Analysis of Young Chinese Users of Sina Weibo Based on Uses and Gratifications theory

COURSE: Master Thesis in Media and Communication Science with Specialization in International Communication, 15 hp
PROGRAMME: International Communication
AUTHOR: Jingyi Wang
TUTOR: Susanne Almgren
SEMESTER: VT 2018
ABSTRACT

Writer(s): Jingyi Wang

Title: Analysis of Young Chinese Users of Sina Weibo Based on Uses and Gratifications Theory

Language: English

Pages: 33

Among the web 2.0 applications, a micro-blog (Weibo in Chinese), resembling the combination of a Twitter-like Internet service has gained substantial popularity in China. Sina Weibo is the market leader with approximately 50% of the market share. Around 80% of the users on Sina Weibo are young people. Hence, it is necessary to analyze young Chinese users of Sina Weibo and examine whether Sina Weibo fulfills the needs of young people and whether Sina Weibo meets their expectations. The study used the theory of uses and gratifications and the theory of expectancy-value as theoretical foundations. This study summarized six gratifications items (including social interaction, social networking, information seeking, information sharing, entertainment and recognition) from previous studies, and used these gratifications items to analyze: (1) the relationships between demographics and gratifications obtained; (2) the relationships between Sina Weibo usage and gratifications obtained; (3) the correlations between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. This study used quantitative method to obtain data from a questionnaire and all the data were input to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) for analyzing. The questionnaire was conducted and was distributed in Sojump.com. The results showed that Sina Weibo meets their users' needs from six gratifications dimensions.

Keywords: Social Media, Sina Weibo, Uses and Gratifications theory, Gratifications sought, Gratification obtained
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to my thesis supervisor Dr. Susanne M. Almgren, who was always ready to help and walk me through the process of doing a thesis from the beginning to the end. Thanks for her guidance, patience and support. Thanks to Mrs. Mia V. Friman, who was the first teacher who taught me in Jonkoping University, and always gave me useful suggestions about my study arrangement in the past year. Thanks to Xun Zhou, whose movies have given me powerful spiritual supports. Thanks to my family members, especially my parents, who kept me company and made me happy over the past decades. Thanks to my lover Cong Hu, who constantly encouraged and supported me.
# Table of contents

List of figures .................................................................................................................. vi
List of tables ..................................................................................................................... vii
Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 1
2 Aim and research questions ........................................................................................... 3
3 Previous research .......................................................................................................... 3
  3.1 Social media ............................................................................................................. 3
  3.2 Sina Weibo ............................................................................................................. 4
  3.3 Uses and gratifications theory ................................................................................. 5
    3.3.1 Uses and gratifications theory on Internet ..................................................... 6
    3.3.2 Uses and gratifications theory on Twitter ..................................................... 9
    3.3.3 Uses and gratifications theory on Weibo ..................................................... 10
4 Research Gap .............................................................................................................. 11
5 Theoretical frame and concepts .................................................................................... 12
  5.1 The expectancy-value model ................................................................................... 12
  5.2 Gratifications sought and gratifications obtained .................................................... 13
    5.2.1 Gratifications sought .................................................................................... 13
    5.2.2 Gratifications obtained ................................................................................ 14
  5.3 Gratification items .................................................................................................. 14
    5.3.1 Information sharing....................................................................................... 14
    5.3.2 Information seeking ...................................................................................... 15
    5.3.3 Social interaction ......................................................................................... 15
    5.3.4 Social networking ....................................................................................... 15
    5.3.5 Entertainment ............................................................................................... 15
    5.3.6 Passing time ................................................................................................. 16
    5.3.7 Recognition ................................................................................................. 16
6 Materials and Methods ............................................................................................... 16
  6.1 Material .................................................................................................................... 16
  6.2 Methodology ........................................................................................................... 17
    6.2.1 Sampling and survey ...................................................................................... 17
    6.2.2 Measurement .................................................................................................. 18
7 Results ............................................................................................................................ 21
  7.1 Descriptive statistics .............................................................................................. 21
  7.2 The relationships between users’ demographics and gratifications obtained ......... 23
    7.2.1 The relationships between gender and gratifications obtained .................... 24
    7.2.2 The relationships between age and gratifications obtained ......................... 25
    7.2.3 The relationships between educational level and gratifications obtained ...... 26
  7.3 The relationships between usage and gratifications obtained .................................. 27
  7.4 The relationships between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained ....... 28
8 Discussion ...................................................................................................................... 32
9 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 33
References.....................................................................................................................34
Appendix 1.....................................................................................................................43
Appendix 2.....................................................................................................................47
List of figures

Figure 1 Expectancy-value Model (1985).................................................................12
Figure 2 Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of social interaction.........30
Figure 3 Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of social networking........30
Figure 4 Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of information seeking.....30
Figure 5 Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of information sharing.....31
Figure 6 Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of entertainment...........31
Figure 7 Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of recognition...............32
List of tables

Table 1 Gratifications sought and gratifications obtained items and statements from Sina Weibo use.................................................................19
Table 2 Reliability statistics for each item. .........................................................................................................................21
Table 3 Users’ demographics on Sina Weibo..................................................................................................................22
Table 4 Sina Weibo usage....................................................................................................................................................23
Table 5 Mann Witney U-test results for testing whether there are significant differences between gender and gratifications obtained.................................24
Table 6 The relationship between age and gratifications obtained.................................................................25
Table 7 Kruskal-Wallis for the relationships between educational level and gratifications obtained (N=110)........................................................................27
Table 8 Spearman’s correlations between Sina Weibo usage and six items of gratifications obtained.................................................................28
Table 9 Pearson’s correlations between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained.................................................................28
1 Introduction

Social media plays an important role in people’s daily lives, and helps people meet their various needs. From the perspective of the uses and gratification theory, the aim of this study is to analyze the use among young Chinese people of the social media platform Sina Weibo.

Among the Web 2.0 applications, a micro-blog (Weibo in Chinese), a Twitter-like social media has gained substantial popularity in China. The Chinese government blocked Facebook and Twitter in 2009 (ABC News, 2009). Seizing the opportunity of a market vacuum, the Chinese technology company Sina Weibo corporation developed a Twitter-like social networking service in August 2009. In mainland China, Sina Weibo, Sohu Weibo, Netease Weibo, Tencent Weibo and Baidu Talk are major social media platform competitors. Sina Weibo is the market leader with approximately 55% of the market share. In December 2017, the population of Chinese netizens reached 772 million (CNNIC, 2018), and with 376 million active users on Sina Weibo, approximately half of Chinese netizens use Sina Weibo. Around 80% of the users on Sina Weibo are young people (Weibo, 2017). This substantial penetration of Sina Weibo constitutes an interesting object of study.

The popularity of Twitter and Facebook in Western countries have drawn academic attention from the uses and gratification perspective (e.g., Johnson & Yang, 2009; Liu & Cheung, 2010). Many studies have analyzed the motivations behind the use of Twitter or Facebook. In China, it is not surprising that substantial studies have analyzed why Chinese people use Weibo. Despite extensive studies on the uses and gratifications of social media (e.g., Stafford, Stafford, Schkade, 2004; Ko & Roberts, 2005; Jun & Lee, 2007; Mendes & Tan, 2009; Cheung & Lee, 2009; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Anita & David, 2013; Finin & Tseng, 2007; Shao, 2009; Ivy et. al, 2010), few have distinguished or mentioned differences between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. Generally, past research has only analyzed motivations
for social media use through gratifications obtained. Previous research has failed to examine the motivations behind using a certain media (gratifications sought) and the types of gratifications eventually gained by using social media (gratifications obtained). Past research merely analyzed gratifications obtained due to ambiguous concepts on gratifications sought and gratifications obtained and the idea that there are no differences between these two concepts. Actually, everyone has different motivations or expectations when using social media for meeting their own needs (Rubin, Sypher, & Palmgreen, 1994); in other words, netizens (users in the Internet) have different motives before even using social media. After beginning to use social media, users will not feel they have obtained gratification unless they perceive that the social media platform has met their expectations. This means that gratifications obtained do not always correspond with gratifications sought. This thesis will examine whether users receive their expected gratifications after they use Sina Weibo. This study will also analyze the correlation between patterns of use and gratifications obtained on Sina Weibo. This study conducted an online survey of users on Sina Weibo. This thesis adopted a purposive sample for the survey. Findings from a purposive sample can not represent all of young Chinese users. However, as Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p. 268) suggested:

“purposive samples are considered useful for exploratory studies that can lay the groundwork for additional studies based on probability samples.”

