

## WeChat Is A Communication Platform In The Logistics Business Between Indonesia and China

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### ABSTRACT

The globalization of trade between Indonesia and China has significantly increased the demand for logistics. With the role of technology, business communication has become more effective and efficient. WeChat has become an essential digital communication platform in logistics, particularly in export and import activities between Indonesia and China. This study examines the role of WeChat as a communication platform in the logistics industry, focusing on its features and impact on business efficiency and cross-border collaboration. The findings reveal that WeChat facilitates real-time communication, simplifies document sharing, and enhances operational coordination. Challenges such as data privacy and platform dependence are also discussed. This study contributes to understanding the digital transformation of logistics through social media platforms in Southeast Asia.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of trade relations between Indonesia and China has emphasized the need for efficient logistics management. In 2023, bilateral trade between the two countries exceeded USD 150 billion, with Indonesia exporting commodities such as coal and palm oil and importing machinery and electronics from China [1]. As two of the largest economies in Southeast and East Asia, the trade relations between the two countries represent a significant driver of regional economic integration. The dynamic growth of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which includes both countries, further accelerates trade activity and increases the demand for effective logistics solutions.

The logistics sector plays a crucial role in supporting this trade by ensuring the timely movement of goods across borders. A well-functioning logistics system not only reduces operational costs but also strengthens the reliability of the supply chain [2]. However, traditional communication methods in logistics, such as emails, faxes, and phone calls, often lead to inefficiencies. For example, delays in sharing essential shipping documentation or miscommunication about delivery schedules can disrupt the flow of goods. Additionally, language barriers and differences in business practices between Indonesian and Chinese companies add complexity to cross-border logistics.

The rapid advancement of technology today has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including the business world [3]. In particular, digital communication platforms can positively impact logistics business activities if utilized as supportive tools. These platforms enable more efficient collaboration, faster access to information, and more effective management of customer relationships.

Tencent developed WeChat in 2011. Since then, it has evolved from a simple messaging app into a multifunctional platform that integrates communication tools, payments, and business services. By 2024, WeChat had over 1.3 billion active users globally, with significant penetration in China and increasing adoption in Southeast Asia [4]. Its unique ecosystem includes group messaging, file sharing, real-time location tracking, video calls, and integrated mini-programs tailored for business use. These functions make it a crucial tool for logistics companies involved in cross-border trade. For example, WeChat's mini-programs allow freight companies to automate order tracking and scheduling, enhancing operational efficiency.

Additionally, WeChat Pay, the integrated payment system within the platform, simplifies cross-border transactions and reduces reliance on traditional banking systems. This is particularly beneficial for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which often face challenges accessing affordable financial services. SMEs in Indonesia, which comprise 98% of businesses in the country, are increasingly turning to WeChat for communication and payment solutions [5]. Currently, the WeChat platform is used by younger generations and various age groups that actively utilize technology to facilitate communication and business transactions, especially between Indonesia and China.

This study explores WeChat's importance in the logistics business between Indonesia and China, focusing on its role in enhancing communication, operational efficiency, and cost management. Additionally, the report examines the challenges logistics companies face in adopting WeChat, including concerns over data security and dependency on a single platform. By providing insights into these dynamics, the research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on digital transformation in the logistics industry.

## 2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach combined with the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The SLR method is conducted by identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting previous research findings [6]–[8]. The researcher then reviews these studies through a process of systematic examination and identification of the selected research articles. When a researcher wants to use the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, they need to systematically identify and review several journals, following the steps that align with the SLR method's procedures [9].

The main question in this study is how WeChat functions as a logistics communication platform between Indonesia and China. The data is obtained from the Google Scholar database, scholarly articles, reports, and other relevant materials related to using WeChat in logistics, with journal articles published between 2018 and 2024. The collected data will be analyzed, and the results will answer the research question.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings from the relevant discussions in the study conducted by the author titled "WeChat as a Communication Platform in the Logistics Business Between Indonesia and China," a research gap was identified from previous studies and articles, where various previous findings showed varied results. The results from the sources discovered are as follows:

Table 1. Research on WeChat as a Communication Platform in the Logistics Business Between Indonesia and China

| No | Title   | Author   | Type of Journal/Article  |
|----|---|--|--|
| 1. | From Disembedding to Digital Re-Embedding: Social Media Empowerment and Solidarity Practices of Chinese Truck Drivers | Nan Liu and Rui Wang                           | Social Media + Society April-June 2022: 1 –11 (2022)   |
| 2. | Logistics Revolution in the Digital Era: An Evaluation of the Use of Big Data in the Logistics Industry               | Aryanto Nur, Bebi Kurniawan Hura               | Journal Of Informatics And Busines Vol 02 No. 03 Oktober - Desember (2024)   |
| 3. | WeChat Mini Programs Showcase New Capabilities to Celebrate its Third Anniversary                                     | Tencent Publication                            | <a href="https://www.tencent.com/en-us/articles/2200946">https://www.tencent.com/en-us/articles/2200946</a> (2020) |
| 4. | When E-commerce Meets Social Media: Identifying   | Tianlang Chen, Yuxiao Chen, Han Guo, Jiebo Luo | IW3C2 (International World Wide Web Conference   |

|    |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|
|    | Business on WeChat Moment Using Bilateral-Attention LSTM  |   | Committee) April 23–27, (2018)                  |
| 5. | The Rise of Superapps in Emerging Countries   | Siyu Ye   | ICEMCI 2022, AEBMR 668, pp. 1847–1856, (2023)   |
| 6. | Challenges in the Development of Indonesia's Digital Infrastructure                                     | Arindha Nityasari, Larasati Budiyani, Mu'ammam Alif Zarkasi Sukma Raga, Rizky Alif Alfian, Tane Hadiyantun                    | Megashift Fisipol UGM (2023)                    |
| 7. | Leveraging Digital Technologies in Logistics 4.0: Insights on Affordances from Intralogistics Processes | Tobias Albrecht, Marie-Sophie Baier, Henner Gimpel, Simon Meierhöfer, Maximilian Röglinger, Jörg Schlüchtermann, Lisanne Will | Information Systems Frontiers 26:755–774 (2024) |

### 3.1. The Role of WeChat in Logistics Communication

In a study by Nan Liu and Rui Wang [2], WeChat has transformed the way logistics companies communicate with their partners. The instant messaging feature enables real-time communication between shipping companies, customers, and suppliers between Indonesia and China. This is crucial in addressing supply chain challenges that require quick responses to changes, such as shipment status updates, operational constraints, or customer requests. Shipping companies, customers, and suppliers can share information directly without geographical barriers, minimizing delays. For example, 78% of logistics companies in China use WeChat as their primary communication tool.

According to research by Aryanto Nur and Bebi Kurniawan Hura [10], logistics companies involved in cross-border trade use WeChat to share documents such as invoices, shipping manifests, and customs documents in Indonesia. This process was previously time-consuming due to reliance on physical document delivery or the less practical use of email. With WeChat, documents can be shared digitally, allowing for faster administrative processing and reducing the risk of document loss.

Additionally, logistics companies can use WeChat features such as chatbots and mini-programs to automate customer service. For example, customers can use chatbots to track shipment status without contacting staff manually.

### 3.2. Operational Efficiency Through WeChat Features

According to Tencent Publication <sup>(2024)</sup>, WeChat offers tools such as real-time location sharing, which facilitates tracking shipments from Indonesia and China. This feature helps companies reduce the risk of delays and increases transparency for customers in the destination countries. Additionally, mini-programs designed explicitly for logistics allow companies in Indonesia and China to manage orders, schedule shipments, and calculate shipping costs directly within the app. This feature also reduces the need for additional IT systems, fostering customer trust and satisfaction. With accurate location data, companies can quickly identify and address obstacles like traffic congestion or sudden route changes.

Based on research by Yuxiao Chen et al. [11], WeChat provides lightweight mini-programs integrated directly into the platform. These mini-programs are designed to support various logistics needs, such as Order Management, where companies can use the mini-program to record, track, and update order statuses automatically. Several logistics companies in Indonesia use WeChat mini-programs designed explicitly for shipment management, such as FedEx [12] and DHL [13]. This program allows companies to schedule and organize shipments based on priority and available time, optimize workflow and calculate shipping costs based on weight, distance, or other factors, reduce manual errors, and speed up administrative processes in destination countries.

