Inclusive Development of Online Support Community Specialized for Chinese

Youth's Mental Well-being

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Abstract

The growth in the volume of social media users is a global trend. Chinese social media users are also in line with this trend as a country with a vast population. The functions of social media platforms are no longer limited to meeting people's daily communication. As more diverse functions are presented on social media, there are concerns about their negative impact, such as media bias, online violence, and the conflict between censorship and freedom of speech. In China, where youth are the primary target users of social media, it is necessary to improve the inclusiveness of Chinese social media platforms for the youth group and reduce the negative impact of social media on Chinese youth. This research will explore the characteristics of an online support community specialized for Chinese youth and develop a prototype of supportive online platforms that meet their needs.

Keywords: social media, media bias, online violence, conflict between censorship and freedom of speech, Chinese youth, inclusiveness, online support community,

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Dedication

  I want to dedicate my MRP report to my parents, partners, friends and classmates. I would like to thank my parents for supporting me in studying abroad and providing me with the opportunity to learn about different cultures and broaden my horizons. I would like to thank my partner for always being there for me and preparing delicious meals for me when I was busy with my research. I would also like to thank my friends for their support and encouragement in keeping me optimistic and positive. I would also like to thank my classmates with whom I have explored the joys of cooperation with others by doing group work.

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1. Background:

In this internet-intertwined environment, digital media has been involved in every aspect of people's lives. More than 3.6 billion people worldwide were using social media in 2020, and that number is expected to increase to 4.41 billion in 2025 (Statista.com, 2022). One of the reasons for social media's popularity is the development of the smartphone. The increasing number of Chinese youth using social media is consistent with global trends. In the past decade, China has become the leading consumer market for smartphones (Statista.com, 2022). A phenomenon that cannot be ignored is that with the gradual integration of modern electronic devices into daily life, youth groups also have more opportunities to connect on social media. In China, the dominant group of users on social media is Chinese youth, with 90% of Chinese youth reporting that they use their mobile phones to access the internet (Yang Y., 2018 Sep 12). As today's youth frequently use smartphones and other communication tools in their homes, communities, and school, they have a longer exposure time to social media. Over 50% of Chinese youth spend more than 2 hours per day on social media (Ye et al., 2018).

However, access to digital media or social platforms may negatively impact the young age group due to their lack of the ability of self-protection, self-control and telling right from wrong. Negative influences on Chinese youth may be brought by social media, such as cyber violence, privacy leak, fake news spreading and biased speech (Zhang et al., 2019). Existing social media does not seem to focus on or be concerned with negativity in the use of social media by young users. For example, in

one aspect, Chinese youth receive real-time content and comments on social media or online games frequently that have not been filtered through the rating system or censorship system in time (Wong, 2018). There is a great deal of negative speech in this content, such as discriminatory remarks, biased speech, hate speech, fake news spreading, violent or pornographic content, which can be emotionally and psychologically damaging to young people and even lead to verbal conflict and online violence (Zhang et al., 2019). Even if the content will be censored and blocked later, many young people victims of online violence still have little recourse to defend their rights. Existing social media fail to exclude individuals when they post offensive content, making other young users' online social experience not guaranteed and not conducive to social media's inclusive development for youth groups.

On another point, research has indicated that those who replace in-person social interaction with virtual interactions may show increased psychopathological issues, such as depression, anxiety and experience a greater sense of loneliness (Song et al., 2014; Bickham et al., 2015). The adverse effects of these social media can lead to a range of psychological problems in youth groups.

As young age groups are increasingly exposed to social media platforms, many countries are beginning to focus on reducing the negative impact of social media on young people and hope to improve the inclusiveness of social media for younger groups through more in-depth research. World Health Organization (WHO) has identified studies on the potential health effects of mobile phones and social media in children and adolescents as a high-priority research area (Zheng et al., 2014).

Chinese social media primarily has a stricter censorship system than Western social media. However, the problem of Chinese youth's access to social media also needs to be paid attention to in a wide range of fields. Chinese students use social media to listen to lectures online, teachers use social media to assign homework, and young people use social media to shop has become a habit. Chinese youth access to social platforms have become an irreversible phenomenon; youth's parents or teachers do not want to discourage youth from using smartphones or social media just because of the possible adverse effects of social media.

For the above reasons, how Chinese youth use the Internet and the information they receive online need to be paid attention to. This research attempts to find inclusive solutions specifically for the Chinese social media market. In this research, the concept of inclusive social media is defined as an emotionally supportive online social environment. The research investigates characteristics of online social communities that are more inclusive for Chinese youth groups. Characteristics include emotionally safe, emotional support and respect for diversity.

1.1 Market research :

Before meeting with participants, a literature review and environmental was conducted scan for the popular social media in the market, including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Discord, and tried to define some inclusive designs that were widely accepted or excluded by the young age group.

Aspects of inclusive design defined by this research that is widely accepted in the

field of teenagers' social media (the resources are adopted from google search):

	Quality communication	Global information dissemination	Ease of joining user community where one can voice their opinions
Facebook	Messages must be sent via Messenger	Involve diverse information	Provide diverse communities for users to join and it is easy to voice their opinions
Discord	Involve text message, no delay video/audio call	Involve diverse information	Provide diverse communities for users to join and it is easy to voice their opinions
Instagram	Involve text message, no delay video/audio call	Involve diverse information	No community provided
WhatsApp	Involve text message, no delay video/audio call	Only for daily communication and file transfer	Users can create a group chat but in a relatively private relationship circle.

Table 1. Compares method of communication sharing on the apps

1) Method of sending information: There are many ways for users to communicate on social media. In addition to sending text messages, many social platforms also have audio calls and video calls without sound and image delays. From an inclusive point of view, seeing a friend's face or hearing a peer's voice can be psychologically helpful for teenagers to shorten the social distance between them instead of simply communicating through text (Buhler 2013). Furthermore, no audio call or video call delay allows youth to achieve online multiplayer communication,

which reduces the social cost among youth and helps meet youth's basic daily social needs.

2) Global information dissemination: social media is a giant global information pool. Its expansiveness allows users to share ideas, thoughts, and learn new things. In addition, during the pandemic, most schools choose to teach online through social media. It is undeniable that those global platforms involving diverse content, such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Discord, efficiently access diversified information and educational resources for young age group users. However, Chinese youth in China are restricted from accessing YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Discord due to regulatory restrictions.

3) Voice their opinions: Users can join different communities or groups interested in on social media to discuss some topics with others. Moreover, it is easy to find like-minded peers and communicate with them. This means if they say something right and reasonable, other users can hear them and support them; if they want to start some positive movements, there might be many people following them. This kind of inclusiveness will give young age group users chances to do some marvelous things more efficiently and meet their psychological needs for a sense of belonging (Gordaon, 2022).

Aspects of inclusive design in social media for teenagers that are challenging or controversial are: (the resources are adopted from google search):

	Privacy leaks	Average time spent by users	Freedom of expression
Facebook	High risk	33 mins/day	Certain restriction
Discord	Low risk	9 mins/day	High level of free speech
Instagram	High risk	53 mins/day	Certain restriction
WhatsApp	Low risk	38 mins/day	Certain restriction

Table 2. Evaluation of existing apps' non-emotionally supportive online social environment

(BroadbandSearch.com, 2022)

1) Privacy leaks: Nowadays, people often post their daily lives on social media, but it is worth noting that any content posted on the web does not disappear completely, and this data may be saved somewhere on the web. Teenagers are at risk of having their information exploited by online scams if they are not informed about how to protect their privacy on social media. Their thoughtless comments are also at risk of being criticized by others and causing online violence. All of these situations have the potential to cause psychological trauma to the youth population (Rao, 2017).

2) Lose track of time: There is so much information on social media that it is time-consuming to research it all and making it difficult for users to focus on searching or browsing for the information they need. It is easy for their attention to get lost in a large and mixed pool of information (Brinn, 2015). Especially for the youth group, due to the lack of self-control, young users do not realize that they have spent hours on a

social media platform browsing that mixed information and forget what their original purpose of browsing social media is (Wallace, 2014). This situation may lead to the addiction of young people to the Internet.

3) Freedom of expression: That is a double-edged sword; it is good to see people can express their opinions, but anyone can say anything on social media, maybe some comments will cause an internet battle, and some people will suffer cyberbullying. This situation is challenging to control based on a totally open environment. When young users are exposed to or affected by this negative information, they will find it challenging to deal with their situation (Edwards, 2021). They also lack relevant knowledge to ease their emotions and solve psychological problems (Zhang, 2019).

2. Problem statement

This research investigates the experience of Chinese youth on digital media. The project aimed to identify characteristics of the online social support community for Chinese youth that might reduce the negative impact of the online platforms on their mental well-being.

2.1 Research objective:

When considering the inclusiveness of online social communities for youth, the most significant problem is how do we define an inclusive online social community? How do we distinguish the inclusive and non-inclusive concepts from social media? This research aims to try to address the research objective by answering the following research questions.

Research questions:

a. How do Chinese teens use social media as a community of support?

b. What are the characteristics of an online support community?

3. Research methodologies

This research was conducted with participants through the Focus group, co-creation, as described in Appendix B. The total meeting time with participants was about five and a half hours.

The research was conducted between 27 January and 12 March 2022.

The research was approved by OCAD University Research Ethics Board # 2020-04.

