Public Welfare on Chinese Social Media

----Take Sina Micro-blogging as an example

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Abstract

The advent of social media not only facilitates people to gain information, share experience, exchange ideas and engage in discussions related to various topics, but also enables organizations, including corporations, governments, non-profit ones, etc. to communicate with its key publics in large number instantaneously and effectively. Among them, the successes of some public welfare organizations achieved especially draw our attention. With the help of social media, public welfare changes into activities within everybody’s reach. However, “social media for public welfare” is still a relative new subject and lacks of discussions from academia. Previous studies focused on the behavior patterns and internal motivations of social media users in public welfare activities and how organizations use social media to communicate with their stakeholders and engage the public. But there was no study on how performance of non-profit organizations on this platform affects users’ satisfaction and continuous engagement in their activities. We felt there was a need to clarify the relationship between the performance of public welfare organizations on social media and its users’ satisfaction and behaviors, which may give more implications to enlarge the influence on social media platform.

Therefore, in this paper, we firstly discuss the advantages of social media for public welfare causes in literature review. Then, based on the literature of social media, we identify four factors that may affect its users’ satisfaction on public welfare organizations’ performance and developed a model accordingly. We empirically carried out an online survey focusing the public welfare pages caring and helping children in poverty-stricken areas on Sina micro-blogging, with a sample of 203 people, to test the model. The proposed model, with trust, information quality, connectedness significantly influences the satisfaction of users, and with responsiveness, slightly affects the satisfaction. Based on the results, we develop some useful implications to help improve the performance of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging, which are specialized in caring and helping poor children in rural areas.
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CHAPTER I. Introduction

1. Background

According to statistics from Internet World Stats 2012, the number of worldwide Internet users has surpassed 2.4 billion. And the 31th Survey Report (2012) of CNNIC (Statistical Report on Internet Development in China) reveals that in mainland China, the total number of Internet users is more than 560 million. And among the activities that Chinese Internet users engaged in, social media especially micro-blogging has become the first domain type with the largest and most active users in China. And the number of Chinese micro-blogging users dramatically increased in 2011, which surged to 63.31 million from 195 million. By the end of December 2012, China has had a total of 309 million micro-blogging users, an increase of 58.73 million. Among these Internet users, micro-blogging users accounted for 54.7%, up by 6% over the end of last year. Micro-blogging has become a more and more important Internet application that more than half of Chinese people use in their everyday life.

Based on the report of CNNIC, more and more Chinese people begin to express opinions, share experience, gain information and obtain supportive resources via micro-blogging. The role of micro-blogging is not only a platform of releasing information, but also a “black hole”. In addition to show different forms of information quickly, it can also quickly install a common idea regarding certain issue and build a relationship among people. Thus, unprecedented micro-revolutions have been triggered in creation of public discourse space and integration of social
participation mechanism by micro-blogging, which brings about new opportunities for the development of Chinese social welfare (Yu, 2010).

Actually, faced with the advent of social marketing, many foreign nonprofits recognize that social media has the power to make the world a better place. The 4th Annual Nonprofit Social Network Benchmark Report (2012) reveals that 98% of nonprofit organizations have a Facebook presence, and 72% are establishing themselves on Twitter.

Although commonweal communications in mainland China cannot be compared with that in developed countries due to the level of social development, social system and mechanisms, the social media wave in social welfare field is still worth reflection and reference. The wide propagation of “micro-blogging” platforms is creating opportunities for public welfare organizations, which enables them to communicate more with their major stakeholders and attract more public to participate in.

On March 9, 2011, led by journalist of the Phoenix Weekly Deng Fei, “Free Lunch for Children” project was launched on micro-blogging to help primary schools in remote villages provide lunches to students. In just two months, followers of the micro-blogging page soared and general public began to donate money and things to them. According to the report of Xinhua News Agency on October 31, 2012, students at 178 rural schools in Hunan, Hubei, Guizhou and Yunnan provinces have received
free lunches through the project. Over 1 million people have donated to the project, with donations totaling 32.3 million yuan. This program not only successfully drawn public attention, but also caught the attention of policymakers. It called on the State Council, or China's cabinet to provide 16 billion yuan in subsidies every year to 26 million students in 680 counties and cities across the country in their years of compulsory education. It has been the most successful public welfare campaign on Sina micro-blogging so far.

2. Objective and Research Question

As we mentioned above, social media helps some public welfare issues achieve tremendous success in term of raising public awareness, while, not every case succeeded in social media. Unlike the similar topic “social media and social business” which gets lots of attention and discussions (Qualman, 2012), “social media for public welfare” is still relative a new subject and lacks of discussions (Mansfield, 2009), especially in the context of China.

At present, mainland China has obtained the initial development compared with developed countries in terms of network and new media hardware, while the utilization of social media for social benefit activities and commonweal communications have just started (Zhang, 2012).

Due to the large quantity of Chinese impoverished children, helping them is a theme
that constantly appears in social benefit activities, which devote to improving the life of these children in various manners. However, the successful cases, which evoke strong repercussion in a short time, can just maintain a limited sustained attention, compared with other topics discussed on micro-blogging (Zhou, 2012).

According to the data from the official website of Free Lunch, between April 2011 and February 2013, Free Lunch raised funding over RMB 43 million, providing food security, i.e. warm free lunch, for student in over 200 schools, which has further contributed to the starting and implementation of Nutrition Improvement Planning for Compulsory Education Students in Rural Area by State Council, China, and then nutrition status of children in Chinese countryside are massively promoted. The remarkable success of Free Lunch in improving social welfare of impoverished children is closely related to the power of micro-blogging. According to Deng Fei, the initiator of Free Lunch, these social welfare activities could not be completed without Internet in Web 2.0 era. The value of social media “relies on building of massive groups to a large extent, and we have constructed a huge population with love and kindness which are constantly fermenting and providing power”.

Thus, in this project, through collection of research results in social media and social welfare home and abroad, and analysis of several successful cases such as Free Lunch on the platform of Sina micro-blogging, we shall investigate the impressions of users on social welfare activities on micro-blogging, and on the basis of which we would
discuss how to launch public-benefit activities by using micro-blogging platform. Therefore, with the limited resources, commonweal organizations for impoverished children will be able to apply micro-blogging effectively to enlarge the social participation in the activities, propagate philosophy for public benefit to them and exert the impact of social welfare concept. Based on the objective we describe above, we specify our research question as following:

What is the performance of public welfare organizations for impoverished children on Sina micro-blogging, and how the performance affects the users’ satisfaction?

3. Literature Review

3.1 Social media and public welfare on social media in China

(1) Definition of social media

Antony Mayfield (2008), an American scholar, is the first one to propose the concept of social media. He defines social media as a new online media to give users the great interactive space to share most in the book *What is Social Media*. He strengthened that social media has the following characteristics: participation, openness, conversation, community and connectedness.

Some other scholars paid more attention on technological factors on this question. According to Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2010), social media is defined as applications based on Internet in the environment of Web 2.0, and contents
generated by users are allowed to create for exchange. In addition, social media has to rely on mobile and technologies based on web, so that platforms with high interaction created for individuals and communities will be able to generate the contents, and based on which they can co-create, share and discuss with each other. As a result, it brings about changes in communications between organizations, communities and individuals substantially and pervasively.

At present, social media is undergoing a rapid development. The debate about what is the core competitive advantage in terms of contents, terminal and relationship is no longer the major concern. More importantly, we must capture a clear understanding about the concept of social media, as well as the knowledge on information communications, resource sharing and the changes of social approach and lifestyle. Undoubtedly, technology leads the development of social media, but social media is not only technology. The social characteristic is the core feature of social media (Yang, 2011).

Therefore, we define social media as: a kind of information and communication carrier which we can create, share and exchange contents initiatively and interactively by relying on the new networks, mobile and digital technologies; it is featured by user-driven and able to support both point-to-point and multi-to-multi mode.
(2) Development of public welfare on social media in China

Current studies have showed social media is more than just a fad. On the contrary, more and more people realize that it has been the mainstream in the future: not only in the media industry, but also some other fields (Yang, 2011).

