

# Collective Decision-Making in Mobile Group Chats

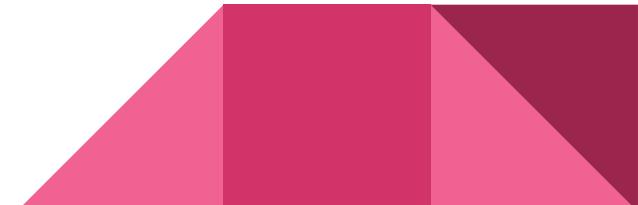
Diva Smriti & Kunal Eapen

# Decision Making in WhatsApp Group Chats

Q. **How** do groups **make decisions** on online messaging platforms like WhatsApp?

Q. **What problems** do people face when making decisions on online group chats within WhatsApp?

Q. **How** are online platforms **addressing** these issues?



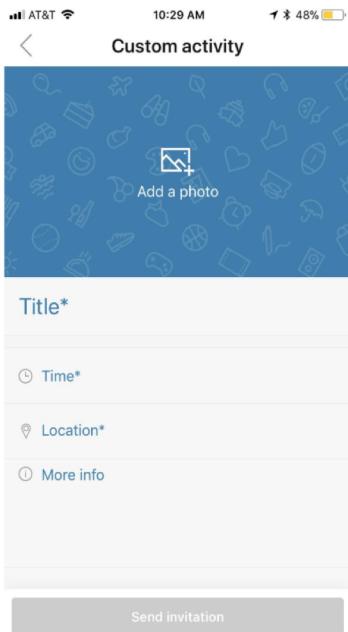
# Previous Research

Groups **fail** to reach a consensus in online group chats when:

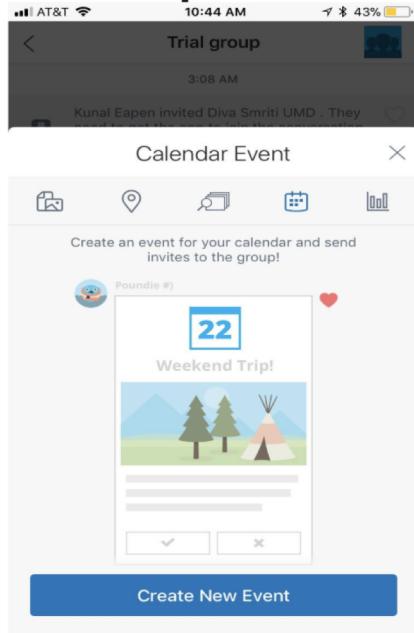
- The group is large
- Time is limited
- Tasks are social-emotional in nature

Previous research is specific to a task, or structured, but as such do not suggest improvements in day-to-day group chat discussions to overcome this problem

# Competitive Analysis



Who's In



GroupMe

**Install Slack**

**Step 3: Make a decision together**

Now that you're all set up, it's time to start making decisions. Select from one of the options below:

- Proposal**  
Seek collective agreement
- Check**  
Track participation and find volunteers
- Poll**  
Measure popularity or offer a choice
- Dot Vote**  
Prioritise options
- Time poll**  
Find a time to meet
- Ranked choice**  
Rank options in order

I'LL DO THIS LATER

LoomioBot

- No consensus building support
- Many options intimidate users

# Methods

**Literature Review**

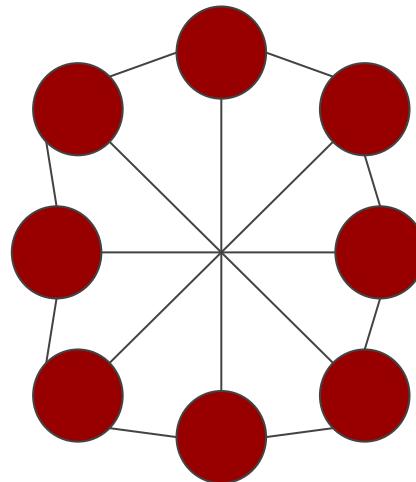
**Competitive Analysis**

**Contextual Observation**

**Individual Interviews**

# Contextual Observation

Have a group of eight members of an already existing social circle perform a consensus building task using Whatsapp group chat.



