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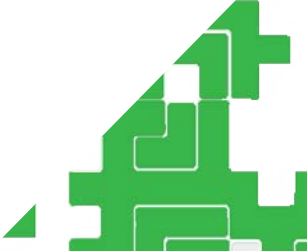
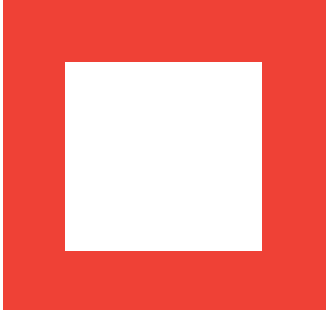


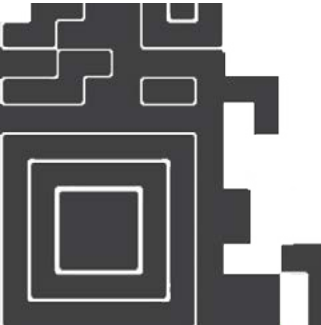




WeSupport
by 瑞联雅博

Can WeChat Provide Learning for China's Migrant Workers?

A Study on WeSupport, a WeChat-
based Learning Platform



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"I video chat with my son as much as possible, but I used to only ask him the same questions about his homework and school...I felt like as he was getting older, he didn't want to talk to me so much anymore. Recently, I read some contents on the WeSupport platform about effective listening and some 'tricks' about different ways to ask questions. I really tried to "experiment" with these tricks whenever I talked to my son... and I think slowly but surely, he is more willing to talk to me."

Li Mei, a follower of CCR CSR's WeSupport eLearning Platform on WeChat.

Executive Summary

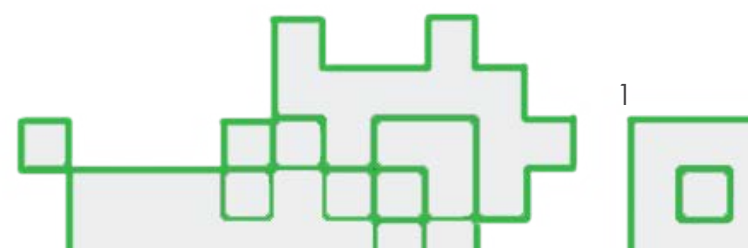
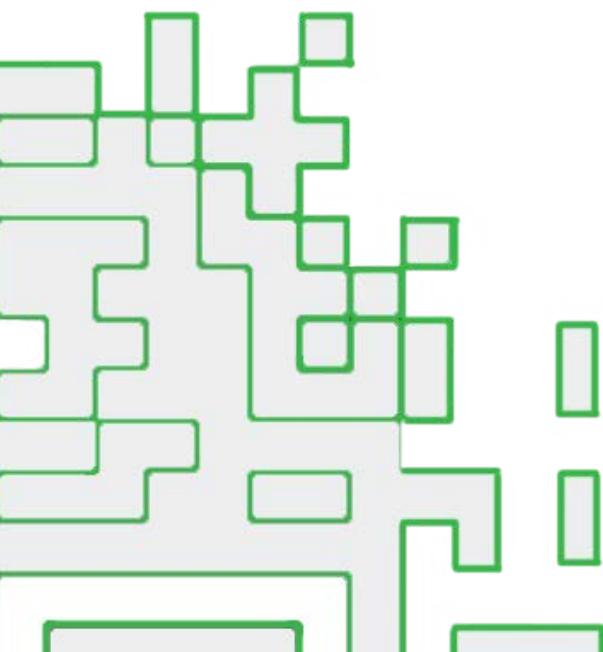
Tapping into WeChat's reach and potential, CCR CSR launched an eLearning platform, known as "WeSupport eLearning Platform", on WeChat in 2015 that seeks to support, motivate and inspire migrant parent workers, young workers and line managers working in factories through knowledge sharing. Over the course of a year, followers of the platform have been receiving tailored lessons, tips, articles, quizzes, videos and campaigns via a WeChat public account push notification on a weekly basis.

Looking at both WeChat on the whole and the WeSupport platform specifically, this study surveyed 567 migrant workers through online surveys and in-depth interviews to evaluate the impact of WeChat-based eLearning on migrant workers' life and work and the degree to which it has responded to their needs. It also analyzed users' characteristics, online habits and interests, with a particular focus on WeChat's role in social integration.

The study found that WeChat and WeSupport helps migrant workers with such challenges as social integration, knowledge acquisition, communication and motivation.

The study also highlights links between the number of public accounts people follow, their education level and gender. In general, migrant workers with lower education and male workers follow the least number of public accounts, while the majority of WeSupport platform users have high education levels. However, we also found that the most active users on WeSupport were actually the people with the lowest education levels, indicating that once the first barrier is breached, this form of eLearning can be particularly attractive to workers.

Looking at the reception of the WeSupport content we could see that the support aimed at parent migrant workers received the strongest feedback, with parents reporting that the content is applicable in their daily lives and addresses common challenges. As such WeChat and platforms such as WeSupport have the potential to become an important tool for migrant workers in terms of social integration, increased awareness and support.



I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

1) Internet, Mobile and WeChat in China

By June 2016, the number of internet users in China reached 710 million people, accounting for 51.7% of the country's population.¹ Young people aged 25 and under consisted of 41.7% of all Internet users. Meanwhile, Internet coverage among the youth (25 and under) reached 85.3%. About 90% of all Internet users including youth rely on mobile phones to surf the net.²

Although only 10.6% of mobile phone Internet users in China utilize it for eLearning, the absolute number is still large – 70 million people, and with this number increasing rapidly, it is bound to cover millions more in the near future. 59.3% of all online learning courses taken by users are done so via mobile phones³, giving mobile based learning a great potential to become an effective educational tool.

WeChat ('Weixin' in Chinese) is a cross-platform instant messaging service developed by Tencent in China, which was first released in January 2011. By June 2016, the number of active WeChat users swelled to 805.7 million.⁴ According to Tencent Penguin Intelligence, close to 40% of WeChat users view content posted on the WeChat public accounts on a daily basis.⁵

2) The Center for Child Rights & Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR)

The Center for Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR) in China has been a pioneer in advising businesses on child rights since 2009. The consultancy's services and expertise help businesses embrace sustainability strategies, programs and projects that permanently improve the lives of children, young workers and working migrant parents.

CCR CSR works with companies to assess their impact on children and to ensure they respect and promote the rights of children within all of their business operations, in particular within their Asian supply chains. To date, CCR CSR has developed a wealth of tools, training packages, eLearning content and projects, has conducted ground-breaking research, surveys and policy review work, and has founded a virtual and Hong Kong-based Youth Development Working Group consisting of major international brands who meet on a quarterly basis to discuss and find solutions to child rights related issues within their supply chains.

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1. CNNIC (July 2016) *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China* <http://www.cnnic.net.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwzbg/hlwjbg/201608/P020160803367337470363.pdf>
 2. CNNIC (August 2016) *Internet Behavior of the Youth in China 2015*
 3. <http://www.cnnic.net.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwzbg/qsnbg/201608/P020160812393489128332.pdf>
 4. CNNIC (July 2016) *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China* <http://www.cnnic.net.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwzbg/hlwjbg/201608/P020160803367337470363.pdf>
 5. Tencent (2016) *2016 Interim Report* <http://www.tencent.com/zh-cn/content/ir/rp/2016/attachments/201601.pdf>



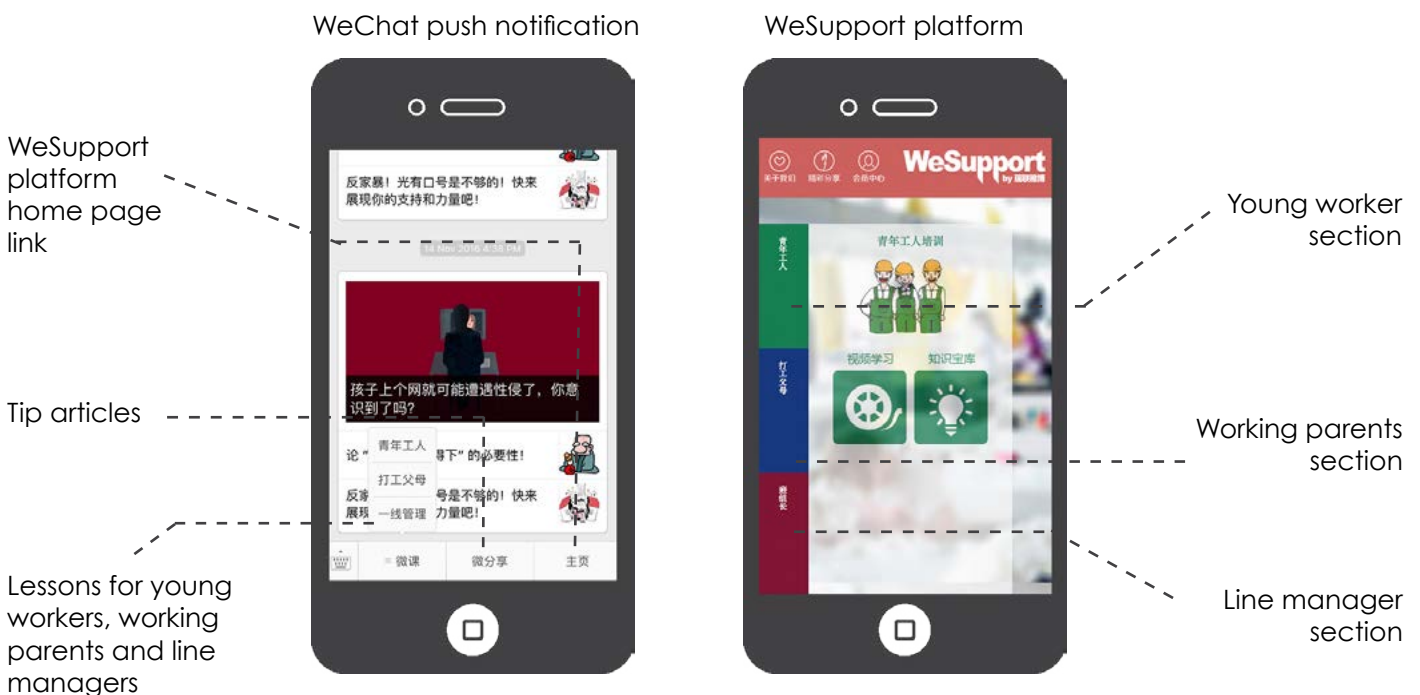
3) WeSupport eLearning Platform

Technology and online tools have the potential to reach a wide readership consisting of young migrant workers and parents. They can also help people access knowledge more easily and support them in building up skills to integrate into city life and perform better at work. With WeChat connecting hundreds of millions of people in China, CCR CSR realized the practicality of using WeChat as an important tool to promote knowledge sharing.

In June 2015, CCR CSR developed a WeChat-based eLearning platform, WeSupport, that provides workers with 24/7 access to online learning materials through a WeChat public account.⁶ The aim of the platform is to inspire and motivate workers to develop their personal and professional skills necessary to reach their full potential, while also helping factories address common issues such as high staff turnover, conflict and low worker morale. With different content formats such as photos with text, video clips, animation, comic strips and interactive quizzes, the platform targets young workers, parent workers and line managers.

New content is sent to WeSupport public account followers on a weekly basis through push notifications, with close to 150 individual lessons, quizzes, videos and tips articles posted to date. What's more, content from previous weekly push notifications can be accessed and viewed via an easy-to-navigate menu that links directly to the actual WeSupport eLearning platform, where all the content is conveniently sorted by target group (i.e. parent workers, line managers and young workers) and format (lesson, video, quiz, weekly tips).

In addition to CCR CSR's WeChat-based WeSupport platform that's accessible to all users who scan the QR code and follow the account, a customized factory eLearning platform is also available. This factory-based platform allows factories to upload their own content and tailor it to their workers' needs. It also allows factories to track the learning progress of their workers, make factory announcements and receive suggestions or grievances from their workers in a private and secure way.



6. <http://ccrcsr.com/content/wechat-platform>

a. Target 1: Working/Migrant Parents

China's migrant population reached 247 million in 2015, accounting for 18% of China's total population or the equivalent to one in six persons migrating.⁷ 61 million children have been left-behind by parents due to this mass migration. According to a 2013 CCR CSR study, over 40% of working parents have left work due to concerns related to their children, and almost 40% admit to making errors at work due to worries about their children. Many parents only get to see their children once a year for a short period.

A large number of parents would like to find work closer to their children but struggle to find factories that provide facilities and/or support provisions for the family.⁸

Apart from the regular tip articles and comics posted on CCR CSR's WeSupport platform each week, CCR CSR developed ten special lessons based on tried-and-tested training materials that aim to provide migrant parent workers with a range of important support mechanisms and tools for improving and maintaining relationships with their children.

Lesson Topics:

- Life is full of choices
- Being a working parent and balancing demands
- Wellbeing
- Children's rights
- The needs of your child
- Child resilience
- Creating a care plan
- Effective communication from a distance
- Recognizing the signs of distress
- Making the most of your time together

In addition to our own unique content, CCR CSR and UNICEF joined forces to respond to a strong demand by migrant parents for basic information about early childhood development (ECD). Lessons covered the topics of nutrition, child safety and disease prevention. A total of 48 posts were adapted from UNICEF's ECD content, including lesson articles, videos and quizzes.



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7. National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People's Republic of China 2016 Report on China's Migrant Population Development <http://www.nhfpc.gov.cn/zhuzhan/xwf-bh/201610/58881fa502e5481082eb-9b34331e3eb2.shtml>
 8. CCR CSR (2013) They Are Also Parents: CCR CSR Study On Migrant Workers With Left-Behind Children In China <http://ccrcs.com/resource/225>

b. Target 2: Line Managers

CCR CSR's WeSupport platform content also targets supervisors and line managers. Many of today's supervisors struggle to communicate effectively with their workers, many of whom are much younger, restless and away from home for the first time. Our content aims to strengthen their communication and conflict management skills, to understand the needs of China's young workforce, and to ultimately help them become better managers. Lesson Topics include:

- Giving feedback
- Managing conflict
- Mediating conflict
- Providing support to young workers
- Running a meeting - ground rules
- Running a meeting - effective communication
- Running a meeting - clear messages
- Handling aggressive conflict



c. Target 3: Young Workers

CCR CSR's WeChat lessons for young workers aim to motivate, educate and inspire the young workers of today, many of whom lack the resilience and skills to integrate into their new job environment. Lesson topics include:

- Aim for the top: needs & motivation
- Keeping a positive attitude
- Stress management
- How to speak and listen
- Conflict and criticism
- Career development

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The ultimate goal of this study was to understand the initial impact of CCR CSR's WeSupport eLearning platform and to assess the degree to which this WeChat-based learning platform responds to the needs of China's migrant workers. In order to attain this goal, we aimed to 1) understand the characteristics, online habits and interests of WeSupport users, especially rural migrant workers; 2) measure the effectiveness of WeChat in helping migrant workers integrate into society; and 3) evaluate the initial impact of the WeSupport platform on workers' life and work.

