

COMPLETION REPORT

This research mainly targets at how Chinese youth understand Japan and how they discuss Japan-related topic via the internet. Though CHINA-JAPAN relationships have been researched a lot in diplomatic dimension, few has been done in the field of citizen's especially young people's view of Japan, which is a fundamental basis for further efforts in the increasing important "Public Diplomacy" to foster political, economic and cultural exchanges. The young people are heavy users of the internet, they read less newspapers and books and their ideas are less represented in the traditional mass media. Meantime, they are sensitive to national interests in international society, and they play an important role in opinion expression especially in Japan-related topics. Youth are the future managers, scientists, journalists who will influence China-Japan relation in form of their daily work. It's very necessary to explore how they discuss these topics and how they treat Japan.

This project has deployed discussions of Chinese youth about Japan's 3-11 big earthquake by analyzing a Social Network Site (SNS) RenRen, one of the most frequently used WEB 2.0 applications among Chinese young people. Typical posters and articles with high participation by high clicks and many replies have been carefully explored. Due to the real-name registration system of RenRen, the identity and the attitudes of the users could be combined to trace their opinions formation. Based on the analysis mentioned above, the following conclusions are drawn from this research:

Firstly, viewpoints vary, but cannot reach an agreement. In the traditional internet environment, group polarization phenomenon appears frequently when discussing controversial issues, but it did not happen in this research. Compared with posters and replies towards Japan 311 earthquake in Tianya BBS, different opinions in Renren website tend to be more balanced presented and the way of expression tends to be more various. It is also worth noting that the strengthening but conflicting opinions usually cannot reach an agreement after discussion.

Secondly, irrational expressions exist, including internet nationalistic ones. Although there is a real name system in SNS websites, which can restrict the random and irresponsible expressions, certain user usually don't know each other in the case that the popular poster/article be shared from the original author to a wider public environment and be read by many more new users. As a result, effects of group norm are reduced and irrational actions will emerge such as emotional catharsis and vituperations. However, this situation involves only a small part of participants of the discussion, especially compared to that in news site and BBS

Thirdly, users in BBS as well as traditional internet webpage must point out the interactive object in their comments. Instead, users of SNS websites only need to click 'reply' or '@' somebody so that they can have a one-to-one interaction, which is far more convenient than BBS. This makes the discussions of Japan related topic more accurate, direct and lasting. As the research's conclusion, the author suggests that the citizen-level communication and dialogue between Japanese and Chinese especially the youth is necessary, which could overcome the blind spots of diplomatic relationships. This research urges to expand monitoring of youth expression and discussion via internet, as this situation has been setting agendas for traditional mass media reports and has great impact on government policy-making. Careful and complete analysis of irrational expressions should be done in the future to identify youth feelings and concerns to find effective measures of high pertinency for improvement of the two nations' understanding and communication.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

2011-11-05, China Youth University for Political Sciences, Beijing, *the 3rd Media Convergence Conference*,
New Media and Chinese Youth's Online Discussion, Wang Bin.

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

China Youth Study, 2012(3). Analysis on Characteristics of Young People's Opinion Expression Under the
Circumstance of New Media, WANG Bin & WANG Ping.

Youth Journalists, 2012(2). Youth Opinion Expression in Social Network Sites: A Case Study of Discussion on
Japan's Earthquake, WANG Bin & XU Ying.

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)