A Study on Different Chinese Enterprises' Poverty Alleviation Models in the Context of Internet - Based on the Perspective of Corporate Social Responsibility

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Abstract. The research summarises the pattern of Chinese Internet companies following national policies to fulfil their social responsibility specifically to participate in poverty alleviation programmes proposed by the government. The results of participation in poverty alleviation endeavours on the sustainable development of Chinese Internet platform enterprises themselves are explored. By comparing the poverty alleviation models with those of Chinese production companies that have made outstanding contributions in the field of poverty alleviation, we will summarise the innovations and optimisations made by emerging Internet platform companies in their poverty alleviation models. From the results of the study, firstly, Chinese internet platform companies have a different model of poverty alleviation compared to traditional Chinese companies, but there are also lessons to be learned. Secondly, Chinese internet platform companies have built the fulfilment of social responsibility into their business activities, and have achieved the creation of shared value through the use of platform business, social resources. Suggestions are made for global enterprises to participate in the cause of poverty alleviation and better fulfil their social responsibility colleagues to promote sustainable corporate development.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, Internet platform enterprises, poverty alleviation.

1. Introduction

Poverty is a major challenge for the whole world and eradicating it is a common goal of the international community. China has undoubtedly made an important contribution to poverty governance. Since the reform and opening up, Chinese companies have also been actively involved in poverty alleviation and fulfilling their social responsibilities. At the same time, with the development of online business, a number of influential Internet platform companies have emerged in China in the past two decades. These internet platform companies, like traditional enterprises, have contributed to the reduction of poverty in China in a social way that cannot be ignored. This paper focuses on traditional enterprises that have been committed to poverty reduction in China (Kweichow Moutai Group, Geely Holding Auto Group, Junlebao Dairy) and typical internet platform enterprises: Meituan and VW Dianping (hereinafter referred to as Meituan Dianping), Pinduoduo (a shopping website), and Tiktok as case studies to summarise the differences between the two types of enterprises in terms of poverty reduction goals and models, and to analyse the impact of the different models on the enterprises in terms of The impact of the enterprises themselves.

2. The basic concepts

2.1. Digital platform enterprises

Internet platform enterprises are enterprises that primarily use digital technologies to construct platforms and provide products and services accordingly. As Internet platform enterprises are still in the process of initial rapid development, there is still a lack of a unified definition of digital platforms.
The main function of transactional digital platforms is to build networks that facilitate value exchange and transactions between different user groups, such as e-commerce platforms like Taobao. Innovative digital platforms mainly provide digital tools and resources to support platform users to develop relevant products and services based on the platform, focusing on the core and peripheral modular technical architecture and technical components of the platform. Compared with innovative digital platforms, transactional digital platforms directly affect various levels and aspects of economic and social life on a larger scale, and are the focus of platform research. Aspects are the focus of platform research and can be distinguished into more categories based on characteristics such as the role of participants and the form of products and services offered (Täuscherand Laudien, 2018) [1]. In this process, platform companies use intelligent algorithms and continuously growing data volumes to continuously improve their digital control and integration capabilities, and can enter other related markets or develop new ones through platform technologies, thus supporting more diverse user engagement and gradually forming a large platform business ecosystem[2] (Eisenmann et al., 2011; Liu, Jiangpeng, 2015; Gong, Limin and Jiang, Shisong , 2016; Helfat and Raubitschek, 2018). Most of the Internet platform companies do not rely on specific products but assume the role of leaders of the entire business ecosystem based on their capabilities and strengths in architecture foundation, connectivity coordination, innovation leadership and integration expansion [3](Zhang et al., 2020).

2.2. Corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to the responsibility of a company to its stakeholders in its business operations. The concept of CSR is based on the idea that business operations must be sustainable, and that companies should not only consider their own financial and operational status, but also their impact on society and the environment. Social responsibility is the obligation of business enterprises to pursue long-term goals that benefit society, rather than the obligations required by law and economics. The goal of industry is not simply to produce goods, but corporate social responsibility and the various responsibilities of company operators to meet human needs within and outside of industry, and argues that corporate social responsibility contains an intrinsic element of morality and that the interests of the community as a measure should take precedence over corporate profitability.