The first objective of the research was to capture the progress of the WeSupport platform against the following indicators:

- Improved remote parenting skills of migrant workers
- Improved knowledge of new/future parents about early childhood development (ECD)
- Improved life skills of young/juvenile workers including communication, problem solving and decision-making
- Improved skills of line managers in dealing with young migrant workers

METHODOLOGY

1) Research Design

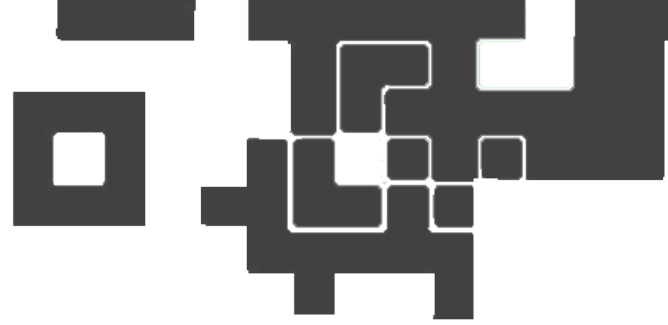
CCR CSR implemented both quantitative and qualitative research in order to evaluate the progress towards the above-mentioned indicators. CCR CSR conducted an online survey with the subscribers of the WeSupport public account on WeChat. In order to obtain more in-depth information that was not captured through the survey, CCR CSR also conducted in-depth interviews.

a. Online Survey

The sampling frame was 100% of the subscribers of the CCR CSR WeSupport platform. The survey questionnaire mostly included quantitative questions focusing respectively on parent workers, young workers and line managers. The questionnaire also included general questions about participants' background, WeChat usage and psychological wellbeing.

The questionnaire was expected to take about 10 minutes to complete and aimed to cover no less than 500 users. In order to encourage enough subscribers to complete the survey, we decided to reward the first 500 participants with instant transfers of "red envelopes" to the sum of 30 RMB each.





The first round of survey questions was shared with all subscribers of CCR CSR's WeSupport platform in early June of 2016, and 1591 responses were collected – a much higher response rate than initially anticipated. In order to ensure the quality of data, we decided on some criteria to filter out possible non-valid responses. We used the following criteria to filter out the responses that are most likely non-valid:

- 1) The survey was completed in under 5 minutes
- 2) If the job position of the respondent was other than a factory worker/employee
- 3) If the respondent claimed he/she hadn't read any contents on CCR CSR's WeSupport platform

After filtering the raw data based on these criteria, we kept a sample of 469 entries who all scored high in terms of validity.

In late August 2016, the second round of survey questions was distributed online through the factory public account of a CCR CSR project factory, which incorporated CCR CSR's WeSupport eLearning contents into their own WeChat platform. We aimed to collect at least 100 samples by rewarding the first 100 participants with “red envelopes” valued at 30 RMB each. We collected 125 responses and applied our validity criteria as above, keeping 107 valid responses from the project factory. The total sample size combining first and second survey thus reached 576.

b. Interviews

Workers who participated in the online survey were given the option of accepting phone interviews as well. 242 (42%) of the respondents expressed interest in being interviewed by leaving their mobile phone numbers. We randomly selected 20 participants from among parent workers, young workers and line managers for in-depth phone interviews to complement the results of the quantitative survey.

The interview questions focused on workers' experience when migrating to a new location, how they stay connected with friends and family, how they usually use WeChat and CCR CSR's WeSupport platform, their opinions about the current contents and suggestions for improvements etc. But most importantly, we tried to find out how we can make the eLearning contents more suitable and attractive to workers.

From the conversations with the 20 respondents we selected five typical interviews to develop in-depth case stories. These stories can be found in Appendix 1.



SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Our sample consisted of 576 WeChat and CCR CSR WeSupport platform users, of which 276 (48%) are male and 300 (52%) are female. There is no statistical difference between the number of male and females. For this study we tested all variables by gender and displayed results where a statistically significant result for gender disparity was found.

61% of the respondents are married, of whom close to half (47%) have young children under six.

1) Locations

74% of the respondents of the survey are located in three provinces/municipalities in China: Guangdong, Hubei and Chongqing (Chart 1). The majority of respondents grew up in the countryside before they turned 16 (Chart 2). For the purpose of this study, we looked at the variances between these rural migrants in terms of their usage of WeChat and CCR CSR's WeSupport platform and the different impact those online tools might have on them.

Chart 1: Location of respondents

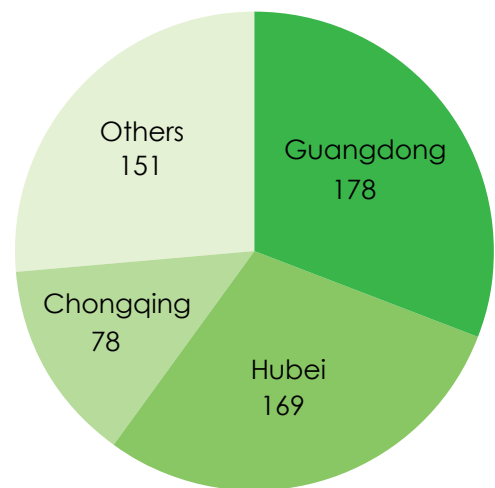
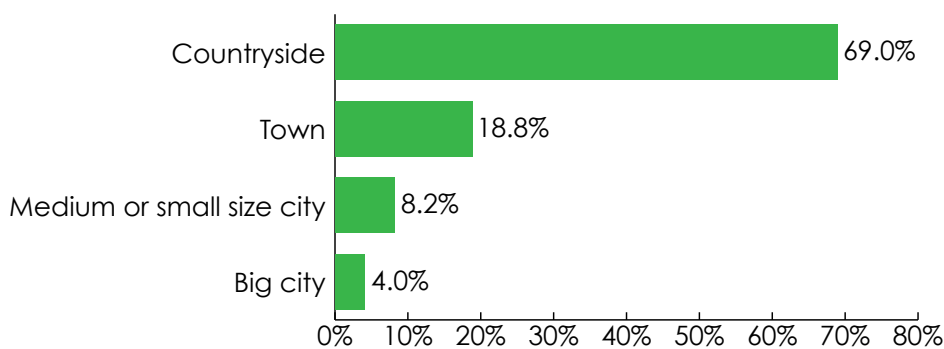


Chart 2: Where respondents grew up before age 16



2) Sector

A large portion, 43%, of the respondents are working in electronic factories (Chart 3). This is not surprising given the large and young workforce in electronic factories⁹, which typically has high smart phone usage¹⁰ and Internet coverage¹¹.

3) Age

The average age of the respondents is 29, higher than the average age of WeChat users in 2014, which was 26.¹² Chart 4 displays the age distribution of the sample. Young workers who are 25 and younger consist of 27% of the sample. The average age of single workers is about 25, and the average for married or divorced workers is 32. We analyzed the connection of age with all other variables in the survey to search for possible differences between online habits and interests of various age groups and the different impact the project may have on them. Additionally, we also looked at the disparity between young workers (25 and younger) and older ones. In later paragraphs, we will only talk about the statistically significant correlations between age and other variables.

Chart 3: Respondents' sector of work

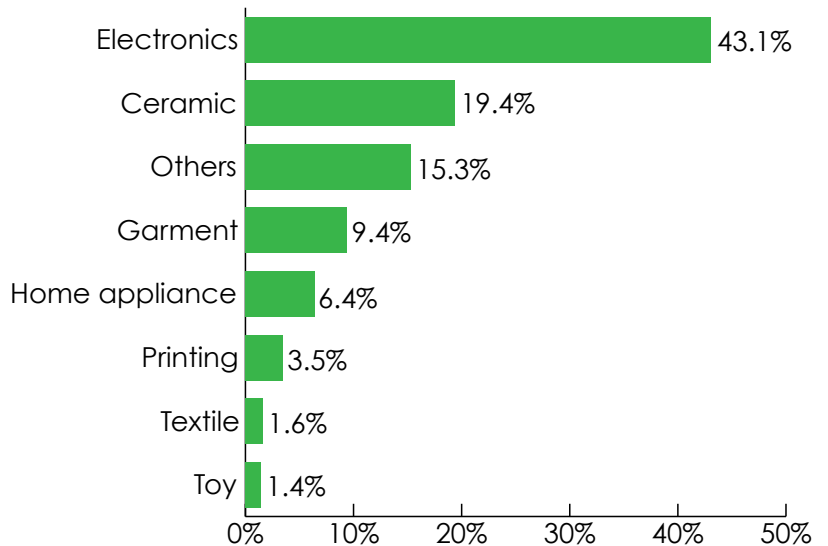
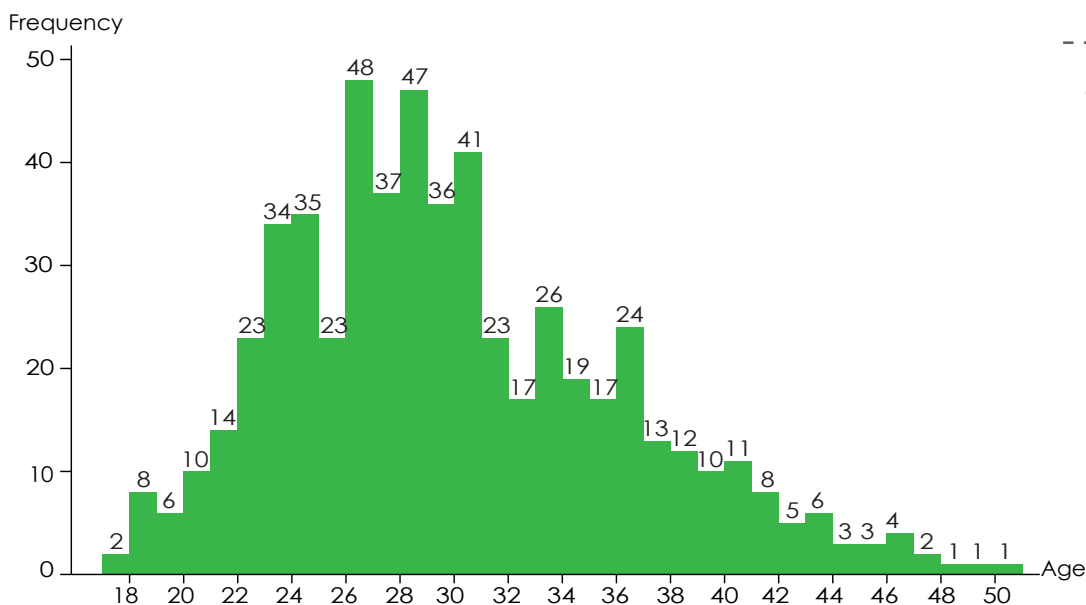


Chart 4: Age distribution of respondents



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- 9. CCR CSR (2015) *Staying On: A Study On Young Workers In The Electronic Industry* <http://cccrs.com/resource/312>
 - 10. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/224110/smart-phone-users-in-china-by-age/>
 - 11. CNNIC (August 2016) *Internet Behavior of the Youth In China 2015* <http://www.cnnic.net.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwz-zbg/qsnbg/201608/P020160812393489128332.pdf>
 - 12. China Internet Watch (2015) *China Social Media Users Insights in 2015* <https://www.chinainternetwatch.com/13844/china-social-media-users-in-sights-2015/>

4) Education level

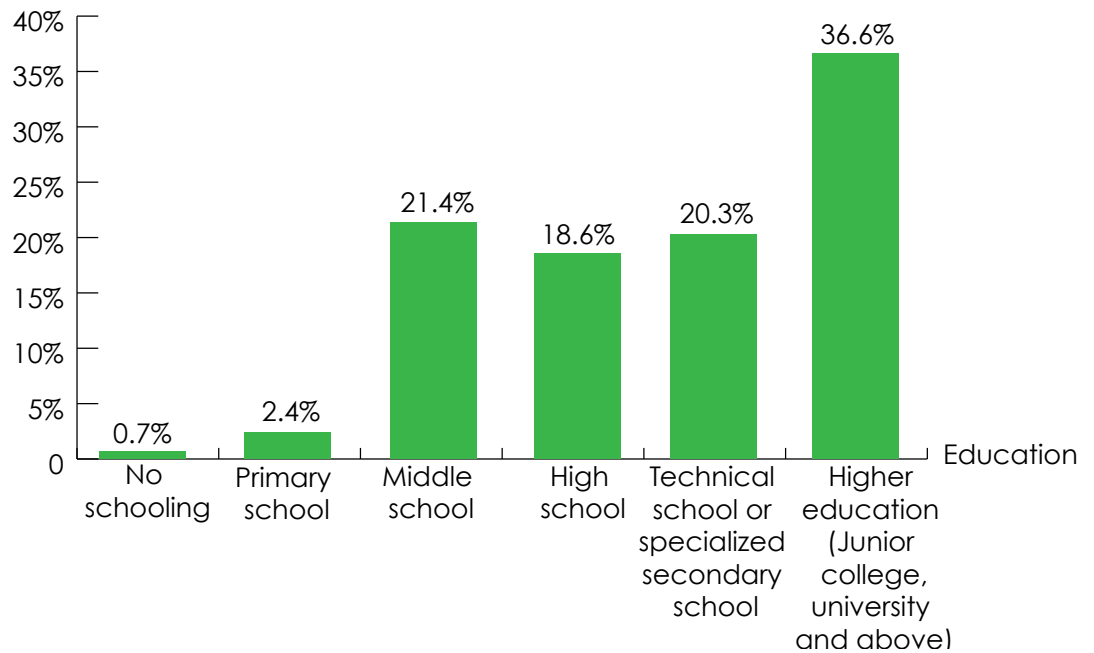
The education levels of respondents are higher than the average education levels for migrant workers in general, with 37% claiming to have some college/university education (Chart 5). This may seem unusual, but considering that 43% of respondents are from electronics factories, it is not completely unexpected. According to our previous research, electronics factories have a young workforce with much higher education levels (close to 30% of young workers had college/university education).¹³ It is also true that the workers from electronic factories in the current study have significantly higher education levels (40% college/university education) than others, which strongly influences the overall results.