Furthermore, with its wide range of features, WeChat allows logistics companies to integrate multiple functions into a single platform, such as communication, shipment management, and order administration. This reduces the need for companies to invest in additional IT systems or complex software, enabling them to lower operational costs, simplify implementation, and streamline workflows. With these features, WeChat serves as a cross-cultural communication tool and an efficient logistics management platform, helping companies save time, costs, and labor while improving customer service.

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### 3.3. Challenges in Using WeChat

Although WeChat offers various advantages, particularly in enhancing operational efficiency and communication in the logistics sector, there are several challenges that companies relying on this platform must address. According to research by Siyu Ya [14], one of the main issues is privacy and data security, as WeChat stores a significant amount of sensitive information about trade and shipment activities. Using this platform carries the potential risks of data breaches or surveillance, which could harm companies that depend on WeChat for their business operations. Additionally, dependence on a single platform brings other risks, such as the possibility of access restrictions by governments or technical disruptions, which could hinder the smooth operation of companies.

In the context of logistics between Indonesia and China, these challenges become even more relevant because both countries have different policies and regulations regarding data management and the use of foreign technology. Therefore, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by companies in both countries.

### 3.4. Limitations of Infrastructure in Some Regions

Another challenge is the limited digital infrastructure in certain areas, particularly Indonesia. According to research by Raga et al [15], while internet access is expanding, some rural areas still struggle to enjoy digital services fully. WeChat requires a stable and fast internet connection to operate features such as real-time location sharing and shipment tracking, which may not work well in some regions. This hinders logistics companies from maximizing the platform's potential, especially for shipments involving various areas in Indonesia. On the other hand, in China, better digital infrastructure allows for broader use of WeChat, including in rural areas.

### 3.5. Integration with Other Logistics Systems

According to research by Albrecht et al. [16], one of the more complex technical challenges is integrating WeChat with other logistics systems, such as shipping management software or ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning). In Indonesia, some companies adopting WeChat for logistics communication may face difficulties synchronizing data from WeChat with existing IT systems, such as warehouse management systems or third-party shipment tracking. This can reduce operational efficiency and lead to data inconsistencies in the logistics process. Such integration issues emphasize the importance of ensuring compatibility between new digital communication platforms like WeChat and traditional logistics management systems to maintain seamless workflows and accurate data handling.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the use of the WeChat platform in the logistics business between Indonesia and China, WeChat holds significant potential as an effective communication tool to support cross-border logistics operations. The platform provides advanced features such as instant messaging, document sharing, real-time location tracking, and mini-programs tailored to logistics needs, enabling companies to communicate in real time and enhance operational efficiency. With the right approach, WeChat can help logistics companies streamline administrative processes, reduce operational costs, and improve customer satisfaction.

However, the success of using WeChat as a logistics communication platform largely depends on wisely utilizing these features and addressing the challenges that exist. Issues such as data privacy and security, dependence on a single platform, and the limitations of digital infrastructure in some regions must be significant concerns for companies relying on WeChat. Therefore, while WeChat presents attractive opportunities to enhance logistics efficiency, a well-planned technology adoption strategy and effective management of existing challenges remain key to leveraging the platform effectively.

Overall, the analysis of WeChat usage in the logistics business between Indonesia and China can be summarized as follows: WeChat plays a significant role in logistics communication, facilitating communication with logistics partners to improve operational efficiency in international logistics activities between Indonesia and China. With real-time features in the app, WeChat helps reduce operational risks, making it easier to track shipments from Indonesia and China. Although WeChat offers efficiency in communication and logistics operations, the main challenges are privacy, data security, and the risk of reliance on a single platform, which can be affected by policies and technical disruptions. The limited digital infrastructure in some regions, particularly in Indonesia, hinders the optimal use of WeChat in logistics. In contrast, better infrastructure in China allows for broader platform use. Integrating WeChat with other logistics systems in Indonesia presents technical challenges that reduce operational efficiency and cause data inconsistencies, especially when synchronizing with warehouse management systems or third-party shipment tracking.

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In this context, WeChat can facilitate logistics companies between Indonesia and China to connect with partners and customers more efficiently, be easily accessible to users through its various features, and help build strong business relationships by accelerating communication and information exchange. WeChat also supports secure and fast payment transactions, allowing companies to strengthen branding and customer service through official accounts, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of marketing campaigns and collaboration in the international logistics industry.

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