Sina micro-blogging, the most popular social media in China, has once been acclaimed that “attention is power; ‘onlooking’ changes China” by the famous news commentator Xiaoshu (2010). Although this point of view more or less exaggerated the influence of micro-blogging, we have to admit that it indeed has a communicating power like nuclear fission. Yu Guoming (2010) pointed out that, “an individual micro-blogging interacts with other people’s micro-blogging; an individual group interacts with another group; as long as the information has a strong penetrating power of hierarchical culture or public interests, it will draw common attention. Theoretically, it can reach everybody in the world within a very short time, while it is no longer important that which channel this information came from.” From this point of view, there will be new forms and possibility in public welfare communication that different from the traditional mass media environment. And public welfare project gradually become activities within everyone’s reach (Zhou, 2012).

Since the public welfare on social media is an emerging issue, the Chinese scholars have not formed a systematic research about it.
The research on social media is drawing much attention with its mature technology and growing number of users. However, the discussion on social media and social welfare in the world has just started widely in recent years. The First Global Social Media and Social Welfare Summit Forum was held in New York in September 2011; later the First New Media Social Welfare Forum was held in Tunisia in November, 2011; and the Third Global Social Media and Social Welfare Summit Forum was held in Beijing, which was also the first social media and social welfare forum held in China (Fan, 2012).

After searching in the CNKI database with the key words such as “public welfare”, “micro-blogging” and “social media”, we find that the previous researches focused on the application of social media by public welfare organizations. For Chinese public welfare organizations, social media are mostly used to organize activities, propagate, and release information. However, appeal for participation has been rarely applied.

Therefore, the present research is mainly about the communication effects and mechanisms in social media based welfare activities through case analysis (Wang Xin, 2010), such as the fight against child trafficking on micro-blogging.

The related research fields included the understanding of social media, public welfare communications, civil society, network behavior and so on. Scholars focused on the behavior patterns and internal motivations of social media users in public welfare.
activities (Ning, 2012), and the social mobilization function of social media, especially Chinese micro-blogging, the most popular social media in mainland China. However, they do not pay enough attention to the complexity of communication subject, the content and process with the development of the whole media industry. The general communication model and characteristics of public welfare communication are still not very clear (Meng, 2012).

3.2 Civil society and social media based public welfare in China

(1) Changes in public sphere

Habermas (1990) mentioned that a society consists of the private sphere and the public authority sphere; the so-called private sphere refers to the civil society where people are living, while the public authority sphere refers to the huge political system that manages the national government. Public sphere is somewhere in between the private sphere and the public authority sphere, which enables people to gather together and discuss about the public affairs. To maintain the existence of the public sphere and to play its function, we need to establish certain social norms.

Before the wave of social media arrived, the space of individuals under the mass media is very limited due to the high degree of monopoly of media resources and the capitalization of the media environment. As one of the important issues in the public sphere, social welfare was facing a serious difficulty, as it departed from the modern survival rule of interest first. Fortunately, with the development of the media
technology, the relatively free and open environment of social media has brought new opportunities to the public sphere. Under a series of positive changes (such as, the main entity is becoming anonymous; the public space, which has lost its position in the traditional mass media, has gradually extended to the virtual space; the public space of the social media is extended connotatively and getting blurred publicly), the space of public communication has gained a new breakthrough. Social media is now constructing an equal, interactive and decentralized “public sphere” platform, which has broken the traditional one-way and unbalanced communication mode (Lin, 2012).

On the other hand, Yu Keping (2007) pointed out that civil society in China has the obvious dual property of official and civil organizations. As non-governmental organizations are forming in this transitional period, social media in China are operated by civil users and supervised by government. Thus, the dual property brings limitations on one hand, while is able to promote impact of social welfare activities on polices. Free Lunch is a typical case in this aspect.

(2) The application of Bourdieu’s theory of field
Bourdieu defined field as a place where people are fighting for power and capital. The structure of field depends on the temporary balance obtained while capital is conducting a certain kind of distribution. He considered capital as a “social resource”, which can be divided into four categories: economic capital, social capital, cultural
capital and symbolic capital (Couldry, 2003).

The field of social media is a complex containing a variety of social forces and factors that restrict each other and operate constantly; such complex is reflected from a network formed by the interrelationship among the social media users.

Lampe (2012) and etc. in Michigan State University (MSU) conducted long-term research on behaviors of social media users. They started from analysis of inter-behavior change of users, used empirical analysis and questionnaire surveys to research the mode of users’ behaviors and their internal motivations, and account for users’ behaviors surrounding “social capital”.

In the field of social media, social capital is the resource of the public welfare activities, while maximizing the number and variety of the capital is an important factor for the success of the public welfare activities in the social media field. The welfare activities of the social media need to utilize the capital of each participant. The participants with a larger number and a larger variety of capital will have more power, so that they can generate a greater impact on the boundary and function of the field.

The linking function of the public figures in the social public welfare has perfectly reflected this point. Therefore, the key success factor for public welfare activities of
the social media is to maximize the usage of the four kinds of capital in the social media field: using the symbolic capital to attract more participants; gathering economic capital to improve the living condition of the recipients; relying on the social capital to expand the influence of the public welfare activities; integrating the cultural capital to enhance the scientific level of the activities.

3.3 Usage of social media for nonprofits especially welfare organizations

Nowadays based on the development of social media, there is a new term “social media marketing”. Social media marketing indicates that enterprises post specific information or contents in social media for marketing aims to draw attentions from the public, give rise to on-line discussion, encourage the audiences to propagate and spread the information with their individual social networks, and further improve relationship with users and promote users’ degree of satisfaction.

Social media and social media marketing has not only been used by individuals, but also been adopted by non-profit organizations, corporate and government to communicate with the public (J. Li & H. R. Rao, 2010, Sabrina & Andreas, 2013).

Gregory D. Saxton and several scholars examined the social networking practices of the 100 largest nonprofit organizations in US. Facebook, which was launched In 2004, is now the largest and fastest growing social networking site (Ayelet Baron, 2009). The research developed a comprehensive classification scheme to delineate these
organizations' use of Facebook as a stakeholder engagement tool and found that "statuses" on Facebook could be aggregated into three key dimensions - "information", "community", and "action". Nonprofit organizations are better at using Facebook to strategically engage their stakeholders via "dialogic" and "community-building" practices than they have been with traditional websites (Saxton, G.D, Guo, C, Chiu, I, & Feng, B, 2011).

It is beneficial for nonprofits especially public welfare organizations for several reasons. Social media can help deepen existing relationships because it connects people in different places together at any time and users with common interests on this platform will be attracted to the same social network, and even a new social relationship can be developed (Yang, 2012). Social media has substantially potential as an organizational communication and stakeholder relations tool. The diversified communication patterns of social media have enhanced the communication effect (Guo, 2012). It has created opportunities for interpersonal engagement, interactivity, and dialogues that are qualitatively different from those offered by traditional websites. Moreover, it engenders considerably capabilities for interactivity, collaboration, constant communications (Jo and Kim, 2003; Cameron, Webster, Quan-Haase, Cothrel & Wellman, 2005; Macias, Kanter, Hilyard & Freimuth, 2009). Most importantly, it is a more convenient platform with a cheaper cost, comparing to the traditional media platforms. Nonprofits including public welfare organizations can benefit from adopting social media due to their often-limited monetary resources.
(Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). This characteristic helps individuals or organizations get the access to media and the public much easier which is significant to most middle and small non-profit organizations. Organizations aim to raise public’s awareness about specific social welfare issues and make a difference through utilizing interactive social media.

There has been a rise in the research of how organizations use social media to communicate with their stakeholders and engage the general public in recent years. While some networks like Twitter and Facebook have been well documented, there is not enough research on the popular Chinese micro-blogging social network such as Sina micro-blogging.

CHAPTER II. Consumers’ Satisfaction Research of Public Welfare Pages on Sina micro-blogging

1. Background

In accordance with the definition above, social media are Internet-based platforms built on the basis of Web 2.0 that allow users to create and share user generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The definition implies if we do not take social media’s Web 2.0, which is the platform’s technological foundation, into consideration, social media is all about content, or information. Mangold and Faulds (2009) argue that social media can be seen as a hybrid that combines the feature of traditional media in delivering information directly to its audience, and nontraditional feature of
allowing audience to interact with each other directly, instantaneously and frequently.