Users of CCR CSR's WeSupport platform have significantly higher educational levels than migrant/factory workers in general.

This finding is also in line with other research, which shows that online learning is more popular among users with higher education levels. Additionally, this explains the unusually high education levels of CCR CSR's WeSupport platform

users compared to other migrant workers and also indicates a challenge in bringing eLearning to people with low education levels.¹⁴

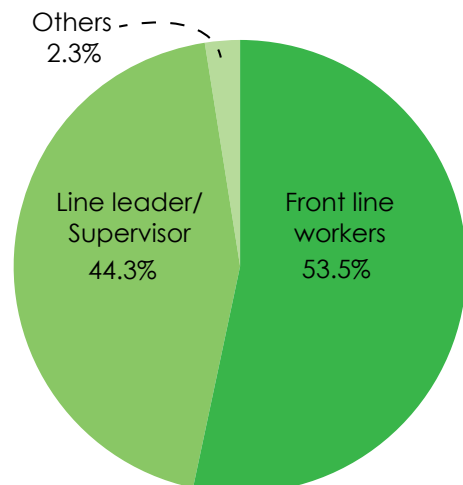
Chart 5: Education levels



5) Position

98% of respondents are factory workers, of whom the majority are front line workers (53%) followed by line managers. CCR CSR's WeSupport platform has lessons specifically targeting line managers, and those lessons are viewable to all users.

Chart 6: Position at factories



13. CCR CSR (2015) *Staying On: A Study On Young Workers In The Electronic Industry* <http://ccrcsr.com/resource/312>

14. EUSME Centre (2014) *Online Education Market in China* http://www.ccilc.pt/sites/default/files/eu_sme_centre_report_-_online_education_market_in_china_jul_2014.pdf

II. WECHAT USAGE

We tried to discover what subscribers mainly use WeChat for and whether some crucial functions differ by the age, gender, education level and rural migration of the users. Since CCR CSR's WeSupport platform is set up as a WeChat public account, we also looked at how active our users are on public accounts in general, before comparing it to the popularity of CCR CSR's WeSupport platform.

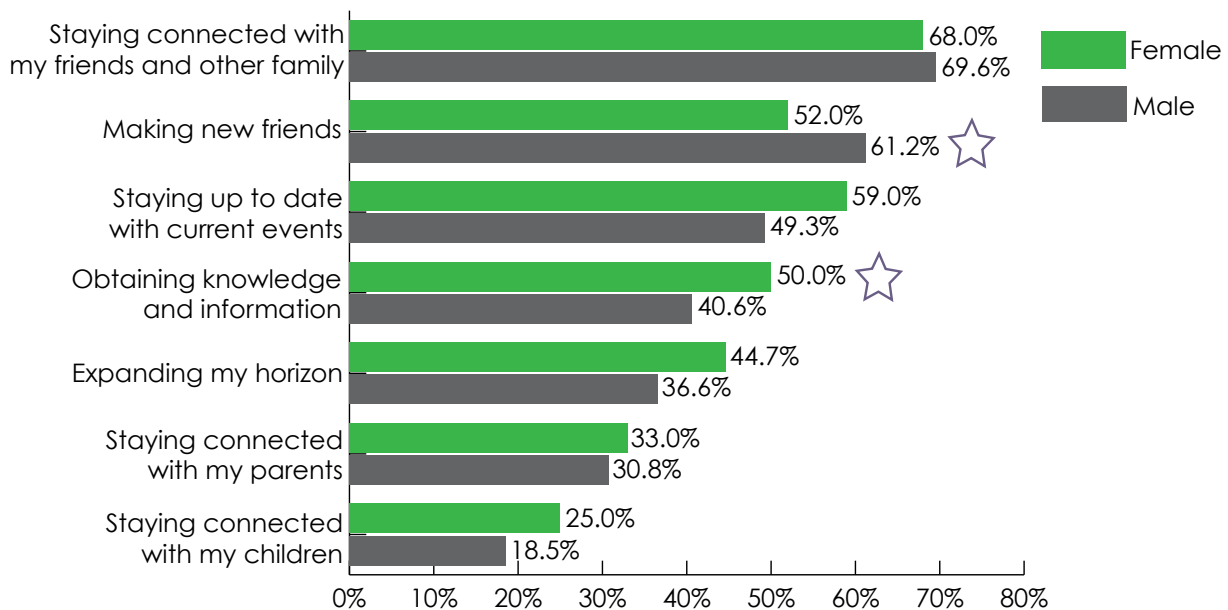
Do workers use WeChat differently?

The top three most useful functions of the general WeChat app are 1) staying connected with friends and family (excluding children and parents), 2) making new friends and 3) staying up to date with current events (Chart 7). "Obtaining knowledge and information" followed closely behind with 45% of the users choosing that to be the most useful function of WeChat. While age, education background or rural migration does not have any significant correlations with the likelihood of using WeChat for "obtaining knowledge and information", more women than men (50% vs. 40.6%) found that aspect useful.

Female workers tend to use WeChat more for obtaining knowledge and information.

In contrast, male users are more likely to use WeChat for the purpose of making new friends than their female counterparts.

Chart 7: Functions of WeChat by gender

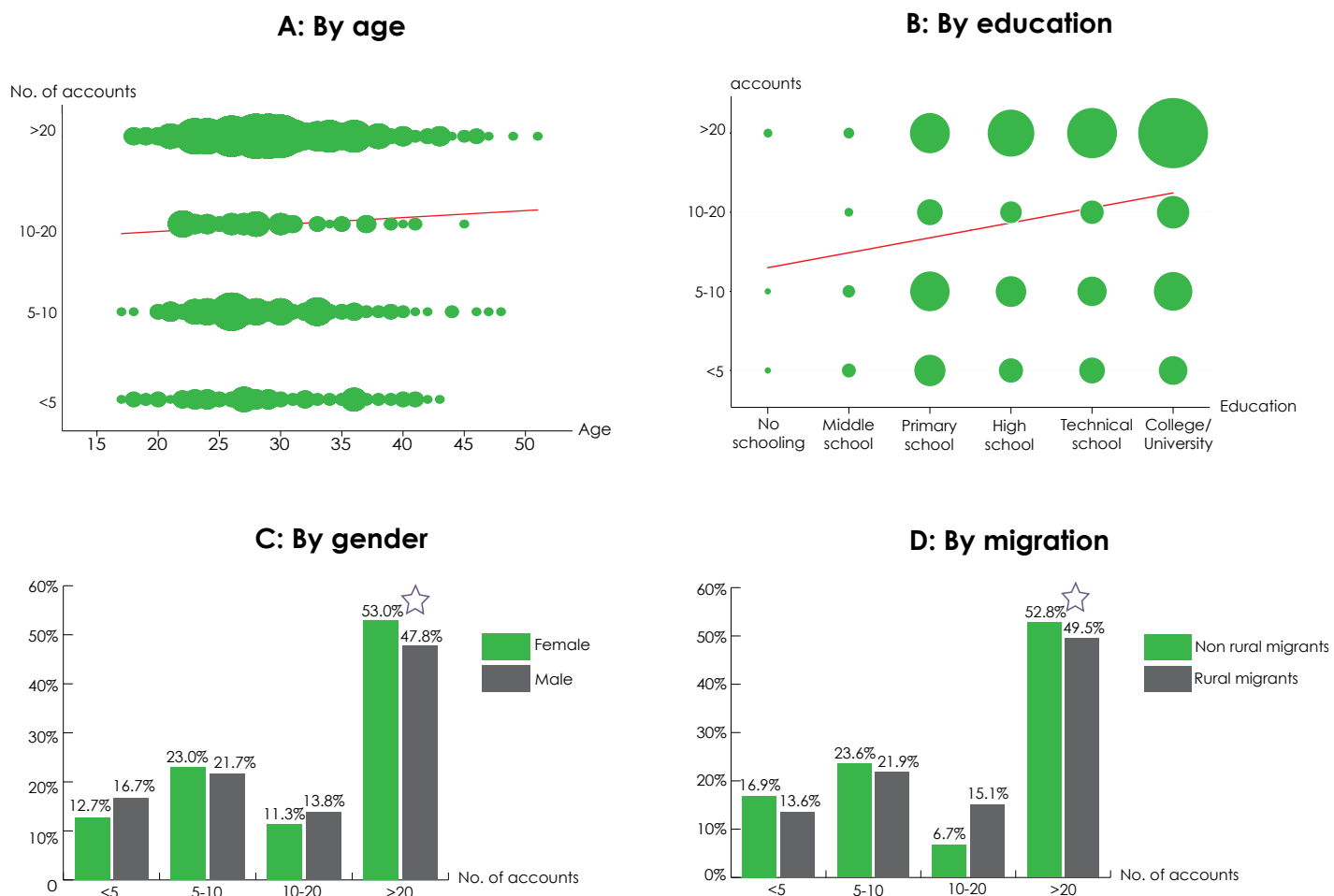


WECHAT PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

More than two thirds of the respondents (69%) subscribed to five or more public accounts. The number of public accounts that the users follow is significantly correlated with their age, gender, education level and rural migration status (Chart 8). The younger the users are, or the higher their education level is, the more public accounts they tend to subscribe to; female users tend to subscribe to more public accounts while rural migrants subscribe to fewer accounts.

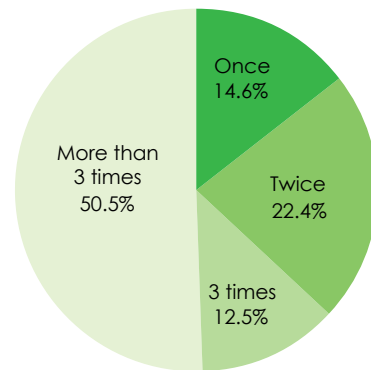
Female users and those with higher education levels tend to follow more public accounts while rural migrants subscribe to fewer accounts.

Chart 8: No. of WeChat public accounts



The majority of followers (51%) check public accounts more than three times a day (Chart 9). However, the frequency of browsing the contents on public accounts is not significantly correlated with the age, gender or rural migration of users, but only correlated with their education level. The better-educated users tend to read the contents of the WeChat public accounts more frequently. Also, it is worth noting that users who find WeChat most useful for “obtaining knowledge and information” tend to read or check public accounts more frequently.

Chart 9: Frequency of browsing public accounts per day



CCR CSR WESUPPORT PLATFORM USAGE

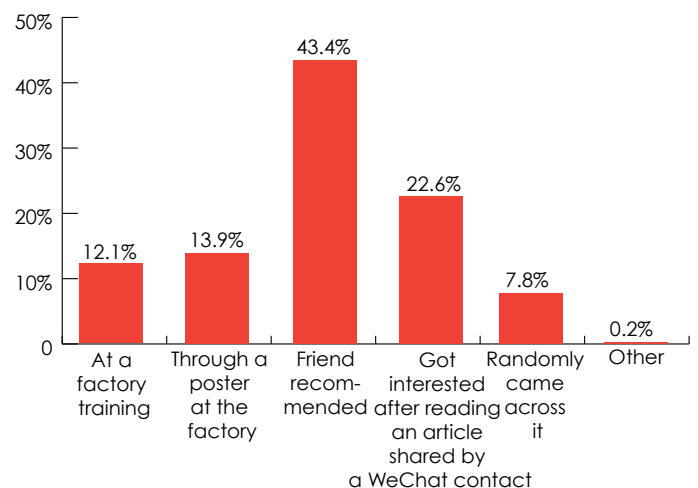
The following sections will provide an overview of how users of CCR CSR's WeSupport platform were introduced to the platform, as well as the frequency of using the platform and sharing the contents. The role of age, gender, education level and rural migration status in users' activity levels on WeSupport will also be described in the sections below.

Most of the users subscribed to CCR CSR's WeSupport platform after recommendation by a friend.

1) How users were introduced to the platform

The WeSupport platform was promoted at CCR CSR project factories during in-factory training workshops and through poster displays. The survey shows that only 26% of the users subscribed to the WeSupport platform through such means while most of them (43%) got to the platform through recommendation by a friend (Chart 10). This could indicate the potential of WeChat-based eLearning to reach a large number of users beyond the scope of project factories.

Chart 10: How users were introduced to the platform



2) Frequency of browsing CCR CSR's platform

44% of the users say they access the WeSupport platform on a daily basis (Chart 11). Even though the frequency with which users check public accounts in general does not correlate with their age, it does in the case of WeSupport: the older the users are, the more frequently they view CCR CSR's WeSupport platform. It is also interesting to note that rural migrants use the WeSupport platform more often.

Furthermore, the users who subscribed to the platform through in-factory project promotion and those from the project factory that incorporated WeSupport contents in to their public account tend to utilize CCR CSR's WeSupport platform more frequently.

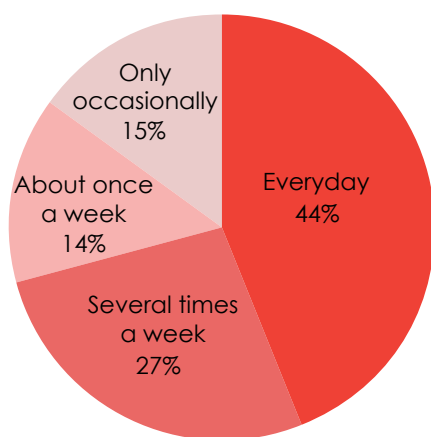
Even though less educated users tend to be less active on general WeChat public accounts, they are significantly more active on CCR CSR's WeSupport platform than their better-educated peers. This result seems counterintuitive, as we know that the users of CCR CSR's WeSupport platform have significantly higher education levels than migrant/factory workers in general, signaling a challenge in making online learning more accessible to workers with lower education levels.

However, we can also conclude that workers with lower education levels might have a stronger need for such a platform even though they are not necessarily used to accessing knowledge and information through such a channel.

Workers with lower education levels might have a stronger need for such a platform even though they are not necessarily used to accessing knowledge and information through such a channel.

