
Chinese Soft Power: A Case Study of Panda Diplomacy

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Abstract This paper examines China's public relations strategy of "panda diplomacy." The research used secondary sources to examine the role of panda diplomacy in Chinese public diplomacy. China's panda diplomacy is a unique tool for public diplomacy that may be used to spread Chinese culture to a global audience and create friendly bilateral relations between the nations where it is implemented. Compared to Confucius institutes or student exchanges, it has a greater impact on the perception of China in the international community. Panda diplomacy can assist China achieve its public diplomacy aims, demonstrating its efficacy as a tool for public diplomacy. As a result of this study, a better understanding of China's soft power and public diplomacy can be gained by studying the relationship between panda diplomacy and political ties.

Keywords: Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Panda Diplomacy, Foreign Policy of China, Conflict Resolution

Introduction

CHINA'S ECONOMY WAS BOOSTED BY DENG XIAOPENG'S ECONOMIC reforms of 1978 (Denmark, 2018). With foreign investment and multinational corporations flooding into China, it grew at a faster rate than any other economy in the world over the next few decades (Hu & Khan, 1997). After the reforms, China had to find new ways to connect with the world. Chinese soft power and public diplomacy grew in importance as the country's international influence expanded (Jinwei & Zhou, 2012). As China rises to prominence in the twenty-first century, it must make the most of its soft power (Jinwei & Zhou, 2012).

Soft power can help China increase its appeal to other countries and foreign audiences, build trusting relationships and encourage other

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nations and audiences to listen more attentively to China's views. When used effectively, public diplomacy is a key soft power tool for interacting with other countries. Chinese soft power resources based on culture, tradition, and ideology must be promoted through public diplomacy (Gill & Huang, 2006). Confucius Institutes, language and cultural exchanges, education, and Chinese celebrities abroad have long been debated as the foundation of China's soft power in the international community. Many people, on the other hand, missed China's most potent soft power asset of all time: the giant panda (Wei, 2019).

Gigantic pandas are among the most beloved animals in the world (Deamer, 2016). Known as "panda diplomacy," China has been lending pandas to other countries since 1957 (China Daily, 2013). Panda loans are a tool used by Chinese public diplomacy to turn soft power into tangible results. Even though panda diplomacy has been widely discussed in the media, academics have not given it much attention. Although the paucity of academic discussion may lead one to conclude that panda diplomacy has little substance, there are numerous layers of understanding that could link panda diplomacy to China's public diplomacy.

Literature Review

China is home to the world's largest pandas (Zhou, 2018). The Chinese government recognizes the significance of its giant pandas and has long included them into its foreign policy objectives (Pacher, 2017). In 685, the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) presented a pair of pandas to the Japanese emperor (Xing, 2010). China is sending pandas to other countries as a goodwill gesture in the goal of strengthening ideological and diplomatic connections (Xing, 2010). Chinese panda diplomacy is a way for China to gain leverage in gaining the attention of the target audience, making it simpler for China to achieve its diplomatic objectives. As a public diplomacy instrument, Xing argues it presents an approachable image of China that encourages positive perceptions of China among its target audiences.

Research into why the giant panda is an ideal candidate for animal diplomacy is a hot topic of debate in the academic world. Hartig argues that China's panda diplomacy is successful for two reasons: the panda's global appeal and the fact that it is only found in China. The panda, according to Hartig Mullan and Marvin, has "near worldwide appeal" (Mullan & Marvin, 1999). In terms of appearance, the panda can be described as adorably cuddly, naive, and playful. According to Ramona and

Desmond Morris, the panda is defined by its cuddly, friendly, and sexless demeanour (Morris & Morris, 1982). In animal diplomacy, pandas provide as an excellent illustration of neoteny or kindschenschema. As a result of its youthful features, it evokes feelings of care and protectiveness, as well as cuteness (Hartig 2013).