As our study mainly focuses on Sina micro-blogging, we refer to many previous information-related researches on this type of social media. A research on defining Twitter (Kwak, Lee, Park, Moon, 2010), a similar version of micro-blogging sharing the majority characteristics with Sina micro-blogging in China, is a social network or a news media found out that the people who are not subscribed by their followings regard twitter as an information platform rather than a social networking site and users follow others not only for social networking, but for information and the acts of following indicate that they want to receive every message from the person they subscribe. Other researches also indicate the function of delivering information in micro-blogging. The research on micro-blogging usage and communities (Java, Song, Finin, Tseng, 2007) categorized users on Twitter into three different types: information source, friends, and information seeker. These studies together indicate the inherent nature of social media as a medium to release, spread and share information among its users. Therefore, information and its quality will definitely become the focus of how well an account manage its performance.

And among many features which new media platforms have, “interactive” is also one of the most basic ones, it allows user to have more access to information, also encourage users to engagement with the media content (Fiore et al.2005). A greater involvement can be achieved by increasing levels of interactivity (Bucy, 2003), also does the positive attitudes to the website (Kalyanaraman & Sundar 2003). Moreover,
a high quality of interactivity can level up the source credibility (Fogg 2003).

Social media was born with the characteristic of interactivity (Qualman 2010, Kerpen 2011, Safko 2012, Kabani 2013). It brought the revolution to the workplace in term of interactivity (Prohaska 2011). It provides organizations with a space to interact with key publics and allows users to engage with one another on topics of mutual interests (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009). Studies show that between interactivity and performance of the organization there is a positive relation (Nah & Saxton, 2012; Bortree & Seltzer, 2009). People very much valued the opportunity to get social interaction on social media (Arthur & Sherman, 2006). And organization must understand how to interact with people and how people interact with each other in order to achieve success on social media platform (Moran & Gossieaux, 2010). This makes organizations become more interactive with shareholders and develop a strategy for the interactivity (Prohaska, 2011). Moreover, measuring interaction is crucial for assessing a social media program of an organization (Stewart & Pavlou, 2002).

When we discuss social media, trust is a dimension which has drawn more and more attention (Yang, 2008). As we mentioned, social media is interactive. However, all interactions require an element of trust.
Traditionally, trust is defined as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995).

During the face-to-face communication, trust is a key foundation for information sharing and developing of new relationships (Fukuyama, 1995, Lewis and Weigert, 1985). Trust is also a major factor for building effective on-line interactions (Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter, 2004, Jarvenppa and Leidner, 1998, Meyerson, 1996, Piccoli and Ives, 2003). It is crucial in a lot of transactional relationships (Reichheld and Schefter, 2000).

2. **Empirical Study on Four Famous Public Welfare Pages on micro-blogging**

(1) **Free-lunch**

This programme was initiated by Deng Fei, the reporter and director of press department in “Phoenix Weekly”. United with Chinese Social Welfare Foundation, it made a public offering plan which encouraged people to make daily donation of $3 which would help to give free lunches to poor children in rural areas in China.

Its official page on Sina micro-blogging was established on 2nd April, 2011. More than 73 thousand people followed it till March 2013.
(2) Anti-child trafficking

The Chinese Ministry of Public Security announced that the crime of child trafficking swept again since 2007. Deng Fei was also the first sponsor of this program. He posted a photo of a lost boy and finally helped the parent find their son after three years. In order to help the more parents whose kids were trafficked.

This official account was established on 7th February, 2011. Supported by the Ministry of Public Security and other micro-blogging accounts related to anti-trafficking, like Take Photos to Rescue the Child beggars sponsored by Yu Jianrong, professor of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, several trafficked children were rescued successfully. It has nearly 19 thousand followers on Sina micro-blogging till March 2013.

(3) Love Save Pneumoconiosis

It is an initiative that aims at saving, helping and taking care of millions of migrant workers with pneumoconiosis who are struggling at the edge of death and in extremely difficult lives. Wang Keqin, the famous investigative reporter in contemporary Chinese society, called “Chinese Lincoln Steffens” and “the First Person in Investigation report” by the press, is the originator of the public welfare programme.
The pneumoconiosis is a group of interstitial lung disease caused by the inhalation of certain dusts and the lung tissues’ reaction to the dust.

On 15th June, 2011, Love Save Pneumoconiosis became a legal public welfare programme. Till March 2013, this public page has attracted more than 17 thousand followers on Sina micro-blogging.

(4) Loving package project

United with the Chinese Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, this programme called people to donate their unused clothes and books and post the packages to children lived in the poor areas in China. Its official page was established on 15th April 2013. It has more than 21 thousand followers on Sina micro-blogging by March 2013.

Based on the performance of the above official Sina micro-blogging accounts, we conclude some common characteristics in terms of the content.

Firstly, most of the information must be directly related to the topic of this account and deliver useful messages to the followers. For example, Anti-child trafficking mainly provides clear descriptions of the lost kids, educates people how to protect their children and prevent them to be trafficked. Love Save Pneumoconiosis is concentrated in raising public awareness of the consequences of pneumoconiosis and seeking for help for the migrant workers to improve their health condition. To
raise public awareness of the related welfare issues, the content also must be edited creative enough. Sometimes network buzzword and related popular trends should be adopted. Most of the above Sina micro-blogging accounts united the non-profit organizations to organize several creative on-line and off-line activities. Moreover, interactive content makes the communication process more enjoyable and encourage more people to participate in the related programme. Live interviews on Sina micro-blogging is common used by their official accounts. Fans can communicate with the related experts and seek for help on this platform. In addition, most of the above public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging have a message board on their pages.

Secondly, the related Sina micro-blogging must release the content frequently. Delivering instant messages in real-time to the followers to inform them the latest news. Live related activity on this platform is popular. *Free-lunch for children* usually live the volunteer’s action in different schools. *Loving package project* usually live the donation ceremony on Sina micro-blogging. *Anti-child trafficking* usually live the action of rescuing the lost kids.

Thirdly, the content with high clicking rate must have the clear source of coming. Usually it is released or forwarded by other verified Sina micro-blogging pages. Anti-child trafficking usually provide information sources from the local police or the Ministry of Public Security and professional media organizations. *Loving package*
project and Free-lunch for children often post the list of donators and other multimedia content as evidence.

According to the literature background and empirical studies on four successful public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging, we choose the following dimensions to evaluate current situation and the users’ satisfaction of the performance of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging: trust, information quality, connectedness and responsiveness.

CHAPTER III. Research Model and Results

1. Study Model and Hypotheses

By integrating what we learn from the literature review, we built a model which contains four dimensions, these four dimensions can impact the user’s satisfaction about the public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging platform, then impact user’ Continuance Intention of follow the pages. The model is depicted in Fig. 1. In this part, the crucial dimensions of the study model and the relation within them are discussed.
Trust

Different public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging provide different public information. Most of accounts on these public pages are verified accounts. But whether users or followers trust the information or content they provide is the key question.

Trust generally refers to an expectation that people are trustworthy and honest (Cyr, D. (2008). Here trust could be made up of three dimensions: honesty, benevolence and competence perceived in a website. The users will feel satisfied if he perceives the fulfillment of the required level of honesty, benevolence and competence in the website (Flavián, C., Guinalíu, M., & Gurrea, R, 2006). Some researchers also analyzed
the importance of trust in Internet relationships. For instance, if the users believe that the organization will fulfill the agreed conditions, they believe that this behavior will continue and their predisposition to develop the relationship will increase (Grönroos, C, 1994).

Similarly, we believe that if users consider the public welfare pages they followed provide them honest, benevolent and competent information, they will feel satisfied and continue to follow them. More specifically, if the public pages of caring poor children can provide transparent content like the donating list and which child get their donations eventually to the followers on their pages, users may have more confidence in these pages. This leads to the following hypothesis:

**H1. Trust has a direct and positive impact on the followers’ the satisfaction to public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging.**

**Information quality**

In previous literature review, one of social media’s inherent natures, an information delivering and sharing platform, has been clarified. Spreading information and large amounts of user-generated content is the major characteristic of social media. To every Sina micro-blogging account, generating and managing its information on its own page or website is the principal and most important task. However, there has not been any literature in addressing the relation between the perceived information
quality of a public welfare page and general users’ satisfaction towards it. Therefore, whether information quality of a public welfare page on Sina micro-blogging impacts its users’ satisfaction, and whether the satisfaction positively influences users’ continuous intention to the page are questions we need to answer.

