

Chapter 3

Integrating Social and Mobile Media in Environmental Marketing Communications in China: Opportunities and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The rapid rise of China as an economic and geo-political superpower has been accompanied with its environmental causalities. According to World Health Organization, more than one million Chinese die of air pollution each year. Non-profit conservation organizations, foreign or domestic, have launched environmental marketing communications campaigns to address these problems. This chapter describes and explores the role of mobile social media in conducting environmental marketing communications in China.

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Using Rare's Pride Campaign in Yangtze River and other environmental conservation organizations to protect endangered species and natural resources as examples, this chapter demonstrates the benefits and limitations of mobile and social media in promoting environmental causes in China. Discussion, implications, research limitations, and future research directions were presented.

INTRODUCTION

China's ascent as a superpower has been demonstrated not only in its dramatic economic developments in the past decades, but also in its active diplomacy to shape the rules of international arena since the Second World War (Fish, 2017; Ikenberry, 2008). China's growing GDP has grown to \$11.8 trillion, surpassing Japan (\$4.84 trillion) as the world's second largest economy (Bajpai, 2017). On the basis of Purchase Power Parity (PPP) index, some has claimed that China has overtaken U.S. as the world largest economy (Baijpi, 2017). Its real GDP growth rate has often seen double-digits (e.g., 10-15% before the Financial Crisis in 2008) until recent years (Frangos, 2017). Also refer to Frangos (2016), (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-gdp-long-slog-increases-the-pain-1453183305>) for more details. According to Iyengar (2017), China's economy grew stably at 6.5% during the 2nd quarter of 2017; however doubts about the sustainability of its growth remains due to the country's real estate bubble and debts (Wei, 2017). For example, Moody's Investor Service has downgraded China's sovereign debt to A1—the first time the company cut its rating since 1989 (Macfarlane, 2017).

Accompanied by China rapid rise is the recent President Xi's grandiose rhetoric of "Chinese Dream" (BBC News, 2013), and "One Belt, One Road" Initiative. In his speech about what "Chinese Dream" means for the world, President Xi elaborated in his 2013 speech when he was promoted as the head of Chinese Communist Party (BBC News, 2013).

We must make persistent efforts, press ahead with indomitable will, continue to push forward the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strive to achieve the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," "To realise the Chinese road, we must spread the Chinese spirit, which combines the spirit of the nation with patriotism as the core and the spirit of the time with reform and innovation as the core.....To realise the Chinese road, we must spread the Chinese spirit, which combines the spirit

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