



New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences



Issue 1 (2017) 288-295

ISSN 2421-8030

www.prosoc.eu

Selected paper of 8th World Conference on Educational Sciences (WCES-2016), 4-8, February 2016, University of Alcalá, Madrid, Spain

Social media's role among Tujia Ethnic Minority teenagers in Guizhou (China)

Tian Qu^a*, Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 8290, Spain.

Mingguang Liang^b, Department of Education, Kaili University, 556011

Suggested Citation:

Qu, T. & Liang, M. (2017). Social media's role among Tujia Ethnic Minority teenagers in Guizhou (China). *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online]. 01, pp 288-295. Available from: www.prosoc.eu

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Jesus Garcia Laborda, University of Alcalá, Spain

©2017 SciencePark Research, Organization & Counseling. All rights reserved.

Abstract

In this study, we explore the role of social media in Ethnic minority teenagers' lives, and describe their activities, using frequencies, time spending, and their parents' attitudes toward social software. To this purpose we randomly chose 50 students (aged: 13-18) to participate, who are Tujia ethnic minority in Guizhou. To collect data we used questionnaire platform Sojump. Results show that mobile phone is the most frequent tool to use social media; the most used feature of social media is chatting; most teens use social media everyday, and occupy part of their studying time; and more than half parents regulate their children's social media using, and they worried about social media effect children's school marks.

Keywords: Ethnic minority, social media, Tujia teenager, school performance, mobile media.

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Tian Qu**, Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 8290, Spain.

E-mail address: gutian1217@gmail.com / Tel.: +542-458-85-74

1. Introduction

There is an obvious gap in wealth between urban and rural areas in China (Wu & Liu, 2014). Traditionally, it is believed that the economic gap between urban and rural regions generates a knowledge and information gap (Jin, 2003). Urban youth generally own more devices such as computers and tablets, so they have more chance to access knowledge. In contrast, most ethnic minority youth live in rural areas. They have less audiovisual devices and know less or find out later about what is happening in the outside world. At the same time, people in urban areas also have limited channels to gain information from ethnic minority zones. However, social media provides a User-Generated Content (UGC) platform to users and gives them more opportunities to participate and interact.

Social media is wide spread in China and has a powerful influence. In 2015, the Chinese New Year Gala cooperated with Wechat to send an electric “red envelope” to the audience. To get the “red envelope” people had to install Wechat (a instant messaging application) on their mobile and shake the mobile at a specific time. More than 20 million people joined this game, the peak of shaking mobiles was 810 million per minute (Lu, 2015). Compared to the older generation, young people are a group, which accept and absorb new things more quickly.

Social media is informative and attractive for youth. 90% of Chinese young people own a social media account and more than 50% have two accounts or more (An & Liu, 2013). Youths prefer using Mobile Apps and their favorite social media software is the instant message application (Wu, 2014). Using this app they can chat with their friends, share information, publish their status and expand social circles. In some cases, they use social media to kill time (Zhang & Nie, 2013). Social media may also help young people to improve their academic record. Some researchers have established a teaching model on social media to improve the learning environment (Wang, 2013; Tang & Xu, 2015). But others argue that when young people use social media for learning, they can be interrupted by messages from friends or push news from apps. Most often, youths turn their attention to talking with friends or viewing news (Liu, 2013). Spending time on social media also has some significant negative outcomes.

A survey on college students showed that students spend long hours on social media, which had an impact on their health (Meng & Liu, 2013). It also found that students chat with their friends in cyber spaces but they ignore or have less face-to-face communication with their peers (Yuan & Liu, 2015). Some young people even show mobile social media dependence (Xu, Su & Lin, 2012). They publish their status to win attention from others and to obtain emotional satisfaction (Chen, 2014). The majority of studies on social media were carried out in the Han population. Few research has explored the impact of social media in ethnic minorities' lives. Similar to the urban young generation, increasingly more ethnic minorities own smart phones. That means, nowadays, the information gap and knowledge gap between urban youth and rural ethnic minorities is getting narrower than before. Ethnic minority youth have equal opportunities to express themselves, acquire knowledge and obtain information as their urban counterparts. Based on the above, we proposed three hypotheses in our study:

- H1. Using social media reduces the time teenagers spend on studying.
- H2. Social media helps Tujia teenagers to learn.
- H3. Parents worried about children's social media using.