Information quality and its influence on perceived performance and loyalty intentions on websites has been the focus of many researches conducted from different perspectives (DeLone & McLean, 1992; Nelson, Todd, & Wixom, 2005; Boritz, 2005; Kim, Kishore, & Sanders, 2005; Wu & Wang, 2006; Kim & Niehm, 2009). Previous study has confirmed that the quality of information is relevant to the satisfaction on website performance (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Malhotra, 2002) and the information quality of a website serves for either drawing or repulsing online users (Turban and Gehrke, 2000).

As for the factors determining the information quality, the emphasis of different studies varies due to different research subjects. Kim et al. (2005) paid attention to the accuracy, relevance and completeness of information. Barnes and Vidgen (2001) stressed the accurate information after examining its developed measurement items in uncompleted transactions on an online bookstore. Zhang and von Dran (2001-2002) identified accuracy and timeliness as important quality influencers on the information of various websites including government, education, medicine, e-commerce, etc. Pearson, Tadisina and Griffin (2012) concluded previous literature
review on the factors of information quality: completeness, comprehensiveness and accuracy are most significant feature of certain websites’ information quality, however, currency and timeliness were stressed in websites related to financial services and issues.

Compared with all the researches in this field, we find out a more comprehensive measurement of information quality incorporated factors of relevance, understandability, reliability, adequacy and scope (McKinney et al., 2002; Pearson, Tadisina & Griffin, 2012). Though the constructs are for information quality measurement of general websites and micro-blogging differs from a usual website in many ways, especially the intensive interaction among its users based on content created, it can be viewed as a website because firstly it is a platform to generate and deliver information, which is in line with the function of general websites; secondly, every user owns an independent web page which can also be regarded as a website especially from the perspective of delivering information. Therefore, in this study, we follow McKinney et al.’s research (2002) to test whether information quality of a public welfare page and its constructs influence its perceived performance, or rather, its users’ satisfaction.

In this study, information quality is defined as how well a public welfare page on Sina micro-blogging manages its contents. In accordance with McKinney’s definition, relevance is about the pertinence and applicability of the information shown on a
public welfare page for users who intent to participate in public welfare activities; understandability is defined as how easy information on the public welfare page is to read and understand and its degree of clarity; reliability refers to how accurate, credible and trustworthy the information on public welfare pages is; adequacy is about how complete and sufficient the information provided by public welfare pages for the users; scope refers to the level of detail and range of information on the public welfare pages.

We believe that the five factors influence the information quality of a public welfare on Sina micro-blogging and the information quality determines the satisfaction of users towards the page. This leads to the following hypothesis:

**H2. The information quality of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging is positively related to the satisfaction of its followers who are eager to participate into the activities.**

For information quality is a significant construct in information-intensive websites (Barnes and Vidgen, 2001), we come up with hypothesis

**Connectedness and responsiveness**

How to define the concept of the interactivity? Since the concept can be demonstrated from multiple dimensions (Burgoon, Bengtsson, Ramirez, N.E., Miczo,
different researchers have their own opinions about which dimension should be include into the concept. Generally speaking, there are three main kinds often be included: person to person, person to content, and person to system interactivity (McMillan, 2002). For the social media platform such as Sina micro-blogging, a cyber-space constructed by person to person communication techs, which is combined of technical and social functional parts (Trist, Murray, 1993), studies already show us that sociability plays a vital role on the platform (Preece, 2001). Therefore in our research, viewpoints from previous studies are adopted by us (Hoffman, Novak, 1996), which analyzed interactivity in two dimensions: connectedness and responsiveness. Put it in detail, we use the term connectedness to describe the motion of being related to others and the public welfare pages on platform when users share the experiences, ideas and opinions via Sina micro-blogging platform. Meanwhile, we use term responsiveness to describe condition that whether or not the users care about how fast and frequently the pages and other followers of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging platform respond to their messages (Tedjamulia, Olsen & Dean, 2005).

Previous studies showed the fact that Internet interactivity including that the connectedness and responsiveness, which we study here have positive relations to the satisfaction. For instance, one study (Lowry, Romano, Jenkins, Guthrie, 2009) show that interactivity improve the quality of communication, which in turn improve process satisfaction in users groups.
For the connectedness, it reflects the fact that people expect to gain intimate feeling when they are the users of certain technology. It satisfy human being’s instinctive needs of social interactivity and feeling of social belonging and connecting. It has the same features when we talk about consumer. In the sociology, consumers always hold certain personal value, which also is positively related to satisfaction (Sweeney, Soutar, 2001). Therefore, we proposed that more connectedness people get from following the public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging platform, the more satisfaction they have. And the hypothesis is:

**H3. Connectedness positively affects users’ satisfaction towards following public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging.**

For the responsiveness. Whether it is a traditional website or a blog or a social media platform, all the interactions are actually built on conversation-----when a user write a blog or send a text, he or she wants get a responses later. From the Theory of Social Exchange, we know fact that human beings desire to gain their own benefits from participating in the social communication or helping each other in order to benefit oneself, is often treated as one important cause of Internet interactivity (Blau, 1964). Take Wikipedia as an example. The reason of the contributors of Wikipedia write their knowledge on the website, to some extent, underlines the fact that they anticipate others can contribute know-hows one day in the future and they can
benefit from it (Yang, Lai, 2010). Once a person receives the responsiveness from other people, there is a big probability that he or she would consider that their efforts, which includes time, money and energy they contributed to the social communications worth well. Therefore, the give and receive process will satisfied user in term of interactivity. In another words, the more responsiveness one person gets from others, the more likely that he or she may have a better experience and feeling about a communication. By considering this, we form a hypothesis as following:

\[ H4. \text{Responsiveness positively affects users' satisfaction towards public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging.} \]

**Satisfaction and continuance intention**

Oliver (1980) defined satisfaction as “an individual's evaluation and affective response to his or her overall experience with a service or product.” In our case, satisfaction refers to users of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging have a positive attitude towards the performance of them. However, whether satisfaction influences users’ continuance intention is something else we want to know. We refer to expectancy-value theory to make the hypothesis.

The basic concept of expectancy theory is that people form their opinions based on expectations. In this theory, based on the belief developed, people try to take actions that they think will lead to positive results (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Rosenberg
developed the concept to find out its influence on attitude, in which he defined attitude as “relatively stable affective response to an object” (Cohen & Fishbein, 1972). His study suggests that people’s attitude will be influenced by the understanding about the abilities of an object facilitating or blocking the attainment of a prospected situation. If something supports the individual in fulfilling a goal, the individual forms favorable attitudes toward it.

The expectancy-value theory was adapted to media by Palmgreen (1984) on the basis that the combination of beliefs and evaluations developed about a specific medium could be either negative or positive and could determine whether the individual would continue to use that medium. For public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging, whether the followers continue to subscribe the accounts is very important mainly for two reasons. Firstly, on micro-blogging, people do not always obtain information directly from those they subscribe, but often through the messages forwarded by others, which will make the information more influential if one public welfare account has many followers. The more followers, the bigger chance their information is spread in broader area. In addition, the number of followers has been an indicator of how influential an account is on Sina micro-blogging. Whether the satisfaction on a public welfare pages determined by the four dimensions positively influences users’ continuance intention in subscribing the accounts is a question. Hence, we form the hypothesis:
H5. *Users' satisfaction on a public welfare page positively affects their continuance intention to this page.*

2. **Research Method**

The study model is built upon the Sina micro-blogging platform, specifically, about the public welfare pages on the platform. We choose the issue of caring and helping children of poverty-stricken area to examine the model. On the Sina micro-blogging platform, different kinds of pages and different public welfare issues may have different follower groups, and more importantly, these groups may have various attitudes toward the model. Therefore, we have to narrow down the scale of model application to the issue of caring and helping children of poverty-stricken area.