Exploratory studies usually are used to reveal opinions and behavior patterns (Malholtra & Birks, 2007). Results from a purposive sample can be an important indicator of young Chinese users’ features of Sina Weibo. This thesis is an exploratory study that attempts to answer basic research questions about Sina Weibo young users in China.

In the following paragraphs, the aim, research questions and research gap of this study will be introduced. In the section of previous research, the introduction of social media, Sina Weibo and the theory of uses and gratifications will be conducted. In the section of theoretical, the expectancy-value model, the concepts of
2 Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to draw conclusions about young Chinese people’s use pattern of Sina Weibo and then analyze their resulting gratification and expectation fulfillment with the platform. The findings of this study both provide useful suggestions for improving the experiences of the young Chinese generation with Sina Weibo and contribute to the future studies of Sina Weibo. To accomplish these objectives, the following research question have been developed:

Question 1: What is the relationship between user demographics (gender, age, and education level) and gratifications obtained?

Question 2: What is the relationship between Sina Weibo usage and gratifications obtained?

Question 3: What is the relationship between the gratifications obtained and gratifications sought on Sina Weibo when young Chinese people use it?

3 Previous research

3.1 Social media

Kaplan and Heinlein (2010, p. 61) proposed that social media platforms are “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0.” Obar and Wildman (2015, p. 745) further suggest that social media platforms are “computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.” Several factors have been suggested to affect
social media use and interpersonal communication, including age, educational level, economic security, health, etc. (Rubin, 1981). Some early research found that Internet users are typically young and male, and that they are interested in technology and politics (e.g., OECD 2007). Apart from teenagers, Internet users of other age groups are interested in politics (Karahasanovic et al., 2009). Men tend to generate more comments than women. Further, Internet users have above average education (Almgren & Olsson, 2015). Lucas and Sherry (2004) proposed that female users are less willing to play video games. In the US, college students often use social networking services to interact with offline acquaintances in order to maintain friendships (Ellison, Steinfeld and Lampe, 2007). Young adults mainly use Facebook to contact pre-established friends for offline relationships (Pempek, 2009). More generally, previous studies have revealed that gender, educational level and age affect motives for using media.

3.2 Sina Weibo

Sina Weibo launched in August 2009 and is now a popular social media platform in China. It enables users to find information they are interested in and re-post content with a limitation of 140 Chinese characters, although there is no character limits if users post original content. Moreover, Chinese characters are able to transmit more information within a limitation of 140 characters because Chinese characters use a logogram as the base rather than an alphabet system (Chan, Wu, Hao, Xi and Jin, 2012). Sina Weibo also allows users to upload videos, audios, music, photos and attached URLs (Uniform Resource Locator). Sina Weibo users can follow people they are interested in, send and receive messages, and search using keywords to find posts by people they do not follow (Kwak, Lee, Park and Moon, 2010). Due to strict censorship in China, some posts that include sensitive messages, especially political topics, are deleted through manual checks (Global post, 2011). By September 2017, the monthly active users on Weibo reached 376 million, an increase of 27% compared to the same period in 2016. Daily active users reached 165 million, an increase of 25% from the same period in the previous year (Weibo, 2017). Approximately 50% of
netizens use Sina Weibo, which is similar to Twitter’s market in the US. 56.3% of Sina Weibo users are male, while 43.7% of the users are female. The biggest proportion (38.6%) of the total Sina Weibo user age range was from 23 years old to 30 years old, followed by the 18-22 age group (27.6%) (Weibo, 2017). Users aged 20-35 years old account for 82%, or 72.7 million, of Sina Weibo users. And, 91% of Sina Weibo users have bachelor’s degrees (Weibo, 2017). Ha and Eun (2016) suggest that female users of Sina Weibo are more likely than male users to use Sina Weibo to follow celebrities, collect information and social contacts, make self-introductions, and relax. The 2017 Sina Weibo user report reveals that people of different ages, education levels, gender, and incomes have different motivations for using Sina Weibo. In highlighting these facts, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of the relationships among Sina Weibo, gratifications sought, and gratification obtained.

3.3 Uses and gratifications theory
The theory of uses and gratifications has been accepted and widely used in the media and communication field. Evans (1990, p. 151) suggested that

“audience ... gratification is primary, and media consumers are seen as rational agents whose various uses of media offerings depend upon how these offerings serve various social-psychological functions.”

Levy and Windahl (1984, p. 51) noted two main concepts in the uses and gratifications theory: a “receiver-oriented concept” and “active audience” concept. The theory of uses and gratifications suggests that people use social media to fulfill their expectations. People actively select a certain media to meet their psychological needs (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974). This theory has been influential in the field of media and communication, its main purpose being to understand why people use a certain media. Earlier, research focused on what media does with people, while the theory of uses and gratifications concentrates on what the people do with media, focusing on media audience rather than media content.

The theory (McGuire, 1974, p. 180) suggests that:

“the social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of
the mass media or other sources, [...] lead to differential patterns of media exposure, resulting in need gratifications and other consequences.”

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974, p. 20) identified the seven steps audiences use a certain media.

The internal logic of uses and gratification is that
“the social and the psychological origins of needs which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources which led to differential exposure (or engaging in other activities), resulting in need gratification and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones.”

The uses and gratifications theory analyzes media users through a psychological perspective, suggesting that media audiences actively use a certain media to meet their social and psychological needs. In other words, the audience is goal-oriented and has expectations before using the media (Huang & Liu, 2012).

This framework has been applied to different media (eg., television, home computer, ICQ (a instant message tool)). Originally, McQuail et al. (1972) identified 4 groups of gratifications that users seek from media: (1) a desire to escape from reality and release emotions; (2) personal relationships; (3) personal recognition; (4) surveillance. In 1973, Katz et al. identified 25 needs, or gratifications sought, that people seek to meet from using mass media and categorized these into five groups: (1) to broaden their knowledge, or to get more useful information; (2) to enhance the aesthetic, or pleasure, which can be considered affective needs; (3) to enhance credibility, confidence, stability and status, which can be considered integrated demands; (4) to interact with friends and family members, which can be considered social interaction needs; (5) to escape from real life and release pressure, which can be considered emotional needs.

3.3.1 Uses and gratifications theory on the Internet

With the rapid development of communication technologies, new media entered and
became a part of people’s lives. Ruggiero (2005) states that the Internet has at least three unique characteristics compared with traditional media: interactivity, demassification and asynchrony. Interactivity refers to the possibility to communicate with others and actively seek useful information or entertainment. Demassification refers to an increase in content selectivity. Asynchrony refers to user freedom to enjoy Internet media whenever or wherever they want.

Elliott and Rosenberg (1987) suggested that the uses and gratification theory can be applied to analyze people’s motivations when using new communication tools. Stafford et al. (2004) argued that the uses and gratifications theory can be applied to analyze uses of new media. Substantial literature has examined why users participate in new media from an uses and gratifications perspective (Lei & Susu, 2010; Yin & Leo, 2011; Chunmei & Weijun, 2015).

James and his colleagues (1995) used this theory to analyze why people use electronic bulletin boards with five gratifications typologies: transmission of information and education, socialization, medium appeal, business, and entertainment. Perse and Dunn (1998) analyzed motivations for using computers, including entertainment, escape, habit and time passage. Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) found that people use websites for seven motivations: social escapism, transaction-based security and privacy concerns, information, interactive control, socialization, nontransactional privacy concerns and economic motivation. These results can be compiled into a list of motivations for website use: (1) escape from the reality life; (2) a quick and a convenient way to get information; (3) make friends and social interaction; (4) enjoy the interactive features of the websites.