Innocence and cuddliness are evoked by the panda's cuddly, awkward appearance, which has a round, flat face and huge black eye patches (Schaller, 1993). Because they can only be found in China, pandas become excellent ambassadors for their country through their unique position as an endangered species (Xing, 2010). The western mountainous region of China is home to all of the planet's pandas. According to Xing, China's "uniqueness has made China the only country to identify its national emblem with the panda" (Xing, 2010).

Animated diplomacy is more effective when the animal is identified with its original country, such as the panda and China (Cushing & Markwell, 2009). The visual identity of the panda is essential to its international appeal, but the fact that it can only be found in China means that it is an effective tool for Chinese foreign policy. The panda is "China's major cultural icon"; furthermore, it sends out all the correct signals of kindness. According to Hartig, the panda's message for China is quite clear. China's gentle, traditional, and peaceful values are represented by the panda since the gigantic panda is linked with China (Hartig, 2013). In contrast to other forms of Chinese diplomacy, such as classrooms, museums, or exchanges, the panda's placement in zoos increases its potency as a public diplomacy tool.

Xing sees zoos as a fun, diverse place where visitors may learn and have fun. Contrary to popular belief, most people view schools, museums, and other places of learning as a source of stress or anxiety (Xing, 2010). Due to its enormous size and the fact that it is not constrained by social class, China's giant panda is a more effective tool for public diplomacy. In addition to other public diplomacy approaches, China uses panda diplomacy to bridge language and cultural hurdles. The giant panda's global appeal, exclusivity in China, media attention, and the zoo's capacity to reach larger audiences regardless of social hierarchy make panda diplomacy a unique and strong, albeit mostly overlooked use of soft power.

Joseph Nye maintains that China does not fit the usual soft power mould, and therefore, panda diplomacy is not a standard soft power research or public diplomacy tool. Panda diplomacy gives China a prominent profile in selected countries and makes global audiences interested in China. According to Xing, China's public diplomacy aims are met by

panda diplomacy because it increases China's visibility overseas and draws attention, making it easier to fulfil its diplomatic goals. In his perspective, using panda diplomacy gives the impression that China is approachable and kind, and that this will have a positive effect on overseas audiences' perceptions of China.

Public diplomacy is an important part of China's panda diplomacy, as evidenced by the fees paid by zoos that house pandas to Chinese conservation institutes. Hartig writes, "Giant pandas are a public diplomacy bonanza given the media excitement and mainly positive coverage." Hartig argues that public diplomacy may be measured in part by the number of people it reaches, and with this in mind, China's panda diplomacy is a very successful tool because it is "without any doubt a major crowd puller" and generates "enormous media attention," he says (Hartig, 2013). Panda diplomacy, according to Buckingham et al. (2013), is more than just a scientific interchange. They suggest that "panda conservation occurs in a complex, dynamic interplay between politics, markets, and conservation strategy."

Lin's description of the panda's soft power reflects that of other scholars. This charming creature has the power to captivate the hearts of foreigners and gain favour for China. Chinese public diplomacy and soft power can be strengthened through the use of panda diplomacy, which has been shown to be more than just a conservation effort (Lin, 2009). According to Xing, "valuable but long-overlooked power assets" like Panda Diplomacy can help China achieve its public diplomacy aims. Panda diplomacy may throw light on China's present public diplomacy techniques and show where it is effective in the current global atmosphere because it is a rapidly emerging world power.

Theoretical Framework

As a public diplomacy tool, the giant panda serves as a soft power resource and a model for understanding the panda's role in China's public diplomacy. The methodology developed by Gilboa to study public diplomacy will be applied to the study of panda diplomacy as a tool of public diplomacy. As a public diplomacy technique, panda diplomacy can benefit from animal diplomacy concepts.

Joseph Nye coined the term "soft power" in 1990. The United States attempted to reposition itself without the threat of war following the end of the Cold War. Military strength alone was not enough, and it

had to discover other means of influencing countries (Nye, 1990). As identified by Nye, soft power is comprised of three elements: an appealing culture, consistent political ideas, as well as a country's credibility and moral authority in international affairs (Nye, 1990). In the words of Nye, soft power is a sophisticated strategy that aims to captivate and co-opt the target population (2013). He argues that you don't need as many carrots and sticks when other people share your ideals and desire what you want. Coercion is always defeated by seduction.