3. **Data Collection**

In this research, the sample is the individuals who have Sina micro-blogging accounts. We invite individuals to join in a survey. We conducted an online survey on a professional Internet survey website. In order to increase the response rate and sample quality, we use various channels to find the persons who are qualified and have the willingness to complete the survey.

4. **Sample Profile**

The respondents were asked to complete the survey based on their experience with Sina micro-blogging and the public welfare pages on the micro-blogging platform. A
total of 210 usable questionnaires were collected from the survey. In the 210 respondents, 69% were female and 31% were male. 96% of the respondents were between 20-30 years old and among that, people in their 20-25 taken the majority of the respondents.

Among the respondents, on one hand, 40% did not pay attention to the public welfare issue of children of poverty stricken area. On the other hand, 39% not only pay their attention to the issue, sometimes, also get involved in the activities of caring and helping children of poverty stricken area. 20% show their attention did not get involved in the activities and they have the potential to further their actions.

Among the respondents, 98% of the total have their own Sina micro-blogging accounts and 92% use the platform every day. 64% of the respondents spent more than two hours on the platform. This data reflect us the potential power of Sina micro-blogging platform. Also, 62% of the respondents were active in terms of blogging and interaction frequently on the platform. 28% of the total are deeply involved in the platform. Among the respondents, half of them did not follow a public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging platform. Only 15% of the respondents were follow more than three public welfare pages on the platform.

5. Measures

The dimensions of this research include users' continuance intention, users'
satisfaction, information quality, trust, connectedness and responsiveness. We conduct the survey by using the measure from previous research results (Appendix A). All the dimensions are measured by employing multi-item perceptual scales and are done by a five-point Agree scale, ranging from strongly agree (5), and strongly disagree (1).

6. Data analysis and results
In this research, the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method was used to perform the statistical analysis. PLS technique can provide a good explanation for complex relationships (Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F., 1981) and is widely adopted in social media researches, especially when the research focuses on theory development. After using of the two-step analysis method (Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L., 2010), the demographic and psychometric evaluation of the measurement scales are conducted firstly, and then we evaluated the research model displayed in the hypotheses section. The demographic data would be a good support to our research results and further discussion. By application of this method, we have a higher confidence that conclusion based on the structural relationship in this project is drawn from a set of measurement with desirable demographic and psychometric properties.
a) Measurement Model

Table 1

Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Composite Reliability</th>
<th>Average Variance Extracted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>5 (6)</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Quality</td>
<td>4 (6)</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance Intention</td>
<td>3 (5)</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The convergent validity and discriminant validity of the constructs in our model were evaluated. Convergent validity was tested by three criteria of all constructs: first, the composite reliability (CR) should be at least 0.70 (Chin, W.W, 1998); second, the average variance extracted (AVE) should be over or equal to 0.50 (Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F., 1981); third, all item loadings should be greater than 0.707 (Chin, W.W, 1998). Results of our online survey are displayed in Table 1. All three conditions of convergent validity were satisfied in our data sample by having the CRs ranging from 0.82 to 0.90, and the AVEs from 0.51 to 0.70. The item loadings were all higher than 0.63.
### Table 2

Factor Loadings, Weights, and T-values

* The following items were removed since their factor loadings are less than 0.6: TR5, IQ2, IQ5, RE4, SA2, SA3, CI3, CI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model construct</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>TR 1</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>13.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR 2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>18.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR 3</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>10.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR 4</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>18.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR 6</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>9.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Quality</td>
<td>IQ 1</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>19.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IQ 3</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>22.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IQ 4</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>14.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IQ 6</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>13.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>CO 1</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>16.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CO 2</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>16.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CO 3</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>57.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CO 4</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>36.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>RE 1</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>6.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RE 2</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>22.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RE 3</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>25.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>SA 1</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>25.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA 4</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>27.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuance Intention</td>
<td>CI 1</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>16.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CI 2</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>57.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CI 4</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>22.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discriminate validity is presented with weak correlation between the measure of interest and other constructs (Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F., 1981). It can be evaluated with the square root of AVE of each construct higher than the correlations between it and all the other constructs. As it shows in Table 2, on the diagonal line of the table is the square root (in bold) of each dimension’s AVE. As a result, a reasonable degree of discriminate validity is acquired for each of them is over the correlations between it and all the other structures (Cheung, C. M., & Lee, M. K. 2012).

According to the four dimensions- trust (TR), Information quality (IQ), connectedness (CO) and responsiveness (RE) that we concluded from the literature in the field of social media public welfare, we further tested the correlation between each to the social media users’ satisfaction, specific on the public welfare pages on Sina Micro-blogging, and then the correlation between satisfaction (SA) and continuance intention (CI) is run. Discriminant validity is demonstrated if there is a significant difference of the Chi-square statistics between the constrained and unconstrained models. In the current study, robust evidence of convergent validity and discriminant was found with these data (Cheung, C. M., & Lee, M. K. 2012).
b) Structural Model

Based on the test of the hypothesized effects in our research model, the structural model analysis was assessed. Fig. 2 shows the results of the hypothesized structural model test, including the variance explained ($R^2$ value) of the dependent variable, estimated Path Coefficients with Significant Paths indicated by asterisks, associated with T-values of the paths. In order to perform the significant testing for each path, the bootstrap resampling procedure was used.

Table 3
Correlation between Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Information Quality</th>
<th>Connectedness</th>
<th>Responsiveness</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Continuance Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The shaded numbers in the diagonal row are square roots of the average variance extracted.

What is demonstrated by the examination of the $R^2$ value is that this model explains a substantial amount of the variance in the outcome variable. In our model, it explains 39% of the variance in social media users’ satisfaction and 28% of the variance in social media users’ continuance intention. The significant antecedents are trust, information quality, connectedness, with path coefficients at 0.397, 0.458, and 0.391 respectively. This provides support for H1, H2 and H3. However, the path coefficient
of responsiveness is 0.161, which means kind of insignificant in our model.

![Diagram](image_url)

**Fig. 2** Result of the Research Model

(Note: *: p<0.05; **: p<0.01; ns: not significant;)

---

R²=0.39

0.349**

R²=0.28
CHAPTER IV. Discussion and Conclusion

In this part, we discuss the result of the hypotheses we made based on our study model. Also, the limitation of the study is addressed. At the end, we will discuss some key points, which we can do to improve the quality of the practice.

1. Discussion of each Dimension

This research focuses on how to improve the performance of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging platform in order to level up the satisfaction, which can impact the continuance intention of the followers and viewers of the public welfare pages. We examined six dimensions and the relations within them: trust, information quality, connectedness, responsiveness, satisfaction and continuance intention. The results show us that three dimensions, information quality, trust and connectedness significantly influence the satisfaction of the users, which then influence their continuance intention. As we anticipated, the public welfare pages followers’ satisfaction about performance of the pages hugely impact their continuance intention, which means satisfaction play a tremendous role in such kind of Internet platform (Guinea, Markus, 2009). On the contrast, responsiveness did not pose a significant influence to the satisfaction. Next, we try to discuss the result of the each dimension from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

Trust

Trust has a relatively higher impact on followers’ satisfaction with public welfare
pages, which rank the second in our test model. This result is consistent with previous literatures about public welfare communication in China and social network communication.

In our case, trust is a basic condition, which may lead to the real action. For public welfare pages specialized in caring poor children in China, their initial objective is to raise people’s awareness of caring poor children in remote areas. Besides, they want to get more people involved into the actions of helping those children. Website trust was examined in terms of whether users feel they can trust the website they viewed (Cyr, D, 2008). Some authors have analyzed the role of trust in online relationships by distinguishing different stages, for instance the first is the exploratory stage and the second commitment stage or risk taking stage (McKnight, D. H., Cummings, L. L., & Chervany, N. L, 1998). From the results of Q 7 and Q 8, many people feel the public welfare pages of caring poor children on Sina micro-blogging are trustworthy and they are effective in helping related people. It is considered as the first level of trust. Whereas the result of Q 10 shows that more users feel uncertain when thinking about that whether they will take an action to help those children on such a platform. This is a second level of trust. In this case, followers who have a higher level of trust are more satisfied with the public welfare pages they followed. Currently, micro-blogging users lack enough confidence in trusting such public welfare pages related with caring poor children in remote areas in China. It is the individual’s experience with the website that determines the levels of trust at any moment
Most people who were interviewed in our study already had experiences in the use of the Sina micro-blogging, and such experiences allow them to create expectations about the public pages. However, since few of them do helped related poor children through such a platform before, most of them feel uncertain whether they will take action in the future. In addition, the results of Q.9 and Q.12 may also explain the uncertainty of second level of trust. Q9 shows that users may doubt the real purpose of these public welfare pages and Q 10 shows that such pages are lack of visible proofs or detailed information to persuade people. Trust is cultivated through interactions and information exchange (Zhang, S. Y., & Zhang, Z. (2012). Therefore, public welfare pages could make more efforts to reach users’ expectations and gain more trusts in the future.