Leung (2001) conducted a study examining why people use ICQ, from the gratifications aspects of affection, entertainment, relaxation, fashion, inclusion, sociability and escape. Stafford, Stafford and Schkade (2004) categorized gratifications items when using Internet: (1) content gratifications means that people
can obtain gratification through knowing or sharing massages carried by the medium; (2) process gratifications means that people can obtain gratification by using a certain media; and (3) social gratifications means that people obtain gratification through social interaction and social networking. Ivy et al. (2010) also used these three categories to analyze why people use Twitter. Ko, Cho and Roberts (2005) analyzed why people use the Internet using the following gratification items: information, convenience, entertainment and social interaction. Jun and Lee (2007) analyzed reasons people use mobile media with seven gratifications items: convenience, fashion, information, entertainment, functional services, multimedia services and social aspects.

Mendes and Tan (2009) analyzed user-generated content from three motivation sectors: content motivations (information consistency, source credibility, argument quality and information farming); process motivations (medium and entertainment); social motivations (recommendation consistency and rating). Cheung and Lee (2009) analyzed reasons that people use the virtual community and their findings included purposive value, self-discovery, entertainment value, social enhancement and maintenance of interpersonal inter-connectivity. Haridakis and Hanson (2009) found that people use YouTube for convenient entertainment, convenient information seeking, co-viewing and social interaction.

Anita and David (2013) listed ten uses and gratification themes that explain why people use social media: (1) social interaction is defined as using social media to communicate with others; (2) information seeking is defined as using social media to obtain information that people are interested in or they want to know; (3) passing time is defined as using social media to relax and use up time; (4) entertainment is defined as using social media for recreation; (5) relaxation is defined as using social media to relieve societal and familial pressures, and also to temporarily escape from reality; (6) communication utility is defined as finding a sense of belonging in part of the community; (7) convenience utility is defined as providing convenience for the
audience; (8) expression of opinions is defined as sending comments and sharing their feelings; (9) information sharing is defined as sharing useful information and helping others and (10) surveillance is defined as get to know things that happened the society. The study illustrate that 88% of the total amount of interviewees use social media because they want to interact with others, followed by 80% using social media to find information, 76% for passing time, 64% for entertainment, 60% for relaxation, 56% communicatory utility, 56% for expressing opinions, 52% for convenience utility, 40% for information sharing, and only 20% for surveillance.

3.3.2 Uses and gratifications theory on Twitter

With the development of micro-blogs, Java, Song, Finin and Tseng (2007) analyzed four main user motivations for using Twitter: (1) daily chat, many people post their daily life; (2) social interaction, people use Twitter to interact with each other; (3) information sharing, people use Twitter to share useful information; (4) self-expression, people express their feelings, emotions and opinions on Twitter.

Shao (2009) examined why people use user-generated media, such as Twitter. Motivations were analyzed from four aspects: (1) the consumption aspect: information and entertainment; (2) the participation aspect: social interaction and community development; (3) the production aspect: self-expression and self-actualization; (4) the interdependence of consuming, participating and producing.

Ivy et al. (2010) determined the types of motivations that encourage people to continue to tweet, four major motivation categories: (1) content gratification, including self-documentation and information sharing; (2) social gratification, only including social interaction; (3) process gratification, including entertainment, time passing and self-expression; (4) technology gratification, including media appeal and convenience. The findings indicated that positive content gratification and technology gratification enhance motives for using Twitter, while process
gratifications and social gratifications are less significant motives for using Twitter. Johnson and Yang (2009) used social and information motivations to examine reasons for Twitter use. The results illustrate that Twitter successfully meets the need to pass time. However, other gratifications obtained were not associated with gratifications sought, indicating that Twitter does not actually fulfil most gratification needs.

3.3.3 Uses and gratifications theory on Weibo

Chinese scholars also conducted substantial studies on the motivations of using Weibo. Wang (2012) discusses Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory. This theory demonstrates people’s different needs: psychological needs, safety needs, social belonging, esteem, self-actualization and self-transcendence (Maslow, 1943). This theory states that people actively and initiatively seek to fulfil different psychological needs, which is the foundation of the uses and gratification theory. Wang analyzed motivations for Weibo use, with four categories: opinion sharing, information seeking, social interaction, and media participation.

Fan (2010) used the snowball method to retrieve data from a questionnaire and analyzed the data for various needs, including pressure release, social interaction, information seeking, self-presentation, and business. Fan then categorized the people using Weibo: (1) ordinary people use Weibo for individual purposes, such as entertainment and opinion expression; (2) celebrities use Weibo to establish their perfect images; (3) entrepreneurs use Weibo to publicize their services and products; (4) governmental officers use Weibo to disseminate useful information.

Wang (2011) analyzed reasons that people use Weibo, categorizing these motivations into: new media, information seeking, emotional release, self-presentation, social interaction, entertainment, and participating public affair needs. This research proposed several problems with the Weibo platform, including low quality information, inactive users and over-saturation of advertisements.
Gan and Wang (2013) compared motivations for using micro-blogs and WeChat from six dimensions: information seeking, information sharing, social interaction, entertainment, passing time, and social networking. The findings illustrated that 83.33% of interviewees mentioned using Weibo to seek information, followed by social interaction (72.22%) and entertainment (72.22%), passing time (66.77%), information sharing (55.56%) and social networking (44.44%). These results suggest that Weibo is not a social interaction platform, but an information platform that can help users find information (such as life-related or education-related). The same results can be found in studies of Twitter. Ivy et al. (2010) found that social gratifications are less significant motivators for Twitter use.

4 Research Gap

Considering the given studies, researchers have used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in studies of Facebook and Twitter. However, based on research conducted for this study, few researchers have used quantitative methods to analyze motivations for Sina Weibo use in China. This study will use a structured survey, and will use the data that get from the survey to analyze the relationship between usage and users demographics (gender, age, education level) and gratifications obtained, and the relationship between the gratifications gained and gratifications sought on Weibo. Generally, previous studies have focused on gratifications sought, or only focused on gratifications obtained, rather than focusing on both. In other words, past research has treated gratifications sought and gratifications obtained as the same concept. As a result, literature on the motivations for a certain media use from the perspective of uses and gratifications is not complete. This study examines whether Sina Weibo meets audiences’ needs and expectations, adding to existing knowledge on gratifications sought and gratifications obtained.
5 Theoretical frame and concepts

This section will introduce the expectancy-value theory and the theory of uses and gratifications, which are the foundation for this thesis. Moreover, this section will describe six gratification items (information sharing, information seeking, social interaction, social networking, entertainment, pass time and recognition) and the concepts of gratifications sought and gratifications obtained.

5.1 The expectancy-value model

Some researchers have criticized the theory of uses and gratifications, stating that these are the same concept (Blumler, 1979). In response, Palmgreen and Rayburn (1985) proposed an expectancy-value model. This expectancy-value model divided gratifications into gratifications obtained and gratification sought. The figure of the expectancy-value model is as follows:

![Figure 1: Expectancy-value Model (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1985, p. 66)](image)

The expectancy-value model demonstrates that gratifications sought and gratifications obtained are not the same concept and explains that people’s beliefs about and evaluations of a certain media can influence the gratifications sought, which then affect media consumption. The results of consuming media affect the perception of gratifications obtained, “which feed back to reinforce or alter an individual’s perceptions of the gratification-related attributes of a particular media” (Rayburn & Palmgreen, 1984, p. 540). For example, people who positively value
“social networking” may expect that Twitter will meet their expectations. Assuming that Twitter is available to meet these users and that they are exposed to social networking on Twitter, if these people obtain the expected social networking results, then the gratifications obtained will reinforce their initial beliefs that Twitter can meet their expectations. However if the obtained results do not meet initial expectations, then the related beliefs can be altered. Galloway and Meek (1981, p. 438) state that

“behavioral outcomes or gratifications which are most highly valued or most important to an individual are not necessarily approached. This is because of differing expectancies about their attainment. The same behavior may lead to many different outcomes and the theory holds that the two main components, expectancies and values need to be combined and then summed over the domain of all relevant outcomes.”