It is more beneficial for a nation to gain legitimacy and attract other nations through its culture, politics, and foreign policy than through brute force. Although soft power has received a lot of attention from international relations experts since its creation in 1990, it has also received some criticism. Public diplomacy, according to Nye, may be able to transform soft power into desirable policy outcomes (Nye, 2009). Any discussion of soft power must include public diplomacy, which helps states see the real benefits of their resources.

Public diplomacy was defined by Edmund Gullion in 1965. Foreign policy decisions can be influenced by a variety of means, one of which is public diplomacy (Gullion, 1965). A public diplomacy strategy is "the cultivation of public opinion by governments in other nations," according to Gullion. The phrase "state-centred communication with abroad audiences" was coined by Gullion in 1965 and has been used ever since. It emphasizes the interchange of knowledge, ideas, and education.

A nation can achieve its objectives and policies through public diplomacy, according to Hans Tuch, who sees it as a vehicle to communicate its values, beliefs, institutions and culture to international audiences (Tuch, 1990). It is the goal of public diplomacy to make other countries aware of its culture, political principles, and public diplomacy through mutual understanding. Through its culture, political beliefs, and programs, the United States can exert soft power (Melissen, 2005). According to Melissen, "public diplomacy is an important soft power tactic." The deployment of soft power by states is made possible by public diplomacy, which promotes the flow of information, participation, and understanding.

Governments can use public diplomacy to plan their approach to other countries and how they want to present their country's image to them. Using public diplomacy tools like cultural and educational exchanges, a government can nurture its relationship with the public. Soft power can be turned into foreign policy success through public diplomacy policies. Diplomatic relations between animals Panda diplomacy

can be better understood via the lens of animal diplomacy (Cushing & Markwell, 2009). Animal diplomacy can be used by states to achieve their public diplomacy objectives, such as attracting overseas audiences and negotiating with other countries. Using animals in public diplomacy is possible through animal diplomacy.

The practice of giving gifts has been around for a very long time. For millennia, countries have used animal gifts to strengthen international ties. States are free to swap their animals with one another (Hartig, 2013). In 1943, Konrad Lorenz invented the word "Kinderschema" to describe an adult animal's display of childlike characteristics. In Lorenz's view, a baby-like animal incites a natural desire in humans to care for and protect them, as well as a want to be cuddled (Lorenz, 1943). A high, slightly bulging forehead, a large brain case relative to the face, saucer eyes, round cheeks, and short stubby limbs are only a few of Lorenz's list of characteristics that elicit sweetness and sympathy (Lorenz, 1943). These juvenile characteristics make them adorable, such as kittens, puppies, and pandas. Media coverage of animals is fuelled by the general public's infatuation with their cuteness or oddity (Cushing & Markwell, 2009). The animal's nationality should be tied only to the country of donation, as is the case with the panda in China. This enables the animal to represent its donor country and encourages people to learn more about the country.

Chinese Soft Power

China is researching and putting into practice soft power and popular diplomacy. It is clear that China's strength is unquestionable, given the country's rise from poverty to economic powerhouse, well-run society, and enormous military. However, there is some debate about its soft power (Los, 2018). The demand for soft power rises when a country's hard power is used to intimidate another country. A member of the Politburo Standing Committee, Wang Huning, first introduced Joseph Nye's writings to China in 1993 (Xiao, 2017). Soft power, as defined by Nye, includes cultural diplomacy as a key tool (Nye, 2008). According to Wang Huning, China's soft power relies heavily on culture (Huning, 1993).

Chinese culture and ideology, according to Huning, are the source of China's soft power (Huning, 1993). As a result, China's soft power strategy and public diplomacy are heavily influenced by the country's cultural values, according to Guozuo Zhang, a prominent Chinese scholar (Zhang, 2016). With regard to public diplomacy, cultural

diplomacy is a critical component that differs greatly from the rest of the world (Zhang, 2016). Cultural exchanges are an important part of China's soft power strategy. In order to build a strong foundation for China's soft power, President Xi Jinping says that China must deepen cultural system reform, promote socialist fundamental principles, and advance the cultural industry.