**Information quality**

As we have mentioned earlier in the literature, Palmgreen (1984) adapt expectancy-value theory to media, in which if a medium can satisfy users’ needs, they will continue to use it. Our study is aiming to find out whether the perceived trust, information quality, connectedness and responsiveness of a public welfare page on Sina micro-blogging influence users’ satisfaction and continuance intention to this page, which is clearly demonstrated by whether they continue subscribing or following this page.

Information quality had relatively the most impact on users’ satisfaction. The result
highlights social media’s inherent nature in information delivering and sharing, which has been confirmed by many researchers conducted in the past (Java, Song, Finin, Tseng, 2007; Kwak, Lee, Park, Moon, 2010). In our case, it also demonstrates that in terms of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging related to caring poor children in China, people care more about the information quality than any other aspects. While, in order to improve the performance of information quality, we need to take the factors into consideration.

Among all five factors influencing the information quality, understandability is the most significant one, indicating that if public welfare pages want to engage micro-blogging users into their activities, they need to give simple and clear information to help people easily learn their background, methods to donate or volunteer, current situation, their achievements, etc.

The impact of reliability on information quality ranks second. The result implies that credibility is still a major concern when people read the messages, and they require accurate and trustworthy information. Therefore, for information provider, the organizers of public welfare pages, they need to pay more attention to show their credibility when creating content. They can employ several ways to realize this aim, such as resorting to the help of celebrities and opinion leaders who are trusted by the public or forwarding news reported by credible traditional media including newspaper and television on their pages to enhance the perceived reliability.
Users also care about the scope of information public welfare pages provide, which indicates that most of people on Sina micro-blogging do not have much knowledge of public welfare activities, thus they hope to use the intensive information platform of social media to learn more about public welfare. It also suggests the public welfare communications on Sina micro-blogging is still at the initial stage, which requires the information organizers to deliver broader range of information to raise people’s awareness and understanding on public welfare.

By analyzing the answers of questionnaires, we can get more information. The result of Q6 shows that 11% of respondents do not know the existence of public welfare accounts on Sina micro-blogging and even 51% of them know the existence of this type of pages but do not subscribe. It indicates that the presence of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging is not significant and their operations actually do not draw too much public attention. To improve the situation, Sina micro-blogging should provide more chances to expose public welfare pages to public. For instance, they can also provide ranking for public welfare accounts and set rules within their platform to appreciate and encourage people’s participation in public welfare activities.

Connectedness

Connectedness also has a significant impact, which only a little bit lower than trust,
on satisfaction of users. This result consistent with the literature of Sina micro-blogging research (Zhao, Lu, 2012). In this previous research, connectedness, which demonstrates the social commutation desire of users, ranks as the second strongest dimension which impact satisfaction. It shows us that if their demands of social communications were met, they would have more satisfaction toward the platform. In our research, the users (followers) of the public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging platform who feel more connectedness to other follower and to the accounts have more willingness of the continuance intention. We can understand some details of this dimension by checking the questions, which focus on this in the survey.

First, in the general question about connectedness (Q18), 63% of respondents agree on the notion that public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging platform should make its followers connect with each other. This agreement may reflect multiple insights. For example, people may have the notion that public welfare issue can only be handled by collective efforts. Therefore, they tend to find connection with others in both psychological level and practical level. Another possible reason for this agreement is that this connectedness can reward people with the pleasure from the fact that their efforts and love has been recognized by others. Second, 77% of the respondents think that the users (followers) of the public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging platform should share their experience and inspiration via the platform. We did not expect such a high level agreement. The possible reason for this
may be attribute to the nature of public welfare issue itself. Most of the public welfare issues in China are difficulty to deal with. You have to devote your time and mental energy if you want to get involved in the issues. Thus, individual needs encouragement motivating him or her to take action. All those experience and inspiration can motivate individual effectively. Also, people tend to find their action is meaningful via checking others experience. Third, more than half of the respondents think they can learn something from others if he or she interacts with each other. This may reflect the fact that majority of the followers of public welfare pages have positive attitudes and expectation about their interaction with the pages and the other followers. The possible reasons for this are not clear. Maybe the majorities who involve in public welfare issue are just humble enough to realize that others must have some merits they can learn from. Or, they think learn something from others is a sort of reward for their interaction and devotion. Further research should be conducted here to identify the reasons why user think they can learn by interact with others on this platform. Forth, 72% of the respondents agree that the users (followers) of public welfare accounts on Sina micro-blogging platform share an invisible bond. The possible reason for this can find its trace on the emotion level. As we expected, the most effective way of raising people’s attention toward public welfare issue is to stimulate their emotional reaction. Based on this notion, it is easy for the followers of certain issue forge a psychological bond with each other and with the pages.
Responsiveness

Comparing to information quality, trust and connectedness, we find that responsiveness does not significantly impact the users’ (followers) satisfaction about public welfare pages on platform. This result is a little bit out of our expectation. But it is consistent with previous literature, which also found that responsiveness is insignificant on users’ satisfaction towards microblogging services (Zhao, Lu, 2012). It consistent with the results that responsiveness can be very useful when you are constructing a supportive atmosphere, though there is no clear relation between the responsiveness and the outcome (Gefen, 2000). For instance, trust can be upgraded through increasing the responsiveness, which in turn, makes the users loyal to platform, but whether or not an individual could be stuck to a certain platform isn’t directly decided by responsiveness (Ge, 2002). Possible reasons for this might be that the users of public welfare pages on Sina microblogging platform pay more attention to the information they want or the psychological belonging they pursue, then the responsiveness does not matter to them so much. Even though the results are negative, it is undeniable that responsiveness matters in certain occasions. For instant, one may use “private message” to communicate with someone, and they indeed expect they can get the reply.

Satisfaction and continuance intention

The result also proves that satisfaction of a public welfare page will significantly influence users’ continuance intention to the page, which is in line with our hypothesis. This suggests that if a public welfare account wants to maintain or extend
its influence, it must better perform in the four dimensions determining satisfaction.

2. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Turning to the limitations of our study, our sample size is relatively small and the majority of individuals who participated were under 25 years old, so it may not cover different age categories and professions. Although more than 90 percent of people who were interviewed in our research had experiences in the regular use of Sina micro-blogging, 38 percent of interviewees do followed such public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging. Thus, the measurement of satisfaction and continuance intention is just a concept for most interviewees. In order to get a exacter result, selecting related followers of public welfare pages as samples to measure satisfaction and continuance intention is necessary in future research.

Our review of prior literature indicates that research on measurement of public welfare communication on Sina micro-blogging remains relatively new in China. Due to fact that the amount of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging is rapidly increasing, to enhance the understanding of this phenomenon and help related non-profit organizations to take better advantage of this platform, we propose a theoretical model that explains micro-blogging users’ satisfaction and continuous intention on public welfare pages. Based on previous studies related to the evaluation of the website performance and the current situation of public welfare communication in China, we just concluded some key elements which may impact
the users’ satisfaction, we believe that future research should include some other related constructs. Besides, further studies could test our model by communicating different public welfare topics on different platforms. In addition, although social network service provide a new platform for communicating public issues and raising public awareness, whether all the public issues are suitable to communicate on such a platform is still a question mark, especially in China, for example anti-child sexual abuse. Further research should also consider the impact of culture and regulations in different regions.

CHAPTER V. Implications

Theoretically speaking, by starting from the previous literatures, which focus on social media, this research expends the study on different dimensions that can impact social media public welfare pages’ performance. Our research provide some helpful insights to better understand how public welfare issue work on social media platform.

