



**UNIVERSITY OF MACAU**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION**

**Explore the Role of QQ Groups in Chinese *Tuishou* Operations**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.



Cao Wen Yuan, Wenny

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## ABSTRACT

“Pushing hands” (*tuishou* in Chinese) describe a type of business operations organized on the Chinese Internet which uses paid posters disguised as ordinary netizens to launch promotional and marketing campaigns in social networking sites (SNS).

This thesis strives to explain how the internet mercenaries employ the QQ group as a main communication vehicle to organize posting operations and conduct the whole viral marketing campaign. And this study combines text analysis, ethnographic and content analysis for this purpose.

*Tuishou* operation involved in four types of roles: the boss, the sub-contractor, the receptionist and the poster. Each role has given duties to achieve the final goal. Through the text analysis, *tuishou* operations are categorized into four dimensions: business execution platform, group management system, group communication network and information distribution medium.

Compared the features of the QQ group with the six attributes of social media (Postman, 2009), it reveals that, the characteristics of authenticity, transparency and connectedness in the QQ group are blurred; the characteristics of immediacy and participation are obvious; and the characteristic of accountability is ensured.

From the viral marketing perspective, four cases were collected to discover the mode of

viral communication. Only two of them contain viral elements such as creative ideas, oddness and revealing people behind the scenes.

As a conclusion, low-cost, breakthrough geographical limitations, comprehensive communication and vague identity are the reasons that the QQ group enhanced the *tuishou* industry in mainland China. Powerful media and weak content may be the status quo where it is for Chinese *tuishou* operation.



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