Public diplomacy and soft power are concepts that Nye emphasizes, but many academics argue that he doesn't go into enough detail about how culture can be used as a form of soft power. For Chinese academics and policymakers, culture is a significant source of soft power (Kong, 2015). As Breslin (2011) argues, it is important to understand China's history and customs in order to establish its soft power. Chinese soft power strategies are heavily influenced by cultural factors. In his address to the 17th National Congress, former CPC General Secretary Hu Jintao used the phrase "enhance [Chinese] cultural soft power". The phrase has come to represent China's soft power strategy (Jintao, 2007). According to him, the "enormous rejuvenation" of the Chinese nation will be followed by the "blooming" of the Chinese culture.

Culture is an important part of the soft power. As of the time of Xi Jinping, this method has been widened and improved. It was said in 2014 by China's current General Secretary that "we should expand China's soft power, portray a proper Chinese narrative, and better relay China's message to the world." Currently, China's soft power and popular diplomacy are based on these fundamentals. China's public diplomacy strategies are based on the country's cultural soft power assets. The Chinese film industry, Chinese museums abroad that can inform visitors about ancient Chinese culture and history, cultural attractions within China such as the Forbidden City and the Great Wall, and panda diplomacy are all part of the curriculum at Confucius Institutes.

Chinese diplomacy relies heavily on these culturally diverse and distinctly Chinese means of reaching out to the world. "Strict political structure," according to Gill and Huang, makes it difficult for China to use soft power since it can scare other publics with whom they are trying to build connections (Gill & Huang, 2006). When it comes to soft power, China's political system may be difficult for Westerners to relate to because of its high level of political control and system structure. The "China Threat" is a hotly discussed topic in the United States. There is apprehension among Asian nations that China's growing economic and military power may lead to Chinese dominance of Asia. In Europe and Africa, a growing Chinese presence has raised concerns about China's true motives (Wei, 2019).

Bringing China to the world's attention and aiding foreigners in their understanding of China are the primary objectives of Chinese public diplomacy (Zhao, 2007). Public diplomacy goals of China are summarized as follows: "China seeks understanding for its political system and policies; it wants to be seen as a stable and reliable and responsible economic partner; it wants to be seen as a trustworthy and responsible member of the international political community; and it wants to be recognized as an ancient, but vibrant civilization". Through public diplomacy, China aims to promote its image, raise understanding of its system and initiatives, and exert influence on other governments. An important part of a country's public diplomacy strategy is the development of soft power tools.

As a result of the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake, the distribution of pandas in China was dramatically altered (Buckingham, Neil, David, & Jepson, 2013). As a form of public diplomacy, China sent pandas as gifts to other countries. A pair of panda cubs were sent to the USSR by China in 1957 and 1959 (Hartig, 2013). Japan and North Korea were the recipients of panda gifts from China. Five pandas were sent to North Korea. After China joined the United Nations in 1971, it began sending gifts of pandas to the West. During Richard Nixon's 1972 visit to China, China sent the United States two huge pandas as a gift (MacMillan, 2008). As China's prime minister at the time, Zhou Enlai entrusted Western countries with the first panda. China transferred 16 pandas to seven Western countries between 1972 and 1982, including the United States, Japan, France, the United Kingdom, West Germany, Mexico, and Spain. By 1982, China had shipped 23 giant panda cubs.

Pandas: An Instrument of Chinese Soft Power

Huge pandas' economic strength was found in 1982, just as China was beginning economic reforms and refocusing on economic growth (Schaller, 1993). China concluded in 1982 that distributing pandas would be a breach of international law and convention (CITES, 1982). Since then, China has been renting pandas to other countries for exhibitions, where they would spend between 100 and 200 days in each location. For the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, pandas were loaned out. After the games, they were returned to San Francisco. Another pair was exhibited and transferred to New Zealand in 1988 in Australia (Hartig, 2013).

