Management of Information Communication Mechanism in Colleges and Universities — Based on the Perspective of WeChat Work Group

Junhong Chang

Abstract—**WeChat is a convenient means of information and communication nowadays, which can provide functions such as group chat, public platform, friends circle, and message spreading. WeChat group is widely used in the working environment of colleges and universities, greatly improving the communication efficiency as well as making up for the shortcomings of the formal communication mechanism, but it also causes problems like inefficiency and poor security of information management. A sound and efficient information and communication mechanism for organizations could be established by taking the formal communication network as the leading role and strengthening the management of WeChat group.[1]**

Index Terms—**Management, communication, WeChat.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication refers to the process of effectively transmitting information between two parties. As an information sharing activity, communication enables information transmission and opinion expression, and the relationship among people, between organizations and people can be concluded and changed [1]. Effective communication includes mutual understanding of the ideas of both parties. In the process of communication, the transmission of information will be affected by different levels of noise, which will cause communication inefficiency. Some of noise is caused by communication media, such as the use of communication tools.

Communication plays a critical role in organizational management [2]. An organization cannot be managed without it. In organizational communication, formal communication and informal communication coexist. Formal communication is oriented to organizational structure, where information flows along the formal management hierarchy, and can be divided into upward communication, downward communication, and parallel communication [3]. Some specific forms include chain communication, wheeled communication and full channel communication. Informal communication is the main method of interpersonal communication, which is based on interpersonal relationships, where information flow is usually random. In organizational management, formal communication is the main focus, while informal communication is supplemented. Because formal organizational management must follow the formal regulation of the organization system, being formal is the

basic feature of the organizational structure. Informal communication is more suitable for daily interpersonal interactions, which won't be limited by time, place and environment. It is fast, wide-ranging, flexible and diverse, and has the characteristics of randomness and openness, promoting interpersonal interactions and sharing of feelings.

WeChat is a widely used information communication method that improves the efficiency of interpersonal communication. It is widely used in China, providing very convenient information transmission by means of mobile phones, verbal and non-verbal communication. Many people have begun using it in work to improve efficiency. Because of the nature of WeChat, it is easier to build an informal communication environment. In WeChat, members are often more able to express their true thoughts and will, and get some compensatory satisfaction from their needs [4].

Colleges and universities are institutions that combine administrative and teaching research, where teaching and research work may not be required in office. The use of WeChat in college employees reflects the advantage of virtual information management, which can break the time and space constraints and process working information in a timely manner. However, the WeChat group will also cause problems and obstacles to the work. This paper takes a university as an example to discuss the use and existing problems of the WeChat group in the organizational communication mechanism, and proposes solutions.

II. THE FORMAL COMMUNICATION MECHANISM OF IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Colleges and universities, like any other social organizations, are systems consisting of people, things, and information. The management of colleges and universities is the management of several internal subsystems. The subsystems of colleges and universities include various ministries and departments under different colleges [5]. The Office Automation (OA) system is now widely used in many colleges and universities for daily office operation and coordination of various systems. The OA system is generally divided into personal space and school portal. The personal space layout has personal related work modules, such as to-do work and work schedule, while the school portal has announcement notices, school news, scientific research activities and so on. The OA system can be accessed through various methods such as browser, APP, WeChat, but under normal circumstances, the information obtained through browser access is relatively complete, and

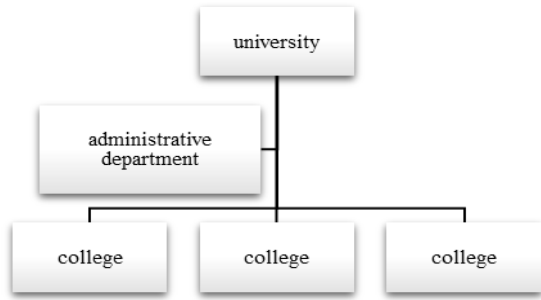the processing of information is more convenient.

Fig. 1. Organizational structure of universities.

Fig. 1 shows the basic organizational structure of a university. The administrative departments include the school office, the finance department, and the personnel office. Each college is mainly responsible for various teaching activities. It is the main unit of school work and implements the system of director responsibility.
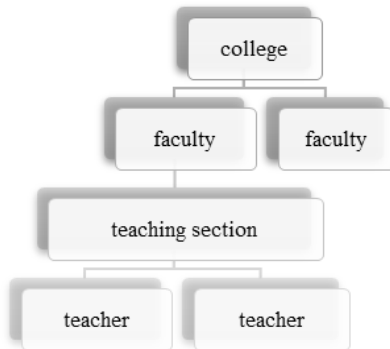

Fig. 2. Organizational structure of colleges.