Plan a surprise  
birthday party!



# Individual Interviews

We interviewed each of the eight members of the group chat about their experience with participating in consensus building activities in relation to our assigned task as well as their daily interactions on messaging platforms.

## **Contextual Observation served two purposes:**

- To act as a context probe/source of reference for participants when being interviewed.
- To corroborate anecdotal evidence of behavior with observed behavior.

# Themes

**Transcribe Interviews**



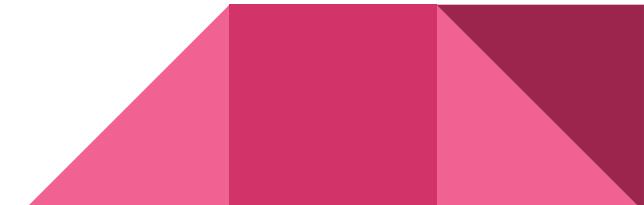
**Notes from Interviews**



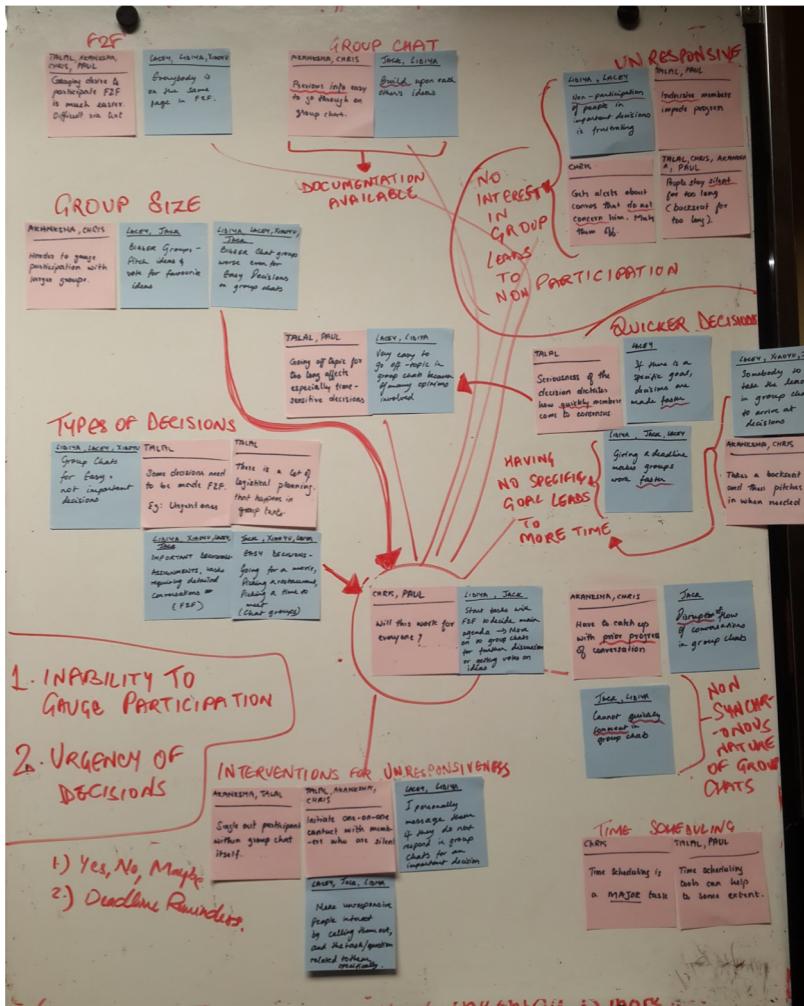
**Group similar Notes**



**Themes**

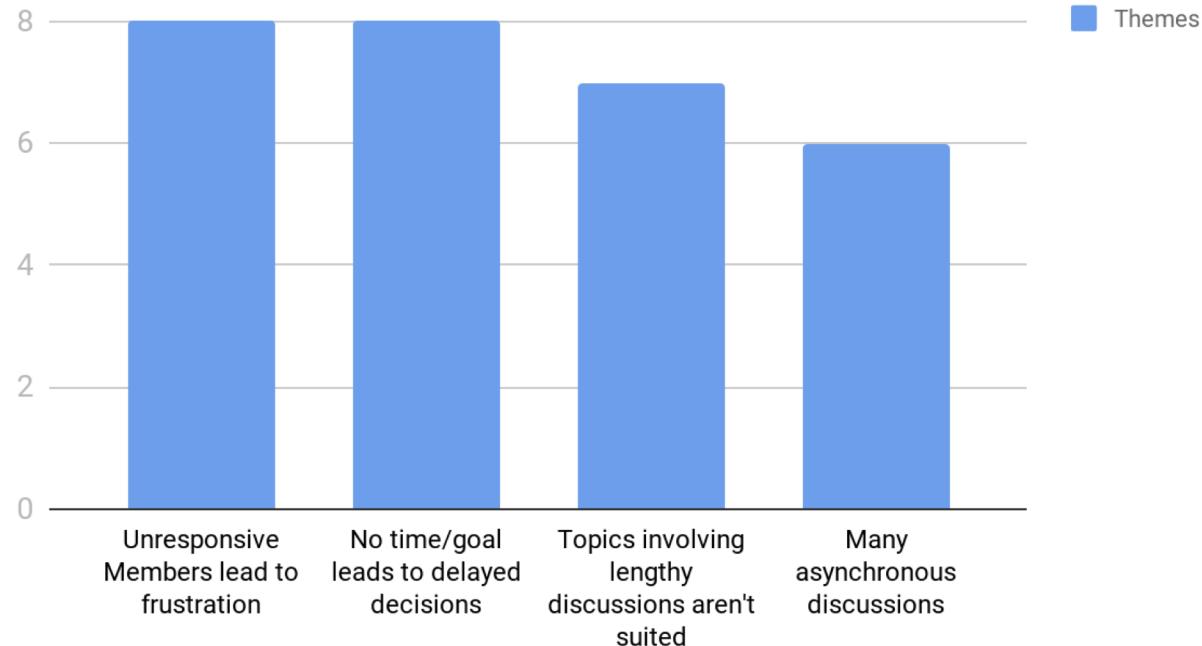


# Themes



# Themes

Major Themes



# Behaviors

**Notes from Interviews**



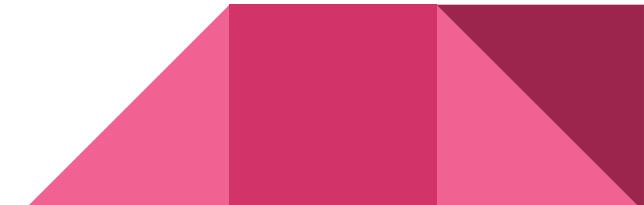
**Notes from Group Chat Data**



**Group people with similar roles**



**Behaviors**



# Behaviors



## Drivers

- Introduce the idea
- Urge the group to discuss
