Use Of Mobile Application By Foreign Students In China: Shanghai University

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Abstract
The purpose of this research is to evaluate the use of mobile applications among foreign students in Shanghai University in China. The research aims at achieving the following objectives:

Determine the extent to which mobile applications are used in China among foreign students specifically in Shanghai University, find out how the foreign students in Shanghai University of China use mobile applications and finally find out the effects of the use of mobile application among the foreign students in Shanghai University of China.

By so doing the study will add to a scholarly body of knowledge and will provide suggestions and recommendations to address the challenges of use of mobile applications among foreign students which might be useful for policy makers and other stakeholders.

The quantitative study approach survey using self-administered questionnaire was applied for data collection in this study. The study was guided by four hypotheses. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey design and targeted foreign students in Shanghai University of China. The researcher used purposive sampling with a sample of 25 participants. Data was analyzed using thematic approach and SPSS statistical package. The data collection involved interviews with the participants and questionnaires were used as a means of ascertaining the opinions of business owners, financiers, government officials and consultants separately. The research employed methodological triangulation by using content analysis and interviews to increase confidence in the interpretation of the data.

Key words
Mobile Application, behaviour, foreign students

1. Introduction
A number of studies have been conducted in China on the role of mobile applications; however such studies have concentrated mainly on the general public and not the foreign students. Not much has been written especially on account of foreign students in China. This research is intended to fill that gap. To the authors’ knowledge, no research has been conducted in China to analyses the use of mobile applications among foreign students in Shanghai University. Therefore, there is shortage of literature on the same topic. In view of this it is hoped that the end result will help out in identifying the extent to which mobile applications are used in China among foreign students specifically in Shanghai University. Hence, this research tries to find out how the foreign students in Shanghai University of China use mobile applications. By so doing the study will add to a scholarly body of knowledge and will provide suggestions and recommendations to address the challenges of mobile applications which might be useful for policy makers and other stakeholders.

Analyze the use of mobile apps in China among foreign students will help the stakeholders and policy makers determine what needs to be done to enable foreign students use mobile applications appropriately. The study will also help to find out the effects of the use of mobile application among the foreign students in Shanghai University of China.

The findings of this research will therefore contribute determining what needs to be done to curb the wrong use of mobile applications by foreign students. This is predominantly important in helping the foreign students realize their objectives in university. The findings will be relevant for formulating regulations for Shanghai University and other learning institutions, policy devising and provide a basis for further research.
2-Research design

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher adopts a mix of qualitative and quantitative research strategy to evaluate the use of mobile applications among foreign students in Shanghai University in China. This research incorporates two methods: a semi-structured interview and an experiment. Qualitative data will be collected by the semi-structured interview, while quantitative data will be collected by an experiment.

The goal of qualitative research is to gain holistic, comprehensive and affluent data (Walker et al. 2008). On the other hand, Qualitative research is to understand a phenomenon, and generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis (Patton & Cochran, 2002). A semi-structured is a qualitative method of research used in the social sciences (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to and then move them and Bernard (1998), the semi-structured interview provides reliable and comparable qualitative data; and allows informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms. In the current study, semi-structured interview method is used to evaluate the use of mobile applications among foreign students in Shanghai University in China.

As showed below on the table, the research established that approximately forty seven percent (47%) of all foreign students in China are studying undergraduate degrees at Shanghai University. An additional 15% are pursuing advanced degrees at the master’s or doctoral levels and approximately thirty percent (30%) are enrolled in Chinese primary and secondary schools. The Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) confirms that approximately forty percent (40%) of foreign students in China are pursuing the Chinese language at some level. The inflow of foreign students in universities gradually, has countless advantages, which can also add to the diversity of higher educational institutions by creating mutual cultural learning environment for local students.

Table 1: Level of Education of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary and Secondary</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma and Certificates</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate degrees</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s or Doctoral levels</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Level of education of participants
2.1 Research question
i. To what extent are Mobile Applications used in China among foreign students specifically in Shanghai University?
ii. How do the foreign students in Shanghai University of China use mobile application?
iii. Are there effects of the use of mobile application among the foreign students in Shanghai University of China?

2.2 Research Hypothesis
The role of the hypothesis is to guide the researcher by delimiting the area of research and to keep him on the right track (Kothari, C. R., 2004:13). Regarding this, based on the results of previous studies the hypotheses can be hypothesized are:
H1: Foreign students in Shanghai University China use Mobile Applications frequently
H2: Foreign students in China are using Mobile Applications for studies
H3: Some Apps are generally used by all foreign students, whatever the country the student is coming from
H4: Mobile applications affect foreign students in Shanghai University China.

2.2.1 Conceptual Framework
Diagrammatically conceptual framework has been presented as follows:

3. Summary of Key Findings
The main objective of this research was to evaluate the use of mobile applications among foreign students in Shanghai University in China. In order to realize the objectives of the research, survey design was adopted to facilitate the collection of original data necessary for the research. The target population included foreign students at Shanghai University of China. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires and interviews. Data collected was first edited in order to check for completeness. Thereafter, it was coded and formatted before being analyzed to obtain percentages and frequency distribution tables.

The study found that the participants ages were; For male - the findings displayed that 16 percent were between the ages of 21 to 30 years, 12 percent were between the ages of 31 to 40 years, 20 percent were between the ages of 41 to 50 years and 12 percent were aged 50 years and beyond. For females- The findings displayed that 12 percent were between the ages of 21 to 30 years, 8 percent were between the ages of 31 to 40 years, 16 percent were between the ages of 41 to 50 years and 4 percent were aged 50 years and beyond.