Galloway and Meek (1981) also state that the expectancy-value theory hypothesizes that expectations about actions that are expected to satisfy needs can be articulated.

5.2 Gratifications sought and gratifications obtained

Based on the literature review conducted for this paper, studies analyzing Weibo rarely discuss gratifications obtained and gratifications sought simultaneously. Previous research has mixed the concepts of gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. Hence, it is necessary for future studies to distinguish between these two concepts.

5.2.1 Gratifications sought

Gratifications sought are a motivation type that arises from expectations of using a certain media (Rubin, Sypher and Palmgreen, 1994). Conceptually speaking, motivations are the “expressed desires for gratification in a given class of situations” and they are considered to be gratifications sought in this context (McLeod & Becker, 1981, p. 74). Specifically, gratifications sought are media user pre-expectations or pre-motivations (Dobos, 1992). McLeod and Becker (1981) state that needs are the
precursor of motivations. However, needs are more internalized and rooted in psychology and physiology, making it difficult to measure them through self-reporting. Due to this, using motivations to measure individual expression in certain situations is “more amenable to conscious awareness, more focused and directed to some behavioral resolution, more problem-oriented, and more specific to the situation” (McLeod & Becker, 1981, p.74). From Fishbein’s perspective (1963, p. 236), gratifications sought are more accurately defined as the “seeking of a particular outcome mediated by the expectancy of obtaining the outcome, times the evaluation of the outcome.”

5.2.2 Gratifications obtained
Conceptually, gratifications obtained are simply the outcomes of using a certain media (Rubin, Sypher and Palmgreen, 1994). McLeod and Becker (1981) suggest that the effects of media use are equivalent to gratifications gained. From the perspective of media effects, gratifications obtained are the “perceived personal outcomes” of media use (Rubin et al., 1994, p. 173). Personal gratifications sought typically change over time in response to actual gratifications obtained from a certain media (Palmgreen et al., 1985).

5.3 Gratification items
This study will use the same gratifications items to analyze the relationships between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. Six gratifications items were selected based on previous studies: social interaction, social networking, information seeking, information sharing, entertainment and recognition.

5.3.1 Information sharing
Huang et al. (2007) proposed a new motivation, information sharing, after conducting a qualitative interview study. Information sharing refers to the sharing of useful information through the use of micro-blogs (Gan & Wang, 2015). Casteleyn, Mottart and Rutten (2008) suggest that people tend to provide essential information
to help each other on their micro-blogs. Further, some people write blogs to organize information on different topics and actively participate in hyperlinks. Information sharing primarily involves mainly factual and practical information, while information commenting involves the expression of opinions.

5.3.2 Information seeking
The information seeking gratifications item comes from Papacharissi and Rubin’s (2000) study on Internet usage and is defined the use of social media to seek information or to self-document. Similarly, Gan and Wang (2005) proposed that information seeking is related to users using Weibo to seek information they want to acquire. This item includes an idea of “surveillance” that derives from a curiosity about ones surroundings.

5.3.3 Social interaction
The social interaction gratification item originates from Ko et al.’s (2005) research on website usage. This item has several names, including “anticipated communication” (McLeod & Becker, 1974); “conversation” (Wenner, 1977); and “interpersonal utility” (Swanson, 1977). Conceptually, social interaction refers to using Weibo to maintain friendships or to meet new people (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007).

5.3.4 Social networking
Social networking occurs when Weibo is used to connect with others (Gan & Wang, 2015). For instance, people can broaden their social network and make new friends even if they do not have the opportunity to meet in person.

5.3.5 Entertainment
This gratifications item is defined as using social media to fulfil enjoyment motivations (Whiting & Williams, 2013). Gan and Wang (2015) proposed that this gratification is related to using Weibo for pleasure and amusement. For example, Sina Weibo provides various games and live videos.
5.3.6 Passing time
The passing time gratifications item originates from Palmgreen and Rayburn's (1979) research on television viewing. In the context of Weibo, this item is defined as using social media to fill up free time and relieve boredom (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000).

5.3.7 Recognition
Recognition occurs when users feel sense of belonging while using a certain social media platform or they do not want to be isolated from other friends who use Sina Weibo (Gan & Wang, 2015). For instance, people often use the certain social media platforms (such as Twitter or Facebook) because their friends or colleagues use it, indicating that they do not want to be isolated from others, or people join groups to foster a sense of belonging.

6 Materials and Methods

6.1 Material
The data in this study is derived from the questionnaire, which consists of four sections. The first section covers the respondent's basic information, including gender, age and educational level. The second section is about participant usage of Sina Weibo, providing information on how many respondents use Sina Weibo, how much time the respondents spend per day on Sina Weibo, and how many times a day the respondents use Sina Weibo, and whether Sina Weibo is a part of the respondents’ life. The third questionnaire section is about gratifications sought, and the fourth section is about gratifications obtained. Both of these sections are measured using six gratifications dimensions and these six gratifications dimensions include 27 questions. The questionnaire was Chinese (see Appendix 2) because all of respondents who used Sina Weibo were Chinese, and the whole survey was translated into English (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire consist of 61 questions and the questionnaire data can be found at Sojump.com. to the record of Sojump.com, 110
users finished the questionnaire and all the data was put into SPSS.

6.2 Methodology

6.2.1 Sampling and survey

This research adopts a survey strategy to examine the research questions by distributing a self-administered questionnaire online. The survey is a highly economic method to collect data form a large amount of a population. The survey asked respondents whether Sina Weibo meets their expectations and fulfils their gratifications. The included questions covered usage, demographics, gratifications sought, and gratifications obtained. Young Chinese people (18–34 years old) were selected as the target sample in this research, the questionnaire language is Chinese, and it was administrated from 12th April 2018 to 28th April 2018 and hosted on Sojump (www.sojump.com).

There are two different types of method when it comes to data collection, quantitative research and qualitative research respectively. This study uses quantitative research, which is usually used to analyze a sample of population and data is put into numbers. Since it is impossible to interview everyone, this study adopted the snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling occurs when “the respondents are selected initially in terms of their relevance to the research objectives and on the basis of availability and willingness to be interviewed.” (Hansen & Machin, 2013, p.217). The biggest advantage of snowball sampling is that it allows researchers to access a specific population, such as Sina Weibo users. However, if the questionnaire is only distributed within my friend circle on Sina Weibo platform, it is vulnerable to self-selection bias and might affect the generalizability of the results. To decrease these disadvantages, the questionnaire was distributed across different popular social media platforms, including Baidu Tieba and Douban, allowing different populations to respond to the questionnaire. Hence, this thesis used people from these two social media platforms to try to enroll users in different ways to get more variation. Because people in these two social media platforms have high concentration on age from 18 to
34 years old. I put the link of the questionnaire in a group of Sina Weibo users’ on Baidu Tieba (approximately 20000 group members). Also, I put the same link of the questionnaire on a Douban Sina Weibo group (about 15000 group members). This is a convenient way to let Sina Weibo’s users to participate in this survey. Only 110 people from those two social media platforms participated in the survey. The intention of this thesis is not to generalize the whole population from 18 years old to 34 years old, because the thesis is an exploratory study that can indicate patterns among respondents.

6.2.2 Measurement
The questionnaire language was Chinese as all the respondents were Chinese users. In the first section, Sina Weibo user demographics were measured. The respondents were asked to report their gender, age and educational level. A two-point scale measured user gender (1=male, 2=female). A four-point scale was adopted to measure age (1=18-22, 2=23-26, 3=27-30, 4=30-34). A six-point scale measured education level (1=less than high school, 2=high school, 3=some college, 4=bachelor’s degree, 5=master’s degree, 6=doctor’s degree).