- Collect ideas
- Drive decisions



## Contributors

- Actively pitch in ideas
- Build upon a main idea chosen by the group



## Listeners

- Idle in pitching ideas
- May choose an idea pitched by others
- Only pitch in when :
  - They disagree
  - Singled out

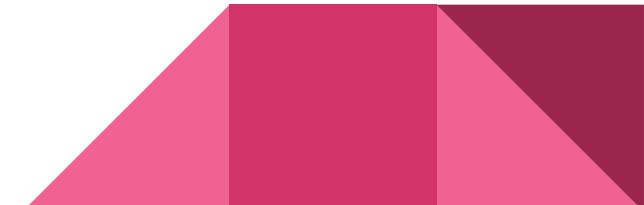
# Decision-Making process

**Pitching of Ideas (Drivers and Contributors)**

**Group selects an idea**

**Build up on the chosen idea**

**Decision**



# Behavior on Online Platforms



Drivers



Effort increases



Contributors



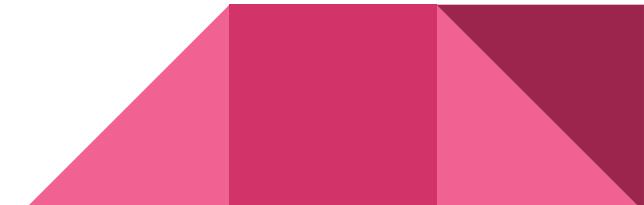
Effort  
constant



Listeners



Effort  
decreases



# Major Findings

1. Event Planning constitutes majority of decisions made in group chats among small social circles.
2. The inability of group chat members to gauge each others' desire to participate is a major issue as opposed to F2F.
3. Decisions get buried in other discussions in the group chat.
4. Urgency of a decision directly correlates with efficiency of decision-making in a group chat.