3.1 Participant recruitment:

The main target population for this research is the Chinese youth population, so participants were Chinese between the ages of 16 and 25 years old, that needed to understand how to use various types of social platforms and be keen to share their user experiences. To ensure that data collection was not limited to Chinese social media, participants needed to have experience using non-Chinese social media platforms.

Participant recruitment was conducted online. A recruitment poster was posted in a Chinese Canada international student chat group. Through questionnaire screening, the study recruited seven participants who met the study requirements, the youngest was 17 years old, and the oldest was 24 years old. They spent an average of five hours a day using social media platforms. Pseudonyms are used instead of participants' names

during meetings and the coding process.

3.1.1 Summary of the characteristics of participants

7 participants were recruited for this study. Those participants are Chinese youth and young adults who are familiar with both non-Chinese social apps and Chinese social apps.

Persona 1

Pseudonym: Puppy

Features: Fan of photograph

Preference: Share daily life and photoes online / Attract more fans / Find like-minded people.

Persona 2

Pseudonym: Kitty

Features: Fan of entertainment gossip

Preference: Get to konw the lastest hot topics online / Get to know some celebrities and KOLs' gossip / Find like-minded people.

Persona 3

Pseudonym: Piggy

Features: Fan of fashion & makeup

Preference: Get to konw the lasted trend of fashion online / Find like-minded people.

Persona 4

Pseudonym: Froggy

Features: Fan of game

Preference: Learn some tips oline about different games / Find partners play games together.

Persona 5

Pseudonym: Crab

Features: Connect with familiy frequently

Preference: Sharing important news or interesing videos online with family.

Persona 6

Pseudonym: Crocodile

Features: Fan of sport

Preference: Learn some knowledge about different sports online / Find like-minded people.

Persona 7

Pseudonym: Raccoon

Features: Fan of pets, dog lover

Preference: Get to know some tips online about 'how to relax my dog.' / Find like-minded people.

Perticipants analysis
Common points
- Receive massive amounts of information from the Internet every day.
- Have the intention of looking for like-minded partners.
- Get information online according to their preferences.
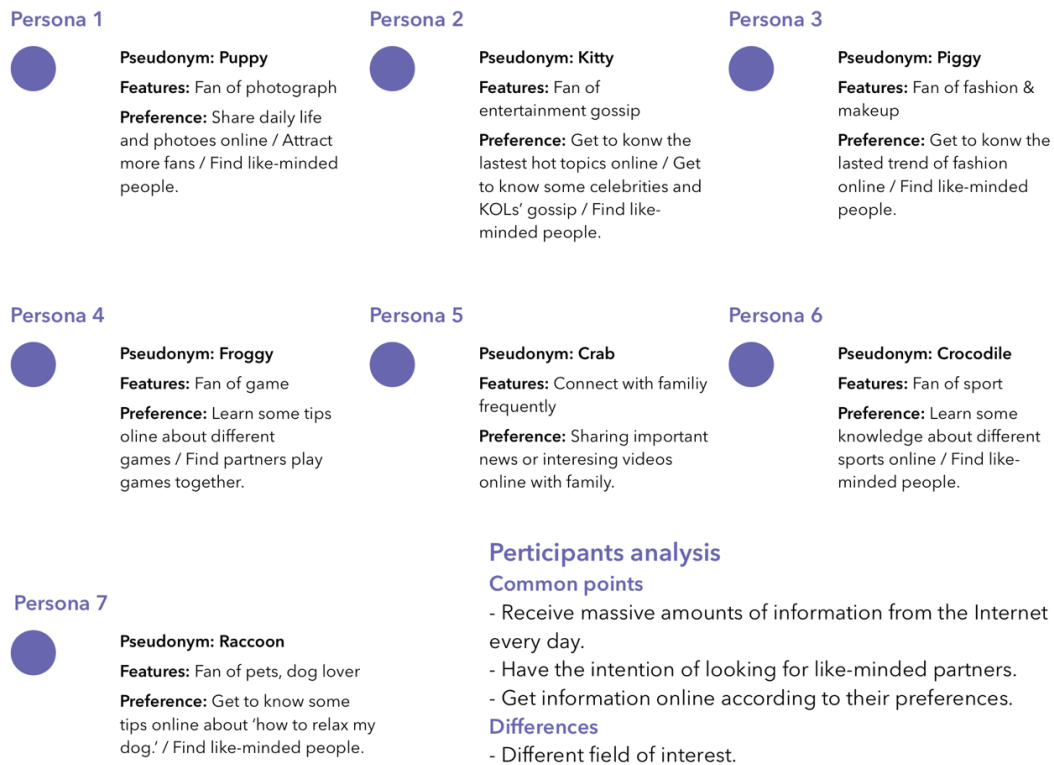**Differences**
- Different field of interest.

Figure 1. Summary of the characteristics of participants

The personas presented in Figure 1 reflects some hobbies of the participants in their daily life and the information they pay attention to when using social media that was gathered during the ice-breaker activity and introductions. The summary of the above data reflects the participants' essential common points and their differences. That is, the common points in their use of social media are

- Receive information from the Internet every day.

- Have the intention of looking for like-minded partners.

- Get information online according to their preferences.

According to the limited information collected, the differences lie in the topics participants search for may vary because of their different interests.

4. Data analysis

4.1 Data collection

Data were collected from a participant focus group and a prototype co-creative workshop. After the co-creation activity, the qualitative data was used to explore what key themes were related to this research. Prototype testing was used for the verification step.

With the participants' permission, the whole process of the activity was recorded as a video. The collected data include the participants' comments during the activity and the prototype test feedback. Since the participants were all Chinese youth, the focus groups and co-creation session were conducted in Mandarin. The data was translated into English after the activity. The transcripts were read iteratively, and the data coded.

4.2 Data analysis results

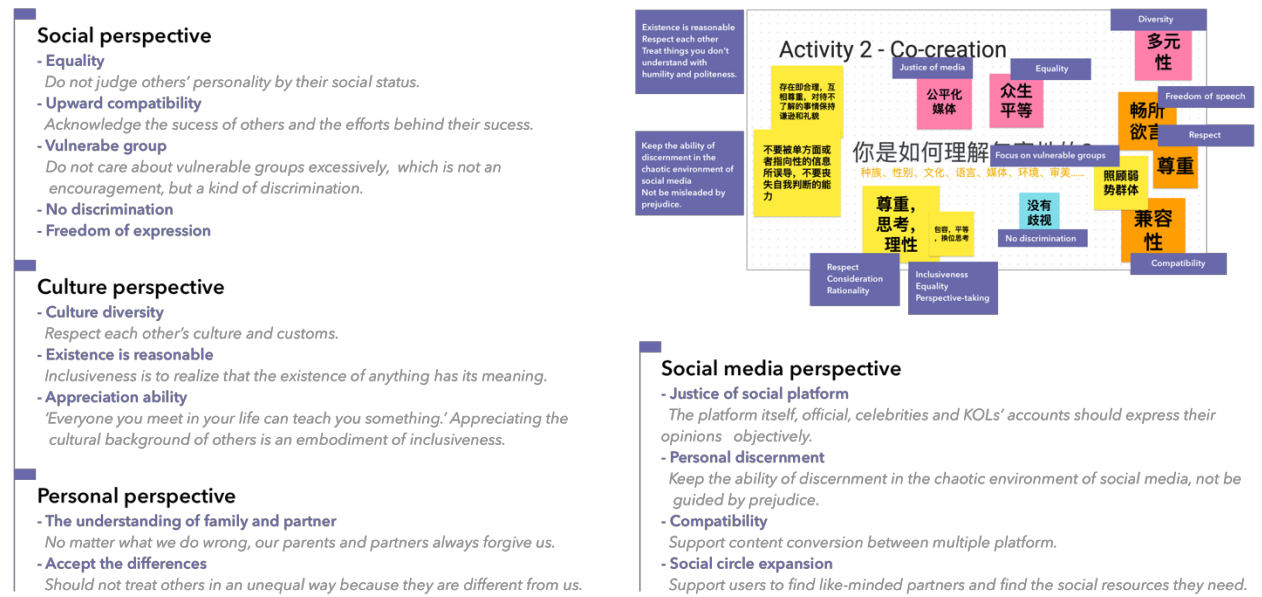**Data analysis (The concept of Inclusiveness for participants)**

Social perspective
- Equality
  Do not judge others' personality by their social status.
- Upward compatibility
  Acknowledge the sucess of others and the efforts behind their sucess.
- Vulnerabe group
  Do not care about vulnerable groups excessively, which is not an encouragement, but a kind of discrimination.
- No discrimination
- Freedom of expression

Culture perspective
- Culture diversity
  Respect each other's culture and customs.
- Existence is reasonable
  Inclusiveness is to realize that the existence of anything has its meaning.
- Appreciation ability
  'Everyone you meet in your life can teach you something.' Appreciating the cultural background of others is an embodiment of inclusiveness.

Personal perspective
- The understanding of family and partner
  No matter what we do wrong, our parents and partners always forgive us.
- Accept the differences
  Should not treat others in an unequal way because they are different from us.

Social media perspective
- Justice of social platform
  The platform itself, official, celebrities and KOLs' accounts should express their opinions objectively.
- Personal discernment
  Keep the ability of discernment in the chaotic environment of social media, not be guided by prejudice.
- Compatibility
  Support content conversion between multiple platform.
- Social circle expansion
  Support users to find like-minded partners and find the social resources they need.