The research on the social responsibility of Internet platform enterprises has not been long in coming, and with the development of different types of Internet platform enterprises, there has been an attempt in the relevant literature to systematically Xiao Hongjun and Yang Zhen (2020)[4] argue that, on the one hand, platform enterprises have the essential attributes of general enterprises and should bear social responsibility themselves; but on the other hand, platform enterprises are not only independently operated individuals, but also the digital platforms they build and own connect a large number of different organisations and individuals, thus giving the platforms unique public attributes, which makes the scope of platform enterprises' fulfillment of responsibility go beyond the boundaries of traditional corporate social responsibility, presenting a This makes the scope of responsibility of platform enterprises transcend the boundaries of traditional CSR, and presents the characteristics of heterogeneity between the subject of responsibility and stakeholders, and duality of scenarios and contents of responsibility implementation. Therefore, Xiao Hongjun and Li Ping (2019) point out that platform enterprises should not only fulfill their own responsibilities, but also promote platform participants to meet the requirements of social responsibility[5], and divide the social responsibility of platform enterprises into "social responsibility as an independent operating entity", "social responsibility as a commercial operation platform" and "social responsibility as a social resource", and "social responsibility as a social resource allocation platform", and at each level, it is divided into three levels: "bottom-line requirements", "reasonable expectations" and "contribution advantages". In each level, there are three levels of "bottom-line requirements", "reasonable expectations" and "contribution advantages", thus clearly defining the content and boundaries of the platform's corporate social responsibility. In line with this hierarchy, He Shihao and Sun Haiyao (2020) [6]propose that platform CSR includes three aspects: construction responsibility, governance
responsibility and social responsiveness responsibility, which should not only ensure the quality and maintain the upgrade of the platform, but also regulate and restrain the behaviour of platform users, and actively respond to social expectations and public aspirations. Exploring the content of platform corporate social responsibility, the way of fulfilling responsibilities and other issues (Zhu Wenzhong and Shang Yabo, 2020).[7]

2.3. Corporate sustainability and shared value creation

Corporate sustainable development strategy refers to the process of pursuing self-survival and perpetual development of enterprises, both to run corporate business objectives and achieve improved corporate market position, as well as to maintain continuous profitable growth and capacity improvement in the competitive field of already leading companies and future expansion of the business environment at all times.

Porter and Kramer (2011)[8] introduce the concept of shared value creation and define it as "policies and business practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while improving the economic and social conditions of the community in which it operates". Both scholars argue that shared value creation differs from the traditional mindset of corporate social responsibility by identifying new opportunities to create economic or business value for oneself from solving social problems, but it is still considered to have many similarities with concepts such as CSR, corporate citizenship, social innovation, social entrepreneurship and blended value (Crane et al., 2014[9]; Dembek et al., 2016[10]. Chinese scholar Xiao Hongjun (2020)[11] then suggests that shared value is a higher-order CSR paradigm, but there is also literature that makes a clear distinction between social responsibility and shared value (Zhang Xianhua and Guo Jiabin, 2020)[12]. To measure these values, Dietz and Porter (2012)[13] construct a process model that consists of four steps: identifying the problem, developing a business model or project, tracking the results, and measuring and unlocking new values . In particular, Xiao Hongjun (2020)[11] points out that shared value must demonstrate the social outcomes of business investments and their impact on business returns, rather than separating the two.

Previous studies in the literature have mostly focused on the impact of corporate poverty alleviation on poverty-stricken areas in the cause of poverty reduction, i.e. the role of corporate poverty alleviation in reducing poverty in China, with less attention paid to the commonalities and differences in approaches to social responsibility between different companies and different industries. At the same time, research on the cause of poverty reduction in China has mostly focused on macro policies and government policies, with less research on the innovation of Chinese enterprises in poverty reduction.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Research methodology

This research adopts an inductive, multi-case study approach. On the one hand, the purpose of this study is to investigate how Internet platform enterprises can make use of the characteristics of their own business to fulfill their corporate social responsibility and create socially shared value, which is a typical "how" (how) type of research question. This type of question is suitable for the case study approach (Yin, 2014) [14]; on the other hand, this study needs to summarise the innovation of Chinese Internet platform enterprises' theoretical approach to CSR through a comparison of the poverty alleviation models and impacts of Internet platform enterprises and production-based enterprises.

