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An Empirical Study on Factors Influencing User Intention to Use WeChat Library: Postprint

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study investigates the willingness of Chinese university students to use WeChat libraries and explores the factors influencing users' adoption of WeChat libraries, with the aim of providing references and recommendations for the development and service improvement of WeChat libraries. [Method/Process] Based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), and Information Systems Success Model (ISSM), a theoretical model is established and research hypotheses are proposed. Using users of Chongqing University WeChat library as survey respondents, the model is analyzed and validated through questionnaire surveys and structural equation modeling. [Results/Conclusions] Social influence and attitude toward use are the primary factors affecting users' intention to use WeChat libraries. Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness indirectly influence users' intention to use through attitude toward use. Information quality, system quality, and service quality positively affect perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness; however, the effects of information quality and service quality on perceived ease of use are not significant. The proposed service improvement recommendations hold practical and guiding significance for enhancing WeChat service levels.

Full Text

Preamble

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An Empirical Study on Factors Influencing WeChat Library Users' Usage Intentions

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study investigates Chinese university students' intentions to use WeChat library services and explores the factors influencing their usage, aiming to provide references and recommendations for the development and service improvement of WeChat libraries. **[Method/Process]** Based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), and Information Systems Success (ISS) model, we developed a theoretical framework and proposed research hypotheses. Using Chongqing University WeChat library users as survey respondents, we employed questionnaire surveys and structural equation modeling to analyze and validate the model. **[Results/Conclusion]** Social influence and usage attitude emerged as the primary factors affecting users' intentions to use WeChat library services. Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness indirectly influence usage intention through usage attitude. Information quality, system quality, and service quality positively affect both perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, though the effects of information quality and service quality on perceived ease of use were not significant. The proposed service improvement recommendations offer practical and guiding significance for enhancing WeChat library service levels.

Keywords: WeChat; WeChat library; mobile services; usage intention

To meet users' needs for accessing library resources and conducting business inquiries via smartphones and other mobile devices, an increasing number of libraries have begun offering mobile services. WeChat, as a new service model, has gradually gained favor among libraries. In August 2012, WeChat launched its public platform for individuals, governments, media, and enterprises to cooperate in business promotion, which was rapidly adopted across various industries. Due to its convenience, interactivity, and low cost, the WeChat service model has become a new approach for libraries to expand their mobile services. By integrating the WeChat public platform with library management systems, libraries can provide information services, catalog searching, mobile reading, and consultation functions. According to a survey by Li Weichao et al., by May 2015, 69.3% of "985 Project" university libraries had launched WeChat library services, with this proportion increasing to 92.3% by September 2016. Although the adoption rate of WeChat libraries has risen annually, our preliminary research found that users' willingness to use these services remains weak, prompting this investigation into usage intention factors.

Building upon the Technology Acceptance Model, Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, and Information Systems Success model, this study constructs a theoretical model of factors influencing WeChat library usage inten-

tion. Using empirical research and structural equation modeling, we surveyed Chongqing University WeChat library users to examine the factors affecting usage intention, testing and refining the model to improve service levels. This research not only enriches theoretical studies on university WeChat libraries and provides a new perspective for future research but also helps enhance library WeChat service quality and offers targeted recommendations for WeChat library development.

2 Literature Review

2.1 WeChat Library Research

Research on WeChat libraries can be categorized into survey studies, application research, user behavior studies, and platform design and implementation. C. Gan surveyed the current state of WeChat application in Chinese public libraries, finding that 82.6% of the 46 surveyed libraries had opened public accounts and provided services. Q. Zhu examined the application of social media in university library resource and service expansion using WeChat as an example, demonstrating that social media tools can effectively improve library services and strengthen connections with users. Tu Xia constructed a model of usage intention for university library WeChat public platforms, revealing that information quality, system quality, and usage attitude affect user intention. Q. Wei and Y. Yang introduced the construction mechanism of Chongqing University WeChat library from a system platform design perspective. Previous research has primarily focused on application studies, platform design, status surveys, and library WeChat marketing, with few scholars examining users' usage intentions.