Figure 2. The concept of inclusiveness for participants

To discuss the inclusive features of social media with participants more smoothly, the researcher invited participants to describe how they understood the word 'inclusiveness' before the co-creation activity of the session1 started. For people without relevant knowledge,' inclusiveness' is an abstract concept. At the initial stage of thinking about this issue, most of the participants' first reactions are' Accessibility,'' Compatibility,' and' no discrimination.' Nevertheless, interestingly, as they think deeply gradually, participants give more specific explanations. The data were coded to understand participants' perceptions of 'inclusiveness.' This research coded and conducted a qualitative analysis of their comments and identified the following key themes.

As can be seen from Figure2, participants' understanding of' inclusiveness' can be roughly divided into four perspectives: Social Perspective, Cultural Perspective, Personal Perspective, and Social Media Perspective. Under each perspective, several

keywords are listed to summarize participants' ideas. The qualitative analysis of the above information has led to the identification of three main research themes regarding online inclusive platforms - online safety, equality and inclusiveness and social circle extension.

4.2.1 Theme 1 – Online safety

1. Users' privacy

- Privacy leaks cannot be fully guaranteed on social media.

In the activities of this research, participants argued that no matter how comprehensive social media claim their user privacy protection systems are, users' privacy cannot be fully protected. Even for social media that do not require users' personal information to register for an account, as long as users post their comments on social media, those postings do not disappear completely. One participant said in the research activity:

'I think in today's online society, there is no real privacy at all. Any information you post on the Internet can't be completely destroyed, and it may be used by people with ulterior motives, so if you really want to avoid privacy leakage, you can only refuse to use any social apps.'

- Raccoon

- Real-name authentication is a bottom line for people to protect themselves online.

When discussing Real-name authentication during the activity, participants indicated that:

'I think it is better to use a real-name authentication system. Even if something bad happens, we can find out who is behind the screen.'

As mentioned above, since users' privacy may be stolen by people with ulterior motives, or in the case of online fraud, when users discover such cases, the real-name authentication system may help them find out who the perpetrators of these cybercrimes are through legal channels.

2. Censorship system

- Strict censorship will lead users to lose their freedom of speech

The participants analyzed social media censorship in different countries based on their personal experiences. They agreed that Chinese social media censorship is much stricter, and when users post sensitive content on social media, their accounts may be blocked. The strict censorship system makes them feel deprived of their freedom of expression.

'When we discuss some sensitive topics, our accounts will face the risk of being blocked. I think this violates its original intention as a social app, and people cannot speak freely with others on it.'

- Puppy

- The government censors the content presented on Chinese social media, and the content displayed on some Chinese social media is too directional, which means only positive social activities and government actions will be presented on social media; once a negative report about the government's image appears, the report will be blocked.

The participants gave the example of 'Weibo,' Chinese social media. Weibo is a

popular social media with a user base including celebrities, internet influencers, and scholars. Many Chinese public media have accounts on Weibo. However, the state regulates the content they post. One participant stated:

'I think the limitation of Weibo is that it is too directional, and most of the information displayed is what the big environment (govt) wants us to see.'

- Puppy

4.2.2 Theme 2 – Equality and inclusiveness

1.   Discrimination online:

- Judge people depending on their social status, body, achievements, personalities, gender, race…

One participant mentioned' 'vulnerable group' in this theme. The participant's point of view is not to pay too much attention to vulnerable groups, especially on social media. This participant pointed out that excessive attention is not a kind of help or encouragement but a disguised form of discrimination.

'I think it is worth discussing not to pay too much attention to vulnerable groups. Especially in social media, I think there is no vulnerable group in the traditional sense. For example, if a disabled person shares his/her daily life on social media, others comment and say, 'as a disabled person, you have done very well!' I think this is not a kind of encouragement but discrimination.'

-   Crocodile

'We are supposed to provide social support for the vulnerable group. However, if they are just sharing their daily routines or hobbies on social media and do not want to

draw attention to themselves because of their disability, then we should not emphasize their physical impairment; our excessive attention will make them feel that we think they are different from us. So our encouragement for them should only focus on the content and work they post, not their bodies.'

-   Crocodile

In fact, this is not the only aspect of online discrimination. Discrimination based on religion, race, social status, and gender is also common on social media. Discrimination is demonstrated by the negative remarks or inappropriated extra attention of social media users, for example, paying extra attention to the body of people with disabilities, the body shape and the appearance of others. Therefore, how to reduce the discriminatory statements made by people on social media will be a key theme for inclusive development.

2.   Negative information publishes and spreading:

- Cannot filter negative content for the youth group.

Participants discussed Weibo, Tik Tok, and Instagram. They believed that one of the non-inclusive features of these social media for youth groups is the inability to filter 18+ content. One participant expressed her concern:

'My little brother just started primary school this year, and he has already started using Tik Tok and Weibo. The information on these platforms is very mixed. I do not know if he will see negative information from these platforms.

- Piggy

- Online haters

Participants repeatedly mentioned the negative impact of online haters on their online social experience. They felt that haters' behavior tends to cause cyber violence and results in a discordant online social environment. Here is a quote from the discussion between two participants:

'Many haters on Tik Tok reply or send private messages to attack other people, I think this is the fuse of cyber violence.'

- Froggy

'I think haters are really speaking freely on the Internet now, and there is no bottom line for them. You know, people are separated from each other by the screen, and no one knows anyone, and no one will be responsible for their own remarks.'

- Raccoon

3. Who is leading people's opinions online?
- Online influencers and celebrities guide people's opinions.

Participants perceive that people with high social status, such as celebrities and internet influencers, dominate social media in guiding people's perceptions. However, some online celebrities will use their social accounts to guide public opinion to maintain their image or interests.

'The public opinion orientation of some people with high status on social media, such as movie stars, online influencers and so on is quite common now. Sometimes, they can describe black as white.'

- Manipulating the public's opinion by capital injection.

Participants believe that celebrities and bloggers with large followings in today's social media have some commercial value. Entertainment companies, advertisers, and product sales attempt to guide popular perceptions by injecting money into these influencers (capital injection). The involvement of capital may lead to the bias and inaccuracy of media information.

'I wrote' Capital Injection' on the blue sticky note, because now many people with higher status in the media will be bribed by others, so they might guide the public's opinion and then distort the facts.'

This participant believes that the fairness of social media is the primary condition for transmitting correct information and protecting users' rights to know the truth.

4.2.3 Theme 3 –Social circle extension

1. Information sharing and acquisition

- People sharing their personal life online is able to find more like-minded peers.

Participants discussed the inclusiveness of Tik Tok and how they believe that people can feel pleasure by recording and sharing their daily lives with social media and that learning about others' lives through social media is also a channel to promote human interaction.

'I think Tik Tok's inclusiveness is just like its slogan: make every second count; we

can record our daily life and share it with others through our Tik Tok account and learn

about the good life in the eyes of others. I think Tik Tok is very entertaining and suitable

for shortening the distance between people.'

- Kitty

- People acquire the latest trending they are interested in.

The participants believe that Chinese youth are more likely to browse news on social media than on traditional news broadcasts. Social media is the primary channel for Chinese youth to receive the latest information, and they search for the information they want to know on social media according to their interests.

'I think the inclusiveness of social media to young people is that we can always know the latest news and information we are interested in. Because few young people will watch the news broadcast now, and almost all Chinese young people know and recognize social information or news on Weibo or WeChat.'

- Crab

2. User categorization

- Categorized the group of people who have the same interest.

Participants believe that grouping users in social media based on their interests can increase their sense of belonging in social media and help them find like-minded partners. Also, grouping users with different interests and opinions can help reduce some of the online disputes.

'I think' user categorization' is a way to avoid network disputes, such as grouping netizens interested in literature and netizens interested in games. If they have their own

small groups, at least there will be no disputes between them.'

<div align="right">

- Froggy

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- Distinguish users' real identities from their online identities.

One participant said Discord helped him distinguish his social media identity from his real-life identity. This distinction helps him avoid adding gaming friends to his daily social accounts (such as Instagram, Facebook, WeChat, and other social platforms that involve personal information). Therefore, the distinction prevents him from revealing more information about himself in front of his gaming friends.

'I want to talk about DC. Before there was no DC, my friends and I could only contact each other through WeChat when playing games, but sometimes we only contact each other because of playing games, not as real friends, so it would be strange to add friends on WeChat. When I started using DC, I thought it would help us distinguish our real identity from our game identity. I think this is the inclusiveness of DC.'

<div align="right">

- Froggy

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4.3 Characteristics of inclusive apps

During the co-creation process, Participants described 1-3 of their most used social apps on their personal Jamboard page and described the pros and cons of the social platforms, Figure 3 summarize the information they mentioned in this part.