# Decision Making in WhatsApp Group Chats

Q. How do groups make decisions on online messaging platforms like WhatsApp?

A. Behaviors of Group Members on Online Platforms

Q. What problems do people face when making decisions on online group chats within WhatsApp?

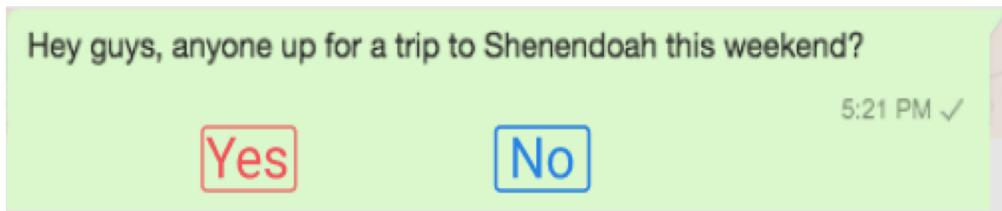
A. Major Findings from Interviews and Group Chat data

Q. How are online platforms addressing these issues?

A. Lit Review & Competitive Analysis

# Design Implications

- Gauging desire for participation via text.



Yes

Participant A

Participant B

No

Participant E

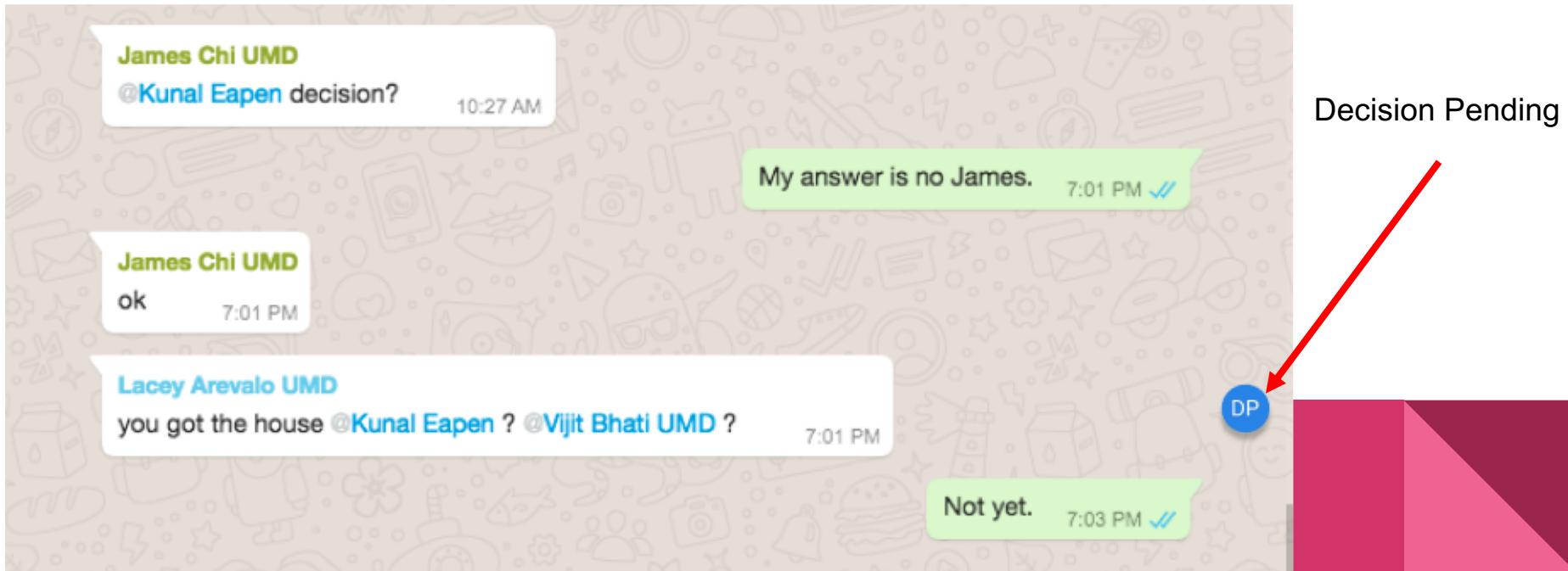
