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Analysis of the alienation phenomenon of alumni relations and the construction of close ties

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Abstract: With social changes and the passage of time, alumni relations have become increasingly alienated, which has affected the cohesion of the alumni network and the long-term development of the school. Geographical dispersion, professional differences and the fading of campus memories are the main factors leading to the alienation of alumni relations. At the same time, although the rise of social media has promoted information exchange, it has also replaced traditional interactive methods to a certain extent. In order to cope with this problem, schools can strengthen the connection between alumni through interactive platforms that integrate online and offline, cross-industry alumni mentor programs, and themed nostalgic campus experience activities. In particular, by establishing an alumni career development resource library and encouraging alumni to participate in school governance decisions, it can not only enhance the sense of belonging of alumni, but also promote mutual assistance and support among alumni, thus forming a close alumni network.

Keywords: Alumni Relations; Alienation Phenomenon; Interactive Platform
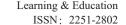
Introduction

As time goes by, more and more alumni are gradually alienated from their alma mater and classmates, and the alumni network has gradually become loose. There are multiple factors behind this phenomenon, such as geographical dispersion, differences in career development, and the gradual fading of campus memories over time. In addition, the popularity of social media has increased the channels for information circulation, but it has also reduced face-to-face interactions. The alienation of alumni relations not only affects the sharing and mutual assistance of alumni resources, but also weakens the social influence and long-term development potential of the school to a certain extent. Therefore, exploring effective ways to promote close ties between alumni has become an important topic of common concern for schools and alumni.

1. Factors of alienation of alumni relations

1.1 Geographical dispersion hinders physical communication

With the progress of society, especially the promotion of higher education, some alumni will choose to develop in different cities or even countries after graduation. This geographical dispersion directly makes it difficult for alumni to communicate physically, which is also one of the main reasons for the alienation of alumni relations. Geographical dispersion determines that alumni have significant differences in living, working, and communication environments. Traditional face-to-face communication becomes difficult and even difficult to maintain normal contact. The long geographical distance often prevents alumni from meeting frequently and holding online and offline gatherings and activities. Although modern communication tools provide greater convenience for long-distance communication, remote communication is always difficult to replace the warmth and emotional communication of face-to-face meetings. Many times, although alumni maintain social network connections, it is difficult to continue to develop and deepen due to the lack of face-to-face communication. The communication between alumni is becoming more and more superficial, lacking deep emotional support and career cooperation opportunities, which eventually leads to alienation between alumni. In addition, geographical dispersion will also affect the development of alumni associations and alma mater organizations. Although some schools try to maintain alumni contact through online meetings or social platforms, such activities are usually difficult to attract alumni from different regions to actively participate, especially those who are busy with work or living abroad. This lack of communication will not only affect the building of emotions and trust between alumni for a long time, but also weaken the cohesion

of the alumni network. Even if some alumni can participate in offline activities, it is still difficult to form deep interactions in activities due to geographical restrictions, making the alumni relationship more alienated.

1.2 Professional differences lead to fewer common topics

When alumni enter the workplace, especially when they grow across industries and fields, the professional differences between them gradually become prominent. Graduates are likely to enter work fields that are unrelated to their professional backgrounds or form different career paths due to different career development. This professional difference leads to fewer common topics among alumni and further intensifies the alienation of alumni relations. Alumni of different majors have significant differences in their daily behaviors in terms of thinking, values, lifestyles, etc. For example, alumni of technical majors may pay more attention to technological innovation and market trends, while alumni of arts and education majors pay more attention to cultural exchanges and academic progress. This professional difference makes it easy for alumni to fall into limited dialogue when communicating, and it is difficult to find common hobbies and topics. The common memories and experiences established on campus often cannot be sustained in the real workplace environment, resulting in a gradual disconnection between the feelings and topics of communication between alumni. In addition, professional differences will also bring a certain degree of competitive psychology. When alumni in different fields and positions communicate, they may inadvertently regard each other's achievements as a kind of comparison and competition, and then feel alienated. This phenomenon is particularly evident in industries with fierce workplace competition, and the mutual assistance and cooperation relationship between alumni is also susceptible to this impact, causing the alumni network that should be full of support and assistance to become increasingly indifferent and alienated.