Chart 11: Frequency of browsing CCR CSR's WeSupport platform

A: General WeSupport use



B: By migration

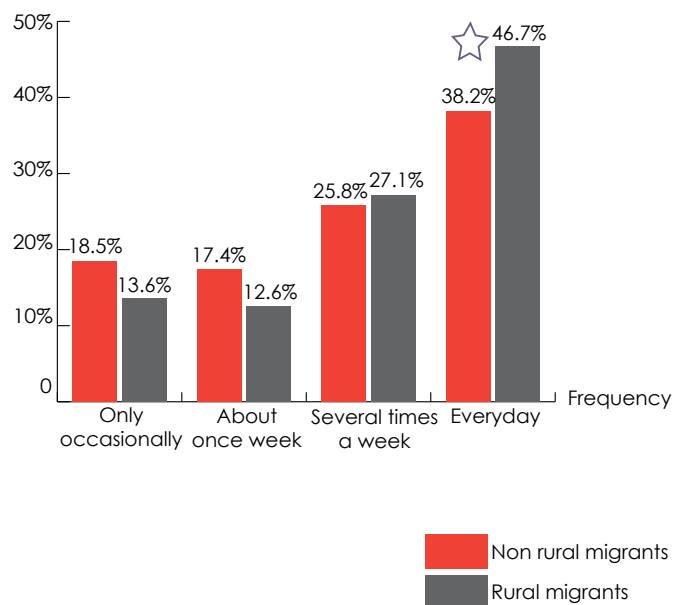
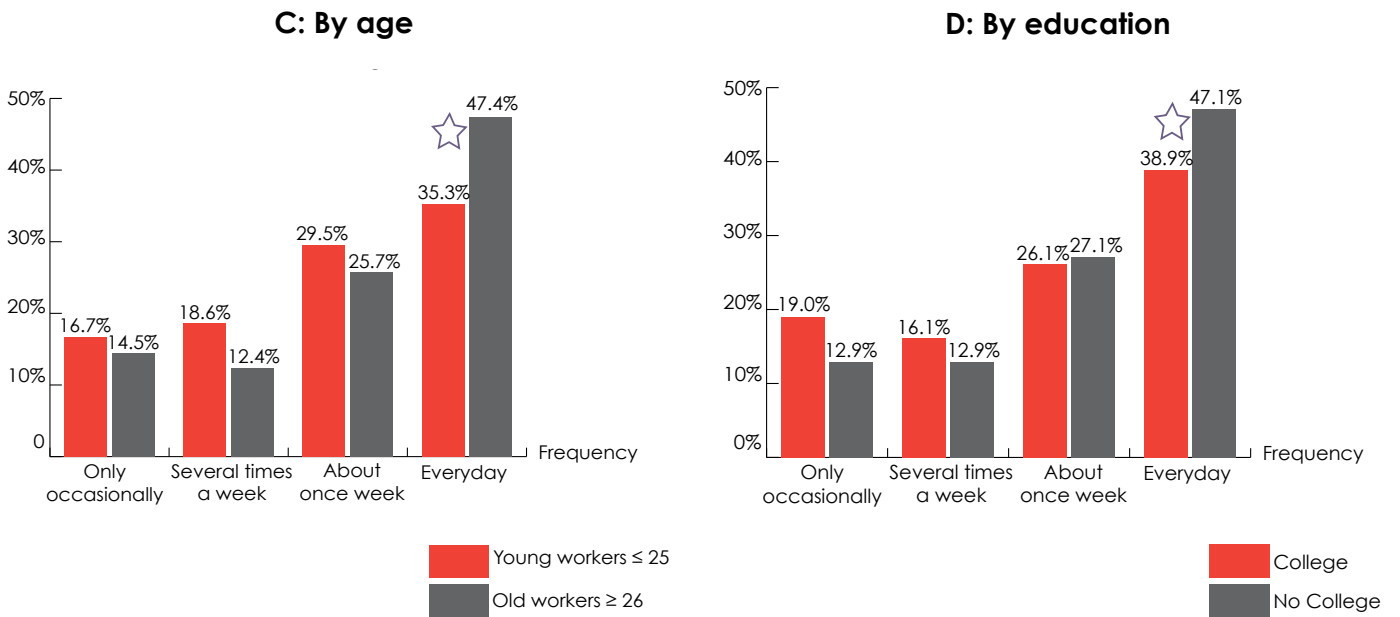


Chart 11: Frequency of browsing CCR CSR's WeSupport platform

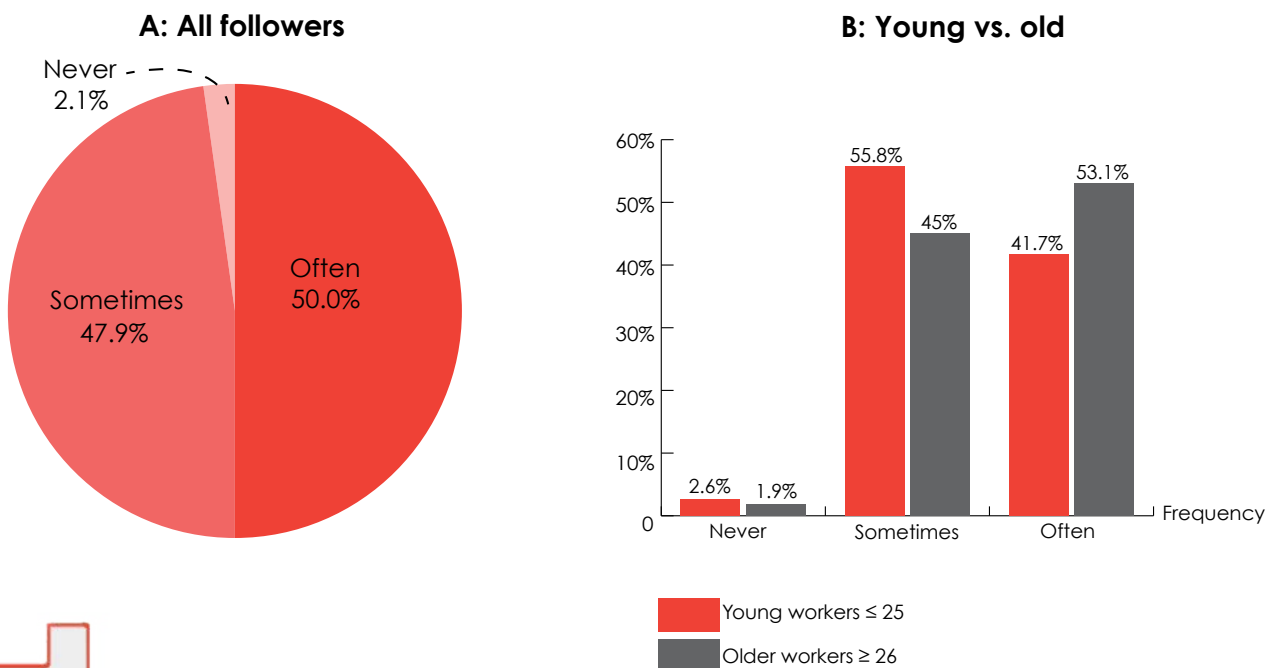


3) Frequency of sharing CCR CSR's WeSupport posts

As can be seen in figure 12 below, 50% of respondents share posts from CCR CSR's WeSupport platform with their network of contacts via "Moments". What's more, the older workers are more likely to share the WeSupport posts often (Chart 12).

50% of the users say they often share posts published by CCR CSR's WeSupport platform in their WeChat "moments".

Chart 12: Frequency of sharing CCR CSR's WeSupport platform posts





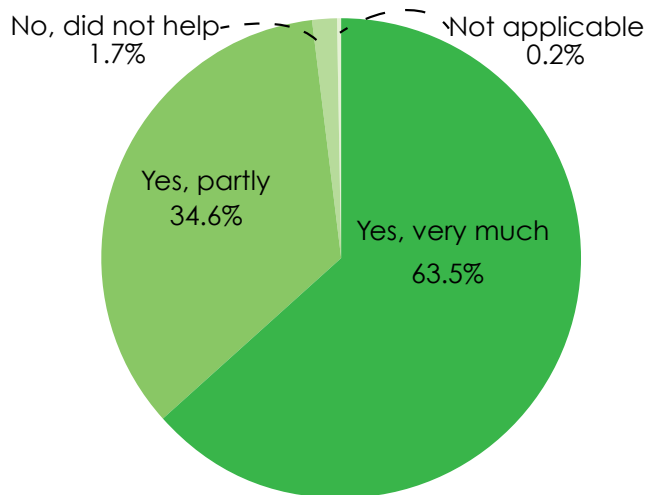
III. THE BENEFITS OF WECHAT FOR USERS

In the following paragraphs, we will discuss users' perception of how WeChat has helped them integrate into society when they move to a new location, how they evaluate the different contents and aspects of CCR CSR's WeSupport platform on WeChat, and what the potential gaps are for improvement. We will present the quantitative results from the worker survey together with what we found through qualitative interviews.

WeChat in general

63.5% of the users reported that WeChat very much helped them integrate into life in their new location (Chart 13). However, their age, gender, education level or rural migration are not likely to play a significant role in how useful they found WeChat to be.

Chart 13: Did WeChat help with social integration?



Almost all interviewed workers who moved to a new location to seek work said WeChat made it easier for them to make new friends and to enrich their social life. Li Hua¹⁵ is a typical case of a young migrant worker trying to build his/her social network in a place far from home.

WeChat made it easier for most users to make new friends and enrich their social life, and for 4 out of 10 parents the most important function of WeChat is to stay connected to their left-behind children.

The Story of Li Hua

Li Hua, 31 years old, left her hometown in Hubei Province when she was 18 and came to work in Guangdong. At the beginning, Li Hua struggled to make new friends in her busy factory life. "Later, smart phones started to get popular, and everybody around me started to use WeChat. Very quickly, I managed to reconnect with my old friends back home, and gradually learned how to make new friends on WeChat...I'm glad my social circle is not only limited to my coworkers at the factory"- Li Hua said.

While WeChat clearly helped migrant workers find new friends and was rated as the second most useful function of WeChat (Chart 7), it also helps create a sense of community for migrant workers who are living away from home. All interviewed workers said they browse what their friends share in their “Moments” on a daily basis. This “social network” function similar to Facebook enables them to stay connected with current events as well as the lives of friends and family elsewhere. As indicated in Chart 7, the most important function of WeChat for users is the instance messaging and voice/ video chatting functions that allow users to stay connected with their friends and other family members.

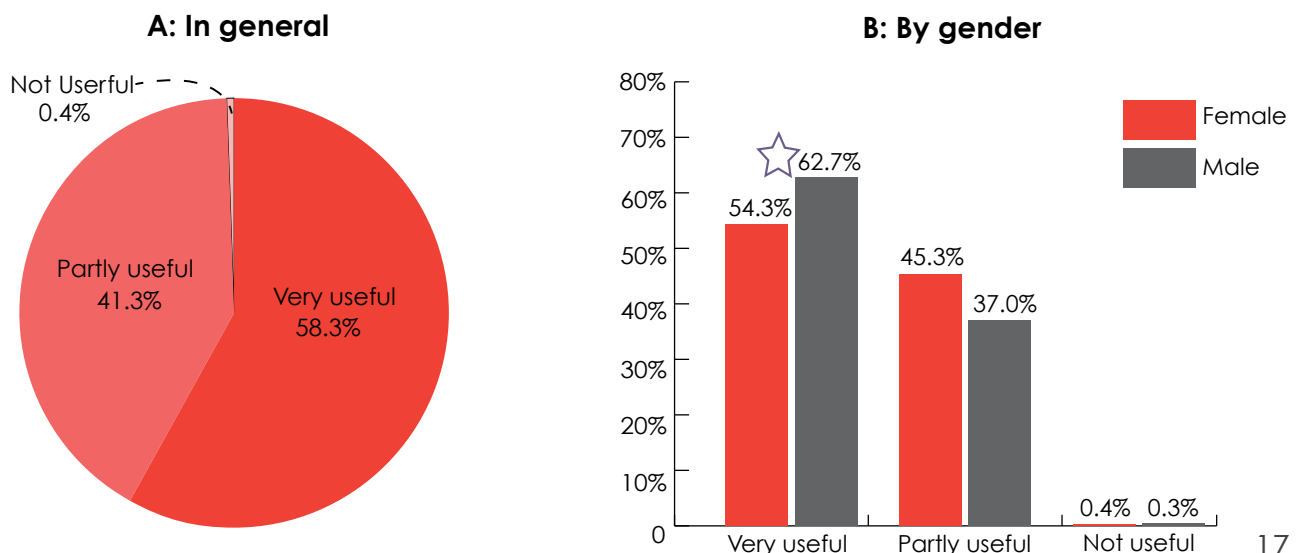
Almost all interviewed workers said they had Wi-Fi access in the factory dorms or rented apartments, so instead of making a phone call to their families, they prefer to video chat with them using WeChat whenever they can. For parents with left-behind children, this function seems especially important. 40% of parent with left behind children thought the most important function of WeChat for them was staying connected with their children. All interviewed workers with left-behind children said they would regularly video chat with their children through their caretakers back home. (For more details, please refer to Liu Fanghua's story in the Appendices section)

CCR CSR's WeSupport Platform

Since the launch of the WeSupport platform in June 2015, 40,193 visits have been recorded in a year. The majority (58.3%) of surveyed users found the WeSupport platform to be very useful while the rest found it partly useful. This survey will allow us and other service providers to understand why users found the content more or less useful and which contents most appealed to them.

Male and/or less educated users found the WeSupport platform significantly more useful than female and/or better-educated counterparts.

Chart 14: "How useful do you find the content/information on CCR CSR's WeSupport platform"?

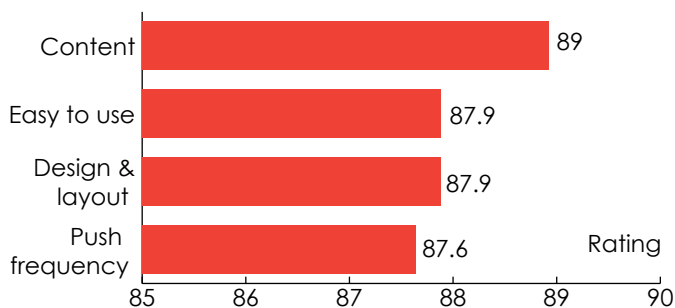


The survey shows that male and/or less educated users found the WeSupport platform significantly more useful than the female and/or better-educated counterparts. This result is part of the paradox CCR CSR's WeSupport platform is currently facing: while generally the platform is used by people with relatively higher levels of education, the contents of the platform has its greatest appeal amongst lesser educated workers.