Each panda couple hired by zoos cost zoos between \$300,000 and \$500,000, while China received a cut of the souvenir sales (Hartig, 2013). There were many benefits to renting pandas, such as gaining publicity and money. Pandas cannot be exported unless both China and the other country are satisfied the transaction will aid in conserving the species, as stipulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in 1996 (CITES, 1996). China's conservation initiatives necessitated a shift in China's panda diplomacy practices. At this stage, China imposed restrictions on panda deals.

The following are the guidelines: Zoos lease pandas from China for ten years, which can be extended by mutual agreement. The annual budget for China's environmental protection efforts must be \$1 million (Xing, 2010). In order to keep their pandas for an additional five years, China negotiated agreements with San Diego Zoo, Zoo Atlanta, and the National Zoo in Washington DC (Hartig, 2013). Some zoos may charge additional fees, depending on the location. All zoos must be able to afford bamboo, which costs around \$200,000 per year to feed the pandas (Fekete, 2012). Every zoo that gets a panda must have a zookeeper who is an expert in pandas (Xing, 2010). It's important for each zoo acquiring pandas to balance publicity, revenue, and costs. Due to the panda's status on the IUCN Red List and the fact that efforts are being made to increase panda reproduction, zoos must ensure that their pandas are properly cared for.

In order to preserve good business connections with trading partners, China employs panda diplomacy to target areas where it sees commercial prospects (Kozłowska, 2020). Academia and the media frequently report on Confucius institutes, linguistic and cultural exchanges, museums, student exchanges, and more (Wei, 2019). Panda diplomacy is largely disregarded in China's public diplomacy debates. Academics and the media have paid little attention to China's long-established diplomatic tactic of "panda diplomacy." China's more conventional public diplomacy tools may be to blame for this. Compared to other countries, China is one of the few that uses animal diplomacy on such a large scale.

Panda Diplomacy: An Effective Means of Serving China's Grand Strategy

Cushing and Markwell's criteria for animal diplomacy are met by panda diplomacy. An appealing visual identity for the panda is essential; it must be a natural fit for the recipient country. Pandas are visually appealing because of their Kindschenschema or neoteny. Humans find a high

forehead, a big brain case, saucer eyes, rounded cheeks, and short stubby limbs charming (Lorenz, 1943). For all of these reasons and more, the giant panda is an excellent choice for animal diplomacy.

First and foremost, "the creatures involved must be distinct and indigenous to the donor country" (Cushing & Markwell, 2009). There are only 1,864 wild giant pandas, panda diplomacy shines in this demand because of its uniqueness (WWF, 2020). The panda was just moved from "endangered" to "vulnerable" by the IUCN in 2016, panda conservation is still a subject that is very much on the minds of the worldwide public (Swaigood, Wang, & Wei, 2016). Many people around the world have the opportunity to see pandas up close and personal through the use of zoo webcams and media reports. China has excelled at incorporating this component of animal diplomacy into its panda diplomacy through annual fees, high standards of panda cages and feeding, and requirements requiring professional giant panda zookeepers.

Panda diplomacy has enormous power as an efficient animal diplomacy instrument due to its high standards in all prerequisites and guiding principles. In animal diplomacy, panda diplomacy is one of the most important tools. The panda is an ideal candidate for animal diplomacy because of its international appeal, attractiveness, rarity, and long-term connection to China. Its public diplomacy effectiveness must be discussed. Public diplomacy is how states communicate with abroad audiences and is a primary instrument of information sharing and communication that allows soft power resources to take root.

Giant Panda Diplomacy is China's public diplomacy technique that uses the soft power of the Chinese government's panda to influence foreign policy. China places a high value on cultural diplomacy as a means of enhancing its soft power. Film and literature have been used as examples of soft power by Nye, but he hasn't mentioned animal diplomacy or the panda in this context. Ancient Chinese traditions and culture are part of China's cultural supremacy, and the huge panda fits perfectly in. The panda is a cultural icon in China because of its historical ties. The panda is a symbol of China's history and culture because of its status as a national hero.

