



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

ISSN(O): 2320-5407 | ISSN(P): 3107-4928

# International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

www.journalijar.com

## REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-57077

Title: Patterns and Purposes of Social Media Usage among International Students in Xi'an: A Descriptive Study

### Recommendation:

Accept as it is .....

Accept after minor revision.....

**Accept after major revision .....**

Do not accept (*Reasons below*) .....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality			√	
Techn. Quality			√	
Clarity		√		
Significance				√

Reviewer's ID: JPR-212

### Detailed Reviewer's Report

**Summary of the Manuscript:** This study examines social media usage patterns among international students in Xi'an, China, focusing on platform preferences and usage purposes. Using a cross-sectional survey of 381 international students, the study finds that WeChat and Douyin dominate, and that students primarily use social media for local information seeking, cultural learning, and peer connection rather than attention-seeking or formal community participation.

**Overall Assessment:** The manuscript addresses an interesting and under-researched localized context (Xi'an) and applies Uses and Gratifications Theory appropriately. However, **major methodological and conceptual flaws** preclude acceptance in its current form. The study claims to be descriptive but suffers from sampling bias, measurement inconsistencies, and overgeneralization. Below are the specific reasons for rejection.

#### Major Reasons for Rejection

##### 1. Sampling and Generalizability (Critical Flaw)

- The study uses a **non-probability convenience sample** (WeChat groups, snowball sampling) but repeatedly makes claims about "international students in Xi'an" as if the sample were representative (e.g., lines 269-271, 359-361). This is a fundamental overreach.
- No response rate is reported. No comparison between respondents and the broader international student population in Xi'an is provided. The author acknowledges the limitation but then ignores it in the discussion, conclusions, and practical implications.
- Given that WeChat itself is the most used platform, recruiting through WeChat groups introduces **selection bias** — students who do not use WeChat (or use it minimally) are systematically excluded. This inflates the reported prevalence of WeChat use.

##### 2. Measurement Issues

- **Platform use item:** Multiple responses allowed, but the manuscript does not report whether students were asked to select "primary" platforms or just "any platforms used." A student who opens Douyin once a month counts the same as a daily user. This renders the frequency data (e.g., 78% for Douyin) ambiguous and potentially misleading.
- **Likert scale interpretation:** The 7-point scale is treated as interval data for means (e.g., mean 4.13), but the midpoint of a 7-point scale is 4.0. Therefore, **almost all mean scores are at or near neutral** (3.65–4.13). The manuscript interprets a mean of 4.13 as "highest-ranked" or "prominent," but this represents only very weak agreement. No statistical test is performed to compare whether these means differ significantly from neutral.
- **Missing justification:** Why were these ten specific purpose items chosen? No pilot testing or factor analysis is reported. The items mix behaviors ("I share"), attitudes ("I feel a stronger sense of belonging"), and activities ("I have joined groups"), making aggregation problematic.

##### 3. Theoretical Contribution is Overstated

### REVIEWER'S REPORT

- The author claims a “localized theoretical contribution” (lines 310-314) by showing that platform choice is shaped by host-country infrastructure. However, this is already well established in the literature (e.g., Pang & Wang, 2020, cited but not engaged; also work by Chen & Li on Chinese digital ecosystems). The study does not advance UGT beyond applying it descriptively.
- The statement that “descriptive mapping... is an important way of clarifying how digital behavior is organized” (lines 320-323) is tautological. A descriptive study can be valuable, but it does not constitute a theoretical contribution without comparison, hypothesis testing, or model building.

#### 4. Misalignment Between Research Design and Claims

- The title and abstract promise a study of “patterns and purposes,” but the analysis is purely **univariate** (frequencies and means). No pattern analysis (e.g., clustering, correlation between platform use and purposes, or within-subject comparisons) is conducted.
- The study claims to be derived from a larger dissertation on acculturation (line 135), but no acculturation variables are analyzed here. This creates a “teaser” effect without substance.
- The conclusion (lines 359-361) states that social media “was more often used to navigate the local environment” — but with means around 4.1 on a 7-point scale, the more accurate statement is that students *slightly agree* with that purpose, not that it is dominant.

#### 5. Overinterpretation of Small Mean Differences

- The difference between the highest-ranked item (4.13) and the lowest-ranked item (3.65) is **0.48 on a 7-point scale** — a trivial absolute difference. The manuscript treats these as meaningful rankings (e.g., “highest-ranked,” “middle-ranked,” “lowest-ranked”), but no statistical significance testing (e.g., paired t-tests or repeated-measures ANOVA) is provided to show that these differences are not due to chance.
- In Table 4.3, standard deviations are large ( $\approx 2.1-2.2$ ), indicating substantial individual variation. Ranking means without acknowledging this variation is misleading.

#### 6. Practical Implications Are Not Evidence-Based

- Recommendations such as “universities should use WeChat and Douyin for communication” (lines 330-335) may be sound advice, but they are not uniquely supported by this study’s data — especially because the study did not measure the *effectiveness* of such communication.
- The suggestion that “joining online communities ranked low, so students may not want formal online spaces” (lines 348-350) directly contradicts the earlier finding that WeChat (which is primarily a group-based communication tool) is used by 97% of respondents. This internal inconsistency is not addressed.

#### 7. Writing and Presentation Issues

- The manuscript contains repetitive phrasing (e.g., “everyday lives” appears six times in the abstract and introduction alone).
- Tables are labeled 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, but the manuscript has no other sections numbered this way — likely left over from a dissertation.
- The abstract states “381 valid responses” but Table 4.3 shows N varying from 370 to 377. The discrepancy is not explained.
- Several citations are incomplete or non-standard (e.g., “boyd, d. m.” is correct but inconsistent with other author name formats).

#### Minor Issues (Would need revision even if major flaws were addressed)

- **Line 135-136:** “The article is derived from the broader dissertation” — this level of detail is unnecessary for a journal article and suggests insufficient rewriting.
- **Line 174:** The Likert scale is described as 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree, but “higher mean scores indicate stronger agreement” is trivial.
- **Table 2:** Percentages for Instagram, Facebook, etc., are reported, but without knowing whether “use” means daily, weekly, or ever, these numbers are hard to interpret.
- **Line 273-275:** The claim that social media “functions more as a practical tool... than for self-presentation” is not supported, because self-presentation items (e.g., “gain attention”) had only slightly lower means (3.97 vs. 4.13). The difference is negligible.
- **Language proficiency data (Table 1):** 14.7% reported “no Chinese proficiency” and 35.4% “basic understanding only” — yet these students are using Douyin (primarily Chinese-language content). This raises serious questions about how they are using these platforms, but the manuscript does not explore this.

#### Recommendation for the Author

This manuscript would need **complete redesign** to be publishable:

1. **Re-frame the study** as a pilot or exploratory study in a specific convenience sample, not a generalizable description of “international students in Xi’an.”

# International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

*www.journalijar.com*

---

## REVIEWER'S REPORT

2. **Add inferential statistics** (e.g., confidence intervals for means, tests of difference from neutral, or correlations between platform use and purposes).
3. **Reduce claims dramatically** — drop statements about “dominant purposes” when means are near-neutral.
4. **Collect additional data** or justify why a descriptive study without hypothesis testing is sufficient (rare in top-tier journals).
5. **Remove practical implications** that do not follow directly from the data.