It also is interesting to note that users from a project factory that incorporated CCR CSR's WeSupport contents into the factory's public account found the platform significantly more useful than others. This is a likely indicator that the factory face-to-face trainings have increased awareness on the challenges faced by left-behind children and juvenile workers and thus triggered curiosity and interest in CCR CSR's WeSupport platform.

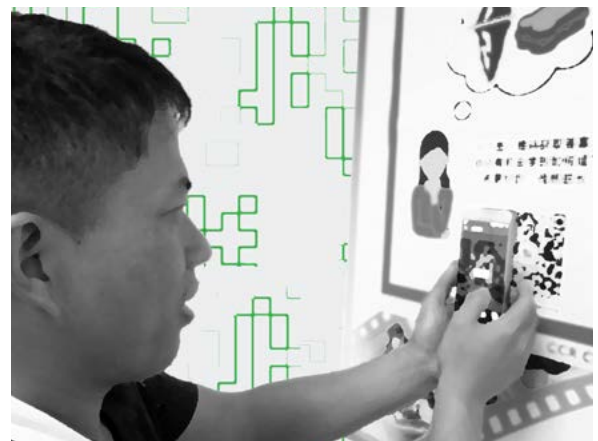
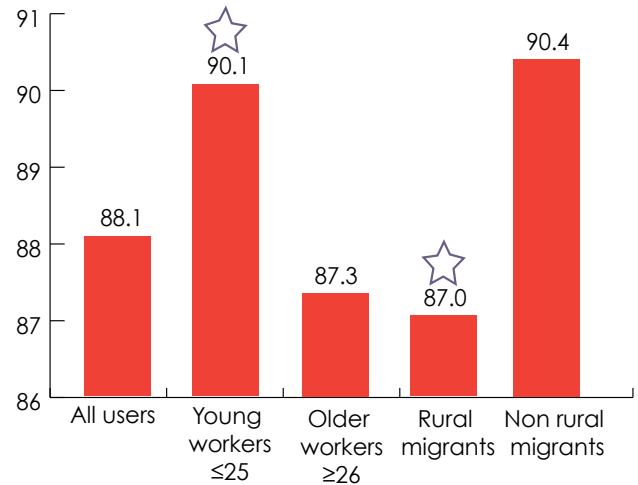
Users gave CCR CSR's WeSupport platform a score of 88 out of 100 on average based on four different aspects: content, user friendliness (easy to use), design & layout and push message frequency.¹⁶ As for different aspects of the platform, content scored the highest at 88.9 while the lowest score followed closely behind at 87.6 for the push message frequency (Chart 15).

Chart 15: Rating of CCR CSR's WeSupport platform (out of 100)

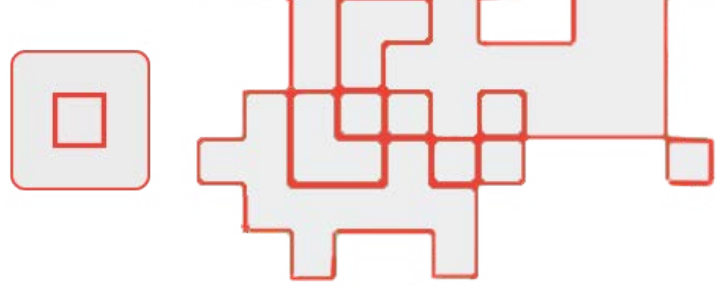


On average, younger workers gave WeSupport a significantly higher score, while it scored lower among rural migrants (Chart 16).

Chart 16: Average score of CCR CSR's WeSupport Platform



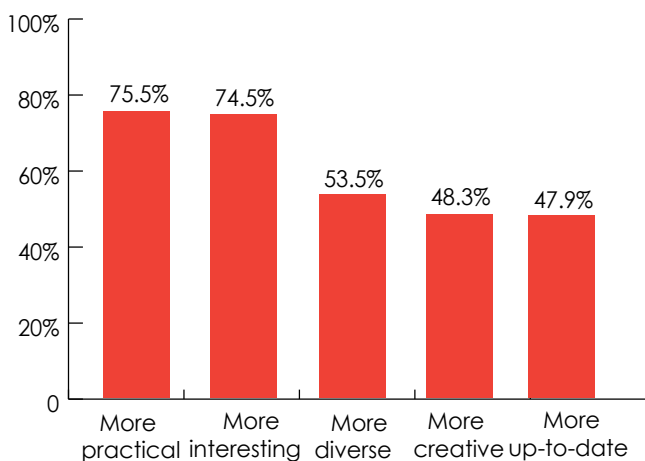
16. The original scores were on the scale from 1 to 5, which were converted to 100-point scores by multiplying them by 20



When the users were asked to choose three improvements they expect from WeSupport, their top responses were 1) make the content more practical, 2) more interesting and 3) diverse (Chart 17). Users' browsing habits when using the WeChat public accounts could pose a challenge to the practicality of the platform. We learned from the interviews that workers tend to read the content in the weekly push messages but do not necessarily browse the actual platform as they might do on a website. This emphasizes the importance of the weekly push messages, which play a crucial role in what content users will read.

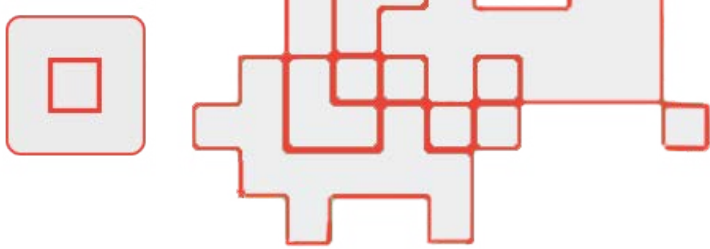
During our interviews we found that users are more likely to share content when they perceive it to be 'funny'. We also found that funny Internet memes are the biggest competitor for the time and attention of the users. Although many interviewees said they found CCR CSR's WeSupport content interesting and relevant, most days after work they just want to relax by watching funny videos/articles. While it may be the general case for many internet users to spend their "leisure time" indulging in lighthearted content, this can also inform the future direction of the content – to inject it with more humor and lightheartedness.

Chart 17: Improvement WeSupport users would like to see



WeChat-based online learning is largely defined by the weekly push messages. In order to compete with other content on WeChat, online learning needs to appeal to users through easy and lighthearted content.



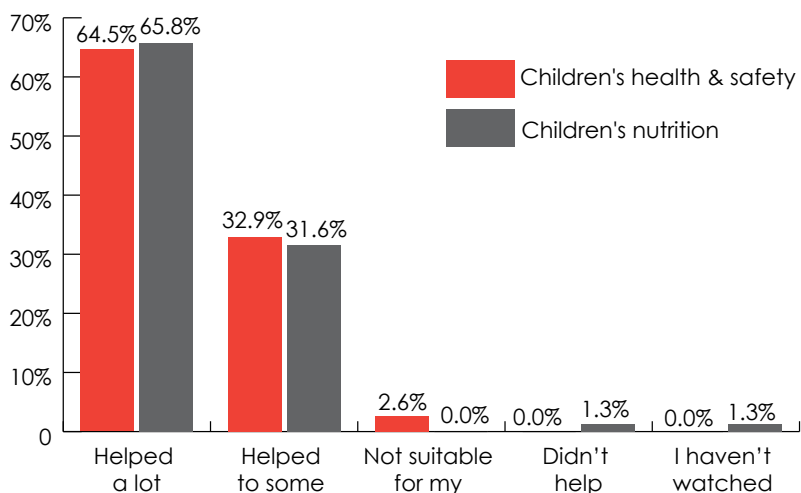


1) Parent Workers

a. Early Childhood Development

31% of the users are parents with young children under the age of six. A major chunk of CCR CSR's WeSupport platform content for working parents is the early childhood development (ECD) series developed by UNICEF. The lessons include videos, quizzes, text and pictures covering topics related to nutrition, health & safety disease prevention. Chart 18 shows how parents of young children found ECD contents useful.¹⁷ Nearly two thirds of the parents found both the health and nutrition content very helpful. Naturally parents with children under six found the ECD content more useful, and among them, the ones who currently live with their children tend to find the lessons more helpful. This is likely linked to the fact that they can apply the tips in the clips much more easily and immediately with their children by their side.

Chart 18: How much did the ECD clips help parents with young children



Even so, the interviews showed that many of the workers with left-behind children do consider the content in the videos to be helpful and pass the learning on to the children's care takers back in their hometowns. Ye Xiaoqin is a typical factory worker who has left her children behind with their grandparents back home. She was inspired by UNICEF's lessons on nutrition, prompting her to encourage her grandparents to introduce healthier options into her children's diet:

The Story of Ye Xiaoqin



Ye Xiaoqin is 28 years old. She has two sons who are six and two years old. Her sons live with their grandparents in their hometown in Yunnan. "I'm constantly worried about their health because they are so spoiled by their grandparents. They eat too much junk food and unhealthy snacks" – said Ye Xiaoqin. But she sounded hopeful that the children's grandparents are slowly replacing the unhealthy snacks with more nutritious food thanks to her persuasion. "I tell them they will grow strong and big if they eat the right food. I make sure to compliment them when their grandparents say they are eating better".

17. Chart 18 displays how useful users found the Working Parents content on CCR CSR's WeSupport platform

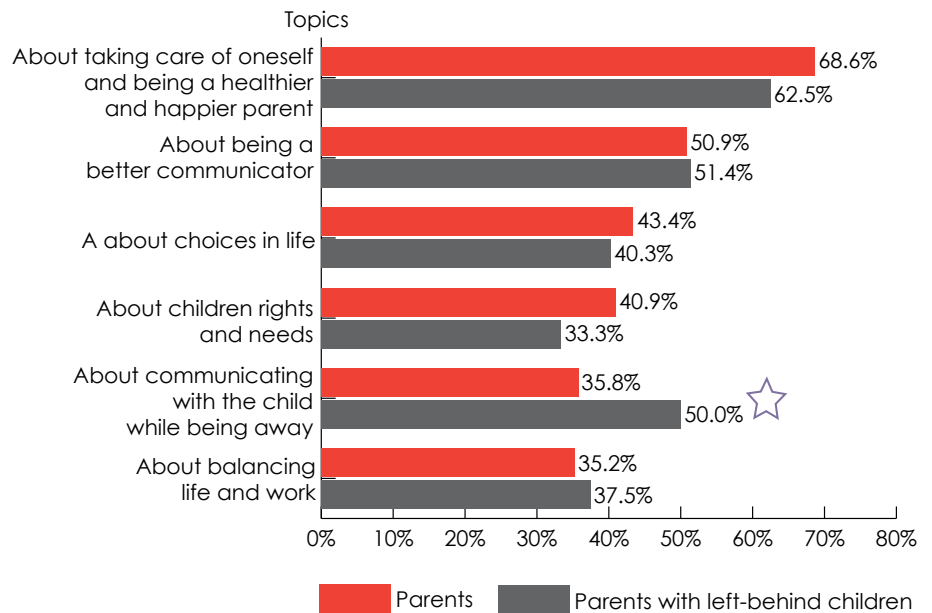
b. Parenting skills

With long working hours and very few holidays, parent workers often miss out on the most crucial moments in their children’s upbringing. Combined with inadequate interaction and communication, this can profoundly affect their work performance and career-related decision making.¹⁸ The parenting lessons on CCR CSR’s WeSupport platform support parent workers, particularly those with left-behind children to help them balance the demands of life and work, and equip them with practical parenting knowledge.

Numerous surveys and interviews conducted by CCR CSR show that most Chinese parents are unaware of the importance of their own wellbeing in maintaining a healthy relationship with their children, especially when they are away and struggle with the guilt of separating from their children. Communication barriers are a frequent problem among parents and children who are separated. Therefore, it is not surprising that the top three favorite topics of parent users are 1) taking care of oneself and being a healthier and happier parent 2) being a better communicator and 3) choices in life (Chart 19). It is also as expected that the parents with left-behind children tend to like the content “communicating with the child while being away” significantly more than the parents who currently live with their children. Also the older their children are, the more likely the parents are to prefer this content.

The majority of parent users reported that parenting lessons very much helped them improve communication with their children, understand them better and build closer relationship with them.

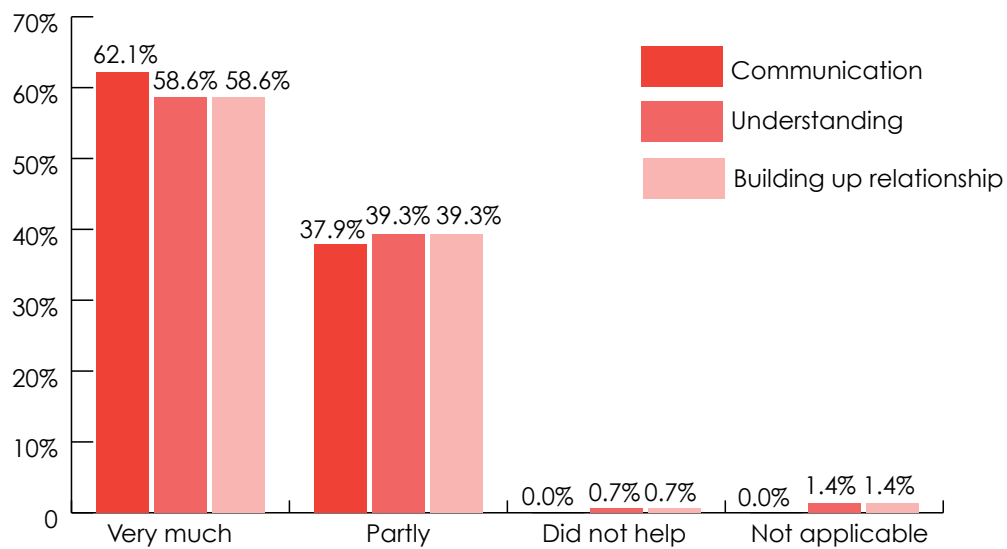
Chart 19: Favorite topics for migrant parents



18. CCR CSR (2013) *They Are Also Parents: CCR CSR Study On Migrant Workers With Left-Behind Children In China* <http://ccrcsr.com/resource/225>

In general, the majority of parent users reported that parenting lessons very much helped them improve communication with their children, understand them better and build a closer relationship with them (Chart 20). While such surveys often trigger positive bias from respondents, the feedback of users clearly indicated positive changes in their awareness and perception, which is the necessary first step towards achieving behavior change. As the survey shows, the majority of parents said that the clips were very helpful and only a handful did not see any benefits. From the interviews we understand that while the impact on knowledge and awareness can be immediate, behavior change takes more time and is an ongoing process.