Fig. 2 shows the organizational structure of a college. Each department is responsible for the teaching management of the subject class, and the department head is responsible for the whole teaching affairs. The teaching and research section is a basic teaching unit, and the director of it is responsible for managing the teaching and research activities of professional teachers. The figures above are the organizational structure of the common teaching and research sections in universities. Most of the work in colleges can be done by the distribution and procession of information through the OA system. The information flow basically follows the principle of upward, downward, parallel communication.

III. THE USE OF WECHAT GROUP IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

While formal communication mechanisms work well, informal communication is an indispensable means of communication in organizational communication. As a popular social software, WeChat is a free application launched by Tencent on January 21, 2011 to provide instant messaging services for smart terminals. It supports fast sending of free SMS (video consumption, video and image) over the network via cross-operating operators and cross-operating system platforms. It can also use data and location-based service plug-ins that share streaming content [6].

In order to facilitate information management in colleges, each department sets up a different WeChat working group for processing working information. For example, different WeChat groups have been established for all staff in the university, all administrative departments, all staff in different colleges, different faculties, different teaching sections, and so on.

When the university has the task to arrange, generally, the information is first sent to all colleges by the various administrative departments, and then to all faculties group, then all the teachers group. The secretaries of departments will also send the message to all directors in all faculties and teaching sections.

Fig. 3. WeChat group information for directors of faculties.

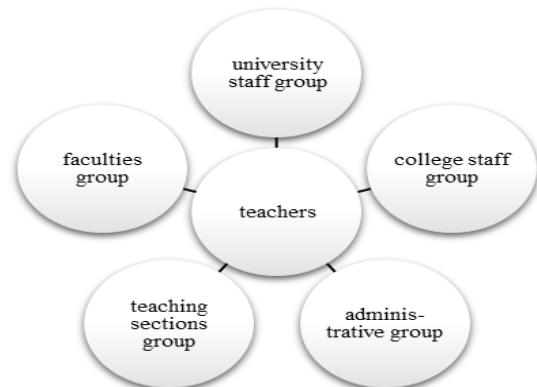Fig. 4. WeChat group information for directors of teaching sections.

Fig. 5. WeChat group information for teachers.

As shown in Fig. 3, Fig. 4 and Fig. 5, the directors of faculties will receive the same messages twice, and the director of the teaching and research sections will receive thrice. The teacher will receive information from all the staff group, directors of faculties, and directors of the teaching sections, and even in the university staff group and administrative department group for certain information.

IV. The Characteristics of the WeChat Group Communication Mechanism

A. Advantages

A proper communication medium is important to the process of communication. WeChat can be used anytime and anywhere because it is bundled with mobile phones. It is rich in functions with convenient written communication, verbal communication, and video dialogue. Faculty employees can fully exchange information through WeChat group. Due to the overlapping nature of formal communication and informal communication, informal communication network established through WeChat may play a role through the structure and function of the formal communication network. This information transmission mechanism can break the level restriction and accelerate the information flow, reduce communication links and levels, facilitate and diverse forms, improve the communication efficiency, and enhance the link between employees at all levels. For the superior leaders, it is also convenient to use WeChat to observe the performance of the subordinates at work, understand the faculty's demands more easily, create a sense of fairness and identity among the faculty and staff, coordinate and balance the interests of all parties, enhance their participation and sense of joy, improve the quality of management decision-making, and promote the implementation of the decision. In addition, with respect to traditional telephone communication, WeChat uses network resources with lower cost, making it more easily to be recognized by employees, as shown in Table I.

TABLE I: COMPARISON OF WECHAT COMMUNICATION METHODS AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION METHODS

	Speed	Cost	Satisfaction
Traditional communication method	Slow	High	Low
WeChat communication method	Fast	Low	High

B. Disadvantages

For most employees, information processing is repeated from different WeChat group, resulting in communication noise, reducing the importance of the meaning of working information, weakening the principle of uniformity of management. The actual processing of the transaction needs to be arranged through the direct manager. In colleges, information flows across different levels, which would disturb teachers. Take an information of an academic research conference as an example, teachers will receive it from university, colleges, faculties, director of the departments, and so on. Teachers will be deeply disturbed and tired. The processing efficiency for transactions is also reduced.