3.2. Case selection

The case studies follow an analytical generaliza rather than a statistical generalizzare. Therefore, the cases selected for this study are not a sample of randomly sampled units; the cases in this sample are an opportunity to generalize theoretical concepts. This paper not only aims to summarise and analyse two representative ways in which companies have fulfilled their responsibility to alleviate poverty, but
also how internet platform companies have integrated poverty alleviation into their main business through innovative ideas and models of poverty alleviation, and even relied on the poor to contribute to the company's development in a strategic sense rather than just providing employment or material support to the poor in the traditional sense based on the company's business. For this reason, it is important that the case highlights the key objectives and key features of the problem study. Taking into account the typicality of the cases and the availability of data, this paper chooses Meituan and VW Dianping (hereinafter referred to as Meituan Dianping), Tiktok under Beijing Byte Jump Technology Co Ltd, and Pinduoduo, as the case subjects of the Internet platforms. Kweichow Moutai Group, Geely Auto Group, and Junlebao Dairy are compared as representatives of traditional enterprises.

3.3. Results
The following findings emerged from the analysis, as shown in Table.1 and Table. 2.

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<td>● Carrying out the project, &quot;China Moutai - The Backbone of the Nation&quot;, supports students in families with financial difficulties to complete their university education.</td>
<td>● Tuition fee subsidy: Geely and local education departments provide tuition fee subsidy for students from households with documented poverty who are enrolled in vocational colleges. The amount is RMB 4,000 per student per year for students in secondary vocational institutions and RMB 6,000 per student per year for students in higher vocational institutions.</td>
<td>● Organising a large-scale public welfare event to select the &quot;Stars of Self-improvement&quot; for secondary school students, and donated scholarships to more than 100 &quot;Stars of Self-improvement&quot; students.</td>
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<td>● Running &quot;Xijiu - My University&quot; for 14 years which has become a public welfare brand.</td>
<td>● Investing 1 million yuan to set up vegetable and fruit cooperatives, and launched a pig breeding project in Shuangdian Township, Jialing District and an ecological breeding and recycling industry project in Qibaosi Township, allowing 238 poor farmers to become shareholders. The poor farmers are employed in the vicinity and share dividends are realized.</td>
<td>● Initiating the establishment of the Hebei Junlebao Public Welfare Foundation.</td>
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<td>● Establishing the Dream Scholarship.</td>
<td>● Invested 20 million yuan to carry out the Leishan tea</td>
<td>● Organising the &quot;Milk Walk&quot; for 4 consecutive years to donate milk to students in poor areas of Hebei Province.</td>
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<td>● Carrying out &quot;Project Hope - Accompanying Classroom&quot; to support students relocated from remote areas.</td>
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<td>● Investing 1.879 billion yuan to establish Moutai College to train professionals in the liquor industry, recruiting 252 college graduates from poor families and providing 37 jobs.</td>
<td>● Investing 1 million yuan to set up vegetable and fruit cooperatives, and launched a pig breeding project in Shuangdian Township, Jialing District and an ecological breeding and recycling industry project in Qibaosi Township, allowing 238 poor farmers to become shareholders. The poor farmers are employed in the vicinity and share dividends are realized.</td>
<td>● Boosting farmers' incomes through industrial poverty alleviation and projects to in Wei County, Chabei and Lingshou, and encouraging cooperative farms to improve the basic conditions for cattle rearing in the form of loans.</td>
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project, transferring 330 acres of tea plantations. Introduced modern enterprise management concept, new tea finishing plant and supporting equipment and sent people to station in the project on a long-term basis.

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<th>Mobilising social funds</th>
<th>● Coordinating social support funds 2.56 million yuan.</th>
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<td>Targeted procurement</td>
<td>● Targeted procurement of agricultural and sideline products from poor areas for daily canteen purchases and staff welfare.</td>
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**Table 2. Poverty alleviation programmes of Internet platform enterprises**