	Wechat	Discord	Tik Tok	WhatsApp	Instagram	RED	Weibo
Inclusiveness (emotionally safe, emotional support, respect for diversity)	· Diverse content provided by mini-program of WeChat (respect for diversity) · Create group chats with friends and family (emotional support)	· Good privacy (emotionally safe) · Social circle expansion (emotional support) · Good customization (respect for diversity)	· Information sharing and acquisition (respect for diversity) · Maintain relationships with friends and family by sharing interesting information (emotional support)	·Daily communication with friends and family (emotional support) · No advertising and fake news spreading (emotionally safe)	· Narrow the distance between people (emotional support) · Diversification of information (respect for diversity)	· Real evaluation of different commodities (emotionally safe) · Diversification of information (respect for diversity)	· Narrow the distance between people (emotional support) · Diversification of information (respect for diversity)
Limitations:	· The speech & content review is quite strict (No freedome of speech) · Not conductive to expading the social circle	· Prone to contradictions (imperfect speech management)	·Prone to contradictions (imperfect speech management) · Dissemination of false information · Time killer	· Privacy problem (phone numbers)	· No content rating system · Discriminatory speech · Time killer · No real-name authentication	·Prone to contradictions (imperfect speech management) · Time killer	· The speech & content review is quite strict (No freedome of speech) · Time killer · Privacy problem · Manipulating hot trending by capital

Figure 3. Inclusiveness and limitation about existing social media

4.3.1 The real-time nature of social media (reflect on theme 3 - People acquire the latest trending they are interested in):

During the discussions on different social media platforms, participants noted that in addition to meeting the basic needs of users for daily communication, they emphasized the importance of real-time social media, participants believe that from an inclusive point of view, being kept up to date with information of interest to them would help them share it with friends and family, which is an easy and effective way for youth to maintain their relationships. The dissemination and discussion of the latest trends are crucial for youth groups. It has become the norm for youth groups to spend 1-2 hours a day absorbing information from different channels via the Internet. Participants said that they spend far more time on social media platforms like Tik Tok, Weibo (a Chinese social app) and Instagram than on simple chat apps like WhatsApp because these social media outlets spread faster for real-time hot trends and have more comprehensive content and more diverse information.

4.3.2 Level of customization (reflect on theme 3 - Categorized the group of people who have the same interest)：

Some participants rated Discord as a social platform that they felt was far more customized than other social platforms. Although it is a social platform specifically for gamers, Discord's interaction process provides users with the autonomy to manage their own behavior. Users can create different communities according to their needs; in the customized management, the titles and identities of the administrators are decided and edited by the users themselves. What is the title and identity of each person in this community are very public, which makes the social situation within the platform transparent and flexible.

Moreover, by creating different communities for their favorite games or joining others' communities, users can distinguish between players of different games within the platform and avoid confusion about which partner played this game with them last time.

Creating or joining a community means group members share similar interests. One participant said that bringing together users with the same interests to form a community facilitates discussion of topics within the community and encourages mutual recognition and support among community members.

4.3.3   Censorship system of Chinese social media (reflect on theme 1 –Strict
        censorship will lead users to lose their freedom of speech)

Participants also mentioned the censorship system of Chinese social media, such

as WeChat and Weibo, where the content posted by users on these social media platforms undergoes a relatively strict review. If the user's comments contain sensitive words or radical content, the content may be blocked, or the poster's account may be banned. Chinese social media primarily has a stricter censorship system than Western social media. The participants had a deep discussion about whether censorship equals loss of privacy. The conclusions reached were interesting, as participants said that no one wants their accounts to be regulated. However, they do not want to change China's current censorship system or speech and content review system. Moreover, they choose to incorporate a censorship system in their co-created platform in this research as well. The participants argued that the strict censorship system of Chinese social media is due to the national context and social system. This research cannot develop a social platform concept that leaves aside reality. The situation of state or Internet companies regulating social media in China cannot be fundamentally changed simply by reforming the social media format. The following is a more detailed elaboration of the views of the participants.

- A censorship system is not exactly the same as a loss of privacy, and privacy leaks cannot be directly linked to a censorship system. Participants pointed out that when people decide to sign up for an account on social media and post content, that action means sharing and spreading. When that action is complete, the data will forever remain somewhere on the internet. In today's social media, there is no complete privacy, so the loss of privacy or the leakage of privacy depends on whether or not there are people with ulterior motives to steal and use other

people's data. (Puppy, Froggy, Crocodile)

- The censorship system does not only imply internal auditing of platforms. However, it is shaped by more profound and more complex reasons, which participants felt could not be changed by mere changes in the form of social media. Lurie (2015) noted that the Chinese view 'privacy' as a derogatory term that represents selfish behavior; Chinese people think the concept of 'no privacy' can facilitate an environment where surveillance by the state. This description is acceptable for the current state of social media in China. The 'sacrifice' of some netizens' privacy seems to be more conducive to openly receiving state control. However, it is worth noting that most Chinese do not resist the protection of privacy and do not consider 'privacy' a 'selfish' concept (Yang, 2018). The discussion of this research for the opinions of Lurie and Yang is that both points are correct, but they start from different points of view. As a Western scholar, Lurie gives his opinion through a Western mode of thinking about the current situation in Chinese society; Yang, as a Chinese scholar, gives her comments through Chinese culture and Chinese perceptions. Lurie describes the behavior and current status that Chinese society exhibits, and Yang describes the thoughts and visions of the Chinese people. The researcher needs to bring both perspectives into the research, deferring to the judgment and perspective of the research's target audience. In this research, the participants' performance in the co-creation activities shows that they are also concerned about privacy and do not see 'privacy' as a concept related to 'selfish.' Part of the reason for China's strict social

media censorship system is the country's political system and its vast population (Yang, 2018). In an online environment with a large population base, if the censorship of speech is not strict enough, the number of online disputes may be doubled. Participants felt that China's social media had to strike a balance between social stability, personal privacy and freedom of expression. It is not just a question of protecting privacy that can be judged, but a result of population size, political factors and social institutions (Yang, 2018). (Puppy, Crab, Kitty, Piggy)

4.4 What are the characteristics of an inclusive online community?

Data analysis of participant preference revealed the characteristics they believe can make the online social community more supportive and inclusive and characteristics that do not accord with the development of a harmonious online social environment.

What characteristics can make the online social community more supportive and inclusive (Positive)?
What characteristics do not accord with the development of harmonious online social environment (Negative)?
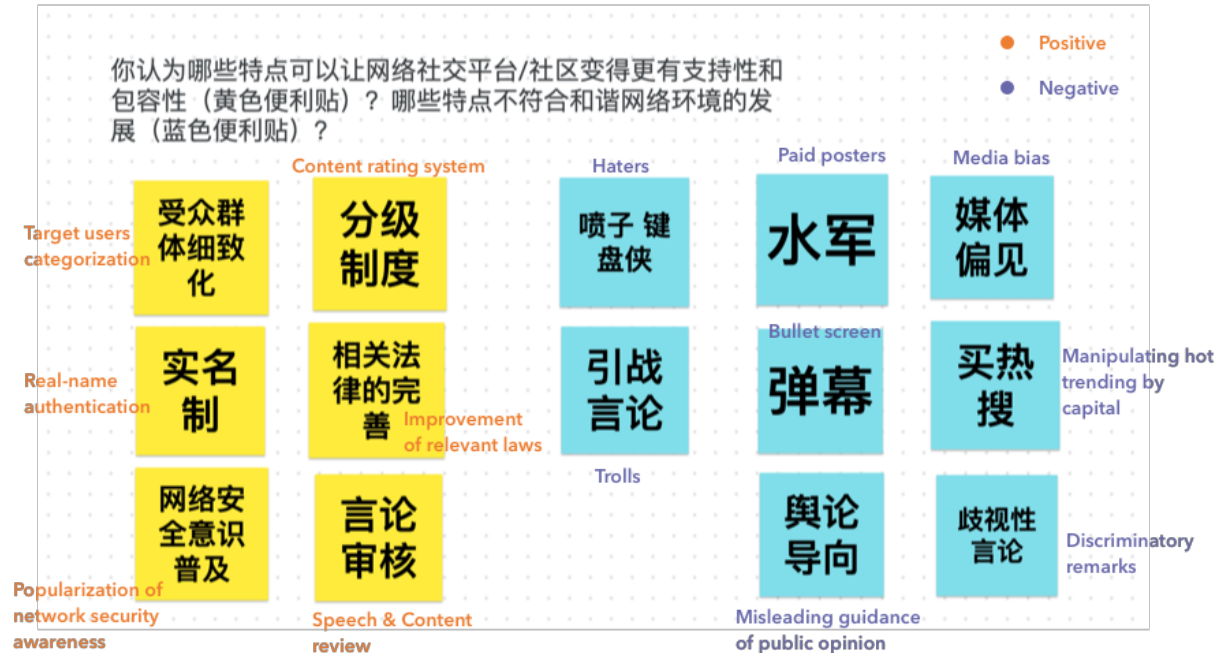
Figure 4. Characteristics of online community's inclusiveness and non-inclusiveness

In this section, this research focuses on the inclusiveness and non-inclusiveness of social media. Through discussions with participants in the co-creation activities, it was found that the essential inclusiveness features are：

Target user categorization - Clearly defined target user categorization can bring together users of the same category and extract their common characteristics and needs.

Real-name authentication - Participants believe that Real-name authentication is necessary. Participants stated that it is acceptable if users' personal information will be used to create their accounts and stored in the backend database. The only thing that

will be displayed on this platform is their nicknames when they finish creating the account. They would rather take the time to complete the authentication of their personal information when registering their account than be subjected to an untraceable cyber-violence in a completely unfamiliar environment. This means that real-name authentication becomes the bottom line for users to protect their emotional safety. Even in the worst-case scenario where their privacy is stolen or subjected to online violence, they can still find out who has harmed them and hold them accountable through legal means. Therefore, real-name authentication is inclusive because users can get emotional safety from a legal restriction of a real-name authentication system.

