

Study on the Impact of WeChat on the Interpersonal Communication of College Students

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Abstract

Introduction: As a new media, WeChat has both negative and positive effects on college students. This paper first analyzes the development status of WeChat in the population and the characteristics of college students' social interaction. Then we conducted a survey on the use of WeChat by college students of Anyang Normal University, focusing on the reasons, duration, WeChat main newsletter, communication of WeChat, and the discrimination between the true and false of WeChat information. We discuss the positive and negative impact of WeChat on college students. Finally, in view of the negative influence of WeChat, we give the corresponding strategic measures from three levels: college students themselves, universities, and university educators, so that college students can overcome and avoid the negative effects of WeChat, so as to better grow into talents.

Keywords: WeChat, college student, interpersonal communication, countermeasures.

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INTRODUCTION

In the information age, with the popularity of the Internet, the major network social platforms are also developing in a rapid manner, especially the emergence of mobile networks has accelerated the development of new media and the rhythm of people's lives. According to the 43rd "Statistical Report on the Development of China's Internet Network" released by CNNIC, as of December 2018, the number of Internet users in China reached 829 million, and the Internet penetration rate reached 59.6%, an increase of 3.8 percentage points from the end of 2017. A total of 56.53 million new netizens were added. The emergence of the Internet has caused people's social behaviors and methods to undergo earth-shaking changes, especially the emergence of WeChat, opening up a new communication model of communication. WeChat is a free application launched by Tencent on January 21, 2011 to provide instant messaging services for intelligent terminals. Its communication mode combines text images, voice videos, small videos and other functions, which can be easily and conveniently communicated with friends [1]. With the rapid development of network technology and the use of smart phones, WeChat has begun to evolve from a simple application of instant messaging services to a comprehensive service platform that integrates

communication, making friends, learning, showing oneself, entertainment, payment and so on.

WeChat provides a space for social interaction with diverse information, enriches the means of communication and the content of communication, and increases the frequency of communication. WeChat users can share content with friends and share the wonderful content seen by users into WeChat friends. The biggest feature of WeChat is that it is completely free and has a well-designed communication protocol, so it has won the favor of many users. With its features of rich functions, convenient fashion and low tariffs, WeChat sensationalizes every member of the society, especially attracting students who are in the forefront of the trend of the times, advocating cutting-edge technology, and having strong adaptability and acceptance [2]. At present, WeChat has become a new tool for college students to communicate with each other, and it also represents a new way for college students to socialize.

However, as a new type of instant messaging and virtual communication tools, WeChat facilitates the social interaction of college students to the greatest extent, and also brings some troubles to the social interaction of college students, which greatly affects the social behavior of college students and changes the

social mode of college students [3]. Nowadays, the strong willingness of college students to communicate with WeChat is combined, so that the phenomenon of college students' communication in WeChat attract the attention of academic circles and university administrators. WeChat is the most widely used social software for college students at present. The behavior of college students using WeChat group to learn includes personal behavior and group behavior. Correspondingly, the effects include individual-level effects and group-level effects. Moreover, the influence of WeChat on the behavior and effect of college students has both positive and negative sides. WeChat buries all kinds of hidden dangers, and students will be deceived by some "interested people" on the Internet if they are not careful. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the positive and negative effects of WeChat on college students' communication and put forward some feasible solutions to help college students' social communication, so that college students can ensure their personal and property safety.

This paper takes the influence of WeChat on college students' social communication as the main research content, and analyzes the characteristics of college students' interpersonal communication from the perspective of users. By using the method of literature research and comparative analysis as the main research methods, this paper makes a general theoretical analysis of the meaning of WeChat and the social communication of college students. Through the analysis of the problems of college students' social communication and the innovation of communication means, this paper demonstrates the influence of the current college students' new communication means on college students, with emphasis on the positive and negative influence of WeChat on college students, so that colleges and college students themselves have the most new understanding of WeChat communication means.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Characteristics of College Students' Social Communication

Social communication refers to the process in which individuals transmit certain information to other individuals through certain language, words or body movements, expressions and other means of expression, which has the importance of promoting deepening self-understanding, promoting the process of socialization and realizing the value of life [4]. At present, the characteristics of college students' social communication are mainly in the following aspects.

Strong willingness to communicate. Effective and positive social communication is conducive to the improvement of college students' undefined academic potential and the development of social adaptability era, which makes college students closely related to each other and social development, and provides a broader

range of social behavior for college students. College students are young and energetic. Their participation in interpersonal communication not only helps to enhance the social communication ability of college students and their understanding of society, but also can increase social wealth and social knowledge. After entering the university, the interpersonal communication of college students shows an unprecedented trend of open communication. Throughout the adaptive social activities, college students can train themselves better.