Chart 20: How much WeSupport helped parents



Li Mei is one of those working parents who is separated from her child due to work and is making a big effort to close the emotional gap created by distance:

The Story of Li Mei

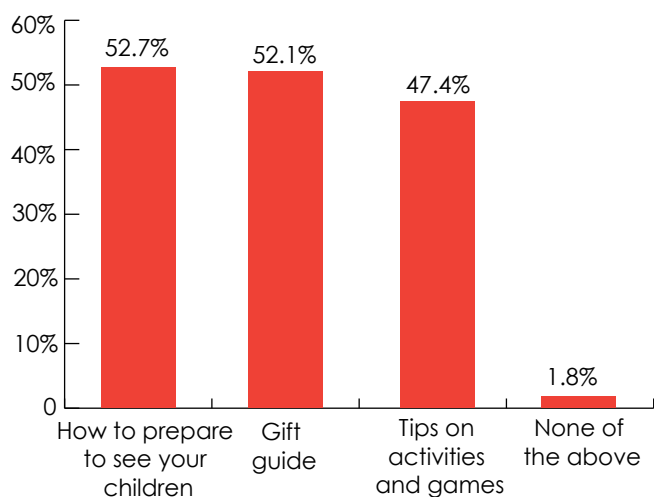


Li Mei is a 37-year-old factory worker. She has an 11 year-old son who lives with his father back home. Li Mei only goes back home twice a year to visit her family, but tries really hard to stay connected with her son. “I video chat with my son as much as possible, but I used to only ask him the same questions about his homework and school...I left like as he was getting older, he didn't want to talk to me so much anymore”, she says. “Recently, I read some contents on the WeSupport platform about effective listening and some “tricks” about different ways to ask questions. I really tried to “experiment” with these tricks whenever I talked to my son... and I think slowly but surely, he is more willing to talk to me.”

c. Holiday Special Edition

Many of the migrant parents only have the opportunity to return home once a year for the Chinese New Year to reunite with their families. For millions of left-behind children, this short period is their best chance to bond with their parents. In order to help migrant parents better prepare for the long-awaited reunion with their children, CCR CSR's WeSupport platform published a series of tips articles in the run-up and during the Chinese New Year. About half of the users found all three topics of the Special Edition most useful (Chart 21).

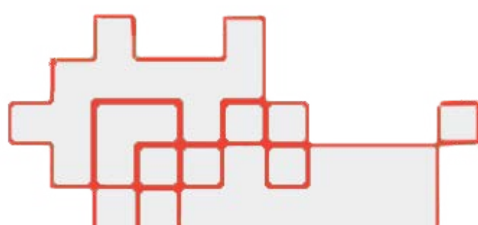
Chart 21: Most useful contents on Holiday Special Edition

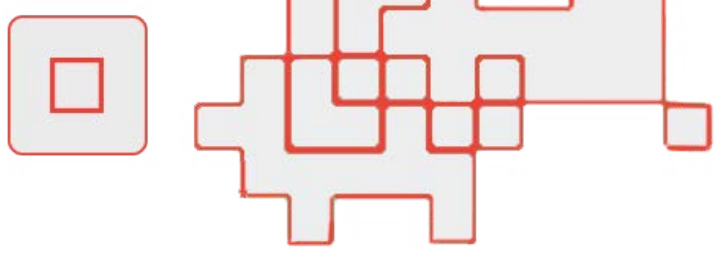


Even though 52% of the parents found the gift guide very useful, only 34% of parents who are not living with their children indicated that when they went back home last time, they chose gifts suitable to their child's age according to the suggestions on CCR CSR's WeSupport platform. 39% of parents said they did activities or played games together with their children recently or the last time they met as recommended by WeSupport. Ye Guofeng is among those parents who are making an effort to connect with their children better using the tips recommended by WeSupport:

The Story of Ye Guofeng

Ye Guofeng is 41 years old. He came to Guangdong from Sichuan when he was 16 and has been a factory worker ever since. He has two sons who are 21 and 11 years old. "I had a very difficult time with my oldest when he reached puberty, so I want to be well prepared and help my younger son go through this special period in his life with ease," he says. "This New Year when I went back home, I used some tips from WeSupport... I made holiday plans with my sons, and took them to see the lantern show instead of the routine visit to relatives' families..." He says he also talked to his youngest son about his New Year's gift and got him a remote controlled toy car instead of only giving him money as usual.

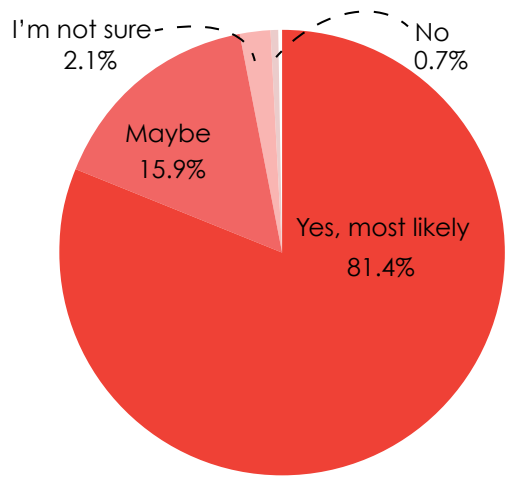




More than 80% of the parents claimed they would most likely continue following the parenting related content on CCR CSR's WeSupport platform. Parents with young children under six are more likely to keep following the WeSupport platform, and so are older workers.

In terms of the content users would like to see on the WeSupport platform in the future, 56% of the users expressed interest in reading content related to parenting. Among the topics they would like to see more of in the future are: 1) communication and relationship (15%), 2) health & safety (14%) and 3) other parenting skills (9%).

Chart 22: Will you continue following the parenting related content?

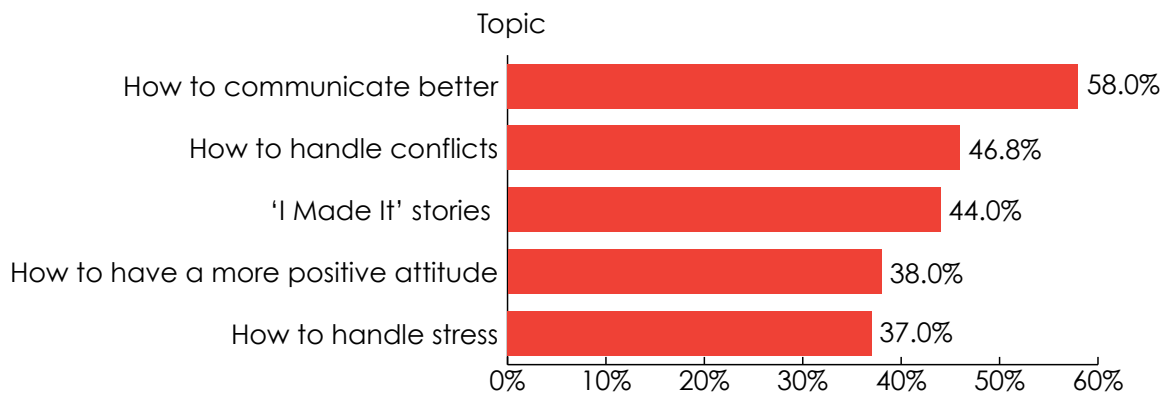


2) Young Workers

Many of today's young workers are second-generation migrant workers who grew up without one or both of their parents. They lack many social skills to integrate well into society, especially communications skills, and often get into fights with their coworkers and line managers. Therefore, it is not surprising that communication is the favorite topic of young workers (Chart 23). Out of all the young worker lessons, around 2/3 (61%) of rural migrants found the lessons related to communication to be their favorite topic. In contrast, 58% of non-rural migrants chose communication as their favorite topic, so this disparity provides some interesting food for thought.

The younger the workers are, the more helpful they found the young worker lessons to be.

Chart 23: Favorite topics for young workers



a. “I Made It” Photo Stories

According to CCR CSR’s study on young workers, less than 20% of young factory workers feel hopeful about their future¹⁹, resulting in a workforce lacking motivation and inclined to have a high turnover rate. The “I Made It” series tells the real-life stories of people who used to be young front-line workers but went on to achieve moderate success in their career. These visual stories aim to motivate young workers by showing that hard work can pay off. 47% of the young workers said the “I Made It” stories very much motivated them. Luo Yu is among those hardworking and ambitious young workers who seek to progress well in their careers and felt motivated by the achievements of the people featured in the “I Made It” stories:

Luo Yu’s Story



Luo Yu is 24 years old. She left her hometown in Sichuan when she was 18 years old after graduating from high school and has since worked at a shoe factory. She knew it was not enough for her and she wanted to have better career development opportunities. So she enrolled in a Procurement and Supply Chain Management course in junior college while still working at the factory. “‘I Made It’ stories gave me a lot of inspiration. I now believe even more firmly that if I keep trying, I will succeed one day. So I will continue my studies...” says Luo Yu. “I’m also making a career development plan as recommended by WeSupport and hope it accelerates progress towards achieving my career goals.”

Young workers were asked about how helpful they found the Young Worker lessons to be in terms of the eight objectives the WeSupport platform aims to achieve. The average score for all eight objectives is 71. Chart 24 shows the average scores young workers gave to each objective out of 100 points.²⁰ The top scores go to 1) identify needs 2) improve relationship with colleagues and 3) stay positive.

Chart 24: Scores for young worker content



19. CCR CSR (2015) *Staying On: A Study On Young Workers In The Electronic Industry* <http://cccsr.com/resource/312>
 20. “Very helpful” was given a score of 100; “Partly helpful” equated to a score of 50. If the answer was “not helpful” or “not applicable”, a score of 0 applied

The average scores of all objectives are significantly correlated with users' age, i.e., among young workers, the younger the workers are, the more helpful they found the young worker lessons to be (Chart 25). Also, the workers from a project factory that incorporated the WeSupport platform's content into their factory's public account found such lessons significantly more helpful than others.

More than 59% of the young workers said they would most likely continue following the young worker related contents on WeSupport, and about 33% said they might do so (Chart 26). Compared to the parent workers, the young workers who are committed to following the related contents are significantly lower (81% v.s 59%). Part of the explanation might be that parents are faced with ongoing and changing challenges with regards to their children, and thus seem to show a stronger need for long-term support.

In terms of content the users would like to see on WeSupport in the future, 60% of the users expressed interest in reading content related to young workers. The topics they would like to see more of in the future include: 1) communication and relationships (16%) 2) psychological wellbeing and positive attitude (13%), 3) work-related skills and knowledge (11%).

Chart 25: Average scores for young worker contents by age

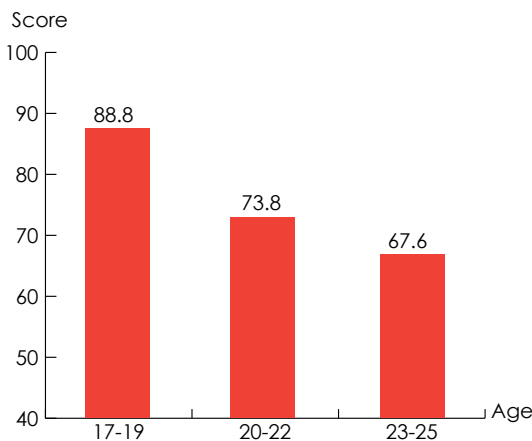
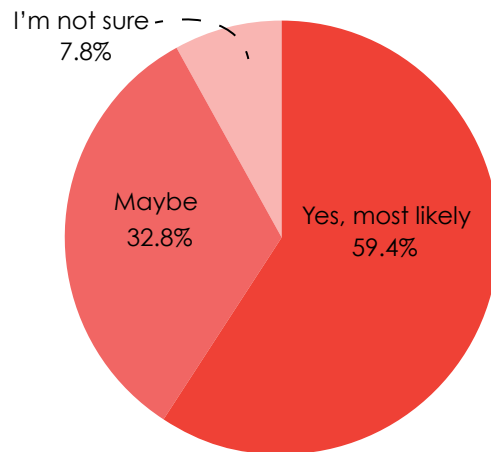


Chart 26: Will you continue following the young worker related content?

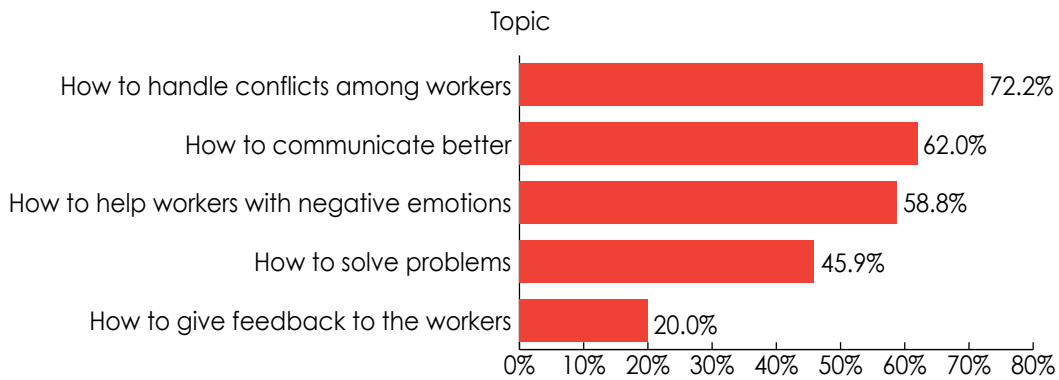


3) Line Managers

Our numerous surveys with workers in the past show that line managers' communication style and their relationship with workers are closely connected to worker satisfaction and retention.²¹ It is also commonly understood that young workers tend to struggle more with communicating with their line managers and other colleagues, and find themselves in conflicts more frequently. Although the line manager lessons on CCR CSR's WeSupport platform were specifically developed for line managers and frontline supervisors who manage young workers aged 16-25, all WeSupport platform subscribers have the option of viewing these lessons and leaving comments. However, for the purpose of this study, we only included the answers of line managers while evaluating the content related to line managers. According to the survey, the top three favorite topics by the line managers are: 1) how to handle conflicts among workers, 2) How to communicate better, and 3) how to help workers with negative emotions (Chart 27).