2. Methods

To pursue this issue and provide up-to-date data, we explore the relationship between Tujia teenagers' social media usage behavior and their learning performance. To explain the relationship, we present 14 questions in our study: Q1. How often do you use social media? Q2. Which is your most

commonly used equipment to use social media? Q3. When do you often use social media? Q4. What do you often use social media for? Q5 What is your favorite social software? Q6. Where do you most often use social media? Q7. Do you use social media for learning purpose? Q8. What kinds of learning activities do you use social media for? Q9. Have you ever used social media to subscribe, watch or learn online courses? Q10. Do your parents approve you using social media? Q11. Do your parents regulate your social media using? Q12. Why do your parents limit you using social media? Q13. Do you think social media helped you with your studying? Q14. What had changed in your life by using social media? And Q15. Do you think social media is an indispensable part in your daily life?

To test the hypotheses, we classified our questions into three parts (see Table 1): a. the time teenagers spend on social media (H1); b. teens' social media usage behavior and learning (H2); and c. parents attitudes toward teens' social media using (H3). We chose Yanhe in Guizhou Province as a research location. Yanhe is an Autonomous County governed by Tongren city with Tujia people comprising 66% of the population. We randomly chose 50 students (aged: 13-18) in a secondary school in Yanhe Tujia Autonomous County. To know the preference and contact rate of social media among the Tujia population, we used Sojump (a online questionnaires platform) to collect data. In the questionnaire, we explored users' behaviors and their outcomes, and investigated parents' attitudes about children's social media usage.

Table 1. Distribution of questions in the questionnaire

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
H1	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q6				
H2	Q4	Q5	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q13	Q14	Q15
H3	Q10	Q11	Q12					

3. Results

Figure 1 presents an overview of the time teenagers spent on social media. Of the 50 respondents, 72 percent youth used social media everyday, 18 percent youth adopted social media several times a week, and only 10 percent used social media once a week. The figure 1 also shows that, among three digital devices, mobile phone has the highest connect rate. Home was the most frequent place teenagers use social media, 54 percent used social media at home. Half of the students used social media when they were doing homework. School was the second frequent place teenagers used social media, 32 percent used it at school. There is also a small percentage of the students used social media in Internet cafes, which account 14 percent of the participants.

As shown in pie chart (see Figure 2), Wechat accounts a significant large number of users than other social media, and QQ is acceptable software that occupied 22 percent of the popular social media. Among all adolescents' using behaviors (see Table 2), interacting and chatting with acquaintances has the highest rate. Making new friends, Watching videos and getting the latest news have about the same proportion. Thirty percent of teenagers played online games. Moreover, a very few percentage teens used social media to gain profit. The proportions of adopting social media for learning purpose occupied ninety-four percent of all respondents. There is only six percent of Tujia adolescents never used social media for learning. For the participants used social media for learning, most of them used it to collaborative and learn in small groups. Homework discussing accounts the second place of their social media learning behaviors. Around nineteen percent of these students adopted social media as a tool to inquiry theory, concept and other information. Only a few teens used social media to interact with their teachers. It is shown that only 22 percent teenagers had watched or subscribed online courses. There is 56 percent of teenagers believed social media had done no effort to help them with their studying. Comparing that 44 percent thought social media had helped their learning. Nearly half of the teenagers believed that social media brought them more fun. Social media helped 24 percent of

them built a good interpersonal relationship. Also 12 percent students had improved their performance. More than 75 percent adolescents believed social media as an indispensable part of their daily lives.