Diversification of communication methods. Compared with traditional letters, telephone and face-to-face communication, current college students prefer chat software, post bar, social networking sites, email and so on. The popularity of the Internet has brought the distance between people closer. College students can learn anytime and anywhere with the help of QQ, Fetion, Weibo, social and learning App, and the way of social communication is diversified [5].

Small range of communication. The interpersonal relationship of college students is mainly friend relationship (close friends or partners), classmate relationship, parent-child relationship and teacher-student relationship, and the scope of communication is relatively small. With the growth of age and knowledge, college students' world outlook, outlook on life and values will gradually improve, but because of their current group and psychological state, they have a higher sense of identity for their peers, so the object of communication is often parents, teachers, classmates, friends and so on.

Analysis of the Present Situation of College Students' WeChat

In order to understand the current situation of WeChat use of college students and make the text more persuasive, during July 2019, we distributed 160 questionnaires to students majoring in Anyang normal University through the questionnaire network platform, 160 valid questionnaires were recovered, and the recovery rate was 100%. According to the gender composition of the survey, there were 30 boys (18.75%) and 130 girls (82.5%). The ratio of male to female was about 1:4, which was basically in line with the gender distribution characteristics of students in local normal colleges. In terms of grade distribution, 53 freshmen (33.13%), 88 sophomores (55.00%), 15 junior students (9.38%) and 4 senior students (2.50%) were investigated. The grades of the sample objects are mainly distributed in the freshmen and sophomores, while the junior and senior students are busy with postgraduate entrance examination and graduation preparation, and so the distribution of the subjects is more reasonable.

Reasons why college students started using WeChat. With the widespread use of smartphones and the widespread coverage of 4G signals, a large number

of popular mobile applications have emerged. Since its launch in 2011, WeChat has become a leader in mobile applications because of its function of "providing instant messaging services for mobile phone users". As can be seen from Figure-1, college students began to use WeChat because it was easy to communicate, accounting for 83.13%, followed by the convenient payment function of WeChat, accounting for 53.75%. From the theory of market demand, various functions of WeChat meet the multi-level and multi-directional needs of college students, such as life, learning and so on. The extensive demand of college students makes WeChat have a wide market among college students, and also makes WeChat more and more colorful, and indirectly maximizes the use of smartphone functions.

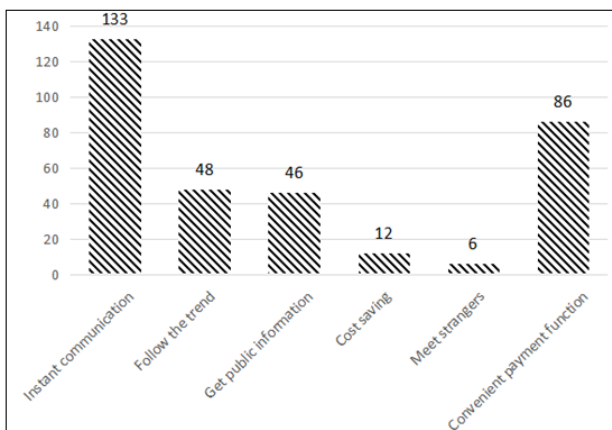


Fig-1: Reasons why college students started using WeChat

Duration of college students using WeChat. According to the survey results of the survey, from the time of use frequency, the number of people who open WeChat more than 10 times per day accounted for 66.87%, as shown in Table-1; and the number of people who use WeChat for more than 1 hour per day accounted for 52.5%, as shown in Figure-2. The above data fully indicates that WeChat is increasingly used in the college student population, and has the characteristics of long use time and high frequency. It also shows that WeChat has become one of the most frequently used social communication tools for college students, and most college students have already had some sense of dependence on WeChat.

Table-1: The Number of Times College Students Click on WeChat in One Day

Option	Number of Respondents	Proportion
Within 10 times	53	33.13%
10-20 times	69	43.13%
20-30 times	24	15%
More than 30 times	14	8.75%