This type of diplomacy involves the public and conveys a message of trust and friendship to other countries. As a result of panda diplomacy, governments are eager to expand their bilateral ties with China. States having tense relations with China must modify their behaviour to receive more pandas after China withdraws them or refuses to give more. When relations between China and Japan were tense, no pandas

were sent, but President Xi and Prime Minister Abe agreed to resume panda diplomacy after things returned to "normal."

Panda loans are strongly associated with policy agreements. Panda diplomacy is a potent public diplomacy method that can change policy outcomes and China's bilateral relations with other nations, according to timelines of relations. Panda diplomacy can also be evaluated by comparing it to China's public diplomacy objectives. For China's public diplomacy, the goal is to be understood for its political system and policies, to be seen as a stable, reliable and responsible economic partner, to be seen as a trustworthy and responsible member of the international community, and to be respected as an ancient, but vibrant culture."

China's goodwill and desire for political and economic cooperation are shown through the use of panda diplomacy. Panda deals are for countries that accept and understand China's political structure and policies, and it is also for countries that contradict with Chinese policies, in order to reconsider their policies towards China. It similarly encourages countries to view China as a stable, reliable and responsible economic partner through entering into panda diplomacy with countries it maintains a strong trade and investment relationship with, with panda diplomacy showing China's commitment to a long-term partnership with these countries.

Gifting pandas serves as a symbol of trust and support, establishing strong connections with a seal of Chinese friendliness. Pandas reflect old Chinese history and culture; they serve to bridge the gap between cultures and generate interest in China as a historical cultural force. Even though panda diplomacy initially appears to have a simple goal of extending goodwill to other countries, it is actually a very successful way of supporting China's public diplomacy objectives, making it an enormously strong tool for public diplomacy. China's panda diplomacy has had an impact on China's public diplomacy, based on higher levels of bilateral ties and collaboration following the signing of panda diplomacy accords. Panda diplomacy is a successful public diplomacy instrument that fits animal diplomacy standards. In terms of public diplomacy, panda diplomacy aligns well with China's strategic objectives.

Tools of Chinese Public Diplomacy

Media, internet, events, cultural and educational exchanges, and celebrities are some of China's soft power tools. A well-known Chinese public diplomacy tool is the use of Confucius institutes. 530 Confucius

institutes operate worldwide, with 126 in Asia, 184 in Europe, 141 in North and Latin America, 59 in Africa, and 20 in Oceania (Jahar, 2019). The goal of Confucius Institutes is to foster goodwill and worldwide understanding by instructing students in the Chinese language and culture. Cultural exchange and language instruction are among the many services provided by Confucius Institutes.

Confucius institutes are viewed as problematic by some. Confusion has arisen in nations where there are Confucius Institutes over China's true intentions behind the institutions, despite their stated purpose of promoting international understanding and cooperation (Wang & Adamson, 2015). Between 2013 and 2020 a total of 46 universities, 2 governments and 1 school board around the world have dissolved their Confucius Institutes. In addition to Confucius Institutes, student-to-student and language exchanges are other forms of educational diplomacy. Outside of China, the number of Chinese students studying abroad is increasing. Students are influenced by their surroundings and might represent their native culture overseas, which helps promote cultural understanding.

As a cultural ambassador, not every child is enthusiastic or receptive to the role because of their age, education, and social class. China exploits worldwide personalities like NBA player Yao Ming for public diplomacy (Cull, 2008). Yao is pleasant, strong, confident without being arrogant, and focused on achieving (Ding, 2008). Yao is a potent public diplomacy figure for China, positively representing his country and garnering public attention to it. However, despite Yao's charm and effectiveness at engaging foreign publics, the long-term benefits of relying on the beauty of superstars are few. It is not a viable long-term strategy to rely solely on the presence of these types of celebrities for news and media coverage (Xing, 2010).