In the second section, Sina Weibo usage was measured. A seven-point scale measured people’s following: “How many people do you follow on Sina Weibo?” (1=less than 50, 2=51-100, 3=101-150; 4=151-200; 5=201-300; 6=201-400; 7= more than 400). A six-point scale measured how much time users spend on Sina Weibo during a typical day (1=less than 10 minutes, 2=10-30 minutes, 3=31-60 minutes, 4=1-2 hours, 5=2-3 hours, 6=more than 3 hours). A four-point scale measured how often users use Sina Weibo in a day (1=less than once, 2=1-4 times, 3=5-9 times, 4=more than 9 times). A five-point Likert scale measured whether Weibo has become part of the respondent’s life (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

The third section of the questionnaire measured the gratifications sought and gratifications obtained of the users on Sina Weibo. Respondents were given a list of
27 gratifications items. All six gratifications items (social interaction, social networking, information seeking, information sharing, entertainment and recognition) were measured using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Moreover, the questionnaire consisted of 27 gratifications statements to determine items of gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. Statements of gratifications sought included “I use Sina Weibo because I want to know more about my friends” and “I use Sina Weibo because I want to pay attention to those who share similar interests with me”. Statements of gratifications obtained included “Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to get information I need” and “Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to make friends with people who I am interested in but I am too shy to talk to.” The table of specific items are the following:

Table 1. Gratifications sought and gratifications obtained items and statements from Sina Weibo use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 know more about my friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 look for friends’ social network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 have fun by viewing my friend’s photos, videos, and personal values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 leave messages for my friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 pay more attention those who has similar interests with me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 make new friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 make friends with people who I am interested in but have no chance to meet in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 keep in touch with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 make friends with people who I am interested in I am too shy to talk to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 maintain my social networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 broaden my knowledge base</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2 find out what is going on in the society and country
3 get information I need
4 get information I am interested
5 find a new way to do research

Information sharing
1 share my view, thoughts and experience
2 share useful information
3 write down what I am thinking
4 make comments

Entertainment
1 kill time
2 relax and escape from pressures
3 entertaining
4 nothing better to do

Recognition
1 share emotions
2 get sense of belonging
3 isolate from my friends who use it
4 I am recognized as trendy

All six gratification items and 27 gratification statements were designed to confirm the potential groupings, and their reliability was tested using Cronbach’s Alpha. When the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient is greater than 0.7, the reliability of the representative data is higher, while a coefficient greater than 0.6 indicates that the data is acceptable. However, coefficients less than 0.35 indicate low reliability, and the acceptable minimum coefficient was 0.5 (Cho, 2016).

The reliability of each gratifications item was measured. The results are shown in the following table. The results demonstrated that gratifications items in using Sina Weibo include social interaction ( $\alpha = 0.945$ ), social networking ( $\alpha = 0.941$ ),
information seeking (α = 0.932), information sharing (α = 0.904), entertainment (α = 0.882) and recognition (α = 0.835). The Cronbach’s Alpha was greater than 0.8 for all variables, indicating that the data is very reliable and that the items have high internal consistency. The table of reliability statistics on six gratifications dimensions are the following:

Table 2. Reliability Statistics for each item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>0.941</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information seeking</td>
<td>0.932</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sharing</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>0.835</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Results

7.1 Descriptive statistics

The questionnaire was set in Sojump.com and all submitted results are valid. One hundred and ten respondents participated in the questionnaire. 28 respondents were male (25.45%) and 82 respondents were female (74.55%), indicating the sample significantly over-represented females in this sample. 65 respondents (59.1%) were from 18 years old to 22 years old, which taken up the largest proportion of the total respondents. 21 (19.1%) respondents were from 27 to 30 years old. 14 (12.7%) respondents were from 18 years old to 22 years old Only ten (9.1%) respondents were from 31 to 34 years old. Among respondents, peak education level varied widely. Four (3.6%) respondents held high school certificates, 19 (17.3%) respondents had attended some college, 63 (57.3%) respondents had graduated with bachelor’s degree, 22 (20%) with master’s degree and only two (1.8%) respondents with doctorate degree. The table of users’ demographics on Sina Weibo are the following:
Table 3. Users’ demographics on Sina Weibo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-26</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some college</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>master degree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doctor’s degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sina Weibo usage also differed among participants. 24 respondents (21.8%) followed less than 50 people on Sina Weibo, 16 respondents (14.5%) followed from 50 to 100 people, 16.5% (18 respondents) of the total respondents followed from 101 to 150 people, and 16 respondents (14.5%) followed 151 to 200 people. 14 (12.7%) respondents followed from 201 to 300 people, while only 11 respondents (10%) followed from 301 to 400 people, and another 11 respondents (10%) followed over 400 people. Respondent data also demonstrates a noteworthy distribution of Sina Weibo time usage. 20.0% of respondents spent less than 10 minutes per day on the platform. 26.4% of respondents spent between 10 and 30 minutes per day on the platform and 25.5% spent reported they spent 31 to 60 minutes per day on the platform. 16.4% of the total respondents spent from one to two hours per day. Only 4.4% of respondents spent from two hours to three hours per day, while 7.3% of respondents spent more than three hours per day. 24 (21.8%) respondents stated they used the platform “less than once” per day, 58 (52.7%) used the platform “1-4 times” per day, ten (9.1%) reported “5-9 times” per day, and 18 (16.4%) admitted to “more than 10 times” per day. These findings reveal that more than half of Sina Weibo users open the app from one to four times a day. Finally, as demonstrated in table 4, more participants agreed that “Sina Weibo is a part of my life” than did not agree with “Sina Weibo is a part of my life”. 49 (44.5%) respondents agreed “Sina
Weibo has become a part of their life”, and nine (8.1%) respondents strongly agreed “Sina Weibo has become a part of their life”. However, 18 (16.4%) respondents disagreed and six (5.5%) respondents strongly disagree “Sina Weibo has become a part of their life”. 28 (25.5%) respondents were not sure whether “Sina Weibo has become a part of their life”. The table of Sina Weibo usage are following:

Table 4. Sina Weibo usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sina Weibo Usage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many people do you follow on Sina Weibo?</td>
<td>Less than 50</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51-100</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101-150</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>151-200</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>201-300</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>301-400</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 400</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much time do you use Sina Weibo in a day?</td>
<td>Less than 10 minutes</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-30 minutes</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-60 minutes</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-3 hours</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 3 hours</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you use Sina Weibo everyday?</td>
<td>Less than once</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-4 times</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-9 times</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weibo has become a part of my life.</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2 The relationship between users’ demographics and gratifications obtained
This study conducted the Mann Witney U-test to compare the differences in Sina Weibo gratifications obtained between males and females, and used the Kruskal-Wallis test to measure whether the effect of educational background on gratifications obtained, and used ANOVA (analysis of variance) to analyzed the relationships between age and gratifications obtained.
7.2.1 The relationships between gender and gratifications obtained

Mann Witney U-test is a non-parametric testing, which is based on the assumption that the sample do not have data on interval level and do not have a normal distribution. Hence, it is an appropriate test to analyze the relationships between gender and gratifications obtained. The p value can demonstrate whether there are significant differences between male and female in gratifications obtained. When the p value is less than 0.05, which means that there are significant differences between gender and gratifications obtained. However, if the p value is greater than 0.05, which indicates that there are not significant differences between male and female in gratifications obtained. Moreover, the grater median is, the more people gain gratifications (Bruce et al., 2012).

The Mann Whitney U-test findings cataloged in table 5 illustrate that gender is significantly linked to gratifications obtained. According to the p value, there was statistically significant difference between male and female participates depending on gratifications obtained for: social interaction (U= 857.000, N1= 82, N2= 28, p= .044, two-tailed), information seeking (U= 1109.500, N1= 82, N2= 28, p= .007, two-tailed), information sharing (U= 861.500, N1= 82, N2= 28, p= .044, two-tailed), entertainment (U= 675.500, N1= 82, N2= 28, p= .007, two-tailed). Because this survey adopt the Likert scale to measure gratifications obtained, which means that the greater median is, the more gratifications people gain. Hence, according to median, females obtained more gratifications from the dimension of social interaction, information seeking, information sharing and entertainment than males obtained.

