

# The Measures for China's University Students Applying Social Capital to Graduate Employment

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## Abstract

This paper tries to use the social capital theory to make some researches on graduate employment, in the hope of giving helpful countermeasures and suggestions for graduate employment.

**Keywords:** University students, Employment, Social capital

Along with the popularization of China's higher education, the difficult employment of university graduates has become a social problem at present. In the year 2009, the number of university graduates is higher than 6 million in China. The one-time employment rate of university graduate keeps in declining. A recent survey from Social Survey Institute of China shows that the overall employment rate of university students is 35.6% in 2009.

This paper will study and discuss the employment of university students in perspective of social capital. Social capital is the social network formed by interpersonal connections, which takes social connections as the base, certain culture as the behavioral norms, and common benefits of certain group or organization as the purpose. The "social capital" of university student refers to all kinds of social connections that can be used to acquiring social resources from today's social structure and operations, and the capability of dealing with different social relations.

University student can gain social capital from the social position of parents. Parents are the most direct social capital for university student. The overall social status of relatives of parents and the social network formed by parents' social connections, and their social capital determine the social capital of university student to a great degree. In the era of information network, the possession of information capital can increase the social capital in a sense. The information network circulation includes the flow of information and the exchange of knowledge. The circulation can help to get useful information and achieve the exchange of network resources. The exchange of information will generate a sense of trust, realizing the circulation and proliferation of information. University student can make best use of social capital in job hunting. The author studies this issue further as follows.

## 1. The Family Should Focus on Building the Primitive Accumulation of Social Capital

The family social capital of university student is from the main social capital stock of the family before entering the university. Social capital theory shows that the primitive accumulation of family social capital is derived from the interpersonal network of parents and relatives based on trust, social skills, social status, and characters. This social capital comes through two ways: within the family and the outside of the family. The social capital within the family includes the social interactive network formed by parents' social resources and relatives' connections. The social capital outside the family includes unrelated social connections and social contact network. The two networks are overlapped and in a dynamic circulation. In China, people value relations. The composition of the network needs time and test of morals and characters. The establishment of the network needs dedication and satisfaction. This network is the contribution of affections and the test on morals. In Chinese tradition, as the university student gets along with family members and relatives, he or she is under the influences of norms recognized by the social network. The university student can look after the supports and comforts from the social capital under the pressure of graduate employment. Meanwhile, the social capital outside the family constituted by the university student connects the family social capital, achieving an integration of social capital, and forming a giant social network, which will play an important role in the establishment of university student's social status.

## 2. Make Best Use of University Advantages and Accumulate Social Capital

When a student starts the university life, he or she begins the process of forming social capital. The higher education is a socialization process, in which university students accept Chinese traditional cultures and change their values.

Meanwhile, the university supplies a platform for university students enlarging their social capital.

### *2.1 Build a High-level Platform for the Accumulation of Social Capital*

Improve the mode of training high-quality talents. Enhance the quality of specialty education and improve the teaching quality. Establish the positive and active learning habits. Pay more attention to training special talents and excellent talents. Help students to get sound specialty knowledge and practical ability. Prepare them with solid specialty bases for the establishment of social capital, and create necessary conditions for the circulation of high-level social capital.

### *2.2 Carry out High-quality Community Activities and Create an Environment for University Students Developing Social Capital*

The university community is a window for university students contacting with the society, and a product integrating university resources and social resources. To organize meaningful and high-taste community activities can help participants to form a mutual trust, develop a consciousness of team cooperation, and follow the rule of mutual benefits and equality. By this way, university student can well be trained with the capability of interpersonal communication and association. The membership of communities overlaps and influences mutually, which can improve the cohesion of communities in general. Community members have different social resources and relations networks. In community activities, their social resources continue to integrate and grow. At the same time, their social adaptability keeps in rising, which may be wonderful helps for their future works and social status, creating necessary conditions for developing social capital.

### *2.3 The Liaison Mechanism of Previous University Graduates Provides Conditions for University Student Developing Social Capital*

The social resources of university seniors have unparalleled advantages over other social resources. Previous graduates are the social capital base with huge potentials. However, due to the lack of liaison mechanism between university students and previous graduates, the valuable social capital has been blocked, turning into a huge waste. The university should take the responsibility of connecting university students and previous graduates, building a sound mechanism, and ensuring smooth connections. It should be one part of daily management in the university. In addition, the university can create a database of students' social capital or even build a website for university students, providing securities and services for university students developing social capital.

## **3. University Students Build the Social Capital System Consciously**

### *3.1 Update the Values, Practice Professional Skills, and Establish a Consciousness of Building Social Capital*

There are usually two extremes in university. Students in one extreme completely are burying themselves in study. They care about nothing but specialty books. They are not good at handling classmates and social relation, let alone knit the social network. This part of students are often more aloof and proud. They occupy few social capitals and pay no attention to the accumulation of social capital. Most of them will choose to take the entrance exams for postgraduate schools, because the job-hunting pressure kills their confidence in employment. Students in the other extreme are not good at specialty study. They pay more attention to social communication. Then, they give up study at last, which causes terrible personal images. On the surface, they are busy in accumulating social capital. In fact, their credits will be questioned and they cannot knit high-quality social networks. Students in the middle mostly have more spaces for the accumulation of social capital. In university, students should build a consciousness of designing the accumulation of social capital, taking it as an important cause in life.

### *3.2 Take a Part in Social Activities and Develop Ways for Accumulating Social Capital*

In university, students should participate in various community activities, accumulating social relations. By joining in different activities, students can get to know others from different specialties. They can understand and help each other, and even develop the life-long friendship. In communities, the team with the same cause can give people the best trainings and tests. They may easily display their kindness and virtues. In a real circumstance, university students can increase the value of social capital. The community is a buffer zone between university and society. By joining communities, university students can accumulate experiences and make new friends, knitting the social network. The part-time social activities create new opportunities for university students establishing their social status.

### *3.3 Make Best Use of Various Platforms Offered by the University and Dig the Social Capital from the University*

Peking University and Tsinghua University are the favorites of students of all ages. In addition to their extraordinary education resources, the broad network of relations among graduates is also an extremely important factor. It is meaningful to make full use of alumni resources to solve the job-hunting problem. The acquirement and the utility

of this resource is an important way for university student developing social capital.

### *3.4 Strengthen the Emotional Communication with Family Members and Broaden the Family Social Network*

After the establishment of family social network, the university student should invest more affection and energies, keep in touch and constant communication, care about family members' happiness and sadness, pay attention to their successes and failures, and feel their feelings. Periodic phones and messages are necessary. As they need help, offer helps. In holidays, the university student can spend more time with the family and join in family parties and related community activities, keeping immediate communication and exchange.

### *3.5 Strengthen the Ties with Teachers and Expand the Social Capital Network*

University teachers have a huge social network. The level of university teachers' social capital is much higher than that of university students' social capital. In specialty study, teachers are the mentors and the directors. In daily life, they are close friends. In contacting with teachers, university students can not only improve the communication skills, but also extend the chain of social capital, getting more information and more development opportunities.

In short, the employment of university students is a social problem associating social livelihood, which has always been mentioned and emphasized by the government and the society. The entire society should concern the project of university student employment, paying attention to the special meanings of social capital accumulation and social human resources to the employment of university student.

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