WeSupport platform lessons are particularly useful for line-managers with a low education background.

Chart 27: Favorite topics for line managers/supervisors



Yang Feng is a line manager who is working to improve his conflict management skills through the tips he got on CCR CSR's WeSupport platform:

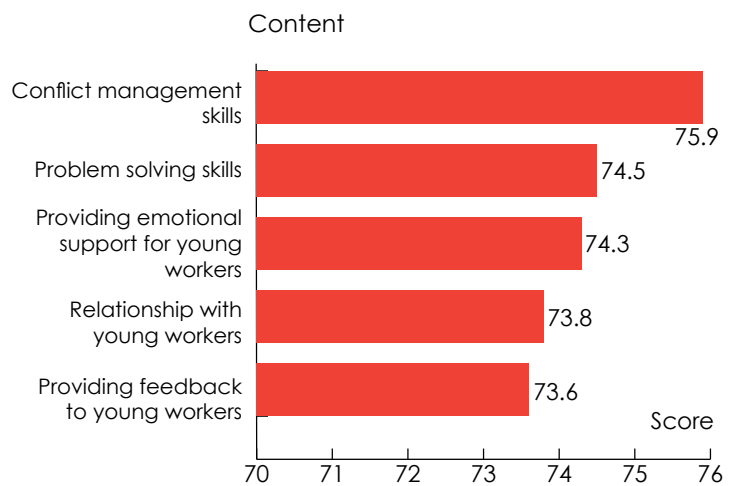
The Story of Yang Feng

Yang Feng, 27, left home when he was 18 to seek work at factories. Last year, he was promoted to be a line manager in charge of over 30 workers. He still feels young and inexperienced. "I got inspired by the WeSupport lesson 'how to be a good line-manager'... Now whenever I find any conflicts among workers, I try to be a mediator. I talk to all sides and encourage them to communicate with each other to deal with any misunderstandings..." he told us.

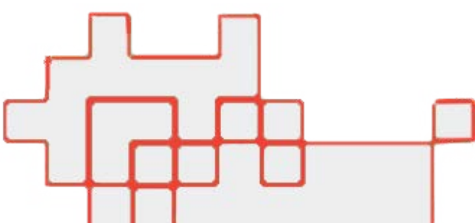


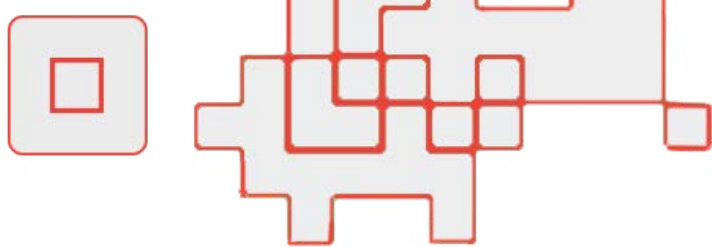
Line managers were asked how helpful they found the line manager lessons to be in terms of five objectives CCR CSR's WeSupport platform aims to achieve. Chart 28 shows the average scores line managers gave to each objective on a scale 1-100.²² The top scores go to 1) conflict management skills 2) problem solving skills and 3) providing emotional support for young workers (Chart 28).

Chart 28: Scores for line manager contents



19. "Very helpful" was given a score of 100; "Partly helpful" equated to a score of 50. If the answer was "not helpful" or "not applicable", a score of 0 applied

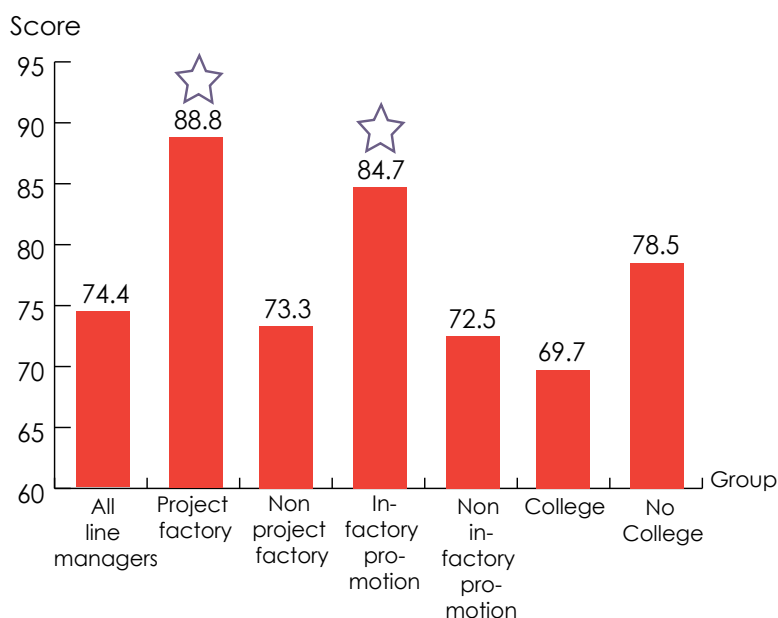




The education levels of line managers are significantly correlated with how helpful they have found the lessons to be: the less educated line managers tend to find CCR CSR's WeSupport platform lessons more useful. Also, the workers who were introduced to CCR CSR's WeSupport platform through factory based training or promotion, and those from a project factory that incorporated the WeSupport contents into their factory's public account found the lessons significantly more helpful (Chart 29).

In terms of content users would like to see more of on CCR CSR's WeSupport platform in the future, 62% expressed interest in reading contents related to line managers. The top topics they would like to see more of in the future are: 1) communications and relationship (23%) 2) management skills (19%) and 3) psychological wellbeing and positive attitude (6%).

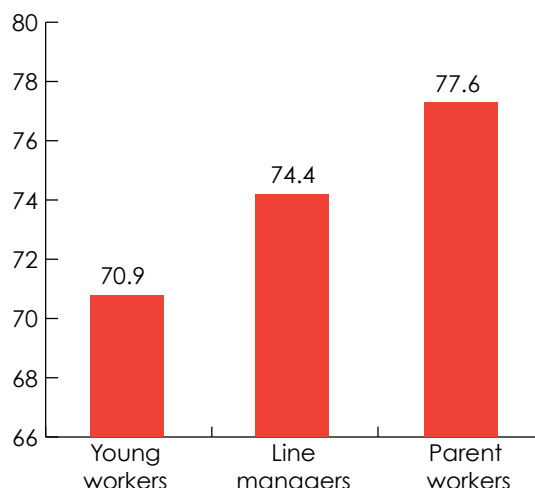
Chart 29: Average scores for line managers/supervisors



4) Different impact of targeted lessons

The study observed that the impact of different targeted lessons varied: working parents gave the highest scores to lessons while young workers gave the lowest scores (Chart 30). This likely reflects the fact that many parents do feel in need of support while for young workers that need might not be so self-evident. Furthermore, this result is likely a reflection of the fact that most investment has been going into the lessons for parent workers both in terms of quality and quantity. In contrast, young worker related contents are still under development and currently only around 10 lessons are available.

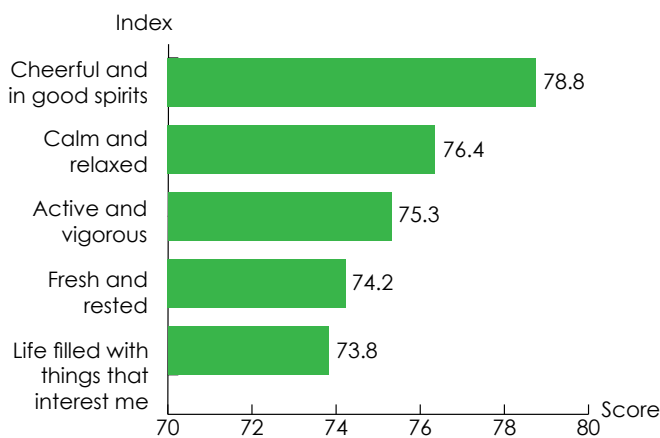
Chart 30: Average scores of targeted audience



IV. PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

We used the 5-item World Health Organization Well-Being Index (WHO-5) to measure the psychological wellbeing of surveyed workers.²³ On average, they scored 76 out of 100. Graph X breaks down the scores for the 5 items.

Chart 31: Scores for WHO-5 Index



The overall psychological wellbeing of the surveyed workers are significantly correlated with their age, meaning the older they are, the higher they scored on the WHO-5 index; in other words, younger workers tend to be less happy. Another connection is the education level: workers with lower education levels tend to be happier than those with higher education levels. This could potentially indicate the frustration of some workers who have more potential but much fewer opportunities to develop their careers.

A very interesting finding is the fact that the impact of WeChat and CCR CSR's WeSupport platform is significantly correlated with psychological wellbeing, i.e. the more users found WeChat and the WeSupport platform

The users who found CCR CSR's WeSupport platform more helpful tended to be happier.



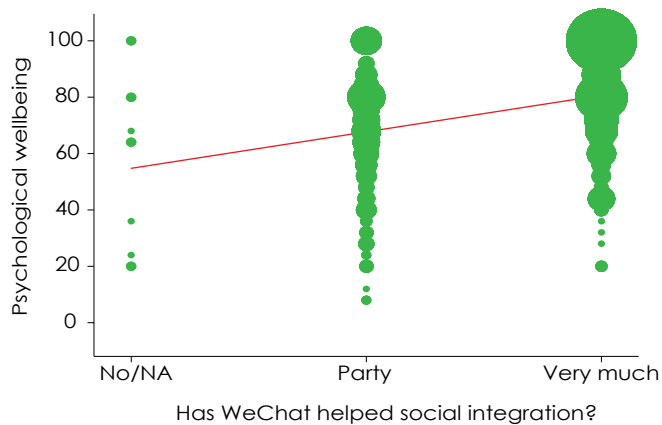
helpful, the higher they tend to score on psychological wellbeing (Chart 32). When we analyzed the feedback of the different WeSupport platform modules, we found similar correlations. For example, parents who found the parenting lessons more helpful tend to be happier in general; when young workers found the related topics more helpful, they tend to score higher in psychological wellbeing index; and when line managers found the topics more useful to them, they also had higher scores for psychological wellbeing.

23. WHO-5 used a 5-scale scoring system ranging from "All of the time" (5) to "At no time" (0). We converted the scores into 100-point scores



Chart 32: Psychological wellbeing and user feedback

A: Psychological wellbeing v.s. social integration through WeChat



B: Psychological wellbeing v.s. WeSupport lessons



While it is fair to assume that such results could be biased by happier users being more “optimistic” about the positive impact of WeChat and CCR CSR’s WeSupport platform, we might be able to implicate, with reservation, that the correlation between psychological wellbeing and the frequency of using WeChat public accounts and the WeSupport platform could indicate that workers with easier access to knowledge and information have the potential to improve their mental health and quality of life.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal of this study was to understand the initial impact of CCR CSR’s WeSupport platform on workers, and the gaps in meeting users’ needs in order to make the platform a truly effective learning tool for factory/migrant workers. In order to reach this goal, we looked at the different characteristics, online habits and interests of WeSupport users, and found connections between those differences and their age, education level

and rural migration status. We also measured the effectiveness of WeChat in helping them integrate into society in a new location and the initial impact of the WeSupport platform on workers’ lives and work.

The following points summarize some key characteristics and differences of CCR CSR’s WeSupport platform users:

1) WeSupport users have significantly higher education levels compared to other migrant/factory workers. Also, female users and those with higher education levels tend to subscribe to more WeChat public accounts, while rural migrants subscribe to fewer accounts. These differences highlight the varying habits of people's WeChat usage. For example, 45% of the users found "obtaining knowledge and information" to be the most useful function of WeChat. It is interesting to note that female users regard this function of online learning significantly more useful than their male counterparts.

2) Only 26% of the users subscribed to CCR CSR's WeSupport platform through in-factory promotion, while 43% joined through recommendation by a friend. While this points to the potential of WeChat-based eLearning to reach a large number of users beyond the scope of project factories, we also found that the workers who were introduced to WeSupport through in-factory promotion utilize the platform more frequently and find it more effective.

3) Higher than average education levels of WeSupport platform users points to a challenge: that it may be more difficult for workers with lower education levels to access and utilize eLearning platforms. However, it can also be a potential opportunity for such users as they are significantly more active on the WeSupport platform than their better-educated peers. This result indicates that the content of the WeSupport platform is appealing to workers with lower education once they are introduced to the platform, even though they are not used to accessing knowledge and information through such channels. If we link this to the fact that peers are the key channel to introducing the WeSupport platform and that peers often share content with people similar to their own background, we can conclude that new innovative ways are needed to lower the hurdles for workers with lower education to

access WeChat-based learning.

In general, we can conclude that WeChat played an important role in helping migrant workers better integrate into society, both from a social aspect and from a personal development point of view. In terms of social networks, we learned from both the survey and interviews that WeChat made it easier for users to make new friends and enrich their social life. It is not surprising that male users are more likely to use it for expanding their social network than females. As for personal development, CCR CSR's WeSupport eLearning platform on WeChat had a significant impact on workers' integration into society.

We found that in just over a year since its launch in June 2015, the WeSupport platform has had a positive impact on factory workers. While such surveys often trigger positive bias from respondents, the feedback of users clearly indicates positive changes in their awareness and perception, which is the necessary first step towards achieving behavior change. For example, the majority of parent users reported that parenting lessons very much helped them improve communication with their children, and helped foster closer bonds between them. In conclusion, the survey highlights the fact that when eLearning content and style speaks to and attracts workers, WeChat possesses the potential to become an indispensable tool for migrant workers with low-education levels in terms of social integration, increasing awareness, gaining knowledge and support.



APPENDICES

CASE STORIES

Story 1: Migrant Parent Worker – WeChat’s indispensable role in communication and learning

Liu Fanghua, a 29-year-old factory employee and mother of a four-year-old son has come to learn about the importance of communication and accessing knowledge in her role as a responsible parent.

Since the past six years Fanghua has been working in the material inspection section of a factory in Chongqing, not too far from her hometown in Changzhou County. She works on morning and night shifts that rotate on a monthly basis, and has worked her way up to a managerial position. Although the pay is not as good as some of her previous jobs, she feels fortunate because it enables her to live with her son every second month. During the night shift, Fanghua stays in the factory dorm while her son is taken care of by his grandparents and father. Her husband is also tied up with work and rarely comes home early. As a result, her grandparents play an indispensable role in her son's upbringing.

