



ISSN: 0975-833X

Available online at <http://www.journalera.com>

*International Journal of Current Research*  
Vol. 12, Issue, 10, pp.14377-14382, October, 2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24941/ijcr.39984.10.2020>

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL  
OF CURRENT RESEARCH**

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTS OF USING WECHAT ON FOREIGN STUDENTS AT HEBEI UNIVERSITY

**<sup>1</sup>Afsar Sadiq Shinwari and <sup>2</sup>Jin Qiang**

<sup>1</sup>School of Journalism and Public Relations Nangarhar University, Afghanistan

<sup>2</sup>Intercultural Communication Research Centre of Hebei University, China

#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article History:

Received 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2020  
Received in revised form  
07<sup>th</sup> August, 2020  
Accepted 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2020  
Published online 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2020

##### Key Words:

Social Media, WeChat, Foreign students, Hebei University.

#### ABSTRACT

Nowadays WeChat app has quickly become an important social media among the people. It is a trustable source of social connectivity and exchange of ideas in the society. The main purpose of this article is to explore different outcomes of using WeChat among foreign students. It would cover both positive and negative impacts of WeChat usage among students. It is a quantitative study of the topic therefore we need to launch a survey for data collection. Total 45 international students were selected from Hebei University, Baoding, China. 42.2% male and 57.8% of the female students participated in the survey. The main finding of our survey is that most of these students had no clear idea about what exactly the positive and negative impacts of WeChat are on their life. Also there was no attempt to notify those effects too. Although most of the students were using WeChat for communication and messaging purposes, some of them use WeChat for exchanging information and sharing their knowledge with friends so it is possible for students to actively use WeChat for sharing their knowledge, experiences and information with classmates and profession related individuals by creating class groups and online discussion along with using WeChat for being in contact with close friends and family.

Copyright © 2020, Afsar Sadiq Shinwari and Jin Qiang. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

**Citation:** Afsar Sadiq Shinwari and Jin Qiang. 2020. "Investigate the Effects of using We Chat on foreign Students at Hebei University", *International Journal of Current Research*, 12, (10), 14372-14382.

#### INTRODUCTION

The new media term refers to various technology that emerged rapid growth on a global scale in the last of 20th century. Those users who already have an internet connection, they are aware with some of the major types of these media which includes social networking sites such as Twitter, Face book, Blogs and videos sharing sites like YouTube. These types of media are greatly advanced cellular communication in the last twenty years, through application that connects with the internet. (Wise Geek clear answer for common questions, n.d.). Beside of this, new media have brought the dramatically changing in the way of communication and information since last decades. New media have turned to a need of daily life, and those make the world like village. With new media there is no limit of time and space between countries and continents. New media as we mentioned before have different types like blogs, YouTube, Streaming, E-Books, Social Media and etc. (Penn, 2016). Social media as a type of new media have a rapid growing globally.

**\*Corresponding author: Afsar Sadiq Shinwari,**  
School of Journalism and Public Relations Nangarhar University,  
Afghanistan.

The statistic shows that the number of social media users worldwide from 2010 to 2016 remarkably increasing. It is 2.46 billion in 2017. In 2019, it is estimated that there will be around 2.77 billion social media users around the globe. (Statista, 2017). According to this statistic report, social media are used globally in recent years. There are huge range of studies on social media in China but researchers which only encompass Chinese civilians not foreign students so for we think there is a need to fill the gap and this article providing information on effects of using WeChat on foreign Students at Hebei University who are using one of the most successful social media, WeChat, in China. Therefore the main objective of this study is to know how the foreign students use WeChat? Why they use WeChat? And what are the effects of using WeChat on international Students at Hebei University?. Article starts from the introduction which includes with brief information about new media and social media. After the introduction, short information is about the rise, usage, scope and famous App of social media in China as well as suggestions for solution of problems. In addition, study reaches to the main point, which is WeChat and survey about the effects of WeChat among foreign students at Hebei University. The type of data collection is survey which include. So the self-administered questionnaire applied for data

collection from total 45 international students from Hebei University.