2.2 User Behavior Theories

Scholars have proposed various theoretical models to study user behavior from different perspectives. In 1975, M. Fishbein and I. Ajzen first proposed the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to analyze how individual attitudes consciously influence behavior. Subsequent models included the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and extended models (TAM2, TAM3). In 2003, V. Venkatesh et al. synthesized these theoretical models to propose the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT).

In information systems research, the Information Systems Success (ISS) model, revised ISS model, and Task-Technology Fit (TTF) model have been applied. Domestic scholars such as Li Yujia have used system dynamics methods to propose mobile library improvement recommendations from four aspects: sensory experience design, information resource design, interaction design, and emotional design. Fan Xiaochun constructed a theoretical model of factors influencing mobile library user behavior intention from an information ecology perspective. These studies examine mobile library user behavior from different

angles.

V. Venkatesh et al. integrated previous research to develop the UTAUT model, which has been gradually applied to mobile library user studies. C. Chang combined UTAUT and TTF models to explain users' behavioral intentions when using library apps, finding that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions affect usage intention. He Wei and Li He introduced perceived risk, information quality, and service quality into the UTAUT model, revealing that perceived risk negatively affects usage intention.

As an information system platform, mobile libraries have also been studied using the ISS model. X. Zha et al. found that service quality is the most important determinant of affinity, which subsequently affects usage intention. H. Mohammadi discovered that usage intention and satisfaction positively influence user behavior.

As discussed in the literature, scholars have explored factors influencing mobile library usage intention based on different theoretical models. The TAM model primarily examines usage intention from system and user perspectives without considering social environment influences, necessitating the incorporation of UTAUT variables. As a system platform, WeChat library evaluation requires integration with the ISS model; relying on a single model yields limited results. Additionally, most current library user behavior research focuses on mobile library APP models and digital libraries, making it necessary to construct a usage intention model tailored to Chinese university WeChat library characteristics by comprehensively examining factors from these models.

3 Research Methods

3.1 Research Model and Hypotheses

As an information system platform, WeChat library service evaluation differs from traditional library service assessment. Therefore, this study draws on variables from the TAM and UTAUT models while incorporating ISS model variables to construct a model of factors influencing WeChat library usage intention, as shown in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper].

3.1.1 Social Influence and Usage Attitude V. Venkatesh et al. defined social influence as the degree to which an individual's usage behavior is influenced by others, which directly determines usage intention. J. Hu and Y. Zhang introduced subjective norm with similar meaning, suggesting that others' recommendations can change individual attitudes and subsequently affect behavioral intention. Therefore, we propose:

H1: Social influence positively affects usage intention.

Usage attitude first appeared in the TRA model and was later adopted in TAM. Following TAM's definition, this study defines usage attitude as the degree of positive attitude users hold toward using WeChat library. Research by H. Yoon,

J. Hu and Y. Zhang, H. Yang and S. Gui, and S. Park et al. demonstrates that usage attitude positively affects usage intention. In this study, when users believe WeChat library will be helpful, they develop positive attitudes that influence their behavioral intention. Therefore, we propose:

H2: Usage attitude positively affects usage intention.

3.1.2 Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness F. Davis defined perceived ease of use as the degree of effort required to use a specific technology and perceived usefulness as the degree to which using a technology can improve performance, demonstrating that both positively affect usage attitude. Studies by J. Thong, H. Yoon, J. Hu and Y. Zhang, and H. Jeong support this conclusion. For WeChat library, convenient operation and user-friendly interfaces that help users' research or learning can enhance usage intention. Therefore, we propose:

H3: Perceived ease of use positively affects usage attitude.

H4: Perceived usefulness positively affects usage attitude.

3.1.3 Information Quality, System Quality, and Service Quality W. DeLone and E. McLean used completeness, relevance, and consistency to evaluate information quality; ease of use, flexibility, and response time for system quality; and reliability and accuracy for service quality. This study defines information quality as the comprehensiveness, accuracy, and relevance of content provided by WeChat library; system quality as performance characteristics including security, reliability, and response timeliness; and service quality as the degree of personalization, interactivity, and richness of services.

J. Hu and Y. Zhang found that information quality, system quality, and service quality positively affect perceived usefulness. E. Park and K. Kim demonstrated that service and system quality positively affect perceived usefulness, influencing usage intention. T. Zhou found these qualities affect user evaluation and positively influence perceived ease of use and usefulness. For WeChat library, high-quality information, stable platforms, and personalized services help users quickly obtain needed resources, improving perceived usefulness. Therefore, we propose:

H5: Information quality positively affects perceived ease of use.