Table 5. Mann Witney U-test results for testing whether there are significant differences between gender and gratifications obtained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.2000</td>
<td>.95061</td>
<td>857.000</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.6000</td>
<td>1.04083</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>.91855</td>
<td>1109.500</td>
<td>.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.6000</td>
<td>1.04083</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2.2 The relationships between age and gratifications obtained

In the table 6, the sig is the p value for each explained source of variance. When the p value is less than 0.05, which means that there are statistically significant effect of the age on gratifications obtained. However, if the p value is greater than 0.05, which indicates that there are no significant effect of age on gratifications obtained (Bruce et al., 2012). The ANOVA findings cataloged in table 6 illustrate that there were no statistically significant effects of age on gratifications obtained. To be more specific, there was no statistically significant effect of age on social interaction \( F(3, 106) = 1.364, p > 0.05 \). There was no statistically significant effect of age on social networking \( F(3, 106) = .414, p > 0.05 \). There was no statistically significant effect of age on information seeking \( F(3, 106) = 1.629, p > 0.05 \). There was no statistically significant effect of age on information sharing \( F(3, 106) = 2.519, p > 0.05 \). There was no statistically significant effect of age on entertainment \( F(3, 106) = 1.370, p > 0.05 \). There was no statistically significant effect of age on recognition \( F(3, 106) = .690, p > 0.05 \). These results reveal that no matter which age groups respondents were in, they obtained the same gratifications across all dimensions.

Table 6. The relationship between age and gratifications obtained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>LSD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.1714</td>
<td>.86951</td>
<td>1.364</td>
<td>.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23-26</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.1046</td>
<td>.94612</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.7048</td>
<td>1.16725</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.6800</td>
<td>.98070</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asymptotic significant are displayed. The significant level is 0.05.
### Table 7: The relationships between educational level and gratifications obtained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>110</th>
<th>2.9982</th>
<th>.99078</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social networking</strong></td>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.9714</td>
<td>.97304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23-26</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2.9538</td>
<td>.93325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.9429</td>
<td>1.05479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.6000</td>
<td>.90921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.9218</td>
<td>.95248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information seeking</strong></td>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.0857</td>
<td>.59077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23-26</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.9385</td>
<td>.73137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.8952</td>
<td>.62167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.4600</td>
<td>.94304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.9055</td>
<td>.72325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information sharing</strong></td>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.5536</td>
<td>.75434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23-26</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.6769</td>
<td>.74964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.1310</td>
<td>1.06248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.3000</td>
<td>.94868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.5227</td>
<td>.85395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entertainment</strong></td>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.7500</td>
<td>.63549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23-26</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.6769</td>
<td>.74310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.5595</td>
<td>.87644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.1750</td>
<td>.97930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.6182</td>
<td>.78453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition</strong></td>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>.62788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23-26</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.1423</td>
<td>.82794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.8452</td>
<td>1.00460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>.89753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0545</td>
<td>.84551</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A:19-22; B:23-26; C:27-30; D:31-34

#### 7.2.3 The relationships between educational level and gratifications obtained

In the table 7, the sig is the p value for each explained source of variance. When the p value is less than 0.05, which means that there are statistically significant effect of the educational level on gratifications obtained. However, if the p value is greater than 0.05, which indicates that there are no significant effect of educational level on gratifications obtained (Bruce et al., 2012). The Kruskal-Wallis findings cataloged in table 7 illustrate that there was a significant effect of educational level on information sharing ($\chi^2(4, N= 110) = 10.117, p < 0.05$). However, there was no significant effect of educational level on social interaction ($\chi^2(4, N= 110) = 4.708, p > 0.05$), social
networking ($\chi^2(4, N=110) = 7.683, p > 0.05$), information seeking ($\chi^2(4, N=110) = 2.884, p > 0.05$), entertainment ($\chi^2(4, N=110) = 3.141, p > 0.05$) and recognition ($\chi^2(4, N=110) = 5.554, p > 0.05$). These findings revealed that only information seeking had correlation with educational level.

Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis for the relationship between educational level and gratifications obtained (N=110)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social interaction</th>
<th>Social networking</th>
<th>Information seeking</th>
<th>Information sharing</th>
<th>Entertainment</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>4.708</td>
<td>7.683</td>
<td>2.884</td>
<td>10.117</td>
<td>3.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>.319</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.535</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3 Relationships between Sina Weibo usage and gratifications obtained

When the p value is less than 0.05, which means that there are positive correlations between Sina Weibo usage and gratifications obtained. When the p value is less than 0.01, which means that there are significant positive correlations between Sina Weibo usage and gratifications obtained. The bivariate correlation findings cataloged in table 8 illustrate that Sina Weibo usage is significantly linked to gratifications obtained. The number of people respondents followed on Sina Weibo had a positive correlation with information sharing ($r_s = .194, N = 110, p < 0.05$, two-tailed) and entertainment ($r_s = .202, N=110, p < 0.05$, two-tailed). Moreover, positive correlations were noted between Sina Weibo time use and social interaction ($r_s = .196, N = 110, p < 0.05$, two-tailed), information sharing ($r_s = .270, N = 110, p < 0.01$, two-tailed), entertainment ($r_s = .278, N=110, p < 0.01$, two-tailed) and recognition ($r_s = .206, N = 110, p < 0.05$, two-tailed). Finally, log in frequency had significant significantly positive relationship with information sharing ($r_s = .291, N = 110, p < 0.01$, two-tailed), entertainment ($r_s = .337, N=110, p < 0.01$, two-tailed) and recognition ($r_s = .248, N = 110, p < 0.01$, two-tailed). It is obvious that the number of people followed, time spent a day and log in frequency affect gratifications that people gain from Sina Weibo. These findings indicate that the more people a respondent followed on Sina Weibo, the more gratifications they obtained from
sharing information and entertainment. Moreover, the more daily time someone spends on Sina Weibo, the more gratifications they obtain from the four dimensions, and users who opened Sina Weibo more frequently per day were more likely to gain gratification from information sharing, entertainment and recognition.

Table 8. Spearman’s correlations between Sina Weibo usage and six items of gratifications obtained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social interaction</th>
<th>Social networking</th>
<th>Information seeking</th>
<th>Information sharing</th>
<th>Entertainment</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of following</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>.194*</td>
<td>.202*</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spend per day</td>
<td>.196*</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.270**</td>
<td>.278**</td>
<td>.206*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open frequency</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.291**</td>
<td>.337**</td>
<td>.248**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<0.05, **P<0.01; 
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

7.4 Relationships between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained

When the p value is less than 0.01, which means that there are significant positive correlations between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. If there are positive correlations between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained, which means that Sina Weibo meet the users’ expectations. An analysis of bivariate Pearson’s correlations was conducted in SPSS to further investigate correlations between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. As demonstrated in table 9, all obtained gratification items positively correlate with all sought gratification items, including social interaction ($r= .694$, N=110, $p< 0.01$, two-tailed), social networking ($r= .739$, N=110, $p< 0.01$, two-tailed), information seeking ($r= .793$, N=110, $p< 0.01$, two-tailed), information sharing ($r= .808$, N=110, $p< 0.01$, two-tailed), entertainment ($r= .596$, N=110, $p< 0.01$, two-tailed) and recognition ($r= .855$, N=110, $p< 0.01$, two-tailed). These findings indicate that Sina Weibo meets young users’ needs and expectations from six dimensions.

Table 9. Pearson’s correlations between gratifications sought (GS) and gratifications obtained (GO)
For the sake of analyzing the correlations between the expectations users have (gratifications sought) and whether expectations are fulfilled (gratifications obtained) in detail, descriptive statistics were conducted by SPSS. The tables of descriptive statistics placed gratifications sought statements and gratifications obtained statements of the same dimension beside each other. By showing variables pairwise, this can directly demonstrate whether there are differences between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. Due to this survey used Likert scale (from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree), which indicates that the greater the mean is, the more gratifications young Chinese users can gain from Sina Weibo.