Speech review - The inclusiveness of speech review is also reflected in the provision of emotional safety for social media users. Participants believe that speech review is an integral part of a social platform and is one of the criteria for establishing a platform. An appropriate level of speech review can help keep the overall atmosphere of the platform healthy and harmonious. Speech review also helps reduce the spread of misinformation and negative information among the young age group. Users will feel emotionally safe when the social atmosphere within a social platform is harmonious and negative messages are reduced.

4.5 Non-inclusive features that cannot be ignored are :

Media bias - Participants indicated that some social media have prejudice due to political bias or some internet influencers with a large number of followers use their

social media accounts to lead or incite other users' emotions and opinions. Media bias is not inclusive because users are misled and exploited by biased information, which may lead to online disputes and cyber violence by users with different viewpoints. Ultimately media bias will cause users to lose trust in social media.

Discriminatory remarks - The participants stated that as social media platforms contain groups of people from all cultures, conflicts of cultural perceptions are inevitable. However, cultural diversity requires mutual respect between users, even if they have different viewpoints. It is unacceptable to bash others for their different cultures, religions and philosophies or make discriminatory remarks.

Internet hater - Internet haters were a group of people that all participants had encountered in their use of social platforms. Participants indicated that the words and actions of haters were a significant disruption to the user's online social experience. Participants' descriptions of haters' behavior were interesting.

'I found that these haters' thoughts are very strange. If they are in a bad mood, they will vent freely on the Internet. They will randomly find an attacker on the Internet and then make some unreasonable remarks. After they vent their negative emotions, they will log out of the account directly. They do not care how others respond to them. I am speechless about this situation.'

- Piggy

Obviously, users do not meet many haters in real life, but many such people are on social platforms. Through discussions with participants, this research found that haters' bashing of others is not based on logic but on their negative emotions, which

means that haters do not need a valid reason to have conflicts with others. However, the underlying logic behind the behavior of online haters is that they believe they are not responsible for what they say or do online, hiding behind the mask provided by social media and that they are not subject to a social opinion because of what they say (Gerster, 2018).
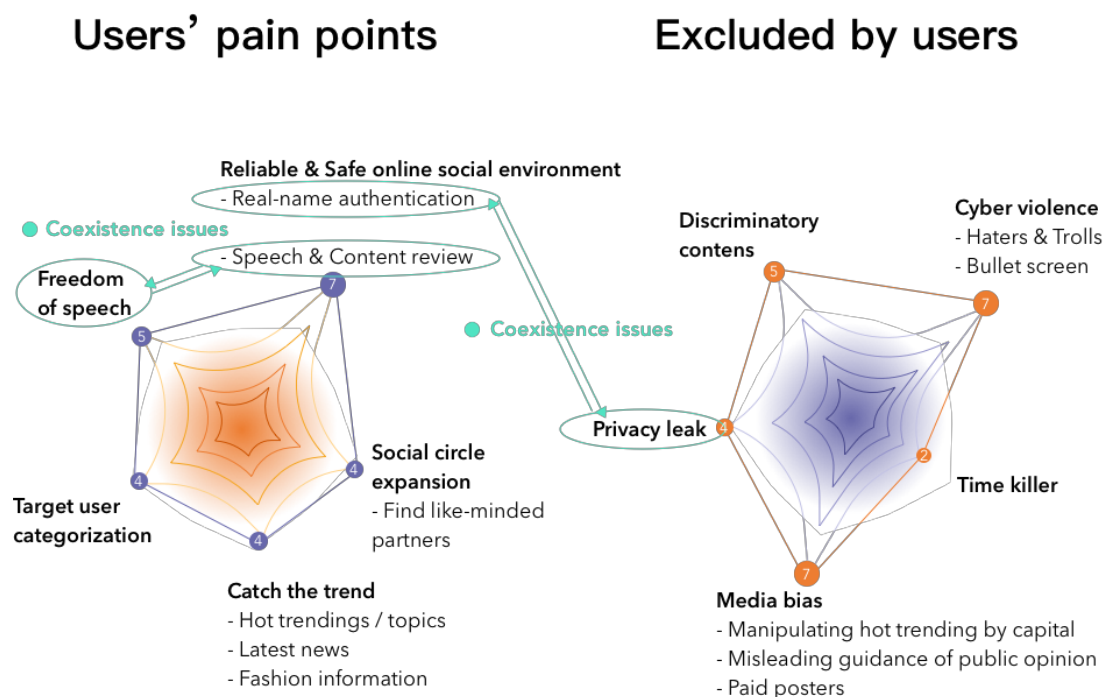
4.6 Inclusive points extraction

Figure 5. Inclusive points extraction

Figure 5 summarizes the above information. The number shown on the dots on the map is related to how many participants made the same comment. This research categorizes the top-level needs of users for social platforms as Reliable & Safe online environments (Real-name authentication, Speech & content review，) Freedom of speech, Target user categorization, Catch the trend （Hot trending/topics, Latest news,

Fashion information）and Social circle expansion (Find like-minded partner). The pain points that users exclude are Discriminatory, Privacy leaks, Media bias (Manipulating hot trending by capital, Misleading guidance of public opinion, Paid posters,) Time killer and Cyber violence (Haters & Trolls, Bullet screen.)

Figure 5 also presents two coexistence problems: How to conduct users' freedom of expression coexist with a speech and content review system? How to make the coexistence of real-name authentication systems without compromising the privacy of users?

5. Prototypes:

According to the data analysis, two prototypes were designed and provided for participants to test in session 2. The following information will mainly introduce the concept and function of two prototypes.

5.1 Mind map:
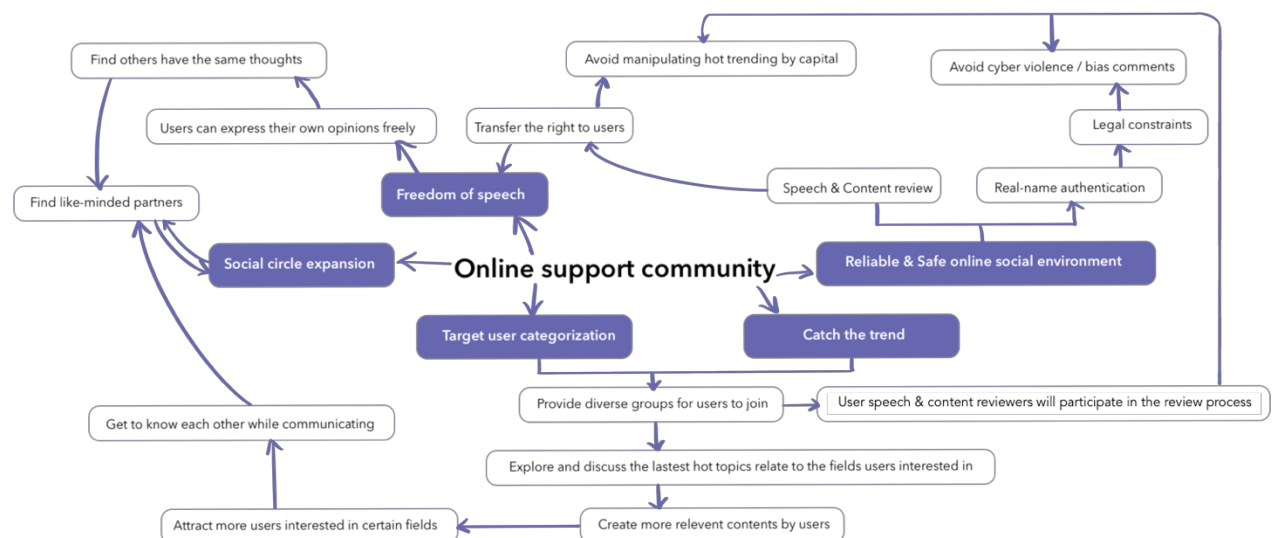
Figure 6. Mind map

Figure 6 is a mind map that shows the goals this research wants to achieve and how this research will do to achieve them on an online supportive social platform. For example, one of the goals is to achieve the target user categorization, which means that in the initial stages of operation, the platform needs to provide users with several communities on different topics and encourage them to post their own content, discuss and communicate with each other. As these communities are updated, more users will be attracted to the platform, and they can choose to create their own communities. The different communities will naturally categorize users with similar interests and provide them with the opportunity to expand their social circles. In addition, a small branch on the right side shows 'User speech and content reviewer will participate in the review process.' As described by the participants in the co-creation session, users can participate in the action of speech and content review. The right of the user reviewers is to conduct the initial review of the negative information in the platform, and the review actions will be completed jointly by multiple user reviewers in the user reviewer group. The review results will be subject to the judgment of the majority of the user reviewers. If other users believe that the user reviewers' judgments are inaccurate, they can appeal to the platform.

Moreover, another goal that the platform wants to achieve is a reliable & safe online social environment, so the measures that need to be taken are Real-name authentication and Speech & content review. The purpose is to provide relative norms for the social environment on the platform to prevent the network haters from

recklessly publishing hate speech on the platform. Meanwhile, as said before, the user community can involve in the speech review, so each branch shown in the diagram indicates how they influence and establish each other.