FINALLY topic comes to an end with the conclusion, acknowledgement and references.

**Literature Review:** As you know, the effects of using WeChat on foreign students in China is a very broad field. Most of the researchers paid attention and investigated the significance, positive and negative effects of using WeChat among university and college students. Abdul Razaque Chhachhar (2015) did a research among 200 international students at Tsinghua University Beijing in China. The previous research identified that how international students use WeChat and what kind of function they use mostly, but they didn't investigate the effects of using WeChat on foreign students. So therefore, we chose this topic and try to fill the gap of previous researches. Our research title is the effects of WeChat on foreign students at Hebei University.

**Social Media in China:** Social media, according to the definition of Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haelein in 2010, are "A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Zhang, 2015). On other voice, social media as an online platform allow people to create video and audio content, give comments to the others post and share it, because social media are very easy to use and reach the audience rapidly. It is widely using in the areas related to the environment, politics, technology and the entertainment industry (Yu, 2014). According to Cromity, "the social media is mainly used in 22 aspects of people's life including business, advertising, education, news, entertainment, research, etc". (Chhachhar1, 2016).

The phenomenon of social media emerged in mainland China as early as 1999 when Tencent released an instant messenger called QQ, which lately claims to have more than 700 million users. But the term of social media became famous and widely used in 2008 in China. (Zhang, 2015). According to accounting survey, China has about 1.3 billion population which make one of fifth of the total population of the world, and those aged 29 and under comprise roughly 40% of the total generation. (WALLIS, 2011). The estimated number of active social networking users in China is 650 million, that's twice the population of the USA. (2015 Chinese Social Media Statistics and Trends Infographic, 2015). However most of the youth in China are using social media to contact friends and gather information. "Over two-thirds of users of Chinese social media are between the ages of 18 and 30, and nearly 90% of Chinese social media users are below the age of 35." (Yu, 2014). Additionally, In China social media play unbelievable role in every aspect of life. It shows that social media are the third hand of human in daily life. It makes everything easier for users, connect with friends and family just in a few seconds, buying something only by one click, no need to carry with cash and etc. Accordingly social media is growing rapidly in China. Although, social media has different types of app but there are some most using and famous Applications, which are the top apps in China like WeChat, Tencent QQ, Q-Zone, Sina Weibo, Pengyou, 51.com, Renren, Jiayuan, Kaixin 001, and Douban. Whereas, on average the social media users spend 90 minutes every day and 88% of users are active on at least one social media networks. 400 million people in China are using mobile

device to access social networks which is equal to more than the entire population of South America. It predicted that there will be 745 million Chinese mobile netizens in 2017. (2015 Chinese Social Media Statistics and Trends Infographic, 2015). As well as WeChat is the more famous and using App, which is growing rapidly in China, and it was using by different types of users including foreign. So, the title of article is (Investigate the Effects of WeChat on foreign students at Hebei University) for that now we discuss about WeChat and usage of WeChat in China.

**What is WeChat and how people use it in China?:** In America and Europe, Face book, Twitter and Linked in are the most popular social media, but in China those are not much accessible because of the government's consideration on the security of international network therefore Chinese market has launched different social media of its own such as WeChat (Chinese WhatsApp ), Weibo (Chinese Twitter) and Renren (Chinese Facebook ). Among them, WeChat is currently in a dominated position than others. (Chhachhar1, 2016). On the other hand, it is a kind of free chatting software which provides instant communication service. WeChat official data show that as of Dec. 2017, the number of WeChat users has reached 963 million. According to having the largest users group it is one of mobile real-time communication software in Asia. (YU, 2017). Although, it counts as China's WhatsApp, which is the most popular App in China. It has 5.5 million monthly users which covering above 90% mobile users. Beside of this, WeChat is the world first all in one platform, which is used as digital wallet, a box office, and even shopping platform. (WHAT WE DO > China Social Media Marketing, 2017). In additionally, it is free to install, use, download and support by all smart phone including iPhone, Android, and Windows phone operating systems. WeChat brought an innovative way for users to promote their connection among each other through text, voice, and videos messaging, location sharing, and other information. And also it is available in 200 countries and 200 languages. (Chen, 2016). According to the users and platform data shared by Tencent in January 2015, the 25% of users checking WeChat more than 30 times per day (Xianglong Xu, 2017). However 70 million people are using WeChat outside of China and it has in a personal account maximum 5000 number of friends. As a user, Chinese adult spend daily over 40 minutes on WeChat and the average of users that purchases products online is 83% and 300 million users that have credit cards attached to their accounts. (Smith, 2017). In finally, WeChat is using by different types of users including foreigner students in China, but they don't have knowledge about the effects of WeChat on users. By the way, we know that research in China on the effects of WeChat on users has already done in wide range but in this article we just want to focus on effects of WeChat on foreign students at Hebei University.