1.3 Campus memories fade over time

The alienation of alumni relationships is usually a gradual and cumulative process, and the fading of campus memories is its most essential cause. College life is an important period of growth for every alumnus, and common campus experiences and memories are important bases for establishing connections between alumni. However, as time goes by, these memories are often drowned in daily work, family life and social pressure. Many alumni gradually forget the good campus time they have walked together, causing the emotional connection with their alma mater and other alumni to gradually fade. Time has an impact on the alienation of alumni relations that cannot be ignored. When graduates enter the workplace, the personal life and career development of alumni become the focus of their attention, and the memories of the past campus gradually fade. These campus times were once the shining points of many people's lives, but under the busy work and family life, those memories may gradually fade or weaken, and the campus emotions and sense of belonging shared by alumni will also disappear. In addition, the alienation of alumni relations is related to the influence of the alma mater. If the alma mater does not continue to carry out alumni activities or does not take effective measures to help alumni maintain emotional contact on campus, alumni will easily lose contact with their alma mater and other alumni. Even individual alumni who have participated in alumni activities, facing the gradually fading campus memories, it is difficult to obtain lasting motivation from the emotional maintenance of the past.

1.4 Social media replaces traditional contact methods

In the information society, social media has gradually become an important means of contact between alumni. Although social media has a significant role in promoting information circulation and communication convenience, it can also cause alienation between alumni to varying degrees. Social media provides a convenient platform for alumni to contact each other through WeChat, LinkedIn and other online platforms. However, this "virtual" interaction lacks real emotional communication and deep interaction compared to traditional face-to-face communication or telephone contact. The prevalence of social media allows people to send information or constantly update dynamics at any time and any place, and the contact between alumni is becoming more and more fragmented and superficial. Communication between alumni through social media is often limited to likes, comments and simple information exchange, lacking deep emotional support and communication. Many people are accustomed to using social media as the only way to contact alumni, but the frequency and depth of such communication are not enough, it is difficult to establish a long-term emotional bond, and it may even cause problems such as information

overflow and weakening of relationships. In addition, although social media helps alumni to contact each other in some way, it lacks the emotional resonance that can be generated by face-to-face communication. In face-to-face communication, non-verbal information and emotional factors are easier to be transmitted, deepening mutual understanding and trust. However, due to the gap on the screen, social media lacks the communication of this emotion, which leads to superficial and empty communication. If this continues, the relationship between alumni may gradually become distant.

2. Paths to build close alumni relationships

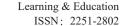### 2.1 Create an online and offline integrated interactive platform

With the advancement of technology, the interactive mode of alumni relationships is constantly changing. Online platforms provide alumni with a more convenient channel for contact, but this cannot completely replace face-to-face communication. In order to establish close alumni relations, schools can create an integrated online and offline interactive platform, give full play to the advantages of modern technology and traditional communication methods, and conduct in-depth interaction and communication with alumni. Online interactive platforms can not only become channels for information release and contact, but also integrate more interactive functions such as alumni forums, online lectures, career development sharing sessions and virtual alumni gatherings. For example, the Harvard University alumni platform "Harvard Alumni Network" in the United States helps alumni find like-minded friends and maintain continuous communication by establishing different alumni groups, divided by region, interest, industry and graduation year. The platform not only enables alumni to communicate on forums or social media platforms, but also holds regular online activities such as career development seminars, corporate interviews, celebrity speeches, etc., which bring alumni more abundant communication content and communication platforms. Offline activities emphasize real social interaction experience. Schools can often organize alumni gatherings, industry exchange salons and sports games. In this way, alumni can not only restore their emotional relationship with their alma mater, but also establish cooperative relationships in career development. For example, Stanford University's "Stanford Alumni Association" often organizes alumni gatherings, industry salons and other activities around the world, so that alumni from all over the world can deepen their connections with each other through online and offline activities. Combining offline activities with online interactions can ensure that the relationship between alumni can be consolidated and expanded in various situations.

2.2 Carry out cross-industry alumni mentoring projects

Cross-industry alumni mentoring projects are regarded as one of the key means to promote closer alumni relations. Through this program, alumni can not only exchange professional experiences but also inspire new opportunities for cooperation in cross-industry exchanges, thereby strengthening mutual assistance and trust among alumni. By establishing mentoring relationships among alumni, alumni resource sharing can be effectively promoted, which helps alumni better meet workplace challenges, broaden their horizons, and even promote cross-industry cooperation. Some well-known universities have successfully carried out research on this project. For example, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) uses its "MIT Alumni Mentoring Program" to provide mentor matching services for different industries. The project provides one-on-one guidance to young and experienced alumni in the form of an alumni database, covering a wide range of industries including technology, business, education, and art. Mentors can not only help young alumni solve problems in the workplace, but also guide young alumni to make wise decisions on their career paths. More importantly, mentors can understand the forefront of the industry through feedback from the mentors, and thus gain new perspectives and insights. The cross-industry alumni mentoring project can help alumni get practical help at all stages of their careers, especially when they are transitioning to a career or developing across industries. This kind of cross-industry mentor support is particularly important. In this way, alumni from different backgrounds and experiences can support each other, share industry experience, communicate with each other, and continuously strengthen mutual trust and cooperation.