Now, because each college generally use WeChat group to communicate for office work, employees rarely use the OA system for information, and almost all the information sent by the university depends on the information transmitted in the various working groups. If some information is sent through formal channels, teachers will miss that information and the progress of work will be affected. Although the WeChat group provides convenient communication, it is not an official communication tool.

The product design and features of the software does not have a personal social security for office, such as the withdrawal of delayed messages or the private dense telephone. The inconvenient storage function of WeChat files also makes information easy to lose. For example, some WeChat files are easy to lose if they are not downloaded immediately. In addition, social software generally does not take into account a specific appeal of the user as a job, such as meeting invitations, instant message reminders, etc. More consideration is brought to the user experience in the chat.

As for the environmental security of products, formal office software is built for the special environment of office, while the environment construction of social software is difficult to fully consider that special environment needs of office [7]. Therefore, once the information is mistakenly sent in the WeChat group, it will cause a lot of pressure.

In addition, due to the freedom of the WeChat group, some teachers and staff also use the WeChat group to distribute a variety of information, including news reports that are forwarded from the mainstream media, policies issued by relevant state departments, and online media content transmission, as shown in Table II.

TABLE II: COMPARISON OF WECHAT COMMUNICATION AND OA OFFICE SYSTEM COMMUNICATION

	Communication Noise	Security	Relativity
WeChat	More	Weak	Weak
OA system	Less	Strong	Strong

V. The Advice on Improving WeChat Group Information Management

A. Establish the Dominant Position of the Formal Communication Mechanism

Formal communication is organized at the formal organizational level. In practice, colleges and universities should follow the management practices of the OA system, mainly based on the formal communication of hierarchical principles, and establish the scope of the WeChat working group and clear the role of group positioning tasks. Cross-level work groups, such as employee groups and department groups, are more suitable for informal information transfer, but information about related work should not be sent here, and information is conveyed by hierarchical workflow tasks, so simple maintenance manage the unified command principles. Once the work is complete, the temporary task group should be removed immediately to avoid resetting the group task. In this way, the teacher's self-worth pursuit and spiritual pleasure can be highly satisfied, and the school's democratic management can be realized [8].

B. Strengthen the Security of WeChat Information

The transmission of WeChat information is random and can easily spread through informal channels. So formal document information should not be sent in a WeChat group, but sent using the OA system, which is due to security work, but also to stress the importance of the work of the task. WeChat has a message reminder function and a

timely feedback function to remind staff to check the office system information in a timely manner. Relevant staff can exchange some work details in WeChat to improve information processing efficiency.

C. Strengthen the Management of the WeChat Group

All levels of colleges and universities should do a good job in the management of WeChat groups at all levels. All departments at all levels shall formulate WeChat group management rules according to the main post training group, and establish a working group of the main working group responsible for the school supervision department system. The current status of the working group shall be checked regularly. The main group also regularly checks group dynamics, cleans up group space, and dynamically manages group members. For some non-work information that is processed immediately, it should be forbidden to post some informal information. An informal network that ensures the integrity of the formal network and the group environment.

At the same time, we should also train the collective members, establish a sense of formality of the group members, and actively exert the influence of WeChat advantage on the work without bring private information and emotions to reduce the spread of news. By enriching the knowledge system of group members, it can not only enhance their understanding of the communication information, but also avoid over-processing and mis-distribution of communication information by members. [9]

VI. CONCLUSION

Due to the random nature of informal communication, organizational management relies heavily on formal communication management. The positioning of WeChat is interpersonal communication. The circle of friends is mainly to meet individual needs. The WeChat function can realize the convenience of communication, improve work efficiency, and make up for the defects of the formal communication mechanism, but it is also easy to cause communication channel congestion, affect management efficiency, and cause communication problems and confusion to management. Therefore, it is necessary to organize the attention and action of various departments, establish and improve the communication mechanism of

colleges and universities, jointly optimize the construction and management of information mechanisms, scientifically construct the WeChat group management mechanism, and correctly use the WeChat group to take advantage of the it.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Junhong Chang was born in 1972. She graduated from Huazhong University of Science and Technology. She is a master of business administration, currently an associate professor teaching and working in SIAS University of Zhengzhou, majoring in management, organizational behavior and other fields. She has published many research papers in some famous domestic academic journals, presided over and participated in many research projects.

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