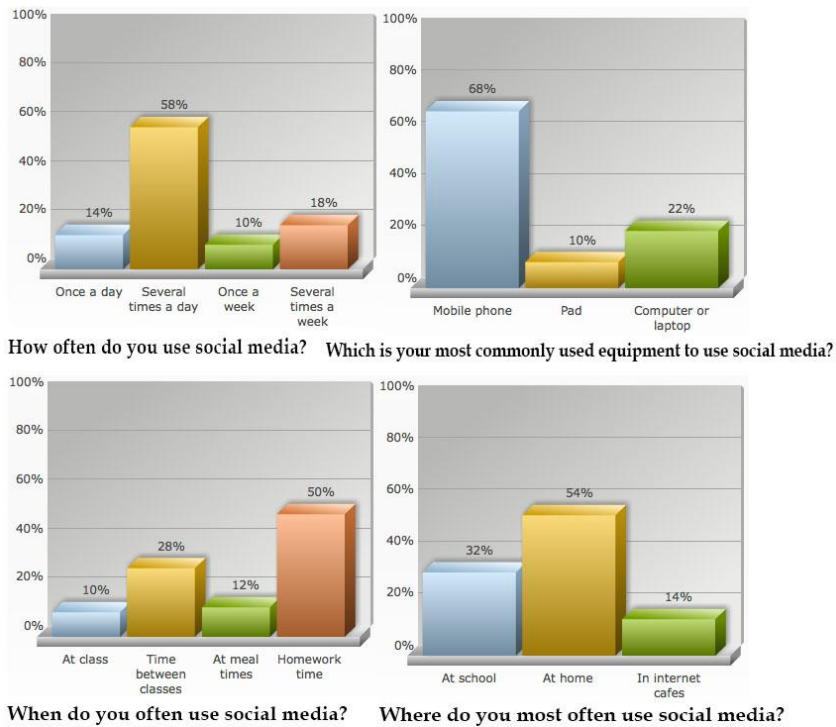


Figure 1. Teenagers' time spending on social media

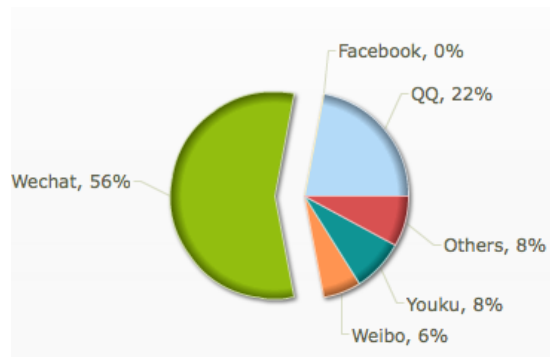


Figure 2. Teenagers' favorite social software

Table 2. Item statistics and measurement results

Items	Category	N	Percentage
Q4. What do you often use social media for?	Make new friends	22	44%
	Interact and chat with acquaintances	43	86%
	Watch videos	24	48%
	Obtain economic advantages	1	2%
	Get the latest news	21	42%
	Play online games	15	30%
	Q7. Do you use social media for learning purpose?	Often	6
Sometimes		41	82%
Never		3	6%
Q8. What kinds of learning activities do you use social media for?	Discuss Homework	14	28%
	Collaborative learning in small groups	22	44%
	Inquiry theory, concept or other information	9	18%
	Teacher Q &A online	2	4%
Q9. Have you ever used social media to subscribe, watch or learn online courses?	Yes	11	21%
	No	39	73%
Q13. Do you think social media helped you with your studying?	Yes	22	44%
	No	28	56%
Q14. What had changed in your life by using social media?	Established good interpersonal relationships	12	24%
	Made more friends	4	8%
	Obtained the latest news	4	8%
	Improved school performance	6	12%
	Gained economic profit	1	2%
Q15. Do you think social media is an indispensable part in your daily life?	Yes	23	46%
	No	39	78%
		11	22%

Figure 3 shows that fifty-eight percent parents held negative attitudes toward children's social media using, and thirty-two percent parents held neutral opinions. Only 10% parents approve their children use social media. Among those parents who showed disapproving or neutral, 78 percent of them had regulated children's using behaviors. There were around sixty-four percent parents worried about using social media affected children's academic performances. Health issue was the second leading reason that parents disapprove children's social media usage.