2.3 Organize themed nostalgic campus experience activities

Nostalgic campus experience activities can effectively evoke the emotional connection between alumni and their alma mater, and help

alumni restore good memories during their college years. As the time since graduation increases, the impression of many alumni on campus has gradually become blurred. However, through some nostalgic activities with distinct themes, alumni can relive their youth and establish a deeper emotional bond with their former students, thereby enhancing the close connection between alumni. For example, Oxford University in the UK organizes a series of activities called "Oxford Alumni Weekend" every year, which covers campus tours, discussions, themed gatherings, cultural interactions and other aspects. The themes of the activities are usually related to the interests of alumni, such as "innovation and entrepreneurship", "humanities and arts", "global issues", etc., which helps alumni share their personal achievements and thoughts while returning to their alma mater, and thereby reawaken the emotional connection with their alma mater. Such activities generally attract alumni from all over the world to participate, and further strengthen the relationship between alumni through in-depth discussions on topics of common interest. In addition, the form of nostalgic activities can also be tailored according to the needs of alumni, such as holding targeted activities for alumni of a certain grade or major. For example, Peking University's "Alumni Cultural Festival" provides alumni of different generations with the opportunity to reminisce and share campus moments through a series of speeches, artistic performances and interactive activities. Through these targeted theme activities, alumni can reconnect in a warm atmosphere and contribute to the development of their alma mater.

2.4 Establish a career development resource library exclusively for alumni

The close connection between alumni is not only about maintaining emotions, but also about mutual support in career development. Building a career development resource library exclusively for alumni can not only bring a steady stream of career support to alumni, but also strengthen cooperation and communication among alumni. The construction of a career resource library covers alumni career development information, industry trends, recruitment information and job search skills, aiming to provide more systematic support for alumni career development. Take the alumni platform "NYU Connect" of New York University (NYU) as an example. By creating a special career resource library and alumni database, the platform provides users with rich recruitment information, industry analysis reports and career development suggestions. In addition, the platform also has a mutual assistance area between alumni and alumni, where alumni can post job search needs or seek industry advice, etc., which helps each other get more valuable support in career development. To ensure the effectiveness of the resource library, the school should continuously update career development information and establish professional career development consultants to assist alumni in coping with real workplace difficulties. The resource library can also provide personalized services to alumni at different stages of career development, such as resume writing and interview skills for job seekers, or investment cooperation for alumni with entrepreneurial intentions. This kind of exclusive resource library can enhance mutual assistance and collaboration among alumni and build the alumni network into a truly valuable professional support platform. In this way, alumni can quickly get professional advice and assistance in their careers when necessary, and the school can also maintain a close relationship with alumni and further promote collaboration and interaction among alumni through the continuous optimization of the resource library.

2.5 Promote alumni participation in school governance decisions

Alumni not only constitute a valuable resource for the school, but also a key driving force for the future growth of the school. Therefore, encouraging alumni to participate in school governance decisions can enhance alumni's sense of participation and responsibility and enhance the close relationship between alumni and their alma mater. The school can establish an alumni advisory committee and participate in the decision-making alumni representative conference to enable alumni to directly participate in the school's major decision-making process. Take Harvard University's Alumni Advisory Committee as an example. It is composed of a group of alumni with extensive influence. The committee often provides strategic advice to various schools to assist them in making decisions on teaching, scientific research and international cooperation. In this way, alumni can not only contribute their professional knowledge and experience to the growth of their alma mater, but also participate in the decision-making process of the school's future direction. In addition, alumni participation is not limited to the strategic level, but also involves resource integration and talent introduction. For example, some schools invite alumni to join the planning and implementation of donation activities, or participate in the establishment of an alumni talent network to help schools attract more outstanding

talents and resources from around the world. Under this mechanism, alumni can feel that their voices are heard and can also support the development of their alma mater with actions.

Conclusion

The close connection of alumni relations has far-reaching significance for both schools and alumni. Through modern means such as the construction of online and offline integration platforms and the development of cross-industry projects, schools can not only enhance alumni's sense of participation and belonging, but also provide alumni with continuous career support and social value. The reconstruction of the alumni network requires the combination of various innovative measures to promote long-term interaction and cooperation between alumni and their alma mater, which will not only promote personal career development, but also make positive contributions to the school's reputation and social responsibility.

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