In another illustration of China's public diplomacy, the Chinese film industry has been improved and Chinese film studios have received a slew of new investments (Becard & Filho, 2019). Non-Chinese moviegoers may be unable to fully appreciate Chinese movies if they cannot communicate in the language. When it comes to Chinese public diplomacy, academics rarely address how Chinese celebrities and Confucius Institutes work together in harmony, but that's exactly what Panda diplomacy does. Using the huge panda as a public diplomacy tool is a smart move. Panda diplomacy is a unique public diplomacy tool with unique features. It has the capacity to reach a broad audience and is unique to China as the most effective form of animal diplomacy.

Panda diplomacy offers various advantages over other Chinese popular diplomacy tactics. It's not limited by age/ethnicity/occupation/religion or interest in learning, culture exchange, or athletics. Panda diplomacy can appeal to a wide range of people, regardless of their age, education level, or social status. Furthermore, panda diplomacy does not require a dedication to learning or culture, to visit a panda in a zoo or read about pandas in the media is a pleasurable activity that can build favourable associations in the viewer. As a public diplomacy instrument, panda diplomacy enjoys a wide audience thanks to widespread media coverage and panda-cams that can be viewed from anywhere in the world.

Discussion

As an unconventional kind of public diplomacy, panda diplomacy has a dearth of academic research to fill the void. Many good things can be learned from studying panda diplomacy. If China wants to strengthen its soft power, international awareness of China, and positive policy outcomes with other countries, it must assess its public diplomacy techniques. Panda diplomacy must be studied in depth to understand its effectiveness, Chinese design, and the possible impact that it has on China's public diplomacy.

As a special bonus, the first ladies of China and the United States were on hand to witness the ceremony of naming a panda. China has not sent a panda to the United States in 59 years because of the trade conflict and Trump's erratic behaviour toward China. The pandas in San Diego Zoo were immediately removed when Trump imposed huge tariffs on Chinese goods. The temporary agreement to bring pandas to Yagiyama Zoological Park was signed in 2011, when Japan-China ties were at their best. China stated its intentions to send more pandas to Japan at the time. Japan and China's panda agreement was cancelled following the Diayou Islands territorial dispute, and no pandas have been transferred to Japan since. A panda agreement was signed by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese President Xi Jinping following the normalization of relations between the two nations, Japan's backing for China in the trade war, and Abe's first visit to Beijing in seven years.

Ueno Zoo has been granted an extension on China's loan of the Xiang Xiang cub. China's choice of countries is influenced by commerce. Trading is a part of every case. US-China ties have not always been friendly, although the US accounts for 16.8 percent of China's exports.

US panda diplomacy took off after Nixon's 1972 visit to China. For decades, China and the United States have maintained panda diplomacy. In the wake of the trade war, panda diplomacy has come to an end in the United States, and San Diego Zoo has had to withdraw its pandas. A trade-based connection between China and its neighbour may be a factor in its choice to relocate pandas to the other side. Aside from China, Japan is home to the most pandas outside of the country.

Chinese panda diplomacy is not surprising given the country's preference for countries with good relations and trade. Choosing a country should be based on both trust and kindness, as panda diplomacy is a symbol of goodwill. After the panda diplomacy accords, China is wise to invest public diplomacy tools in nations that are more likely to be open to partnership and trade. China's top 15 trading partners all have pandas, so the conclusion that trade is another basis for panda diplomacy makes logical. China's trade partners should use public diplomacy to maintain good relations with China.

International publics of any age, education, interest, social status, or income can benefit from panda diplomacy. Unlike Confucius Institutes or student exchanges, Panda diplomacy does not entail education or learning. There is no linguistic or cultural barrier when comparing panda diplomacy to a Chinese star or film. Such type of diplomacy removes language, culture, interests and other demographic barriers. Pandas were given as presents, then commercial loans, and now panda conservation loans are in the panda's best interest. Foreign audiences, foreign governments, and the media all play a role in the successful implementation of panda diplomacy.