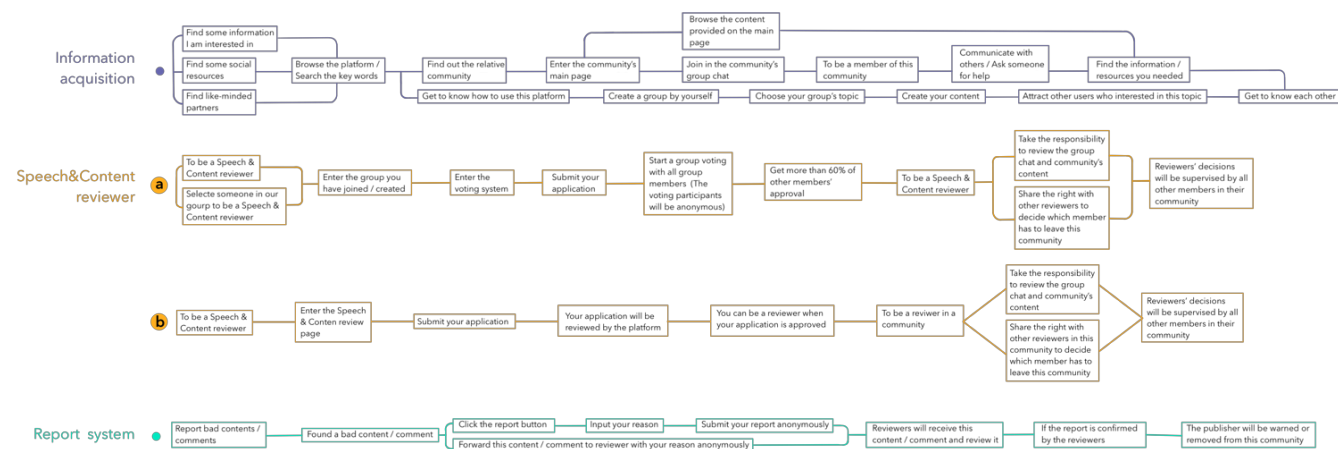**5.2 Co-designed user journey of user experience on the prototype social media platform:**

Figure 7. Co-designed user journey of user experience on the prototype social media platform

Figure 7 shows the user journeys used to imitate different users' behavior. In this stage, this research classified users' paths in three directions. The first path is information acquisition, the second path is speech and content review, and the third path is report system.

The thing that needs to be emphasized here is that two different methods for the second path (speech and content review) were provided for participants to discuss and find which one they prefer. Method (a) is to elect a speech and content reviewer within the user community by community members themselves. However, the person would feel embarrassed or depressed when he/she is rejected to be a reviewer by other

members. Method (b) lets users organize an extra external team to do the speech and content review. Nevertheless, the problem is that who will review this team and decide what kind of user will have this opportunity to be a reviewer.

5.3 Prototype testing

Session 2 was held 30 days after Session 1. All seven participants attended Session 2: prototype testing.

The participants focused on the speech and content review path of the user journey during the prototype testing session. Interestingly, they were not constrained by the information provided, forcing them to choose between method a and method b themselves. Instead, they propose a more comprehensive speech and content review path based on the data provided for them.

In the early discussion, one participant suggested that the platform can provide users with a set of tests, and if users pass the tests, they can be reviewers. However, other participants disagreed with this idea. The first reason was that taking a test is a threshold for users to use this platform, which is likely to turn most users away at the beginning of their use. The second reason is that passing a test is easy for users; it cannot be a standard for selecting reviewers, people know what the correct answer is, but when they pass the test, people will not do the same with the rules they know.

After reflection, they decided that neither method (a) nor method (b) was the most appropriate route in their minds. The participants felt that involving users in speech and content review did not mean giving them the absolute right to review. As a large

operation team, the site developer must be responsible for speech review, and users should not be allowed to take all the responsibilities. If users choose their reviewers, there will be subjective factors. Users will choose people who have the same opinion or have a good relationship with themselves as reviewers. In addition, users use social media to relax rather than work, so choosing users as reviewers are seeing them as free labor but giving users subsidies will impact the fairness of this platform.

5.4 Re-creation of the user journey

Figure 8 is a re-creation of the user journey based on the participants' testing of the prototype in the verification step. The participants also gave surprisingly possible solutions to the problems of how to select reviewers and how to avoid making user reviewers free labor.

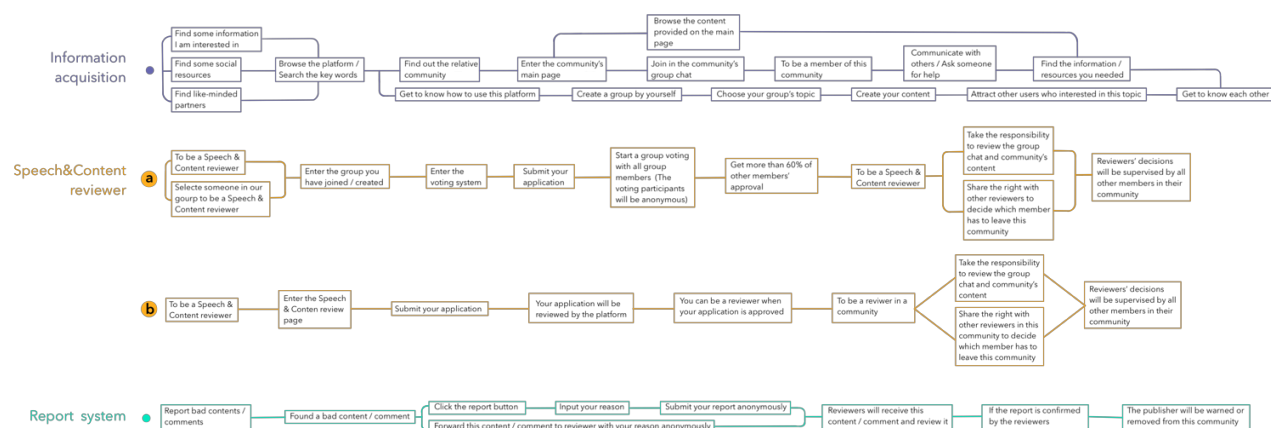For comparison purposes, Figure 7 and Figure 8 below are presented together.

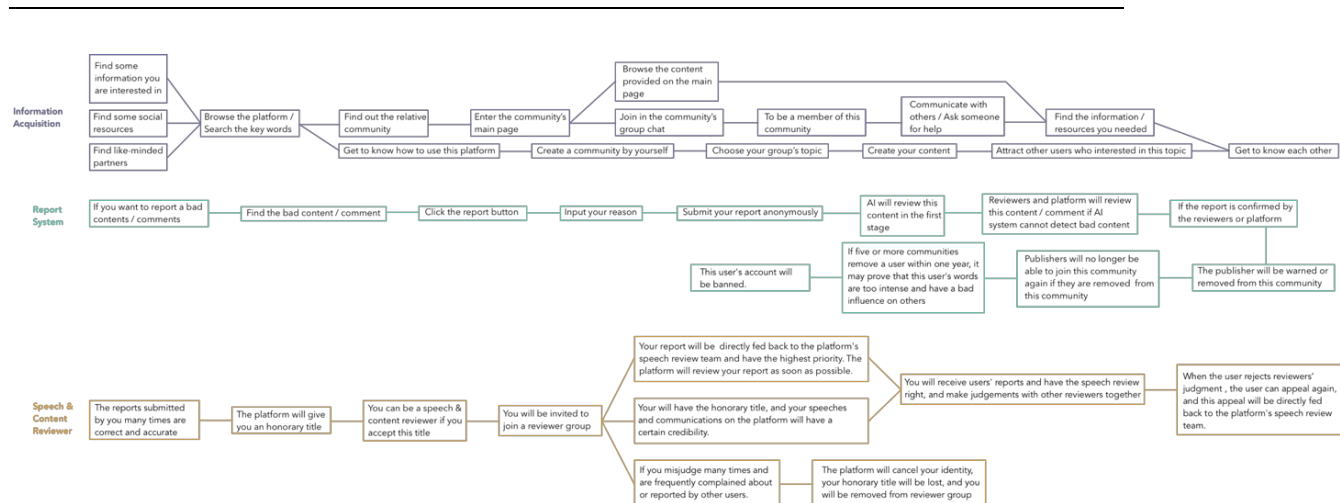Figure 7. Co-designed user journey of user experience on the prototype social media platform

Figure 8. Re-designed user journey of user experience on the prototype social media platform

Figure 8 shows that the online support community, like all social platforms, is a large operation and that AI should do the initial speech and content review. At the beginning of the platform's operation, user reports of content that involve hate speech and negative terms that the AI does not identify will be sent back to the official review team within the platform, and the platform's review team will complete the speech and content review. When the platform finds that some users' reports are accurate every time, the platform can send them an invitation to join an external user reviewer team and be a speech reviewer. The team members are users selected by the platform's official review team.

These selected users have the right to decide whether or not to join the user reviewer team. Suppose they decide to join the user reviewer team. When they see negative content that other users have not reported while they browse the platform, they need to forward this negative content to the user reviewer team for group review. The reports from regular users will be sent to the user reviewer team's group chat. All the user reviewers in the group will review the reports together so that the review will be

more objective, fair and accurate.

In addition, those selected to become user reviewers are not 'free labor' or 'employees of the platform. They can be considered as volunteers within the platform. The benefits of being a user reviewer on the platform are:

·   User reviewers will have the honorary title, and their speeches and communications on the platform will be credible.