The statistical means in figure 2 illustrate that users had low expectations regarding fulfillment of the needs of knowing more about their friends, the need of looking for friends’ network, the need of having fun by viewing their posts and the need of leaving messages. However, users received more gratifications than their expectations from the above statements. Users had higher expectations and got more gratifications regarding the need of paying more attention to people who share similar interests with me than other gratifications statements.
The statistical means in figure 3 illustrate that users obtained more gratifications regarding the need of making new friends, the need of meeting people who I am interested in, the need of interacting with friends and the need of maintaining social networks than their expectations.

The statistical means in figure 4 illustrate that users had high expectations regarding the needs of broadening knowledge base, the needs of knowing surroundings, the needs of getting information and the needs of finding a new way to do research. However, users got lower gratifications from the above statements than their expectations.

Figure 2. Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of social interaction

Figure 3. Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of social networking

Figure 4. Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of information seeking
The statistical means in figure 5 illustrate that users obtained lower gratifications towards the needs of sharing views and the needs of writing down what they are thinking than they expected to obtain. But, users got more gratifications from the need of sharing information and the need of making comments than they expected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>The reason why I use Sina Weibo is because I want to share my views, thoughts and experiences</th>
<th>Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to share my views, thoughts and experiences</th>
<th>The reason why I use Sina Weibo is because I want to share useful information</th>
<th>Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to share useful information</th>
<th>The reason why I use Sina Weibo is because I want to write down what am thinking</th>
<th>Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to write down what am thinking</th>
<th>The reason why I use Sina Weibo is because I want to make comments</th>
<th>Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to make comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>0.971</td>
<td>1.020</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentiles</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of information sharing

The statistical means in figure 6 illustrate that users obtained lower gratifications regarding the needs of escaping from the reality and the needs of passing time because they had nothing better to do than they expected to obtain. However, users received more gratifications from the need of killing time and the need of entertaining than they expected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>The reason why I use Sina Weibo is because I want to relax</th>
<th>Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to relax</th>
<th>The reason why I use Sina Weibo is because I want to escape from pressures</th>
<th>Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to escape from pressures</th>
<th>The reason why I use Sina Weibo is because I want to entertain</th>
<th>Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to entertain</th>
<th>The reason why I use Sina Weibo is because I have nothing better to do</th>
<th>Sina Weibo meets the need that I have nothing better to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td>0.934</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentiles</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Descriptive statistics of gratifications obtained of entertainment

The statistical means in figure 7 illustrate that users obtained lower gratifications regarding the needs of sharing emotions and the needs of avoiding to be isolated from friends than they expected to obtain. However, users received more gratifications from the need of getting senses of belongings and the need of being recognized as trendy than they expected.
This study is regarding the analysis of young Chinese people of Sina Weibo based on the theory of uses and gratifications. Findings demonstrate that more female used Sina Weibo than male, which is consistent with the 2017 Sina Weibo official report. Maybe because Sina Weibo provided more things that can appeal female, such as gossips about celebrities and good way for female to express their feelings and establish their good profile. Approximately 80% respondents hold bachelor degree, which is same as the 2017 Sina Weibo official report. According to 2017 Sina Weibo official report, most of their users were citizens from first-tier cities and second-tier cites, which indicates that these people can get better education. This thesis also examined the relationships between users' demographics and gratifications obtained. The findings indicated that female respondents obtained more gratifications than male respondents from four gratifications obtained dimensions: social interaction, information seeking, information sharing and entertainment respectively, and female respondents gained more gratifications than male respondents. Commonly, Chinese female are more likely to interact with new friends through Sina Weibo, and more positive regarding sharing information and seeking information. Moreover, only information sharing had the relationship with educational level. Different educational levels have different requirements for sharing information. However, there were no correlations between age and gratifications obtained. This is because
the information provided by Sina Weibo was homogenous, which lead to the fact that people at different ages got the information that was roughly the same. Moreover, Sina Weibo met all of expectations from six gratifications obtained. Among these six gratifications obtained, the means of social interaction and social networking were lower than others. And the means of information seeking and information sharing were higher than others. These results indicate that Sina Weibo provides a new way for young Chinese users to gather information, even though Sina Weibo is not a platform that is providing social interaction and networking. In China, WeChat is a major platform that provide people social interaction and networking. Gan and Wang (2015) compared motivations for using Weibo and WeChat from six dimensions and found participants primarily used Weibo for information seeking, with 88.33% of interviewees identifying this motivation. In a second popular application of a private social networking platform called “WeChat”, 88.99% of total interviewees mentioned social networking as motivation. The biggest difference between gratifications obtained via WeChat and Weibo is that information seeking appears most important in Weibo use, while social interaction and networking gratifications play a more primary role in WeChat. For this reason, one can deduce that users reported the lowest mean in social networking on Sina Weibo because the platform is not designed as a social networking application. The same results also could be found in a Twitter study, Twitter may be more suitable as a news medium rather than a social network (Zhang & Pentina, 2012).

9 conclusion

This thesis examined the uses patterns of young Chinese users of Sina Weibo and analyzed whether Sina Weibo meets their expectations through adopting the theory of uses and gratifications. Gratifications sought and gratifications obtained was yielded into six dimensions according to the previous studies, including the dimension of social interaction, social networking, information sharing, information
seeking, entertainment and recognition. These six gratifications dimensions consisted of 27 statements. The data was collected by an online survey distributed on two different social media platform (Baidu Tieba and Douban) by snowball sampling. The survey lasted for 14 days and gathered 110 completed answers in all. All the data was put into SPSS. Through reliability test that was conducted in SPSS, all six gratifications dimensions had high reliability coefficient, each of them was over 0.8, which means that the reliability of the data was extremely high.

The first research question analyzed the relationships between users’ demographics and gratifications obtained. The findings show that there were no statistically significant effects of age on gratifications obtained. Moreover, there was statistically significant difference between male and female participates depending on gratifications obtained for: social interaction, information seeking, information sharing and entertainment. There was a significant effect of educational level on information sharing. The second research question examined that the use pattern of Sina Weibo. The results demonstrate that the number of following, time spend one day and log in frequency affect gratifications that people gained from Sina Weibo. The study found that the more time users spent on Sina Weibo, the more gratifications they obtained from the dimensions of social interaction, information sharing, entertainment and recognition. Moreover, the more people a respondent followed on Sina Weibo, the more gratifications they obtained from the dimensions of sharing information and entertainment. Users who opened Sina Weibo more frequently per day were more likely to gain gratification from information sharing, entertainment and recognition. The last research question analyzed the correlations between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained. The findings show that Sina Weibo fulfilled users’ needs from all gratifications dimensions (including social interaction, social networking, information sharing, information seeking, entertainment and recognition).

This thesis was conducted within the context of social media in China and focused on
young users. This study has examined demographics and use patterns as personality traits in discovering how it affects gratifications obtained. Gratifications obtained can be a better predictor of media use than gratifications sought (Harper, Vernon, & Harper, 2010). Moreover, this study analyzed the gap between expectations and gratifications obtained. This thesis suggest later scholars who want to know more about gratifications sought and gratifications obtained in the perspective of uses can be added into future studies. Moreover, use patterns of young Chinese users also can be added into measurement.

This study has some limitations. One of the concerns is that the number of respondents is modest. Meanwhile, another concern is related to the gratifications items. The six gratifications items were chosen from previous studies and the number of gratification items was limited. The third concern is that this thesis did not consider the factors that can affect that people use a certain media next time. The last concern is that this thesis can not achieve totally transparency regarding how representative those are who participate in the sample. Future studies should increase the number of samples, have more representative samples, and add more gratifications items. Moreover, researchers may consider the behavior intentions that can affect people to continue to use the a certain media next time, such as users’ beliefs and evaluations.
References


the individual, in Blumler, J.G. and Katz, E. (Eds), The uses of mass communication: current perspectives on gratifications research, Sage, Beverly Hills, pp.19-34.