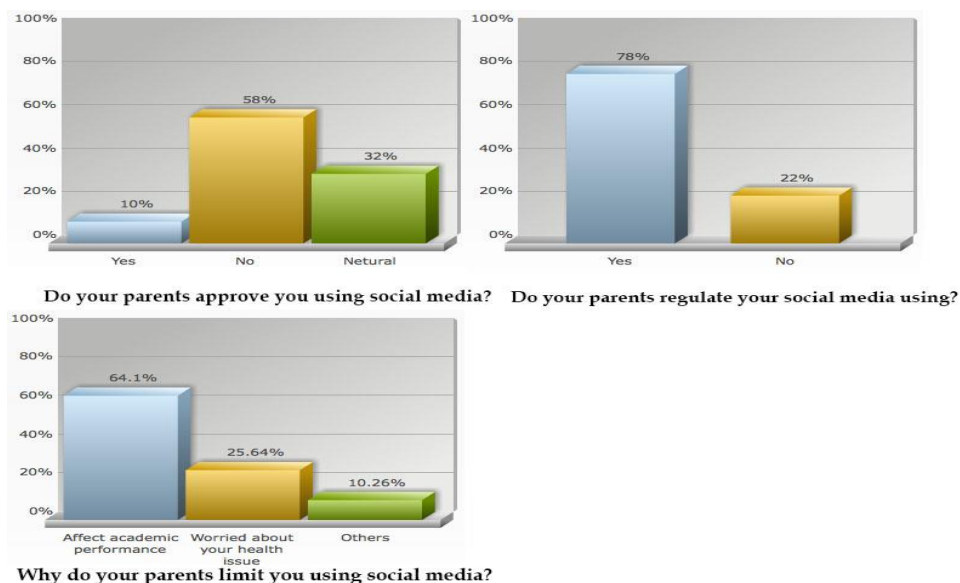


Figure 3. Parents attitudes toward teens' social media using

4. Discussion and conclusion

1. Using social media had reduced Tujia teens' studying time. Most teenagers used social media every day, and 78% Tujia teens believed social media was a component in their daily lives. More than half of the participants used social media when they were doing homework or having class. Mobile phone is the principal tool for Tujia teenagers to access social media. This result is in agreement with previous studies conducted among Han young people in China (Liu, 2013; Yuan & Liu, 2015). The portability feature of mobile makes it easy for teens to use social media at any place. School is the main place for students to acquire knowledge, using social media let them cannot concentrate in school hours. Equally, students will pay less attention on their homework if they use social media during homeworking time. Also for students, the time after class is limited; if they spend part of time on using media that will certainly reduce their studying time. These results suggest that using social media occupied Tujia teens' studying time.

2. For the majority of participants, social media had not improved their school marks. Wechat and QQ are both instant message applications, and popular among teenagers. Moreover, Wechat inclines to provide mobile service. This also can explain the reason that adolescent have a high using rate of Wechat. The top three frequent using activities of social media were interacting and chatting with acquaintances, watching videos, and making new friends (see Table 2). Most children chose using social media sometimes as learning purpose and they used social media for collaborating in small groups and discussing homework. Less than a quarter of teens had watched online courses. Comparing with the results between Q9 and Q4, we find that, 54 percent of teens chose watching videos as their frequent social media activity, had watched online courses; while 46 percent teens preferred to watch videos but never viewed any education videos. There are fifty-six percent of teens believed social media had not helped their studying. We use cross-analysis between Q7 (X) and Q13 (Y)(see Figure 4), and find that those teens chose often use social media for learning purpose are more likely to believe social media helped them with their studying; the teens that had never used social media for learning thought social media were helpless with studies. We can conclude that, considering all the participants as a whole, social media have no significant effect on learning, however, if students always use social media as learning purpose, they can learn more and better.