H6: Information quality positively affects perceived usefulness.

H7: System quality positively affects perceived ease of use.

H8: System quality positively affects perceived usefulness.

H9: Service quality positively affects perceived ease of use.

H10: Service quality positively affects perceived usefulness.

3.2 Data Collection

Chongqing University launched its WeChat library service in March 2014, featuring three functional modules: resource information, smart library, and infor-

mation express. Users can access library resources and services by following the WeChat library official account and binding their personal accounts.

This survey targeted Chongqing University WeChat library users. First, five undergraduate and five graduate students were selected for preliminary investigation, and the questionnaire measurement items were adjusted based on feedback. After testing and finalizing the questionnaire, data were collected through online surveys and on-site paper questionnaires. A total of 400 questionnaires were received. After removing respondents who had not followed the Chongqing University Library WeChat official account and those with severely incomplete or identical answers, 219 valid questionnaires were obtained.

The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale, with respondents selecting from “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “neutral,” “agree,” and “strongly agree” for each measurement item. The measurement items are shown in Table 1 .

4 Data Analysis

4.1 Measurement Model Analysis

Reliability, which measures questionnaire result consistency, was tested using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient via SPSS 19.0. The overall Cronbach’s Alpha was 0.948 (>0.7), indicating high reliability. All latent variables’ Cronbach’s Alpha and composite reliability exceeded 0.7 (see Table 2), demonstrating good data reliability.

Validity was assessed through convergent validity and construct validity. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.52 to 0.70 (see Table 2), all exceeding the 0.5 threshold, indicating good convergent validity. For construct validity, KMO and Bartlett’s test yielded a KMO value of 0.921 (>0.5) and significance probability of 0.000 (<0.01), confirming suitability for factor analysis. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation extracted factors explaining 77.831% of total variance, reflecting most original measurement information and confirming good construct validity.

4.2 Structural Equation Model Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) estimates relationships between latent variables by examining internal structures to verify whether the hypothesized model fits the sample data. Using AMOS 20.0, model fit was evaluated through absolute fit indices (χ^2/df , GFI, RMR, RMSEA) and relative fit indices (NFI, CFI, IFI). As shown in Table 3 , all fit indices fell within acceptable ranges, indicating adequate model fit.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses were tested using AMOS through CR values (ratio of parameter estimates to standard errors) and P-values (see Table 4). The path from

information quality to perceived ease of use (H5) showed $CR=1.877$ (<1.96) and $P=0.06$ (>0.05), failing to reach significance, thus H5 was not supported. Similarly, the path from service quality to perceived ease of use (H9) showed $CR=1.268$ (<1.96) and $P=0.205$ (>0.05), indicating H9 was not supported.

H1, H2, H3, H6, H7, and H8 showed $CR>2.58$ ($P<0.01$), reaching significance at the 0.01 level. H4 and H10 showed $CR>1.96$ ($P<0.05$), reaching significance at the 0.05 level. These latent variables demonstrated significant positive relationships.

4.4 Model Modification

Since H5 and H9 were not supported—indicating that information quality and service quality do not significantly affect perceived ease of use—these non-significant paths were removed. After deletion, all path coefficients became significant at the 0.05 level. The final model of WeChat library usage intention is shown in Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper].

5 Results Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Results Discussion

Social influence and usage attitude significantly affect WeChat library usage intention, with CR values exceeding the critical value of 2.58, indicating positive correlation at the 0.01 significance level. Users' behavioral intentions are influenced by their surroundings; when others demonstrate support and make recommendations after using WeChat library, users' intentions increase. Conversely, negative influences decrease intention. Sample mean analysis revealed that classmates/friends and teachers/experts influenced intention with means of 3.16 and 3.11 respectively, while library advocacy and promotion showed a higher mean of 3.46, indicating that users' intentions are more susceptible to library promotion efforts.

Usage attitude also directly affects usage intention, consistent with findings by H. Yoon, J. Hu and Y. Zhang, and E. Park and K. Kim. When users hold positive attitudes toward WeChat library, they are more willing to use it, enhancing usage intention.

Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness significantly and positively affect usage attitude, which in turn influences usage intention, with perceived ease of use showing a stronger effect. The survey indicated that compared to proficiency in using WeChat library and ease of obtaining resources, users were more satisfied with anytime, anywhere access—particularly important in today's ubiquitous mobile reading environment. Additionally, 64.9% of users reported that WeChat library was helpful for their studies or work, demonstrating the importance of perceived usefulness. Therefore, emphasizing improvements in perceived ease of use and usefulness during WeChat library development can positively influence usage attitude and intention.

Perceived ease of use and usefulness are influenced by system quality, information quality, and service quality, with system quality having the greatest impact. In the mobile information environment, WeChat library serves as an interactive platform between users and libraries; system quality directly affects user experience and perceptions. However, 58.4% of users were dissatisfied with response timeliness. Libraries should assign professional librarians to handle WeChat platform consultations, promptly answer user questions, and provide FAQ sections to help users find solutions, thereby enhancing usage intention. Information quality and service quality both positively and significantly affect perceived usefulness. Users expressed satisfaction with the timeliness and comprehensiveness of resource content and information (lectures, activities, news) as well as personalized services, which help improve perceived usefulness and influence usage attitude and intention.

The hypotheses that information quality and service quality positively affect perceived ease of use were not supported. This may be because perceived ease of use measures users' proficiency with the platform and ability to easily find needed resources, which are less directly affected by information and service quality. Additionally, this study used random sampling of Chongqing University WeChat library users, which may have limited sample representativeness and introduced some error.

5.2 Recommendations for Improving WeChat Library Service Levels

Libraries can enhance WeChat library services through four aspects: information quality, service quality, system quality, and social influence.

(1) Improve Information Content Relevance and Comprehensiveness.

Beyond basic notifications (news, events, lectures), WeChat libraries should focus on knowledge mining of existing resources. For example, based on users' reading habits and preferences, libraries can regularly recommend potentially interesting books to increase user stickiness. Additionally, leveraging library resource advantages to digitize more print materials for free WeChat platform access will attract users through resource availability.

(2) Enhance Service Function Richness and Personalization.

WeChat libraries should expand beyond basic functions (catalog search, e-reading) to include location services (library navigation, shelf navigation, seat availability), QR code borrowing, voice recognition, and mobile self-checkout. They should also utilize WeChat's interactivity and convenience to offer reservation services for spaces and hardware resources, moving offline processes online to improve efficiency and user convenience.

(3) Improve System Platform Stability and Response Timeliness.

As a human-computer interaction system, secure and stable platforms enhance perceived ease of use. Libraries should assign professional staff for WeChat platform operation and maintenance, strengthen system functions technologically, and ensure stable operation. Platform interfaces and navigation should be optimized

to eliminate ambiguity, with user manuals provided to help users quickly find information. Most importantly, user requests must be responded to promptly, emphasizing user-librarian interaction.

(4) Strengthen WeChat Library Promotion and Advocacy. During data collection, we found that 40% of users had not followed the WeChat library, with 78.3% of these unaware of the service. Libraries should use multiple channels to strengthen promotion and advocacy, enhancing social influence and awareness. For example, embedding WeChat library guides in freshman orientation and promoting it through embedded subject services can help more users become familiar with its content and functions, thereby increasing usage.

6 Conclusion

Based on TAM, UTAUT, and ISS theoretical models, this study constructed and empirically tested a model of factors influencing WeChat library usage intention. The findings reveal that seven variables (information quality, system quality, service quality, etc.) affect usage intention. Results show that information quality, system quality, and service quality positively and significantly affect perceived usefulness; system quality positively and significantly affects perceived ease of use, which influences usage attitude; and usage attitude and social influence positively and significantly affect usage intention. However, this study has limitations regarding sample representativeness and size. Future research should expand the sample using stratified or targeted sampling and consider additional factors to further explore influences on WeChat library usage intention.

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Author Contributions

Wei Qunyi: Proposed research ideas and designed the research framework.

Yao Yuan: Conducted questionnaire surveys and data analysis; wrote the paper.

Li Yiting: Conducted questionnaire surveys and data analysis.

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