“I trust my parents when it comes to feeding my son and keeping him warm and sound, but I think there is huge difference when it comes to parenting styles as their style is seemingly outdated”, says Fanghua. The boy's grandparents always keep him inside instead of letting him play outdoors with other children, as they are afraid of him having an accident or sustaining unnecessary injuries”, she explains. “I think this definitely affects his personality and development of social skills, so I take him out a lot to parks and friend gatherings whenever I get a chance”.

Fanghua's concerns are not uncommon – a gaping generational gap exists between many parents and their elderly parents, particularly vis-à-vis parenting and access to information.

Fanghua, like many, considers WeChat her favorite app. She spends most of her free time browsing "Moments" for updates from her friends, reading articles on parenting and child education from several WeChat public accounts and video chatting with families and friends.

During a CCR CSR face-to-face parenting training session in her factory in July 2015, Fanghua learned about the WeSupport eLearning platform on WeChat and started using it. “I learnt so many useful tips about remote parenting and communication in that session that I scanned the CCR CSR's WeChat QR code as soon as I knew that more e-courses and weekly posts are available on that platform” Fanghua said in the interview.

Since Fanghua only returns home every second month, WeChat has become an important tool in maintaining frequent contact with her son. She uses the video chat function twice a week to communicate with him. Lessons like “Effective long distance communication” and “How to make most use of gathering time” on the WeSupport eLearning platform have given her practical guidance on remote parenting, dealing with hard situations and building trust with her child.

"I know communication plays a crucial role in children's development. If I don't talk to him often while I am not present in his daily life, this will leave a deep psychological impact on his future life and his personality will not be that pleasant. As parents, we should respect and pay attention to our children's thoughts, encouraging them to think independently. Although my son is still very young, when I call, we mainly talk about whether he has had a nice day in kindergarten, what he did, where he wants to go on the weekend. Although they are very casual conversations, they definitely help build up trust and the close relation with my son, so he can grow up without the regret of not having a mother in his life."

Faced with an overwhelming amount of information online, she also finds relief in the knowledge based Early Childhood Development contents provided by trustworthy sources like UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. These tips on nutrition and health are carefully selected and presented in an easy-to-understand and engaging way. Fanghua said: "As a parent, I feel I don't have enough knowledge on health and nutrition and our parents still hold many wrong nursing and caring concepts from old times. Therefore every time my kid gets sick, I will ask my husband to take care him and I look for possible treatments through platforms like CCR CSR's eLearning platform on WeChat or other high credibility sources. If he gets seriously ill, we will send him to hospital."

Every time Fanghua reads brilliant parenting tips, she shares it in her "Moments" with friends. "We are too busy to learn parenting knowledge systematically, but whenever and wherever we are free, even if it's just for 5 minutes, we click on WeChat and learn some practical modern parenting skills. I hope CCR CSR can push more posts on a more frequent basis," Fanghua tells us.

Story 2: Migrant Parent Worker – Dad prepares for son’s puberty via WeSupport lessons

Ye Guofeng, now 41, left his hometown in Sichuan Province to work at the tender age of 16 and knows about the trials and tribulations of being a pubescent, young teenager all too well: once he experienced it himself, another time he relived the struggles through his oldest son. Through experience and reflection, Guofeng has slowly come to learn how to shield his youngest son from similar struggles, and WeChat has come to play an important role in this learning process.

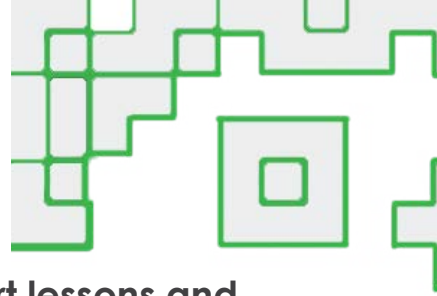
Guofeng's sons are 21 and 11 years old respectively, with the oldest son having followed in his dad's footsteps by taking up a job in the same factory. His 11-year-old has stayed behind in the hometown and is being cared for by his grandparents. As visiting his son requires a 30-hour-train-ride plus an extra bus transfer, Guofeng can only visit his younger son and parents once or twice a year. WeChat, with its multiple functions in video chatting, photo sharing and friends' updates, has become the family's chosen communication tool. Knowing that Guofeng has Wi-Fi in his dormitory at the factory, his parents also installed Wi-Fi at home so that they can video chat with him more often.

Guofeng's son spent most of his childhood and teenage years without his father present, and was often found drunk or hanging out with dubious gangs when he hit puberty. Not surprisingly, his grades in school dropped dramatically during that time. Guofeng remembers worrying a lot about not being there to discipline him and getting him back on track. He also remembers the pain of feeling like an incompetent parent. He sorely regrets not paying enough attention to parenthood during that time.

But with his 11-year-old son, Guofeng sees a chance to do better. Although he's still a couple of years off from puberty, Guofeng has already begun to equip himself with knowledge to help him better support and guide his son through those turning-point years. The post “21 Tips for Parents” on the WeSupport platform has empowered Guofeng with his parenting decisions. “I’m trying to create a household where everyone has a say. Because I’m not home all year round, my parents have taken over the responsibility to discipline and educate my youngest son. Due to the huge age gap and difference in communication style, the boy does not always listen to his grandparents, which used to worry me a lot. But after reading the WeChat lessons, I realized that I should encourage my son to express his own opinions,” Guofeng says.

Whenever he sees a chance, Guofeng tries to impart his ideas onto his parents in the hope that they will allow the boy to have a greater say, especially when it comes to decisions that affect him directly. And Guofeng himself has changed the way he treats his youngest. When Guofeng went home for the Spring Festival last year he asked his son what he would like to do, rather than just impose the usual routine on him. For the first time, father and son went to see a lantern exhibition together, breaking the usual routine of always just hopping from one relative's house to the other. Likewise, Guofeng asked his son what he'd like for Spring Festival rather than just squeeze a red envelope into his hands. After hearing his son's gift wish list, Guofeng went ahead and bought him a remote control car.

In the future, Guofeng hopes to spend more time with his sons, witnessing their growth and development first hand. He will continue to work in the current factory for another two or three years until he has earned enough money and then he plans to move back to the hometown to start his own business. Despite the fact that remote communication is much more convenient these days, Guofeng still wants to be present when his younger son enters puberty, so that he can guide and accompany him through the journey and fulfil his duties as a parent.



Story 3: Young Worker – Staying positive through WeSupport lessons and Wechat’s social functions

When Bi Xinlian was 13 years old she boldly decided to quit school and head off to the east coast to search for work. Leaving behind her hometown in Sichuan Province she found work in a small family-operated workshop that resembled something of a plastic factory. Working at such a young age coupled with her lack of schooling influenced her performance at work and her sense of discipline.

Now 24 years old, Xinlian recalls skipping work shifts to hang out with friends whenever she felt tired. The friendships she made were clearly an important influence in her life. When in 2009 she decided to head for China's manufacturing hub Dongguan, it was her friends who introduced her to the assembly line position she still holds today. Carving out new friendship circles was just as important to her in Dongguan as it was in Fujian, and with most workers around the same age as her, she had no problems finding a peer group to share her favorite past-times with: shopping and hanging out.

When Xinlian had a baby she moved out from the factory into a rented apartment nearby, but being a major breadwinner, she felt out of options when it came to daycare. With no job opportunities in her hometown in Sichuan, she made the difficult decision of leaving her baby girl with her parents. Knowing that she could only make the 36-hour journey back to her hometown once a year, WeChat quickly became the best tool for connecting and interacting with the family.

Xinlian taught her father, who is the only mobile phone user in her family, how to use messaging, video chat and the “Moments” function in WeChat, so that she is kept posted about the family's wellbeing. Although Xinlian doesn't have a good data plan, she always saves enough data to talk to her family and exchange photos. Since she is under a lot of pressure work, WeChat public account providing funny video clips, entertainment gossip and Tencent News are among her favorites.

Xinlian was introduced to the young worker lessons through her factory's WeChat public account. She thinks that unlike the other eLearning courses, the Young Worker lessons depict real life situations through comic strips, and give practical instructions and advice to young workers about communication, conflicts resolution, stress relief and such. Xinlian is especially inspired by the tips on “how to stay positive”: “I was very young when I started working and lived alone by myself. I remember I was desperate to maintain a good relationship with colleagues at work. However, conflicts did happen and I lost my temper. I didn't know who to talk to. My then boyfriend (now husband) was my only comfort. As I grew up and after reading the posts, I realized that a positive and encouraging attitude is very important at work. If we helped and respected each other at work, we could all be happier and more efficient, and even earn more money. It is a win-win strategy. I hope I can be the sunshine of my line, where I can shine through the dark moments and provide my fellow colleagues with rays of happiness during the long work hours.”

When conflicts happen, Xinlian learned to first calm herself down, think from the other party's perspective as suggested by “How to deal with conflicts and criticism”, and to not say angry words out of impulse. She says snacks have become her weapon against negative thoughts.

As for future plans, Xinlian would like to continue working in this factory for 1-2 more years, then go back to her hometown to have a second baby. “Then I would consider working in a restaurant or a shopping mall near my home as my parents are getting older and I do not want to leave my two babies with them.”



Case Story 4: Line Manager – WeChat and WeSupport lessons a helping hand in managing young workers

Liu Qifang, 47, understands the struggles and hardships faced by line workers all too well, especially those separated from their kids. Her working life began at the age of 17 when she left her hometown in Hunan Province to take up a job at a glove-making factory. Between her role as a factory worker, Qifang managed to raise two kids who are now enrolled in college. Since 2007, Qifang has been working as a line manager at a ceramics factory in Dongguan, where she lives in a Wi-Fi covered factory dorm with her husband.

WeChat is one of the few apps Qifang has on her smart phone. At the very beginning, very few of her same-aged friends used WeChat, as most of them were like her: not adept at using smart phones. But when she saw how young people were using WeChat to message and video chat with their families, she decided to give it a go. As she works far away from home, Qifang rarely gets to see her kids. WeChat however, helps to bridge the distance. Before she got the app, her communication with her kids was limited to one call a week. Now she hears their voice, reads their messages and sees their photos on a daily basis. She's thrilled that she can be in touch with her children on a daily basis.

What's more, WeChat has become an indispensable communication aid to her. Thanks to WeChat, she now interacts with friends more and she uses it to send messages to workers when it's not so appropriate to talk to them about certain issues face-to-face. "This method helps to avoid unnecessary conflicts and misunderstandings," she tells us.

Qifang now directly supervises 47 workers on her line; among them are five workers under the age of 25. When we asked her whether she has encountered any difficulties with managing the young workers, she replied: "Management is a kind of art. If you are doing it from your heart, it is not difficult at all. But if you are not focused, you may get lost."

CCR CSR's posts on line managers are among the few articles she has read on WeChat. She says these have given her great inspiration in management and communication and she feels they can be applied in practice. According to Qifang, the relationship between her and the young workers is very good, which she believes is due to her communication style: "I always explain to them very patiently when they have technical problems at work. When they have done a good job, I will praise and encourage them at the morning meeting." Qifang rarely has conflicts with her workers. Whenever there is a problem, she reports it to her supervisor and together they pragmatically solve the problem, thus avoiding wasting time on futile arguments.

Being so far away from home and new to the factory environment, Qifang thinks it is very normal for the young workers to have negative emotions from time to time. When she notices that workers are depressed or not concentrating on work, she gives them a buffer period, some space and she makes sure not to blow the issue up in front of other workers. She then talks to the young workers in private, allows them to speak out and then finds an appropriate solution. Quite often, the problem is that young workers think their tasks are much harder than others and that they have to put in so much more effort than others. This perception leads them to believe that they are not fairly treated and results in negative attitudes. In such situations, Qifang will adjust the work arrangement and rotate their tasks so that everyone can learn new skills and share the workload.

Case Story 5: Line Manager – Effectively dealing with conflict and communicating with workers through WeChat

Xiao Pengfei, a 42-year-old line manager originally from Anhui Province, has put the tips from CCR CSR's WeSupport WeChat platform to good use at his factory.

On a personal level, WeChat has helped him stay connected with his family. He has spent the past 15 years working at the same factory in Dongguan, while his wife is back in the hometown taking care of their elderly parents and his son is off in college in Hunan Province. Pengfei lives in a dorm by himself where free Wi-Fi is provided, thus making it easy for him to stay in touch with family during his spare time.

But during the interview, Pengfei stresses the importance of WeChat in his work as a line manager. "As all workers on my line have installed WeChat, I established a WeChat group with them to pass down all policies from top management and to organize dining out and activities at the weekend. This method of communication seems to be more accepted by young worker and workers provide much clearer feedback on each matter," he says.

According to Pengfei, many young workers these days have a greater plethora of life choices available than them and are under less economic pressure. He believes the majority of young workers have chosen to work in the factory at such a young age not out of economic necessity, but because they don't want to finish school. They are much more free-spirited and often skip out on overtime shifts during peak season when they so please. Pengfei thinks that because of the age difference between young workers and their older counter parts, line managers have to spend more time guiding the young workers. As the lesson on "How to be a good line manager" on CCR CSR's WeChat Platform outlines, the manager of each production line should not only be the "technical advisor" answering technical questions, he/she should also regularly strive to improve their own management styles, advise employees on how they can improve, take time to understand what their workers are really thinking, explain the purpose of each requirement and guide workers in the right direction.

Having worked as a line manager for over ten years, Pengfei has been constantly reviewing his management style and taking part in courses to improve his management skills. CCR CSR's WeChat post "How to deal with conflicts with workers?" has left Pengfei with a deep impression as he has used some of the tips in practice.

Not so long ago, a new employee was transferred to Pengfei's line from another line and many of the products he made failed the quality test. Pengfei went on to ask the reason and the worker replied: "This is how I do my work". This answer provoked Pengfei, causing him to criticize the workers' attitude in front of other workers. This only made the situation worse. This worker claimed that his products were like this on other lines too and questioned whether Pengfei had a personal issue with him. They kept on quarreling for several minutes until Pengfei suddenly recalled the tips in the WeChat post. "I calmed down and realized that only when we are both calm, will we find a solution. So I apologized to him and asked him to disregard my bad temper before." Pengfei then calmly emphasized that although his initial tone was wrong, the quality of the products is very important and is their promise to the factory and brand.

After hearing Pengfei's apology, the worker calmed down and began to listen to Pengfei's suggestion on how to improve the quality of his products. Since then, the worker has been performing very well and all his products have passed the quality test.



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