Appendix 1

Questionnaire in English version

1 What is your gender?
   1) Male  2) Female

2 How old are you?
   1) 19-22  2) 23-26  3) 27-30  4) 30-33

3 What is your educational level?
   1) Less than high school  2) high school  3) some college  4) bachelor's degree;
   5) graduate degree  6) doctor's degree

4 How many people do you follow on Sina Weibo?
   1) Less than 50  2) 51-100  3) 101-150  4) 151-200  5) 201-300  6) 201-400
   7) more than 400

5 How much time do you use Sina Weibo in a day?
   1) Less than 10 minutes  2) 10-30 minutes  3) 31-60 minutes  4) 1-2 hours
   5) 2-3 hours  6) More than 3 hours

6 How often do you use Sina Weibo everyday?
   1) Less than once  2) 1-4 times  3) 5-9 times  4) More than 10 times

7 Weibo has become a part of my life.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

8 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to know more about my friends
   (eg, viewing their photos, video).
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

9 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I look for friends' social network
   (eg, mutual friends or friends of friends).
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

10 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I have fun by viewing my friend’s photos, videos.
    1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

11 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to leave messages for my friends.
    1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

12 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to pay attention to those who
share similar interests with me.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

13 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to make new friends.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

14 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to make friends with people who I am interested in but have no chance to meet in person.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

15 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to keep in touch or interact with my friends.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

16 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to make friends with people who I am interested in but I am too shy to talk to.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

17 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to maintain my social networks.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

18 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to broaden my knowledge base.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

19 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to find out what is going on in the society and the country.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

20 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to get information I need.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

21 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to get information I am interested in.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

22 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to find a new way to do research.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

23 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to share my view, thoughts and experience.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

24 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to share useful information.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree
25 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to write down what I am thinking.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

26 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to make comments.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

27 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to kill time.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

28 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to relax and escape from pressures.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

29 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because it is entertaining.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

30 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I have nothing better to do.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

31 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to share my emotions.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

32 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I want to get sense of belonging.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

33 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I do not want to be isolated from my friends who use it.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

34 The reason why I use Sina Weibo because I am recognized as trendy.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

35 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to know more about my friends (eg, viewing their photos, videos)
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

36 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to look for friends' social network (eg, mutual friends or friends of friends).
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

37 Sina Weibo meets the need that I have fun by viewing my friend's photos, videos, and personal values.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

38 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to leave messages for my friends.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

39 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to pay attention to those who share similar interests with me.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

40 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to make new friends.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

41 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to make friends with people who I am interested in but have no chance to meet in person.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

42 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to keep in touch or interact with my friends
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

43 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to make friends with people who I am interested in but am too shy to talk to.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

44 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to maintain my social networks.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

45 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to broaden my knowledge base.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

46 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to find out what is going on in society and country.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

47 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to get information I need.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

48 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to get information I am interested in.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

49 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to find a new way to do research.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

50 Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to share my view, thoughts and experience.
   1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree
Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to share useful information.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to write down what I am thinking.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to make comments.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to kill time.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to relax and escape from pressures.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

Sina Weibo meets my entertaining need.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

Sina Weibo meets the need that I have nothing better to do.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to share my emotions.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

Sina Weibo meets the need that I want to get sense of belongings.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

Sina Weibo meets the need that I am not isolated from my friends who use it.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

Sina Weibo meets the need that I am recognized as trendy.
1) Strongly disagree  2) Disagree  3) Not sure  4) Agree  5) Strongly agree

### Appendix 2

**Questionnaire in Chinese version**

1. 您的性别
   1. 男  2. 女

2. 您的年龄
3 您的教育程度
1. 初中及以下 2. 高中（中专） 3. 大专 4. 本科 5. 研究生 6. 博士

4 您在微博上关注了多少人
1. 少于 50 人 2. 51-100 人 3. 101-150 人 4. 151-200 人 5. 201-300 人 6. 301-400 人
7. 超过 400 人

5 您每天花多少时间在使用微博上
1. 少于 10 分钟 2. 10-30 分钟 3. 31-60 分钟 4. 1-2 小时 5. 2-3 小时 6. 3 小时以上

6 您每天要使用多少次微博
1. 少于一次 2. 1-4 次 3. 5-9 次 4. 超过 10 次

7 微博是我日常生活的一部分
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

8 我使用微博是为了看我周围的朋友的动态（看她们发布得文字，照片和视频等）
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

9 我使用微博是为了能知道我朋友的社交圈（共同好友或者朋友的朋友）
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

10 我使用微博是为了我觉得看朋友发布的信息很有趣
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

11 我使用微博是为了我要给我的朋友们留言
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

12 我使用微博是为了关注那些与我有共同兴趣的人
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

13 我使用微博是为了能交到新朋友
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

14 我使用微博是为了能和我感兴趣但是没有机会认识的人做朋友
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

15 我使用微博是为了与我的朋友保持联系
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

16 我使用微博是为了和我感兴趣的人但又羞于交谈的人交朋友
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意
| 序号 | 陈述内容                                                                 | 选项 | 1. 非常不同意 | 2. 不同意 | 3. 不确定 | 4. 同意 | 5. 非常同意 |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| 17   | 我使用微博是为了我要维护我得社交圈子                               |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 18   | 我使用微博是为了能够扩宽我的知识面                                 |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 19   | 我使用微博是为了知道这个社会，国家发什么了什么什么事情            |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 20   | 我使用微博是为了获取我想了解的信息                                 |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 21   | 我使用微博是为了获取我感兴趣的信息                                 |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 22   | 我使用微博是想找到一种新的获得信息的途径                           |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 23   | 我使用微博是为了分享我的观点，看法和经验                            |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 24   | 我使用微博是为了分享我觉得有用的信息                              |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 25   | 我使用微博是为了能够写下我脑海里所想的东西                          |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 26   | 我使用微博是为了我能够就某事发表评论                               |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 27   | 我使用微博是为了消磨时间                                             |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 28   | 我使用微博是为了放松                                                 |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 29   | 我使用微博是为了娱乐                                                 |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 30   | 我使用微博是为了能够在我不知道做什么的时候，我可以使用它           |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
| 31   | 我使用微博是为了能够表达我个人情感、见解                             |      |                |           |         |         |         |           |
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

32 我使用微博是为了能找到归属感
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

33 我使用微博是为了不和我周围使用微博的人脱节
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

34 我使用微博是为了让别人认为我不是一个落伍的人
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

35 我使用微博满足了查看我周围的朋友的动态的需求（看她们发布的文字，照片和视频等）
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

36 我使用微博满足了了解我朋友的社交圈的需求（共同好友或者朋友的朋友）
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

37 我使用微博满足了我通过看朋友发布的信息从而感到有趣的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

38 我使用微博满足了我要给我得朋友们留言的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

39 我使用微博满足了关注与我有共同兴趣的人的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

40 我使用微博满足了我能交到新朋友的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

41 我使用微博满足了我能和我感兴趣但是没有机会认识的人做朋友的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

42 我使用微博满足了与我的朋友们保持联系的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

43 我使用微博满足了与我感兴趣的人但又羞于交谈的人交朋友的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

44 我使用微博满足了我要维护我得社交圈子的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

45 我使用微博满足了能够扩宽我的知识面的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意
46 我使用微博满足了我想知道这个社会，国家发生了什么事情的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

47 我使用微博满足了我获取我想了解的信息的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

48 我使用微博满足了我获取我感兴趣的信息的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

49 我使用微博满足了找到一种新的获得信息的途径的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

50 我使用微博满足了分享我的观点，看法和经验的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

51 我使用微博满足了分享我觉得有用的信息的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

52 我使用微博满足了写下我脑海里所想的东西的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

53 我使用微博满足了我就某件事发表评论的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

54 我使用微博满足了我消磨时间的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

55 我使用微博满足了我想放松的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

56 我使用微博满足了娱乐的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

57 我使用微博满足了我在我不知道我做什么的时候，我可以使用它的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

58 我使用微博满足了能够表达我个人情感，见解的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

59 我使用微博满足了我找到归属感的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意

60 我使用微博满足了我不和我周围使用微博的人脱节的需求
   1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意
我使用微博满足了我不想让别人认为我是落伍的人的需求
1. 非常不同意 2. 不同意 3. 不确定 4. 同意 5. 非常同意