·   Receive gift cards from the platform during holidays.

·   During the annual evaluation, user reviewers can receive trophies and gifts from the platform.

Of course, the user speech and content reviewer does not have the absolute right to speech and content review. Suppose other users are dissatisfied with a judgment by user reviewers. In that case, they can also re-sent their report directly to the official review team within the platform. Suppose a user reviewer misjudges many times and is frequently complained about or reported by other users. In that case, the platform will cancel this user reviewer's identity, his/her honorary title will be lost, and his/her will be removed from the reviewer group.

How to limit the presence of online haters:

On the other hand, participants would like to see some punishment added to the platform to limit the presence of online haters. They felt that a simple speech review would only remove the hate speech and content that has been posted but would not be effective in reducing such behavior. Therefore, this research adds to the user journey a

process for punishment that the platform will impose on bad speech publishers.

- If a report from a community is confirmed by the user reviewers or platform speech review team, the hate speech publisher will be warned or removed from this community.

- The bad comment publishers will no longer be able to join this community again if they are removed from this community.

- If five or more communities remove a user within one year, it may prove that this user's words are too intense and have a bad influence on others.

- This user's account will be banned.

The above scenarios result from in-depth discussions and reflections between the researchers and participants of this study. The scenarios are generally aimed at achieving a balance between the rights of the platform and the users in terms of speech review. The participants hope to build an inclusive social platform through direct cooperation between the users and the platform. It also aims to increase the sense of belonging and participation of the users so that they are aware that their actions are recognized, their opinions are heard, and their decisions have an impact on the platform.

5.5 Platform information architecture & Low-fi interface design

Figure 9 is platform information architecture; based on the analysis of the user journey diagram, Figure 9 presents the elements and information needed for each interface as a social platform.
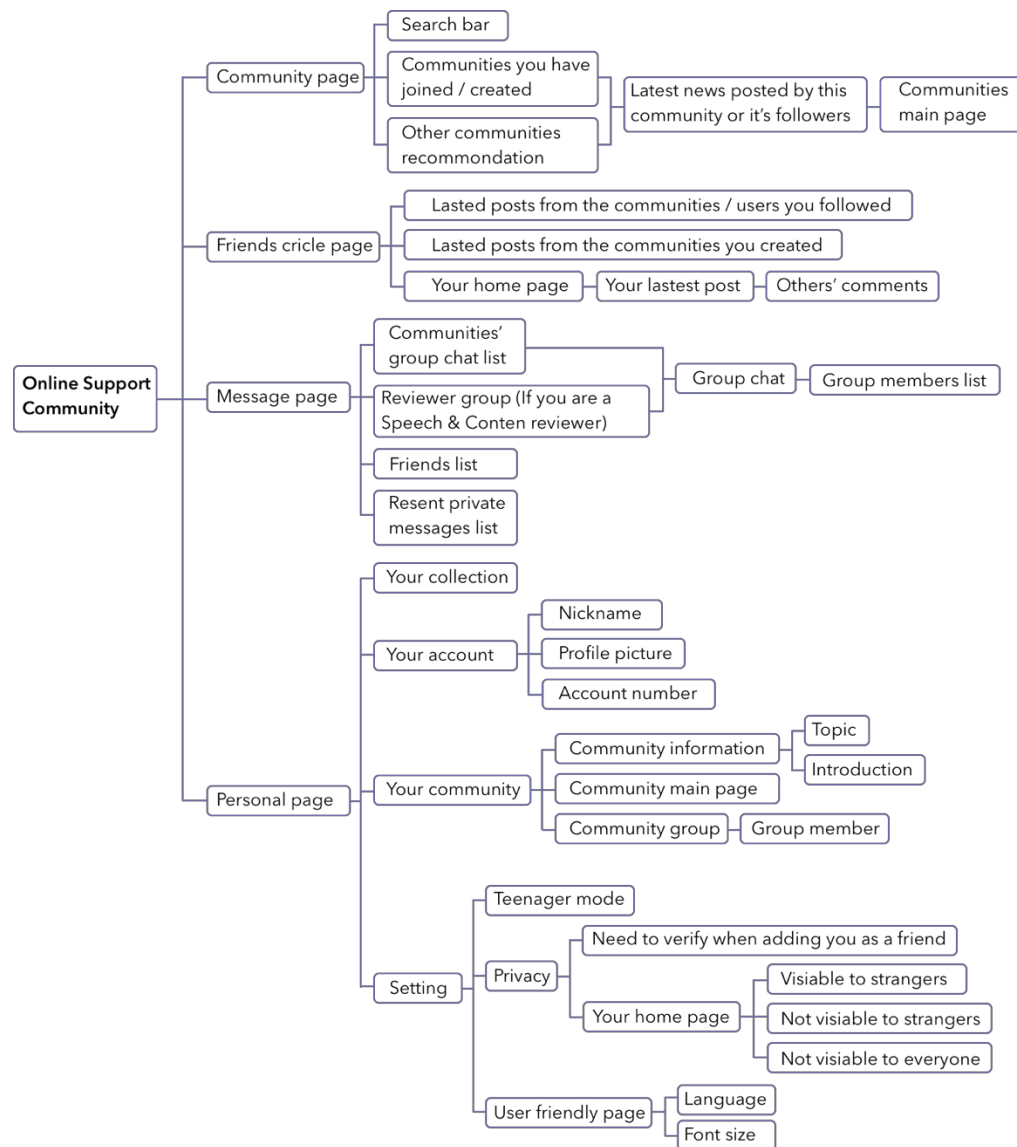
Figure 9. Information architecture

Figure 10, Figure 11 and Figure 12 are low-fi interfaces that aim to present abstract textual information more visually. The content from Figures 10 to 12 is in line with the three paths of the user journey (Figure 8).
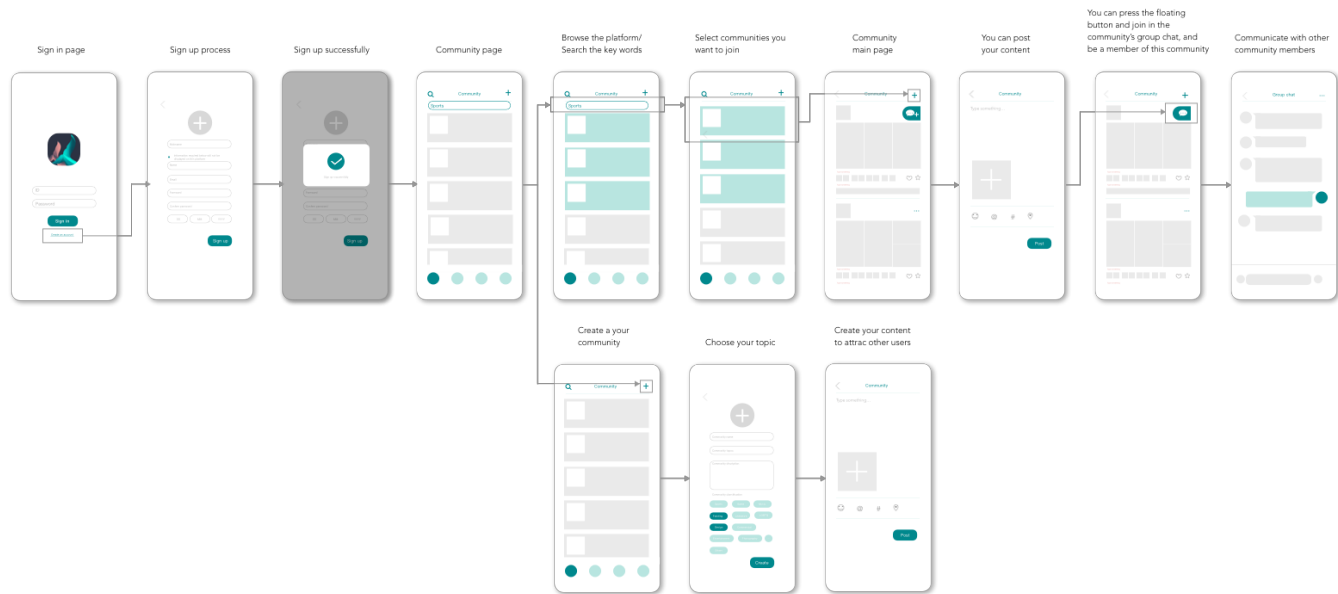
Figure 10. The low-fi interface design of target user categorization
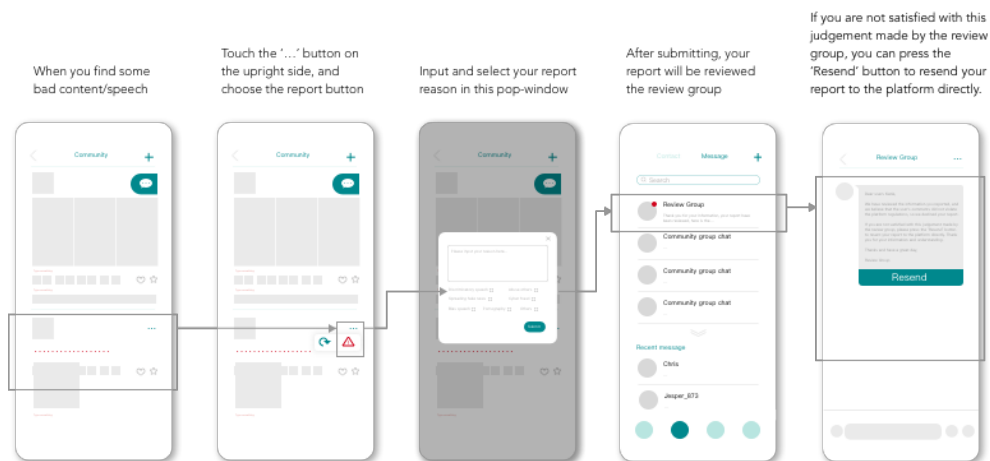