The other special feature of our research is that we conduct a research about the relations between social media and public welfare issue which almost no previous study had eyes on. We measure various dimensions and the relations within them. Also, not so much work has been done in this area.

On the practical side, what we found here are very useful for the practitioner. The
model and the relations within the model may provide some concept or guideline for the practice in daily operation.

**Trust**

To raise public awareness of a welfare topic, relevant social media platforms or public pages should first be recognized by the public. Secondly, the origin of the topic and information should be credible. On Sina micro-blogging, verified accounts are signs of trustable origins of information. Public welfare pages should cooperate with some opinion leaders or reputed organizations in related areas to forward the spreading of their messages. Thirdly, the spreading process of the information should be tracked. Public pages should provide transparent progression of their off-line activities on their pages clearly. Besides, the final result of an online event should be disclosed to the followers. Trust could be cultivated through interactions and information exchange. Many people in China still have a preference in watching TV, reading newspapers and listen to the radio and take the information released by traditional media for real. Sometimes, public welfare pages on social media should work together with traditional media to convenience more people. Finally, public welfare pages should select some good feedbacks from the followers who have participated in their events and post the interacting process on the platform to gain more trusts. Here are some tips for the trust.
(1) Coverage the facts by telling a success story

Story, which is well organized and written, can catch more eyeballs than the simple facts. The humanity and a little bit more detail in the stories can capture public welfare issues three important things: attention, emotion and conviction. Moreover, success stories always attract “thumbs ups” for your micro blogging. Whether he or she is the follower of your public welfare page or not, they all want to hear a success story. Due to the fact that micro-blogging platform is almost overwhelmed by the bad news recently, words with “positive energy” is very welcomed. A feel-good micro blogging from public welfare pages can level up the satisfaction of the viewers, then the satisfaction will drive the followers to become loyalty to the public welfare pages.

(2) Celebrity endorsement

Even though this skill is old fashion and looks utilitarian, but considering the characteristic of Sina micro-blogging and reality of China, it is a very powerful way of gaining recognition. Celebrity endorsement not only improve the exposure rate of you public welfare issue, but also bring you the credit which is very precious in China right now.

(3) Photo and video are the basic tools.

Image always performs better than words in term of convincing.

Praise yourself by using others’ mouth.
In case of public welfare, it means to utilize user-content, such as a follower of your page give nice words to your action, then forward it to your other followers.

(4) A consistent vision, mission statement.

**Information quality**

By checking the model and the details of each question, we find that information quality, to some extent, functions as a motivation of getting involved in practicing public welfare issue. In practice, the information which public welfare pages provide, not only can meet the needs of follower, also, it can brand the pages. And all these make the follower to have more trust, which we discussed earlier. Here are some tips for the information quality:

(1) Public welfare issues stay in the edge of human brain, only repeated and intensive mention can relocate the issues to the center of people’s minds then let them to action.

(2) Most of public welfare issues stay in the edge of society. They are invisible to most of Chinese. Society, as a whole, tent to ignore the problems due to its difficulty to solve or it is the results of the system flaws. Therefore, certain public welfare issues have to seize every opportunity to exposure itself to the mass audience. This is why the public welfare accounts do not have the leisure time to make a joke or play
cute like other type of accounts.

(3) Professional.

Whether a single person or a non-profit organization, if they want to attract people to get involved in the public welfare issues, they have to show their profession in order to get the trust from the people who have the intents. On the Micro-blogging platform, every blog you send to the public impacts your credit profile. Thus, trying to make every blog to relate to your issue is a basic way of showing your professional.

(4) Guarantee the followers and viewers can easily understand issue and program.

(5) Guarantee the followers and viewers’ insight can be updated after reading the information on the pages.

(6) Guarantee the followers and viewers can easily find the information about how to get involved in the issues (donation, participation, supervision)

(7) Guarantee the information is updated by schedule and fresh.

Connectedness

Since we found that connectedness positive related to the satisfaction, practitioners can pay attention to the operation and approach which can help them forge an
emotional connection within the users and with the public welfare pages. In real world, public welfare issues are often presented in a sentimental way, therefore sentiment and being human could the ideal strategy for operation. Here are some tips:

(1) Be human

In order to collect people’s attention towards certain public welfare issue, it is much more available and effective to stimulate one’s emotional thinking than rational thinking. Making the public welfare issue pages behave like a human being is a perfect way to forge an emotional connection with the followers and drive non-followers eyeballs to the issue, and then inspire the actions and reactions of these people. Put the personality in a more specific way is that, for the followers and random viewers, the pages is not only a graphic avatar, it is another human being setting on the other side of the screen. It can interact with them. Thus being friendly is the priority. An account can share opinions and be a participant in various discussions on the Sina micro-blogging platform. The purpose of doing this is to make issue followers to engage. Try to use self-made content as much as the user-made content, while avoid the automate Sina micro-blogging content. One thing should be kept in mind is that the value of Sina micro-blogging lies in that it functions not only as tool but as a human being. Once a public welfare issue page find its personality, the influence and the numbers of followers will grow, slowly in the beginning then a rapid development. Sina micro-blogging is powerful and naturally fit for pushing the public welfare issue, but only those issues, which find their own tone and personality,
can be welcomed and successful.

(2) “Call for action” forge the connectedness

The purpose of presenting the public welfare accounts on Sina mirco-blogging is to motivate people to get involved through participation in the campaigns or to donate. Even through sometimes the gesture of “call to action”, especially calling for donate money, is considered as utilitarian, but that’s something inevitable. The only difference is how to make the “call to action” become easier to be accepted or a spontaneous feeling of the followers. If the users (followers) react to the “call for action”, it would be more possible for them to forge a connection with the other followers and the public welfare pages.

Responsiveness

Even though we did not find responsiveness function a lot in the model, but the in practice, it still can be very helpful in term of creating certain engaging atmosphere.

Here are some possible tips for the responsiveness:

(1) Develop a standard feedback procedure.

Interaction is one of the fundamental characteristics of social media. Through frequently interact with followers and viewers, not only can help you forge a good relationship with them, also gain a better understand of their attitudes about the issue. Therefore a standard Q&A procedure should be prepared in detail in order to deal with the various situations.

(2) Interact with the users (followers) by using their “words”.

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CHAPTER VI. Appendixes and References

1. Appendixes

Appendix A.

Questionnaire and original measurements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Measurement</th>
<th>Proposed Measurement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Trust [1] (2-6)</td>
<td>Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Flavián, C., Guinalíu, M., &amp; Gurrea, R, 2006)</td>
<td>1. I think that the public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging usually fulfill the commitments they assume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I think that this website usually fulfills the commitments it assumes</td>
<td>2. I think that the information offered by these public welfare pages is sincere and honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I think that the information offered by this site is sincere and honest</td>
<td>3. I think I can have confidence in the promises that these public welfare pages make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I think I can have confidence in the promises that this website makes</td>
<td>4. These public welfare pages do not make false statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This website does not make false statements</td>
<td>5. These public welfare pages are characterized by the frankness and clarity of the information and activities that they offer to their viewers/followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. This website is characterized by the frankness and clarity of the services that it offers to the consumer</td>
<td>Information quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information quality [7] (8-12)</td>
<td>1. The information from public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging that is relevant to my volunteering decision is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pearson, A., Tadisina, S., &amp; Griffin, C. 2012)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Information that is relevant to your purchase decision is important</td>
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</table>

58
2. Information that is understandable for you in making a purchase decision is important.

3. Information that is reliable for making your purchase decision is important.

4. Information that is adequate for your purchase decision is important.

5. Information that covers a broad scope for your purchase decision is important.


1. Users of Sina micro-blogging service share their experience and feelings with others through this communication tool.

2. Users of Sina micro-blogging service benefit from the user community using this service.

3. Users of Sina micro-blogging service share a common bond with other members of the user community who are using the service.

Responsiveness [17] (18-20) (Zhao, L., & Lu, Y. 2012)

1. When I’m using Sina micro-blogging service, other users are very responsive to my posts.

2. The information from public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging that is understandable in making a volunteering decision is important.