**Foreign Students in Hebei University:** The government of China is working for the stabilizing community and bringing peace in the world, there for it has been coming to help with others countries in different areas. The most important is higher education. Every year a large group of international students come to China for the higher education purposes from across the world through China Scholarship Council (CSC). However the Hebei University is the one of those universities, which has the proud of international students, 260 international students came from different countries around the world and they are studying different majors in 2017. They have open hand to achieve the good and healthy environment and contact

with each other's, share information, news, views, comments, text, audio and video messages and etc. They are using different Apps of social media but most of them are using WeChat. The main object of this study is the effects of WeChat on foreign students at Hebei University.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The quantitative study need survey to collect the fact and information about the topic so the self-administered questionnaire was applied for data collection in this study. Sample size of the data collection was 45 international students who were selected from Hebei University Baoding, China. The data was analyzed by using SPSS software.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 is explaining the demographics information of the respondents. There are 45 respondents participated in this research, because this survey handed over only to foreign students at Hebei University. In this 45 respondents 19 were male and 26 female. The ages of 66.7% of the respondents were between 20 to 25 while the 28.9% of the respondents' ages were between 26 to 30, and 4.4% others were between 30 to 40, but no one above 40 years old in this survey. For further, 37.8% of the respondents were under bachelor degree, while 15.6% respondents were bachelor degree, 42.2% of respondents were master degree and 4.4% of the respondents were with a PHD level education. When they were asked about staying in China, result came out that 62.2% of the respondents staying less than one year, while 11.1% staying since last one year. However 17.8% of the users are living last two years and only 8.9% of respondents are living for three or more than three years in China.

**Usage of WeChat among Foreign Students:** Table 2 showed the result of usage WeChat among foreigner students at Hebei University. When the respondents were inquired about using WeChat, result came out that all of the respondents use WeChat. The respondents were also asked about how long they are using WeChat, result came that 37.8% of respondents are using WeChat less than one year while 11.1% of respondents are using WeChat for one year, 31.1% of respondents are using WeChat since last three years and 20% of the respondents are using WeChat more than three years. For further information, when respondents were also asked about why they are using WeChat? Result came out that 48.9% of the respondent using WeChat to chat with friends without limitation, because WeChat is more easy tool to communicate with others. 15.6% of respondents use webcam for video chat with family members while 13.3% of respondents using WeChat to improve their knowledge and share experiences with each other, and finally 22.2% of respondents use WeChat to get others' information. However, when asked from respondents about which function they use mostly that the result came 93.3% of the respondents are using sending message function to send messages to friends and family, while only 2.2% of the respondents use game function in WeChat App, but 2.2% of respondents are using the moment function where they share interesting moment of the life with other friends on WeChat, also the same frequency 2.2% of the respondents are using the webcam function. Additionally respondents were also asked about how long they use WeChat every day? The outcome indicated that 26.7% of respondents use WeChat every day less than one hour in a day, 24.4% of respondents use WeChat two hours, while 48.9% of respondents use WeChat more than two hours in a day.