Undecided

Participant C

Participant D

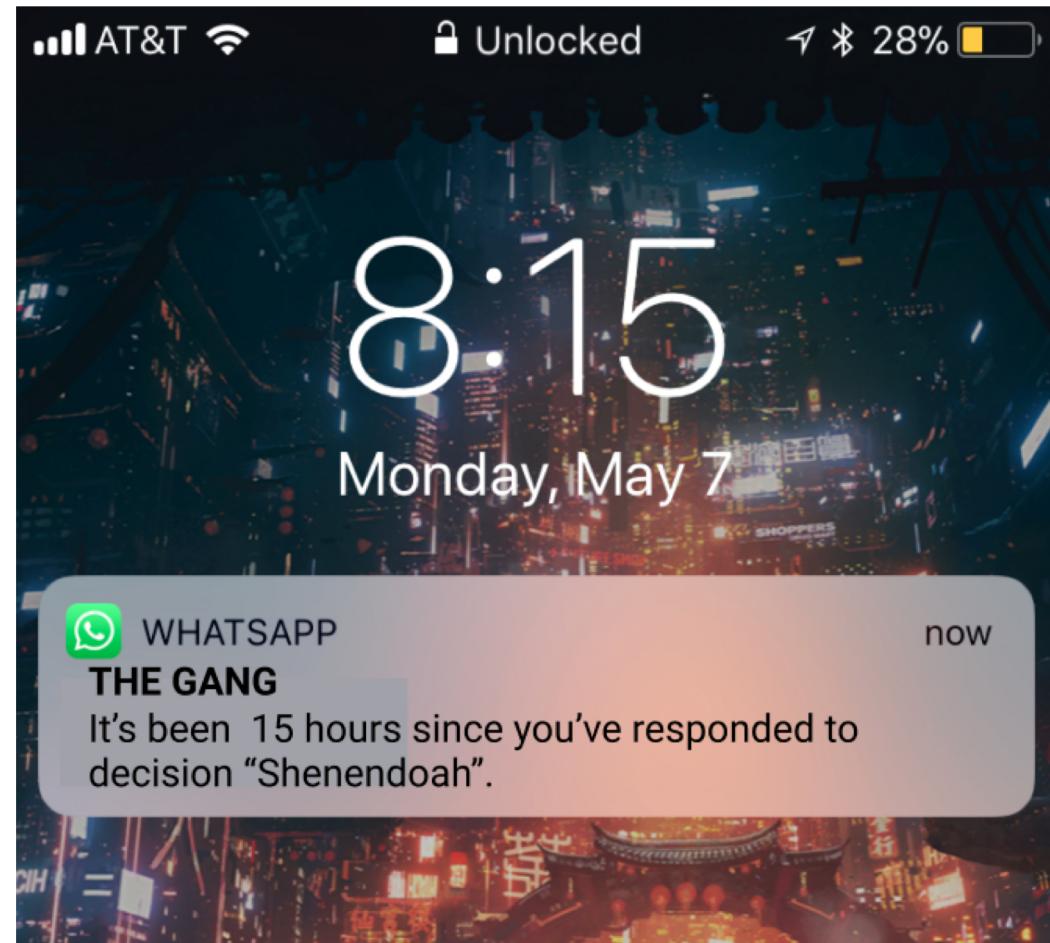
# Design Implications

- Decisions get buried.



# Design Implications

- Stress upon time constraints.



# Limitations

- Most of the participants stated the assigned task closely represented the usual activities they get involved in. However, the fact that they knew that this was only for the purpose of the study caused them to be **not as invested** in the decision-making as they would be otherwise.
- The participants may have **deviated from their normal “behavior”** in group chats because of “being watched”.