The research found out that the use of mobile applications among students in Shanghai University is very rampant especially among foreign students. Every student owns a mobile phone and each phone has at least two mobile applications.

The research found out that foreign student use mobile apps to discuss and share ideas. Mobile apps have made foreign students connect with their peers globally and discuss ideas as well as exchange information. The research established that the students use the apps to interact with their
peers in other universities doing the same course and therefore create interests in their chosen career path.

In relation to this Obar, (2015) mobile applications facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. The variety of stand-alone and built-in social media services currently available introduces challenges of definition; however, there are some common features.

The research established that the mobile apps have really transformed how students communicate. The apps have helped foreign students better their communication skills. It has helped them know how to relate to their peers and their elders.

One of the respondents said, “When I came to China, I didn’t know how I will be able to relate with people here and even fit in their culture but thanks to the mobile applications that has helped me to relate and talk to them just by a click of a button. Mobile apps have just transformed my entire experience in China.”

In relation to the above finding, Kubey et al (2001) established that 75 percent of parents and 78 percent of tutors admitted that they have witnessed higher grades because of mobile apps use. Purpose for mobile applications use have appeared in many studies, and include educational, business, browsing, appointments, and entertainment.

The study found out that foreign students use mobile applications to facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

One of the participants said, “I mostly use mobile apps to socialize with friends and exchange ideas. We discuss a lot of things on the social media apps including from academics to social and economic issues. Mobile apps have helped me to make so many friends.”

Use of mobile applications among foreign students facilitates the development of online social networks by connecting a user’s profile with those of other individuals or groups. Foreign students typically access social media services via mobile apps on their phone. When engaging with these applications, foreign students create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities and organizations can share, co-create, discuss, and modify user generated content or pre-made content posted online. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between businesses, organizations, communities and individuals (Kietzmann; Kristopher, 2011).

The participants were also asked about how long they are using mobile applications, where the result indicated that 80 % of the participants have been using various mobile applications for at least five years and more, 10% two years and 10 % last three years are using mobile apps.

This results got explanation that 30% of the participants use mobile apps every day less than one hour, 50 % of the participants use mobile for at least two hours in a day. However, the research established that 20 % of the participants use mobile apps more than two hours every day.

![Duration of Using Apps](image)

**Figure 2: How long the participants use the apps**
Additionally, the research established that most participants (63%) use mobile apps to communicate with their families, friends and tutors. The remaining 33% use mobile apps to communicate with their business clients, to access financial banking system and to support their character learning and that most report using them for a significant amount of their character study time. This adds further evidence to the claim that students believe learning with mobile devices can help in the learning of Chinese characters (Rosell-Aguilar & Kan, 2015).

Our research also established that foreign students mostly use mobile apps to receive money from their respective countries. In this regard, the figure showed the evolution of payment applications used by foreign students in Shanghai University. The figure showed that Alipay and WeChat are the most used by students, while Apple Pay and others are almost unused. This is due to the familiarity of students in these apps; Alipay and WeChat. While some applications are not able to use in China, such as WhatsApp etc.

**Figure 3: Payment Application**

To close our findings we have measured the effect productive of internet mobile apps in student life in Shanghai University and we found that 30.77% of the students depend on mobile internet applications and 44.62% use excessively mobile internet applications, 17.6% used fairly for their daily need. However, 3.46% do not interested on Mobile application.

Our study showed that greater excessive use of mobile applications is associated with higher external locus of control and greater online social interaction skills. The research established that mobile apps have really affected the lives of students.

The research established that most students read blogs for personal information and academic purposes. Students post for both educational and personal proposes. The research established that the students use mobile apps to access information posted by their faculties on the social media.
However, most foreign students use mobile application for daily communication, with their tutors, families, sending messages and to get some information about their studies here in Shanghai University, China. However, there exist others mobile application functions like online shopping, banking service, and calling taxi, inter alia, available on mobile application which can be beneficial to foreign students. These functions are fundamentally unknown to most of the foreign students with the exception of foreign students who have been in China for a comparatively longer time.

The study revealed that the use of mobile application is killing lots of time and resources even in the redundant things; it has numerous effects on student's life because too play with these media is not good even physically. Notwithstanding China's internet control policy, most of foreign students are using western mobile application like WhatsApp, Facebook and twitter, with majority of them surefire the access to these applications via the usage of by some illegal application such as Psiphon. There is a challenge to change their habits since it serve as the dependable and inexpensive means of communicating with their friends and families back home.

The results of this study indicate that mobile apps can play a significant role in supporting many students in their learning of Chinese characters. The research established that Pleco emerged as the most popular app for the CFL learners in this study, but most users exploited only a small proportion of its functionality, suggesting that learner training is required.

The research established that apps can help students to access learning resources and online courses, anywhere and at any time. Nowadys students can access learning resources anywhere any time without having to visit the traditional libraries.

The research established that the mobile apps have helped the foreign students keep in touch with their peers across the world. Mobile apps have contributed in making the world a global village. Mobile apps have come with various advantages and disadvantages. Mobile apps have helped foreign students to be in touch with their families in their respective home countries.

The research established that most students read blogs for personal information and academic purposes. Students post for both educational and personal proposes.

The research established that the students use mobile apps to access information posted by their faculties on the social media.

Most foreign students use this app to send money and receive from their home countries. Mobile apps such as WeChat, Alipay, and PayPal among others have been very instrumental to foreign students in China to send and receive money from friends.

**Recommendation**

The study suggests that students recognize the value of mobile apps in their learning but may need training in how to exploit their full potential.
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