Figure 11. The low-fi interface design of the negative information report
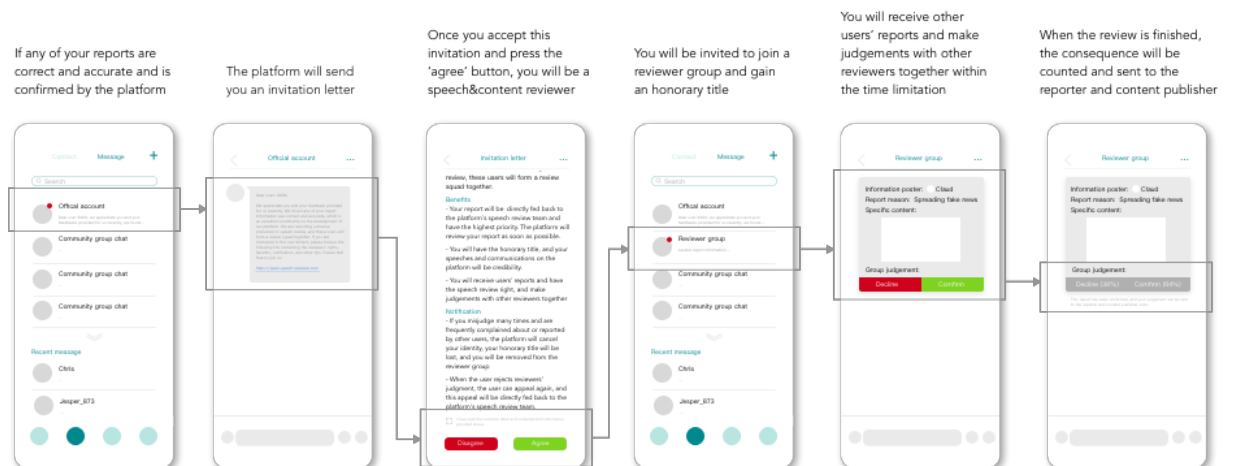

Figure 12. The low-fi interface design of being a user reviewer

6. Discussion

This study shows that youth and young adults' demand for the social platforms' inclusiveness is far more than social media provides today. The participants described various online phenomena, social behaviors and censorship systems according to their personal experiences. The participants reported that they want social media to bring them diverse information and entertainment while focusing on the inclusiveness and positivity of the social environment.

This research identified characteristics of the online social support community for Chinese youth that can reduce the negative impact of the online platforms on the mental well-being of Chinese youth. Through discussion and co-creation with participants, different types of social platforms in various fields were evaluated to what defines an inclusive social platform for the Chinese youth participating in this study. The research identified characteristics that were inclusive: reliable and safe online environment, freedom of speech, target user categorization and social circle expansion. Characteristics that were excluding were: online discrimination, privacy leak, media bias, lost track of time and cyber violence. As discussed in the co-creation session, participants believed that in current social media, users' privacy cannot be fully guaranteed. Therefore, participants preferred to require a real-name authentication system. Real-name authentication will not directly lead to user privacy leakage. Collecting participants' views and feedback. Compared with only focusing on protecting users' privacy, it is better to achieve specific legal constraints through a real-

name authentication system, which will benefit the development of a harmonious online social environment. It is easy to see that people have few responsibilities for their words on current social media because the screen separates them, no one knows anyone, and no one will be responsible for their own remarks. Participants believe that real-name authentication can provide some protection for the rights of users. Even if something bad happens, real-name authentication can help people find out who is behind the screen and hurt them online.

Another point that needs to be mentioned here is that participants mentioned one notion in the online discrimination part 'Do not pay too much attention to vulnerable people in social media.' It is worth discussing that we do need to provide social services and social support to vulnerable people and that we need to focus on the needs of vulnerable people. In this study, the term 'excessive attention' refers to that people's emphasis on vulnerable groups' physical impairments when they do not show a need for help on social media. This kind of 'excessive attention' will be seen as online discrimination.

In addition, Participants mentioned that Chinese youth are used to getting 'news' and 'information' on social media. This research needs to discuss the difference between 'news' and 'information' on social media. Whether in traditional media or social media, 'news' needs to be guaranteed to be authentic, official, and credible, whereas 'information' on the internet comes from multiple sources, such as individuals, companies, and organizations, and the authenticity of this information cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, it is worthwhile to pay attention to how young people

distinguish between 'news' and 'information' on social media.

Furthermore, sharing the right of speech and content review with users on social platforms is a crucial focus of our research. Through the participants' testing for the prototypes, this research has identified clear directions for implementing the concept of sharing the right of speech review. In order to confirm that this concept can improve the social media user experience of Chinese youth and enhance the inclusive development of social platforms, it needs to be tested and run on a real platform.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has achieved the initial goal of identifying the characteristics of an inclusive social platform for Chinese youth. Through focus group activities, coding and analysis of participants' opinions, this research has produced detailed figures for the following aspects: comparison of existing social media platforms, participants' understanding and needs for inclusivity on social platforms, existing inclusivity and limitations of social platforms, and the contradictions that need to be overcome for inclusive development. A prototype of an inclusive platform for Chinese youth was also developed based on reliable data and prototype testing. With the data and information obtained from this research, we can design more inclusive social platforms to improve the negative impact of social media on the youth population.

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Appendices

Appendices A: Participants Screening Questionnaire

Participants Screening Questionnaire
Date: 2022. Jan. 24th Project Title: Inclusive Development of Online Support Community Specialized for Chinese Youth's Mental Well-being Hi! I am Jianqi Yin, a student investigator of Inclusive design at OCAD University; I am glad to have you here. My research topic is Inclusive Development of Online Social Community for Chinese Youth Mental Well-being. This is a brief questionnaire to help me (the researcher) to understand you better and explore: ·   Will you meet the requirements of the age and geographical scope of the participants? ·   Will you have enough experience related to social media to share in the group activity? ·   Are you willing to discuss the topic of the activity with other participants? Please feel free to answer the following questions; any of your answers will keep confidential. After the screening process, all data here will be destroyed. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation! Once you finish this questionnaire, please send it back to me by email: jianqi.yin@ocadu.
1. Name:

2. Age:
3. Place of residence:
4. Language (multiple choices):

a. English
 	
    b. Mandarin
 	
    c. Cantonese
 	
    d. Others

5. How long do you spend on social media everyone day?

a. More than 8 hours
 	
    b. 5 – 8 hours
 	
    c. 2 – 5 hours
 	
    d. Less than 2 hours

6. Use of Chinese social apps and non-Chinese social apps:

a. I only use non-Chinese social apps
 	
    b. I use several Chinese social apps, but I mostly use non-Chinese social apps.
 	
    c. I use several non-Chinese social apps, but I mostly use Chinese social apps.
 	
    d. I only use Chinese social apps

7. Your favorite online social platforms (you can list more than one):
8. Do you mind participating in a group activity with 6-8 participants?

If you have any questions about this investigation, you may contact the student Investigator Jianqi Yin or the Faculty Supervisor Kathy Moscou using the contact information provided below. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at OCAD University [#2020-04].

If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this investigation, please contact:

Research Ethics Board c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation

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Appendices B: Research Arrangement

Research Arrangement	
There were two sessions for the study. Due to the pandemic, the whole process was conducted through Team's virtual meeting. Session 1 is the main procedure for obtaining original data; Session two is the verification step for this research.	
Session 1 - Focus group (100 mins)	Activity 1 - Ice breaker (30 mins): Participants will introduce themselves briefly. - Fill-in-the-blank: There will be a fill-in-the-blank game on the Jamboard board with different options. The questions are about the characteristics of different social APPs. Each participant will fill in the app that meets the features of the question in the blank space. 10 mins break Activity 2 - Co-creation (60 mins) - Step 1: Invite participants to share how they understand the word 'Inclusiveness.' - Step 2: Participants will represent 1-3 of their most used social apps on their personal Jamboard page (include at least one non-Chinese social software.) Participants will compare these apps to discover their inclusiveness and limitations and discuss whether the advantages of these

	apps can apply to Chinese youth.
	- Step 3: The researcher will set up a page for participants on the Jamboard board. Participants will think about the question, "What characteristics can make the online social community supportive and inclusive?" They can provide some suggestions for researchers on the Miro board.
Session 2 - Prototype testing (60 mins)	The researcher will create a prototype of an online social community platform for Chinese youth in the next few weeks, according to the data collected in session 1. This prototype will be displayed to participants in session2.
	- Step 1 (15 mins): The researcher will introduce the designed prototype to the participants and explain which functions serve the pain points raised by the participants in session 1.
	- Step 2 (25 mins): Participants will be provided with a scenario to play the role of users. They will proceed to the next step according to the flow chart guide of the prototype. The Researcher will observe how they interact with prototypes.
	- Step 3 (20 mins): Participants will provide feedback to researchers according to their own process experience.