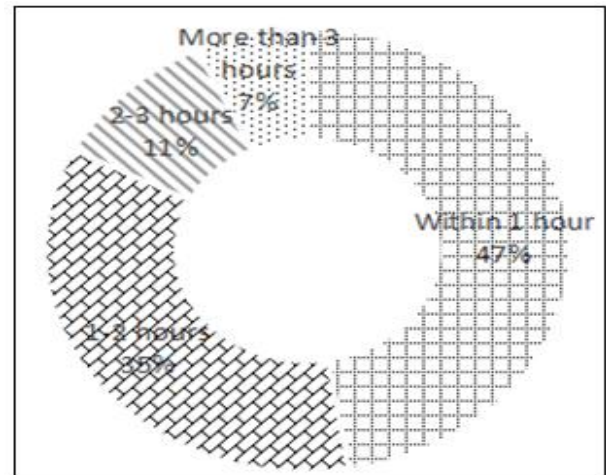


Fig-2: The Length of Time that college students use WeChat in one day

The main contact persons of college students' WeChat. Among the main contact people of college students on WeChat (see Table-2), the proportion of parents or other relatives was 96.25%, which was the main communicator of college students, followed by students or colleagues (73.12%), the third place was communication with teachers (53.12%), and the proportion of communication with netizens who knew or did not know was 13.75%. This shows that in the network social, the network security guard consciousness of college students is still relatively strong. In school, students or teachers often exchange frequently in life. After a period of time, they will generate trust. Therefore, the contacts of college students WeChat are mostly based on acquaintance relationships.

Table-2: The Main Contact Persons of College Students' WeChat

Option	Number of Respondents	Proportion
Parents or other relatives	154	96.25%
Students or colleagues	117	73.12%
Teachers	85	53.12%
Netizens	9	5.62%

College students' identification of the authenticity of network information. College students have a certain ability to identify the information forwarded or published in WeChat, and can be aware of the influence and harm caused by the spread of bad information. According to the attitude table of college

students forwarding WeChat information (see Table-3), about 86.25% of college students are cautious about forwarding information, they often choose to forward information when the information is true, and the information in WeChat moments will not be unconditionally believed. The data show that 50% of

college students will choose to believe the authenticity of the information according to the situation of the

published object.

Table-3: The Attitude of College Students to Forward WeChat Information

Option	Number of Respondents	Proportion
Check the truth and falsehood before forwarding	138	86.25%
Follow the trend	4	2.5%
Forward as long as you like	20	12.5%

The Positive Influence of WeChat on College Students' Social Communication

WeChat is conducive to expanding the scope of social communication of college students. As a free software, WeChat is not for profit. It can be installed on Android or IOS system. The message has the characteristics of fast transmission and low cost. With the exception of mobile traffic, WeChat socializing produces little excess consumption, especially the powerful voice and video features of WeChat that enable people to communicate at any time. The characteristic function of WeChat itself establishes a social network for users, which makes the social interaction of college students more convenient. At the same time, WeChat has a wide range of popularization among college students and high frequency of use. College students can contact long-distance relatives and friends without leaving home, and will not dilute the feelings between friends because of distance. Although WeChat relies on the network to communicate with people, it can strengthen the interpersonal relationship in reality. Through WeChat, college students can communicate with teachers and classmates in life and study, be able to care about their lives with their parents, relatives and friends, and also make some like-minded friends. Therefore, WeChat breaks the space-time limit of college students' communication, expands the circle of college students' communication to a certain extent. It is beneficial to the construction and stability of college students' interpersonal relationship, and lays a favorable interpersonal ability for college students to assume social roles [6].

WeChat is helpful to perfect and improve the knowledge and skills of college students. At present, many educational institutions and government departments have WeChat public platform, through which the WeChat public platform can tell college students about recommended learning skills, life common sense and news and information tweets. According to the survey results, 64.38% of college students like tweets in educational resources and entertainment and leisure, and 46.88% prefer tweets in role model motivation, 84.38% of the college students saw the dynamics of friends in the WeChat circle of friends, 34.38% of the students often saw the articles of spiritual chicken soup sent by their friends, and 28.75% of the students often saw the news and information forwarded by their friends. Therefore, college students can obtain different life experiences and survival skills by chatting with friends through WeChat. By browsing

the circle of friends, they can feel different customs, regional culture, ideological status, and facilitate the communication between students and students, students and teachers through learning and communication groups [3].

WeChat can promote the development of college students' mental health. With the acceleration of social rhythm, college students often face excessive pressure in the process of study, life and work.

Through the communication and interaction of WeChat friends, they can effectively alleviate the psychological pressure. The problems encountered by college students in life and study can be communicated with people or sent to circle of friends to get the care and guidance of friends and relatives. Therefore, the emergence of WeChat solves the limitations of time and space for college students to talk to a certain extent, and college students can get appropriate complaints in time to ensure that college students can grow up healthily. When college students publish their life experiences to a circle of friends, if their opinions are recognized by everyone, they will have a sense of self-confidence and accomplishment in their hearts.