**Information and opinion about WeChat effects:** Data of table three shows the information about usage, importance and effects of WeChat. Among all respondents 15.6% were strongly agree and 37.8% agreed that WeChat as a good tools for hotspot affairs than traditional media while 33.3% were neutral and 13.3 were disagree that WeChat is not good tool to get and share information. When respondents were asked about the activities on moment, result came out that 15.6% respondents were strongly agree and 51.1% were agree that they publish their own activities on moment in WeChat while 26.7% of respondents were neutral, 4.4% were disagree and 2.2% of respondents were strongly disagree that to publish their activities on moment in WeChat. However, when respondents were asked about the authenticity of WeChat information, result came out that 13.3% strongly agreed and 31.1% of the respondents were agree about the authenticity of WeChat information but 53% were neutral students didn't say anything about the authenticity of information in WeChat, Although 2.2% respondents were disagree to conform the authenticity of information in WeChat. For further, when students were asked about reading the comments on WeChat the result showed that 15.6% of students were strongly agree and 26.7% of students were agree and read the comments, who write to their friends and colleagues on WeChat while 37.8% of the students were neutral, 17.8% were disagree and 2.2% of the students were strongly disagree about the reading of comments on WeChat. However the students were also inquired about their comments on different moments who write to their friends on WeChat, where result indicated that 8.9% of the respondents were strongly agree and 15.6% were agree to give comments on different information but 51.1% of students were neutral, 17.8% were disagree and 2.2% of students were strongly disagree that they didn't write comments on others' information on WeChat. The respondents were also inquired about the comments of others in WeChat on their own opinions where result indicated that 2.2% of respondents were strongly agree and 24.4% of students were agree that the others' comments on different social and political topics change their own opinions while 48.9% of respondents were neutral and they said it does not impact on their own opinion on different comments while 15.6% disagree and 8.9% of the students were strongly disagree and said it is not necessary to depend on others and change their own status. The students were also asked about relying on the information where result came out that 4.4% of respondents were strongly agree and 24.4% were agree and said they believe that the information of WeChat is reliable while 46.7% of students were neutral, 15.6% were disagree and 8.9% of students were strongly disagree and said that they not rely on every post of WeChat. However, the students were also asked about the freedom of speech on WeChat where result indicated that 6.7% of the students strongly agree and 37.8% of respondents were agree that WeChat is a best tool and place to share speeches, opinions, and texts without any prevention while 22.2% were neutral, 15.6% disagree and 17.8% of the students were strongly disagree about the freedom of WeChat and said WeChat is not free for freedom of speech. In addition, research further showed that 26.7% of the students were strongly agree and 55.6% were agree with the majority view in the WeChat events while 13.3% of respondents were neutral and 4.4% of the students were disagree about the majority view on events in the WeChat. The students result showed the reliable information about celebrities indicated that 2.2% of the students were strongly agree and 8.9% were agree and said the

**Table 1. Demographic Profile**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender			1.5778	49949
Male	19	42.2		
Female	26	57.8		
Age			1.3778	0.5756
20-25	30	66.7		
26-30	13	28.9		
31-40	2	4.4		
Above 40	0	0		
Education			2.1333	99087
Under Bachelor	17	37.8		
Bachelor	7	15.6		
Master	19	42.2		
PhD	2	4.4		
Monthly Scholarship (Yuan)			3.1136	78402
Lower Than 999	2	4.4		
1000-1999	8	17.8		
2000-2999	20	44.4		
3000 or Above	15	33.3		
How long have you been in China?			1.7333	1.05313
Less than one year	28	62.2		
One year	5	11.1		
Two years	8	17.8		
three or more than three Years	4	8.9		

**Table 2. Use of WeChat among foreigner students**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std.Deviation
Do you use WeChat?			1.0667	0.44721
Yes	45	100		
No	0	0		
How long have you used WeChat ?			2.3333	1.18705
Less than one year	17	37.8		
One year	5	11.1		
Two years	14	31.1		
More than three years	9	20		
Why do you use WeChat ?			2.0889	1.23991
Chat with friends	22	48.9		
Webcam with family	7	15.6		
Seeking information	6	13.3		
Others	10	22.2		
Function do you use the most in WeChat?			1.1333	0.54772
Sending message	42	93.3		
Games	1	2.2		
Moments	1	2.2		
Webcam	1	2.2		
How long you use WeChat every day?			1.7778	0.84984
Less than 1 hour	12	26.7		
One to two hours	11	24.4		
More than two hours	22	48.9		