Chinese culture and history are promoted, interest in Chinese culture and history is stimulated, governments are encouraged to treat China with respect, and China may show its discontent with countries who treat it badly through this method. A year after the panda agreement was announced, the China-Denmark Joint Work Programme was introduced, and President Xi Jinping and Barack Obama increased cooperation on joint programs after holding a ceremony in the United States to give the panda its name. This is because panda diplomacy encourages mutual trust and co-operation.

An effective public diplomacy tool, panda diplomacy promotes China's system to other countries and helps them become more open to it. China wants its political system and policies to be understood; it wants to be seen as a stable and reliable and responsible economic

partner; it wants to be seen as a trustworthy member of the international political community; and it wants to be seen as a trustworthy and responsible member of the international political community."

Panda diplomacy addresses all of these objectives. Additionally, it can be an effective instrument for persuading others who don't to change their views on China. China seeks to establish itself as a long-term economic partner by signing panda deals with reputable trading partners, since the panda is a sign of trust and kindness. This diplomacy demonstrates China's rich cultural heritage by adopting the panda as an emblem of its diverse history. China's public diplomacy strategy, according to Xing (2010), relies heavily on panda diplomacy. In order to meet China's public diplomacy objectives, Panda diplomacy is able to do so.

China's unique panda diplomacy makes use of the huge panda, which can be seen on webcams and in the media in 21 countries. A loan of 10 pandas from China to zoos for \$1,000,000 in panda conservation funding is made in exchange. Visitors to zoos flock to see pandas, which increases both the number of people and the amount of money they spend. With good connections and trade, China selects panda countries, which typically improves their bilateral relations. Chinese soft power is bolstered through the deployment of the gigantic panda as a public diplomacy tool known as panda diplomacy.

The public and governments of other countries can be influenced by China's panda diplomacy. It is possible to see the impact of panda diplomacy in how countries respond to receiving pandas, in the global popularity of pandas, and in their position as a Chinese cultural icon. In China, the employment of panda diplomacy is a powerful tool for public diplomacy. It's a successful kind of cultural diplomacy since President Xi Jinping promotes the panda's role as a cultural representative of China. Animal diplomacy is something it does exceptionally well. More effective than China's other public diplomacy methods in reaching a large audience and erasing linguistic and cultural barriers.

In academic research, the importance of panda diplomacy cannot be overestimated. When other countries feel threatened by China's rapid rise to economic and global dominance, China may continue to grow its soft power and popular diplomacy by understanding how it works. In Panda diplomacy, China is shown as a friendly and dependable country. Panda diplomacy is a long-term political instrument in which the government selects who gets a panda and how they obtain one.

Conclusions

Through panda diplomacy, China makes use of the giant panda, an emblem of Chinese soft power. Soft power and public diplomacy theories were used to investigate and evaluate the role of panda diplomacy as a public diplomacy tool. China's public diplomacy is based on the giant panda, which satisfies the criteria for animal diplomacy. The panda's visual appeal, originality, and exclusivity to China make it a superb tool for public diplomacy. Only 19 nations outside of China now have pandas. Positive ties between China and the receiving country, as well as countries with promising trade prospects, play a role in the selection process.

The use of panda diplomacy to encourage bilateral cooperation on critical policy issues can appeal to foreign publics and governments in the name of people diplomacy. Diplomacy using pandas is an expression of goodwill and potential future policy cooperation between China and the country that receives the gift. When relations between China and a country are strained, China can remove pandas from that country. Chinese public diplomacy does not exclusively rely on panda diplomacy, although it may reach a wider audience and achieve more results than other methods.

In terms of China's four main public diplomacy goals, panda diplomacy could be a good fit. Understanding China's panda diplomacy is crucial at a time when Western countries and world leaders are increasing their hostility towards China. It may look to some as a simple gesture, but it is part of a long-term strategy to expand China's worldwide appeal and influence foreign governments. By realizing the significance and potential influence of panda diplomacy, China may improve its public diplomacy and encourage the international public and bilateral partners to understand the Chinese system.

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