The Negative Influence of WeChat on College Students' Social Communication

WeChat makes college students addicted to itself, thus it reduces the efficiency of college students' learning. According to the survey data, the proportion of college students using WeChat for more than an hour a day reached nearly 53%, and a considerable number of students used WeChat for a longer period of time. 66.87% of the college students clicked WeChat more than 10 times a day, and 8.75% of the college students clicked WeChat more than 30 times a day. The time and frequency of using WeChat is bound to shorten the time of college students to study and live in reality and increase the fragmentation of time. As a result, it leads to college students to form the bad habits of network social platform and the occurrence of bad mental health. In addition, due to the poor self-control ability, many college students are playing WeChat regardless of time and occasion, which leads to their learning and rest time can not be guaranteed, thus affecting their learning efficiency.

WeChat can weaken the realistic interpersonal skills of college students. Other than the usual course tasks, college students have a lot of free time. College

students who have nothing to do often spend too much free time socializing through WeChat, which easily leads to college students spending a lot of time socializing on WeChat, so that there are fewer opportunities for face-to-face communication between people. Wechat's various convenient functions such as ticket purchase, ordering, and recharge are also convenient for life, and also reduce the opportunities for college students to go out. The excessive use of WeChat makes college students have a sense of dependence on WeChat, thus it makes the phenomenon of communication barriers occur in the real world.

Countermeasures Based on WeChat Negative Influence on College Students' Social Interaction

Strengthening the sense of self-discipline in the use of WeChat among college students. Self-discipline consciousness means self-restraint, all the goals worth pursuing need self-discipline in order to achieve it, and self-discipline ability determines the future achievement of a person. The influence of WeChat on college students' social communication has two sides. How to overcome the negative influence of WeChat depends on how college students correctly treat and use WeChat. College educators should use the advantages of WeChat public account to guide college students to establish a rational WeChat view. On the one hand, they should make college students have an objective and rational understanding of the function of WeChat, and actively guide college students to make WeChat an effective tool to enrich their life and study. On the other hand, it is necessary to guide college students to carry out self-education, consciously restrain online social behavior, and enhance their WeChat communication and self-discipline ability. To remind college students to pay attention to the enhancement of realistic communication ability, to distinguish the differences between real social communication and network virtual social interaction [2].

Giving full play to the Social advantages of WeChat platform and guiding college students to establish correct Social cognition. Colleges should realize the positive role of WeChat in the process of college students' socialization, strengthen the education and guidance of college students at the ideological and behavioral level, actively create an omni-directional WeChat system for college students on their study, life and employment, and consciously extend their education to the WeChat platform that college students are willing to accept. First of all, colleges and universities should establish their own official WeChat public account to guide the thinking and behavior of college students. At the same time, they should push the current affairs politics, library services, employment information, postgraduate examinations, civil service examinations, academic exchange information and other information to college students, so that college students can quickly obtain self-development information [6]. Secondly, the establishment of the

WeChat communication group with the class as the unit group, the teacher strengthens the communication with the students through the WeChat group, understands the ideological status and psychological state of the college students, and guides them in a targeted manner. Furthermore, according to the different academic needs of students, college teachers can establish different types of WeChat learning groups, such as graduation thesis group, examination group, college students competition group and so on. Teachers can provide guidance for college students to learn anytime and anywhere to meet their personalized learning of different subject knowledge points [7]. Finally, college ideological and political educators should establish their own WeChat public account, interact with college students in a timely manner, and dare to criticize and correct the bad information on WeChat, and guide college students to distinguish right from wrong, and help college students establish correct values.

Improve the media literacy of teachers and students and update the educational model. Media literacy refers to the ability of people to choose, question, evaluate, understand, reflect and respond to all kinds of information provided by the media, as well as the ability to create and produce media information. Due to the shallow experience of the society, college students are difficult to distinguish the authenticity of some public opinion events and are easily misled by the bad ideas of WeChat communication. Therefore, colleges and universities must improve the media literacy of college students using WeChat, including the ability to improve the interpretation of WeChat information, and the creative ability of WeChat information, and set up special courses in combination with local conditions to take media literacy education as a general course to provide professional counseling for students. Colleges and universities should rely on WeChat to integrate media literacy into the ideological and political education of college students, change the traditional educational model, build a theoretical system of media literacy curriculum, and improve the media literacy education of college students from the multi-faceted aspects of technology, essence and humanities. It can not only improve students' ability to use the media, but also enhance their legal and moral consciousness in the process of using the media [8]. When media literacy education enters the curriculum system, educators with professional media literacy are invited to conduct a series of academic forums and special lectures, which is an effective way to make up for the classroom teaching mode.

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