

# Social Influence of Migrant Workers' ICT Using in China

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Social influence is one of the most important factors in changing one's behavior. There are many factors included in social influence of migrant workers' information communication technology (ICT) using in China. For example, family, friends, related agencies such as Trade Union and the Department of human resources and social security, and the leaders of villages, play important roles in influencing the migrant workers community to use ICT equipment. The primary research method is quantitative. There are 200 migrant worker respondents from 4 provinces. The result indicates that social influence on migrant workers' ICT usage is not high. Colleagues, family, and villagers do influence migrant workers' use of ICT. The lowest mean score in this research is relating to the relevant migrant workers agencies.

*Keywords:* Migrant Workers; Social Influence; ICT Using

## Introduction

Migrant workers in China are mostly people from impoverished regions (especially from rural area) who go to more urban and prosperous regions in search of work. They are the main force for urbanization in the People's Republic of China. According to Chinese government statistics, the current number of migrant workers in China is estimated at 262 million (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2013), approximately 19% of the population. Most migrant workers come from Sichuan, Anhui, Henan and Guangxi Provinces, and generally go to Guangdong, Shenzhen, Beijing, Shanghai and the coastal prosperous cities. Overall, the Chinese government has tacitly supported migration as means of providing labor for factories and construction sites and for the long term goals of transforming China from a rural-based economy to an urban-based one. Some provinces and cities have started providing migrant workers with social security, including pensions and other insurances.

In order to meet the demands of development and modernization, various types of information communication technology (ICT) have been offered to aid migrant workers to find work, express willingness, communicate with home, improve literacy, entertainment, ICT such as wireless intercoms, mobile phones, e-mails, tablet computers, and so on. A number of researches have been carried out about migrant workers' ICT usage, along with the social communicating aspect. Several studies have focused on the impacts of demographic factors in migrant workers' ICT usage, such as gender, finance, age, working location and using time on ICT usage (Huang, 2011; Zhou & Lv, 2011). In addition, other studies discover the impacts of behavioral factors on migrant workers' ICT usage (Zhang, 2012; Zhou, 2013).

Social influence is one of the most important factors in

changing one's behavior. Social influence is defined as a change in an individual's behavior, feelings, thinking or attitudes, and the change is based on interaction with other people or groups. Raidah Mazuki (2013) considers that many factors are included in social influence. For example, family, friends, related agencies such as Trade Union and the Department of Human Resources and Social Security, and the leaders of villages play important roles in influencing the migrant workers community to use ICT equipment. This is related to one of the missions of Trade Union, which is to create a developed, independent and progressive migrant workers community. Gilligan (2005) emphasizes the importance of social influence on ICT usage, asserting that people who live in areas where levels of ICT use are high will have higher levels of ICT usage, while those who live in areas where levels of ICT use are low will have a low level of ICT usage. Tian Qian (2012) considers social effects have important influence on migrant workers' adoption of new media, and finds that the attitude of migrant workers colleagues and community is the most important factor.

## Methodology

This study is quantitative in nature, and a developed instrument (questionnaire) was used to collect the data needed. This study adopts the structure of close-ended and the Likert-Scale five-point measure questionnaire. Each item is given a 5-point scale with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. Each questionnaire took 20 - 25 minutes to complete. The questionnaire was developed in Chinese. Questions with regard to social influence in using ICT are associated with influence of family members, migrant worker colleagues, agencies officers and village administration members on migrant workers to use ICT.

After we finished the original questionnaire, we sent the questionnaire for pre-tested in Lu county, Luzhou city, Sichuan province. A number of 30 migrant workers were involved in the pre-test process. The pre-test has resulted the Cronbach Alpha Value of .679 which bigger than the recommended value of .60. The resulted value has reflected the validity and reliability of the questionnaire used. The data collection used in the real investigate process was conducted in October 2013. Through multi-stage simple random sampling, a total of 200 migrant workers were chosen as the participants. All of the participants came from four selected cities in China, namely Yantan district, Zigong city (represented Sichuan province), Mengcheng county, Bozhou city (represented Anhui province), Luoshan county, Xinyang city (represented Henan province) and Mashan county, Nanning city (represented Guangxi province).

Due to there are 4 diverse districts to be surveyed, we employed 4 trained and experienced investigators to execute the data collection process. Data for the investigation were collected for 1 month. We hand out 50 questionnaires in each district, 4 districts totally 200 questionnaires. Recall 200 questionnaires, 183 questionnaires were available. To achieve the objectives of the study, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mean were employed to describe the general data of the study.

## Results

### Respondents Demographic Data

Most of the migrant workers in this research can be considered as senior workers as the mean score recorded for their age is 32; the youngest is 16, while the oldest is 50. Majority of them received a low level of education achievement whereby a total of 9.7% of them have completed only up to primary school, 79.5% finished junior high school (Now, China adopts the nine-year compulsory education system, and it is free.). A few have successfully possessed senior high school level of educa-

tion or secondary occupation education (10.8%). Most of the migrant workers can be considered as experienced workers based on mean score recorded for working experience which was 11 years. Almost half of them (58.2%) have an average income of RMB 2500 - 3500 per month.