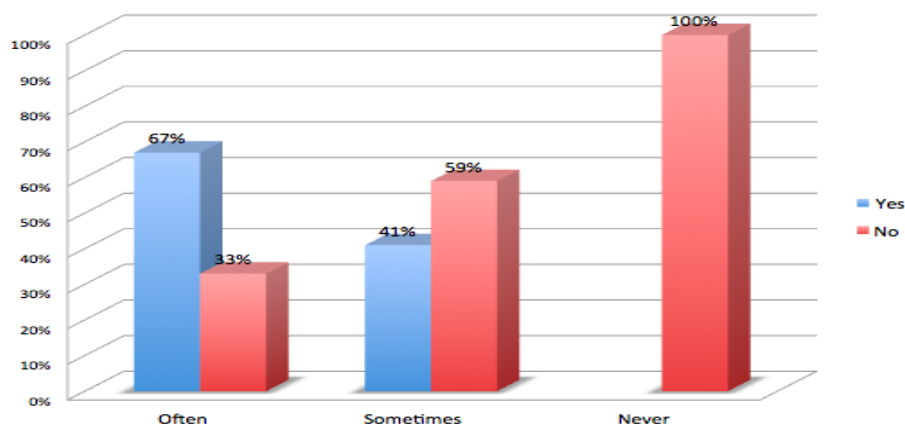


Figure 4. Cross-analysis of children's social media using (learning purpose) frequency and school achievement

3. Parents worried about children's social media usage. Figure 3 suggests that ninety percent parents did not approve their children use social media. This kind of disapproval lead them regulate their children's social media using. Most of these teens consider social media as a tool to have fun. Tujia teens used social media mainly for chatting with friends and watching videos, however, these kinds of activities had no significant effect on their studying for most participants. In addition, more than half of the teens' parents worried about social media usage would affect their children's school marks. In China, the majority of parents are concentrated on enhance students' academic achievements. So parents worrying are reasonable, since using social media had occupied their children's studying time, but did not improve their children's school marks.

References

- An G. & Liu Z.(2013). The report of socialism with Chinese characteristics and youth development. Tianjin: Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences Publishing House.
- Chen, T. (2014). Media dependence of college students in mobile media environment(Unpublished Master's Thesis). Southwest University, Chongqing, China
- Jin, J. (2003). On digital gap. *Journalism & Communication*,10(1), 75-79.
- Liu Z. (2013). Social media dependence and media demands taking college students' Weibo dependence as an example. *Journalism Bimonthly*, 117,119-129.
- Lu, Y. (2015). The peak of shaking mobile had reached 810 million times during Spring Festival Gala for Wechat red envelop. China News Net. Retrieved from <http://finance.chinanews.com/cj/2015/02-19/7073013.shtml>.
- Meng, J. & Liu J. (2013). Teenagers' mobile usage and changes of their lifestyle. *Youth Exploration*, 181, 64-67.
- Tang, C. & Xu M. (2015). Analysis of Influencing factors and operating mechanism of cooperative learning based on the social media. *Journal of Distance Education*, 33(6), 32-38.
- Wang, P. (2013). Analysis of support functions and design principles of mobile learning based on Wechat. *Journal of Distance Education*, 31(6), 34-41.
- Wu, X. & Liu Z. (2014). The factors that affect the income gap between urban and rural areas of China:based on the provincial panel data from 2003 to 2012. *Mordern Economic Science*, 36(1), 46-54.
- Wu, Z.(2014).A study on questionnaire design and characteristics of college students' mobile phone social media dependence (Unpublished Master's Thesis). Southwest University, Chongqing, China

Qu, T., & Liang, M. (2017). Social media's role among Tujia Ethnic Minority teenagers in Guizhou (China). *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online]. 01, pp 288-295. Available from: www.prosoc.eu

Xu, Y., Su, S. & Lin, D.(2012). Adolescent new media dependence behavior: the roles of parental factors and refusal self-efficacy. *Psychological Development and Education*, 28(4), 421-427.

Yuan, L. & Liu Y.(2015). Impact of social media on college student-survey of universities in Anhui. *Morden Communication*, 37(4), 144-148.

Zhang, Y. & Nie, J. (2013). Impact of major on university students' social media uses and motives:a case study of university students in Shanghai. *Chinese Journal of Journalism & Communication*, 35(12), 43-55.