**Table 3. Information and opinion about the Effect of WeChat**

Statement	SA	A	N	DA	SD
I understand WeChat is a good tool for hotspot affairs. I compared with the traditional media, I prefer to use WeChat to understand current events	7 (15.6%)	17 (37.8%)	15 (33.3%)	6 (13.3%)	0
I would use WeChat to publish my activities on moments and often use to forward information	7 (15.6%)	23 (51.1%)	12 (26.7%)	2 (4.4%)	1 (2.2%)
I will first confirm the authenticity of the WeChat in the information I often use to read comments on WeChat	6 (13.3%)	14 (31.1%)	24 (53.3%)	1 (2.2%)	
I prefer to give comment on different information	7 (15.6%)	12 (26.7%)	17 (37.8%)	8 (17.8%)	1 (2.2%)
On WeChat others comment on the different issues change my opinion	4 (8.9%)	7 (15.6%)	23 (51.1%)	8 (17.8%)	3 (6.7%)
Do you rely the information post on WeChat	1 (2.2%)	11 (24.4%)	22 (48.9%)	7 (15.6%)	4 (8.9%)
WeChat is freedom of speech where you can write your opinion	2 (4.4%)	11 (24.4%)	21 (46.7%)	7 (15.6%)	4 (8.9%)
I agree with the majority view in the WeChat of events	3 (6.7%)	17 (37.8%)	10 (22.2%)	7 (15.6%)	8 (17.8%)
Is the information published about celebrity reliable	12 (26.7%)	25 (55.6%)	6 (13.3%)	2 (4.4%)	0
Comments in large numbers information can be reliable	1 (2.2%)	4 (8.9%)	24 (53.3%)	10 (22.2%)	6 (13.3%)
I Spend a lot of time online	1 (2.2%)	14 (31.1%)	19 (42.2%)	8 (17.8%)	3 (6.7%)
WeChat is limited to change the Interpersonal Communication Among students	7 (15.6%)	11 (24.4%)	18 (40%)	4 (8.9%)	5 (11.1%)
Receiving unbeneficial messages from the friends groups	6 (13.3%)	16 (35.6%)	21 (46.7%)	2 (4.4%)	0
	5 (11.1%)	14 (31.1%)	16 (35.6%)	7 (15.6%)	3 (6.7%)

published information regarding celebrities is reliable on WeChat while 53.3% of the students were natural, 22.2% were disagree and 13.3% of the respondents were strongly disagree and understood that it is not sure either it is right information or wrong information about the celebrities. Furthermore, 2.2% of the students were strongly agree and 31.1% were agree and understood that the information on WeChat which has a large numbers of comments can be true while 42% of students were neutral, 17.8% of the students were disagree and 6.7% of the respondents were strongly disagree and said this is not a standard that describes large number of comments reliable. However when the students were inquired about the spending a lot of time online where the result indicated that 15.6% of the students were strongly agree and 35.6% were agree and said we are spending a lot of time online which is not necessary for our study while 40% students were neutral, 8.9% were disagree and 11.1% of students were strongly disagree and said it depends on WeChat users. For more information when students were asked about the limitation of interpersonal communication by WeChat, result came out that 13.3% of students were strongly agree and 35.6% were agree and understood that WeChat is limited for changing interpersonal communication among students. Finally when students were asked about getting unbeneficial messages from the group friends where result came out that 11.1% of the students were strongly agree and 31.1% of the students agree and said they receive a large number of unbeneficial messages from the WeChat group of friends while 15.6% of the students were neutral, 15.6% were disagree and 6.7% of the students were strongly disagree and understood that it has depended on users, if users have good friends they will not send them unbeneficial messages.