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<tr>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>Methods</th>
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<td>Pinduoduo</td>
<td>Meituan[17]</td>
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<td>Leverage platform elements</td>
<td>● Users of the platform plant saplings in the virtual orchard and cultivate fruit trees through social interaction. When the fruit is ripe, they receive a free share of the fruit to help the poor and the farmers.</td>
<td>● Establish a food consumption poverty alleviation project. ● Set up a supply chain service to serve caterers and bring ingredients from poor counties out of remote areas.</td>
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<td>Data resources</td>
<td>● Reinventing the agricultural supply chain model</td>
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<td>Technology</td>
<td>● Virtual ● Games ● Social Interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Event Matchmaking</td>
<td>● Develop and guide standardisation and harmonisation of agricultural products, with first results in production, cultivation and management. ● Initiate the development of local</td>
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<td>Locality</td>
<td>Business and Corporate Cooperation</td>
<td>Poverty Alleviation and Other Operations</td>
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<td>and national industry standards for snow lotus fruit, together with the Institute of Thermal Economics of the Yunnan Academy of Agricultural Sciences. Publish the Yangtze River Delta Commodity Grading and Marketing Standard for River Crabs with the Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture of Jiangsu Province.</td>
<td>● Hometown Goodies is a live farming service with the main business model of &quot;shopping together &amp; direct delivery from origin&quot;. Consumers can directly participate in bargaining, order-pooling and purchasing through the platform. More than 500,000 poor households have registered as takeaway riders through the platform, gaining a stable source of income. With a relatively low skill threshold and high flexibility, riders can increase their income level in a relatively short period of time. Invite outstanding creators on the platform to create content on multiple levels.</td>
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<td>● Directly driving more than 100,000 financial support for poor people to run</td>
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<td>Financial support for poor people to run</td>
<td>Find &quot;experts&quot; (people who are...</td>
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<td>talents with higher education and knowledge of the Internet to return to their hometowns to start their own businesses</td>
<td>new farmers across the country to return to their hometowns to start their own businesses.</td>
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<td><strong>Cooperate with society</strong></td>
<td>City, county and district chiefs entered the live farming support room to promote local agricultural products(by-product), generating a total of 670 million farming support orders and selling a total of over 2.06 billion kg of agricultural produce(by-product).</td>
<td>Provide free information dissemination services for charitable organisations and integrate the power of users and merchants to participate in poverty alleviation.</td>
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<td><strong>Social caring people</strong></td>
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(1) There are obvious similarities in poverty alleviation models between enterprises of the same type. Traditional enterprises mostly adopt the model of donating money and materials to build schools, and the act of poverty alleviation is more of a charitable act that does not seek financial returns as part of the fulfillment of social responsibility and the division of the enterprise's own business, while internet platform enterprises.

(2) The mode of poverty alleviation between Internet platform enterprises and traditional enterprises is quite different. Traditional enterprises tend to adopt the model of donating money and materials to build schools. Internet platform companies, on the other hand, almost always choose to integrate the task of poverty alleviation into their main business and focus mainly on solving the employment problem of the poor.

(3) The exploration of poverty alleviation by Chinese Internet platform companies has broadened the role of corporate social responsibility for enterprises, which, while fulfilling their social responsibility, also enables them to expand and develop their own business, bringing long-term business value to themselves and realising the creation of shared value, linking the fulfilment of corporate social responsibility with sustainable corporate development.
4. Conclusions

With the development of the internet, artificial intelligence, big data and the digital economy, internet platform companies are becoming more and more influential in China's economy and society and should assume corresponding social responsibilities at the same time. Based on this, the main objective of this paper is to summarise and explore how Internet digital platform enterprises participate in poverty alleviation and innovate on the original ways and means of enterprise participation in poverty alleviation, which shows how enterprises can make better use of the products and services they provide to society to more accurately and efficiently alleviate poverty while achieving sustainable development of the company. The main conclusions are as follows:

Firstly, enterprises should try to be able to take advantage of the platform and turn social issues into specific objectives that fit with the platform's business model and value creation mechanism when choosing social responsibility issues, so as to make full use of the platform's accumulated user base, products, big data and technological capabilities. It will be similar with a traditional non-platform company if a platform company bypasses its own business model or core resources and capabilities to fulfil its responsibilities. Traditional production companies should also consider their goals and business plans at the beginning of the poverty alleviation programme at the same time.

Secondly, they should also actively expand their value network according to the nature of the social responsibility issues they choose and attract more partners to the platform, which not only directly contributes new users to the platform, but also offers the possibility of cross-border connections and bringing new opportunities and resources to the company. Traditional production companies can also reach out to upstream and downstream partners and consumers of their products, using their own networks to integrate scattered poverty alleviation efforts.

Thirdly, in the process of fulfilling responsibilities, specific social responsibility performance indicators should be set up. Afterwards, efficient processes and methods can be built around the indicators with directions for continuous improvement and innovation, which will help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of responsibilities.

Besides, it is important to set up a dedicated responsibility department or project team to promote formal and informal cooperation and linkages between the responsibility department and other business departments, so that social responsibility is not carried out outside the platform's main business but can be supported by other businesses. And the new knowledge and experience accumulated in the implementation of responsibility can be disseminated and learned throughout the platform. The same way as companies set up performance reviews within their companies, they can also add the approach to managing poverty alleviation projects and track it dynamically.

Finally, while providing lessons for other internet platforms and traditional production companies to learn from, Chinese internet platform companies should make up for their own shortcomings in fulfilling their social responsibility and give back to society while realizing their business value.

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