3. The information from public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging that is reliable for making my volunteering decision is important.

4. The information from public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging that is adequate for my volunteering decision is important.

5. The information from public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging that covers a broad scope for my volunteering decision is important.

Connectedness

1. “Followers” of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging share their experience and feelings with others through this communication platform.

2. “Followers” of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging benefit from the “follower” group following this page.

3. “Followers” of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging share a common bond with other member of the follower group who are following the page.

Responsiveness

1. When I’m following public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging, other followers are very responsive to my posts.
2. When I'm using Sina micro-blogging service, I can always count on getting a lot of responses to my posts.

3. When I'm using Sina micro-blogging service, I can always count on getting responses to my posts fairly quickly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I think that I made the correct decision to use this website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The experience that I have had with this website has been satisfactory.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. In general terms, I am satisfied with the way that this website has carried out transactions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. In general, I am satisfied with the service I have received from the website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to continue using Sina micro-blogging service rather than discontinue its use.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. My intentions are to continue using Sina micro-blogging service rather than any alternative means.</td>
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</table>

2. When I'm following public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging, I can always count on getting a lot of response to my posts.

3. When I'm following public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging, I can always count on getting response to my posts fairly quickly.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I think that I made the correct decision to use public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The experience that I have had with public welfare pages on Mirco-blogging has been satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In general terms, I am satisfied with the way that public welfare pages on Mirco-blogging has carried out actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In general, I am satisfied with the information I have received from the public welfare pages on Mirco-blogging.</td>
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<th>Continuance Intention</th>
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<tr>
<td>I want to continue following public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging rather than discontinue my following.</td>
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</table>
| 2. My intentions are to continue following public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging rather than any
Appendix B

调查问卷

您好，我们是香港浸会大学传理学院传媒管理专业的研究小组，目前在对中国内地新媒体公益事业的状况进行探索性研究。此份问卷将针对新浪微博平台中关爱求助贫困儿童的公益微博运营和使用者满意度进行调查，谢谢您的参与！

2013年4月

1. 您是_______
   A. 男性， B. 女性

2. 您的年龄在_______
   A. 20岁-25岁， B. 26岁-30岁， C. 31-35岁， D. 36岁及以上

3. 您平时是否关注过贫困儿童的话题，如边远贫困地区儿童生活、就学、教育条件的问题？
   A. 知道这个话题，非常关注；
   B. 知道这个话题，非常关注，而且偶尔参与围绕这个话题的公益活动；
   C. 知道这个话题，非常关注，而且积极参与围绕这个话题的公益活动。
   D. 知道这个话题，但不是很关注；

4. 您是否有微博帐号，如果有，您每天分配多少时间在微博上？
   A. 您没有微博帐号。
   B. 您有微博帐号，但几乎不使用；
   C. 您有微博帐号，每天使用1个小时之内；

3. I intend to use Sina micro-blogging service in the future.
4. If I could, I would like to continue using of Sina micro-blogging service.

3. I intent to follow public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging in the future.
4. If I could, I would like to continue following of public welfare pages on Sina micro-blogging.
D. 您有微博帐号，每天使用 1-2 小时；
E. 您有微博帐号，每天使用在 3 小时以上；

5. 在微博上，您是一个活跃者吗？（即经常发微博，转发，评论，点“赞”等）
A. 只是潜水，几乎不会发微博或者互动；
B. 偶尔会发微博，但几乎不参与其他的互动；
C. 偶尔会发微博，也会参与其他的互动；
D. 经常发微博并参加互动。

6. 您在微博上是否关注了有关社会公益的微博帐号，如“爱心包裹”，“微博打拐”，“免费午餐”，“壹基金”等。
A. 不知道有这样的帐号
B. 知道，但没有关注
C. 关注了 2 个以内此种类的帐号；
D. 关注了 3 个及 3 个以上类似的帐号

请设有某一关爱求助贫困儿童的公益组织，现在微博上设立帐号，开展他们的活动，回答下列问题：（请根据程度来选择）
请对以下陈述的同意程度作出选择：

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1. 我认为以微博为平台进行的公益活动及其倡导理念是可以被信任的：

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2. 我认为，新浪微博上救助贫困儿童的公益微博账号确实能帮助到相关人群

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3. 我认为，新浪微博上帮助贫困儿童的公益账号是纯公益性质的，不功利的

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4. 我相信参加新浪微博上关爱救助贫困儿童的公益账户组织的活动，我也能够真正帮助相关人群

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5. 我认为，在新浪微博上关爱救助贫困儿童的公益账户不会发布和传播虚假消息

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</table>
6. 我认为，新浪微博上关爱救助贫困儿童的公益账户在信息上对粉丝和微博用户是公开、透明的（如捐款渠道，资金来源和去向等）

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7. 我认为，目前新浪微博上关爱救助贫困儿童的公益微博帐号很好地呈现了与关爱救助儿童相关的有效信息

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8. 我认为，新浪微博上关爱救助贫困儿童的公益微博帐号提供了与救助贫困儿童方法及参加其活动渠道等相关的信息

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9. 我认为，新浪微博上关爱救助贫困儿童的公益微博帐号提供的与关爱儿童相关之活动信息清晰明了

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10. 我认为，新浪微博上关爱救助贫困儿童的公益微博帐号的信息彰显了其在儿童关爱领域的成果

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11. 我认为，新浪微博上关爱救助贫困儿童的公益微博帐号提供了足够多的背景信息来动员我参与到其活动中

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12. 我认为，目前新浪微博上关爱救助贫困儿童公益帐号上的信息涵盖了广泛和全面的公益知识和公益话题

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13. 我认为，关爱帮助贫困儿童的公益微博可以使其粉丝互相联系与互动起来

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14. 我觉得，关爱帮助贫困儿童的公益微博的粉丝通过这个平台进行互动，应分享彼此的经历和感想

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15. 我相信关爱帮助贫困儿童的公益微博的粉丝会通过与这个微博的粉丝群体的互动，受益良多

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16. 我相信关爱帮助贫困儿童的公益微博的粉丝会与粉丝群体中的其他成员享有共同的一条纽带

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17. 我认为，在关爱帮助贫困儿童的公益微博上，是否得到回应很重要

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18. 在我所关注的关爱帮助贫困儿童的公益微博上，我很希望和该微博的其他粉丝互动

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19. 在我所关注的关爱帮助贫困儿童的公益微博上，我很希望其他粉丝有更多的互动

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20. 在我所关注的关爱帮助贫困儿童的公益微博上，当我转发、评论、私信以后，很快的得到回应

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21. 我认为关注公益微博是一个好选择

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22. 从整体上来讲，我很满意我使用、查看新浪公益微博的经历

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23. 从整体上来讲，我很满意公益微博所作到的事情

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24. 从整体上来讲，我很满意从公益微博上获取的信息

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25. 在任何情况下，我都会一直关注新浪微博上关爱救助贫困儿童的公益微博

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26. 我想要继续关注新浪微博上关爱求助贫困儿童的公益微博，而不是取消对其关注

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27. 与传统媒体相比，我更愿意从新浪微博等新媒体的公益主页中获得公益知识和公益活动信息

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28. 我将来会关注新浪微博上关爱求助贫困儿童的公益微博及其活动的

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29. 如果新浪微博关爱求助贫困儿童的公益微博能提供给我更多有效信息，我才会继续关注它

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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION FORM

Student Name: LIU Fang TU Shihui ZHANG Bing

ZHANG Yimeng ZHU Pingting

Student Number: 12423777, 12402745, 12423734,

12436844, 12436828

Title of project: Public Welfare On Chinese Social Media

---- Take Sina Micro-blogging as an example

Submission date: May 6, 2013

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We have read the relevant sections on plagiarism provided in the handbook for Graduation Project and observed the standards of conduct. We are fully aware of the consequences in the event of plagiarism.

We declare that, to the best of our knowledge, this project represents our own work and all sources have been properly acknowledged, and the project contains no elements of plagiarism.

We further declare that the project has not been previously included in a thesis or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

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ZHANG YIMENG
ZHU PINGTING

Students’ ID:

12423777,
12402745,
12423734,
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12436828

Signatures:
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