

# Review of Research Literatures on Social Confidence of Urban Youth

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## Abstract

The youth group has always been a hot spot in the academic circle, there are many studies on the characteristics, employment, consumption and other aspects of young people, but there are few studies on the social confidence of youth group. In the few studies, urban youth are further regarded as an important research group; they mainly conduct research from five aspects: economy, class status, social environment, social prosperity and relative sense exploitation. On the basis of the literature review of these five aspects, this paper finds that there is almost no literature on the social confidence of urban youth from social capital, and this may be a new perspective for studying the social confidence of urban youth.

## Keywords

Urban Youth; Social Confidence.

## 1. Introduction

Youth is an important force for the development of the country and society, and the source of social progress. General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized in many statements: "if the youth are prosperous, the country will be prosperous, if the youth are strong, the country will be strong", "youth are the most energetic and full of dreams, and they are the leaders and builders in the future." [1] Youth development can be said to play an important role in national development. However, youth are in complex social conflicts at present, especially among urban youth, which directly affects the social confidence of this group. A more intuitive example is social equity, some scholars point out that over time, income inequality in urban areas will be higher than in rural areas, especially economic income. [2] The living conditions of Chinese youth, especially those born in low-level, especially the living conditions of urban youth who come from the low level are becoming increasingly difficult, and the degree of frustration is getting deeper. Frustration, loss and confusion pervade many youth, especially urban youth who are in wandering state. [3] Youth groups are faced with many social pressures in many social conflicts, which make many of them confused and even pessimistic about their future development expectations, and even some youths have confidence crisis that cannot be ignored. [4] The social confidence of urban youth is not only caused by a single factor, but also caused economy and social environment, etc., at present, the social confidence crisis among young people makes us urgently pay attention to this problem.

## 2. Concept Definition

### 2.1. Youth

The concept of youth was born out of the industrial revolution in the middle of the 18th century; the society had increasingly higher requirements for laborers' production technology and skills, the learning time required to master the skill and major and the preparation period required

to assume the adult role were getting longer and longer, and made youth as a special stage of life development confirmed. It follows that the emergence of the concept of youth is a product of social civilization. The concept of youth is mainly defined by linguistics and scholars:

### **2.1.1. Linguistic Angle**

Linguistics is mainly defined from the angle of age. Youth is the period from 15 to 30 years old. [6] In modern Chinese dictionaries, youth is defined as the period from fifteen to thirty years old, and is people within this age period [6]. The encyclopedia of the Chinese Working Class believes that youth is a period when people gradually mature in physical development, increase their knowledge, gradually form their own world view and outlook on life, and begin to choose occupations and enter into production and work positions, China defines 14 to 28 years old as the youth. [7]

### **2.1.2. Scholars' Views**

The essence of youth is built by society [8]. The concept of youth always reflects the common attributes and relationship of their respective objects, the distinguishing feature of youth is younger age [9]. Scholars mostly conduct research on the essence of youth, and they have not defined the specific age range of youth.

## **2.2. Social Confidence**

Social confidence is the macroscopic social psychological state distributed in the entire society or social group; a comprehensive evaluation and reflection of the public expectations for social development in the future and the resulting behavioral intentions based on the perception of the individual current living conditions. It should be noted that although social confidence is a homogeneous reflection of social individual mentality, it is not a simple summation of individual mentality; it is formed in the process of interaction between individual and society, and has a certain social universality and commonality [10]. Li Hanlin believes that social confidence mainly is people's future expectation and judgment about the national economic and social development situation and other social matters, as well as individual development opportunities, income status and other individual matters [11]. Some scholars simply define social confidence as: social confidence reflects people's attitudes and opinions on the entire society at present and in the future. People's attitudes and evaluation on the whole society, social phenomena and social problems [12]. Social confidence seems to contain a maintained attitude to predict future development prospects from the current state. Social confidence is often the reflection of prediction made based on common sense judgments, because social common sense has commonality in some aspects, this makes different people have a certain commonality in social confidence, however, due to the differences in group characteristics, there must be differences in social confidence.

### **2.3. Social Confidence of Urban Youth**

The social confidence of urban youth does not have such a concept; it is mainly due to the needs of research. This research combines the concepts of youth and social confidence to define social confidence of urban youth as: living in the city, the youth group aged 15-28, based on the current living conditions, a comprehensive evaluation and reflection of the expectations of social development in the future and the behavioral intentions caused by it. It should be noted here that urban youth are not necessarily youth whose household registration is urban, for example, young migrant workers who live in cities for a long time, which also belong to the research object of this study.

### 3. Literature Untangling

There are few studies on youth social confidence; the studies are mainly conducted from five aspects: economy, social environment, social prosperity, class status, and relative deprivation. Moreover, there are few literatures from the theoretical angle, and the academic circle mainly focuses on empirical research at present.