## Conclusion

As we know that the using of WeChat app has a lot of advantages among foreign students at Hebei University which are included: it is very convenient, simple to use, time saving, free audio, videos calls and text message and finely it is using in every aspect to make daily life easier. Although the survey showed that all of the respondents are using WeChat but most of them (48.9) are using WeChat for sending message to friends and video chat with family while just 13.8% of students use WeChat for seeking information and knowledge. So there were some lack of knowledge about the using of WeChat among students that they didn't understand about WeChat as a strong tool for learning and seeking knowledge. Survey showed that there were 26.7% of the students were using WeChat normally less than one hour in a day while 48.9% of the students were using WeChat more than two hours in a day which has negative effect on the student's daily study. However, the function of moment is the personal homepage and sharing system like Twitter and Facebook is also extremely famous among international students and most of them are using it. In addition, most of the students were neutral about the authenticity of information on WeChat while 44.4% of the students were agree and they said there were no way to think about the authenticity of information on WeChat, so this is the other effect of WeChat on students which has believe without searching about information. Most of the students were neutral about to changing their opinions when they see the other user comments on different issues but 26.6% of the students accepts that the other user's comments changed their own opinion on different issues, so it is also the effect of WeChat on students to change their opinion.

Besides, most of the students were agree with the majority view on WeChat moments while they didn't search to know it is right or wrong, however 40% of the students were agree that they spend a lot of time on WeChat, so this is the other negative effects of WeChat on students. Most of the students accept that WeChat is limited the interpersonal communication among students and they said usually our roommates were using WeChat in the same room to ask each other. Further, most of the respondents were agree that they received a large number of unbeneficial messages from the others users, especially in night time when they are sleeping. Finally, WeChat is a type of social media which has positive and negative both effects on users.

## Acknowledgement

At first, I want to express my regards to Hebei University for selecting me as an international students in China country through CSC scholarships. Secondly, I would like to express my gratitude to dear and respectable professor Dr. Jin Qiang who leads and guides me patiently and in a very flexible method. Also credit goes to all my kind professors. Words of appreciation and thanks also goes to international student office and international students at Hebei University for cooperating me in survey and data collection. And the Intercultural communication research center of Hebei University can also be mentioned, the Teacher give lots of ideas about the communication wisdom between China and BRI countries. Finally, thanks to my friends and colleague who shared with me their precious time and experiences about my topic.

## REFERENCES

- Retrieved from Wise Geek clear answer for common questions. *2015 Chinese Social Media Statistics And Trends Infographic*. 2015. Retrieved 11 4, 2017, from [makeawebsitehub.com](http://makeawebsitehub.com). (2017). Retrieved 10 31, 2017, from Statista.
- Ali B. Abduljabar (1), M. D. 2017. The Social Media Based-Marketing for Universities on Foreign Students' Emotions in China. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 55.
- Chen, L. (2016). How has China's home-grown social media Wechat changed the traditional media landscape? *Reuters Institute for the study of journalism*, 4.
- Chhachhar1, X. Y. 2016. Descriptive Analysis Regarding Use of Wechat among University Students in China. *Asian Social Science*, 151.
- Penn, C. S. 2016. What's the difference between new media and social media?
- smith, C. 2017. *100 amazing wechat statistics and facts*. Retrieved 11 4, 2017, from DMR.
- WALLIS, C. 2011. New Media Practices in China: Youth Patterns, Processes, and Politics. *International Journal of Communication*, 408.
- WHAT WE DO > China Social Media Marketing*. (2017). Retrieved 11 4, 2017, from Westwin.
- Xianglong Xu, 1. Q. 2017. influence of Wechat on sleep quality among undergraduates in Chongqing, China: a cross-sectional study. 1.
- Xinhua. 2013, 05 19. Retrieved 10 31, 2017, from [China Daily.com](http://China Daily.com).

- YU, H. 2017. A Study of Application of WeChat in Translation Teaching. *2017 4th International Conference on Economics and Management (ICEM 2017)*, 631.
- Yu, H. 2014. The effect of social media comment on Chinese consumers' attitude toward the brand. 2. Ames, Iowa: Lawa State University, Digital Repository .N 98
- Zhang, Y. 2015. Microblogging and its implications to Chinese civil society and the urban public sphere: A case study of Sina Weibo. Australia: The University of Queensland.

\*\*\*\*\*