

Foreign Students' Adaptation to Social Media in China during Covid-19

A. Lokumannage

*Department of Mass Media, Sri Palee Campus, University of Colombo,
Horana 12400, Sri Lanka
amila@spc.cmb.ac.lk*

This study analyzed how foreign students used social media in China during the COVID-19 pandemic. The objectives of this study were to study how foreign students engaged using WeChat in China, to understand how WeChat groups and news pages facilitated foreign students in China and to determine how foreign students use WeChat as an educational tool. The researchers used close-ended questions to ask from students and used the Likert-scale for the answers by using a five-point measure questionnaire. The researcher gave an online questionnaire to 100 students from 10 different countries that were enrolled in 05 universities in Beijing. Since every university has foreign students, the researcher selected only universities in Beijing. All of them were studying for their Bachelor's degree. As a research method, case study was used for this and the sample was collected by using the simple random sampling technique, a type of probability sampling. The findings show that large numbers of students have been using WeChat due to the influence of friends and classmates. Students also used WeChat to release stress and to find joy and happiness. WeChat not only allows foreign users to access but also allows users to refer this to their friends and family living outside China. Around 69% of students were using WeChat for more than 02 hours in a day. Around 42% of respondents agree with the statement "My family uses WeChat and encourages me to use" and 61% of the respondents showed a positive response to the statement "WeChat plays a significant role for me in obtaining information". Around 72% responded saying that WeChat helps their classroom activities and education. During the quarantine period foreign students used WeChat as an educational tool & shared information about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: China, Covid-19, Social media, WeChat, Foreign students