### Social Influence in Using ICT among Migrant Workers

Table 1 displays the results of statements regarding social influence. The mean score for each item was used to describe the strength of each item. The item "The majority of migrant workers in my region uses ICT and encourages me to use ICT" recorded the highest mean score ( $M = 3.69$ ). The second highest mean score has two items, "My family encourage me to use ICT" and "The officials of the village use and encourage me to use ICT" (the two items both are 3.62), followed by the items "My family use ICT" ( $M = 3.59$ ). The lowest mean score is item "There are free courses on the use of ICT (such as computer, intelligent mobile phone, and internet) in my area" ( $M = 2.05$ ), and item "Agencies provide financial assistance for us to conduct activities that require the use of ICT" ( $M = 2.04$ ).

In this table, there are 183 questionnaires available, each item is given a 5-point scale with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly agree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

## Discussion

Based on the results obtained above, the influence of friends is a major factor in using ICT among the migrant workers community. This may be based on the fact that they spend most of their time together. Nearly less than two months migrant workers are at home, more than 10 months they work together. At certain times, in order to find better work and maximize their earning, they often talk about work and communicate with short message, phone and web chat. Such durations offer more time for them to share and learn new things with regards to

**Table 1.**  
Percentage distribution of social influence items.

item	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Slightly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean
Relevant agencies promote the use of ICT in activities related to migrant workers.	54 29.5%	83 45.3%	23 12.6%	15 8.2%	8 4.4%	2.12
Agencies provide financial assistance for us to conduct activities that require the use of ICT.	67 33.6%	61 33.3%	41 22.4%	8 4.4%	6 3.3%	2.04
The relevant government agencies support the tasks and activities that use ICT as their main medium.	11 6.0%	27 14.7%	79 43.2%	54 29.5%	12 6.6%	3.16
The officials of the village use and encourage me to use ICT.	6 3.3%	8 4.4%	63 34.4%	79 43.2%	27 14.7%	3.62
The majority of villagers here use ICT.	13 7.1%	36 19.7%	69 37.7%	56 30.6%	9 4.9%	3.06
The majority of migrant workers in my region uses ICT and encourages me to use ICT.	6 3.3%	7 3.8%	58 31.7%	79 43.2%	33 18.0%	3.69
My family encourage me to use ICT.	7 3.8%	11 6.0%	51 27.9%	89 48.6%	25 13.7%	3.62
My family use ICT (such as computer, intelligent mobile phone, and internet).	14 7.7%	33 18.0%	17 9.3%	69 37.7%	50 27.3%	3.59
There are free courses on the use of ICT (such as computer, intelligent mobile phone, and internet) in my area.	67 36.6%	72 39.3%	17 9.3%	21 11.5%	6 3.3%	2.05

technology. In addition, villagers can drive migrant workers to use ICT during social gatherings and breaks when migrant workers returning home. Here, they can share their experiences and views about technologies.

The results also show that 36.6% of respondents strongly disagree with the item “There are free courses on the use of ICT in my area”, 33.6% strongly disagree with the item “Agencies provide financial assistance for us to conduct activities that require the use of ICT”, and 29.5% strongly disagree with the item “Relevant agencies promote the use of ICT in activities related to migrant workers”. This is an unsatisfactory result, since such assistance should be provided to migrant workers. On the other hand, 14.7% strongly agree and 43.2% agree the item “The officials of the village use and encourage me to use ICT” (M = 3.62). Agencies and officials of the village play a role as facilitators, and their function in encouraging and motivating migrant workers by providing financial assistance for them to use ICT in finding work and working better is crucial. The results of these 4 items mentioned above, show that Agencies and officials have already come to realize the importance of using ICT in migrant workers, but the support is not enough, especially financial assistance.

Encouragement from family was also one of the factors contributing to the use of ICT among migrant workers. More than half of the respondents agree “My family encourage me to use ICT” (13.7% strongly agree and 48.6% agree). In addition, more than half of the respondents agree “My family use ICT” (27.3% strongly agree and 37.7% agree). It was found that the migrant workers were using mobile phones to communicate with family members while at work. Sometimes, new generation of migrant workers use email, QQ, video chat, and so on. Thus, communication becomes much easier, migrant workers can reduce the time back to home, and spend more time on working to earn more.

Meanwhile, villagers can also influence the use of ICT among these migrant workers. The strong relationships, kinships or friendships, bonds and attachments within the community can intensify ICT usage among migrant workers. In addition, within the rural culture it is common for migrant workers to spend their home time together conducting social activities, such as playing cards, drinking and talking. This enables them to share information and discuss problems with regards to their ICT usage.

## Conclusion

Though some social influence factors such as family, colleagues and villagers do influence migrant workers' use of ICT, the overall impact of social influence on migrant workers' ICT usage is not high. The mean scores of all items included in the questionnaire are smaller than 4, and some mean scores are just only 2. The lowest mean score in this research is relating to the relevant migrant workers agencies, which reflects the fact that there is little encouragement and motivation to use ICT from these agencies. There is still a lot of work to be done within the scope of the China context, to guarantee that migrant workers receive enough assistance and encouragement from their social environment to further encourage them to use ICT in their working and living.

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