#### 3.1. Conduct Research from the Living Conditions

Living conditions reflect the economic conditions of the main body to a certain extent, it can be said that economic factors have a very important impact on all aspects of society. Especially the impact on people, the market economy is the most important background for the development of contemporary Chinese [13]. Especially the younger generation is just in the deep waters of reforms, and economic development status and social distribution status directly affect their social confidence. The survey conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2005 found that China's Gini coefficient reached 0.5 [14], it suggests that there are serious economic inequalities in China's social distribution, due to the age group of young people, most of them cannot have too many wealth, from a realistic point of view, the youth group is in a lower economic position, so it is bound to be lower in social confidence than groups with more wealth. The paper "Social Confidence and Influencing Factors of Young White-collared Immigrant" can be said to be representative to the research on urban youth's social confidence from the perspective of living conditions. The original data was obtained through the Shanghai New White-collared Life Stress and Social Confidence Questionnaire conducted in 2011, and the factor analysis and logit model was used to find that the social confidence index of Shanghai immigrant urban youth group was low; income and social confidence showed strong positive correlation, namely people with high incomes have higher confidence than people with low incomes; life pressure is largely affected by housing factors, and the economic pressure of self-purchasing houses significantly affects the social confidence of young white-collared immigrants. Compared to other types of white-collar, the social confidence condition of white-collared workers whose house is self-purchasing has obvious advantages; in addition to housing factors, there are also health pressures and traffic factors, etc.

Moreover, some scholars point out that people with high life satisfaction, whose experienced economic injustice is lower and expectations for the future is higher, to a certain extent, it can explain that the personal development opportunities and prospects of this group are more optimistic, this group has higher social confidence. [15] In improving the social confidence of urban youth, some scholars point out that how to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor and build a reasonable social distribution structure is very important, and step up efforts to build urban social welfare, especially the young migrant workers [16].

Urban youth groups include migrant worker youth groups and urban local youths, although both are youth groups, there is still a certain gap, except for factors such as culture and education, there are also certain differences in life pressure, which may lead to social the difference in social confidence. Economic factors have a greater impact on urban youth, but social environmental factors have a greater impact on their social confidence.

#### 3.2. Conduct Research from the Social Environment

Charles Zastrow believes that people face three social environments: the first is microscopic level, which looks like a single individual in the social environment; the second is meso level, mainly are small-scale groups, including families, schools, etc.; the third is macroscopic level, including social culture and social security [17]. Domestic scholars further subdivide the social environment into five categories, natural system, population system, cultural and educational system, economic and political system, social customs and lifestyle system [18], and believe that social environment is an extremely complex system, which always affects the individual

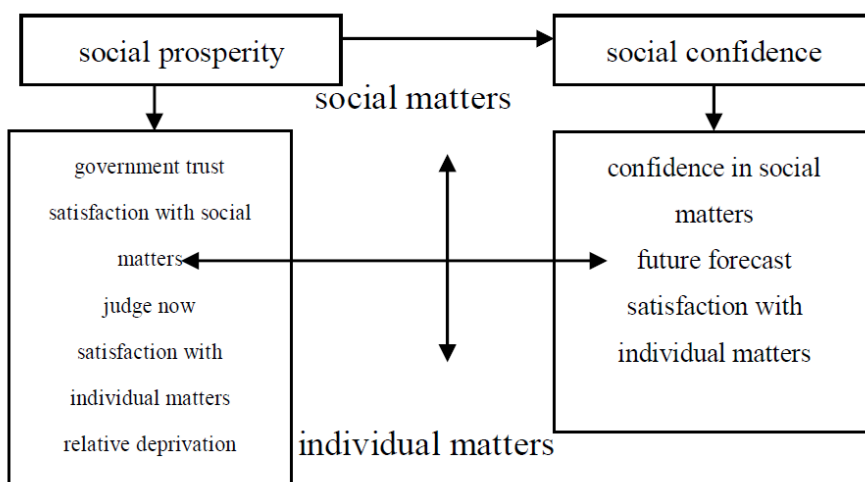
development and cognition. From the sociological perspective, the socialization of people is that people meet social expectations by learning social rules to a certain extent, namely adapting to the social environment. It can be said that the social environment affects people's social confidence to a certain extent.

The paper "Research on the Development Condition of Urban Residents' Social Confidence in the Construction of Harmonious Society" takes the social environment as an introduction, and analyzes the state of people's social confidence at present, the researchers subdivide the social environment into social justice, social integrity, social security, and social problems, education system and many other dimensions. This research adopts the questionnaire method to obtain 13400 samples by tracking the four-year in Shandong Province in 2003. The data found: first, social equity. The social confidence index shows a rising state via several years of data comparison, but the social confidence index is generally low, in addition to objective factors, a sense of injustice caused by urban residents' high expectations is also an important reason; second, social integrity. It can be found from the data analysis from 2003 to 2006 that the social integrity in 2004 was the highest, and there was a certain decline from 2004 to 2006. Moreover, different occupation also has differences in social integrity, among them the trust for teachers is the highest; third, social security. Confidence in social security is increasing year by year, and the proportions of those with a positive attitude towards the social security system are 56.2%, 61.8%, 69.9%, and 70%, respectively, this reflects the gradual improvement of the social security system from the side; fourth, social problems. Social problems mainly include environmental pollution, employment and reemployment, social security, counterfeit, etc. It is found that via research urban residents pay more attention to these social problems, but they are not optimistic about social problems, most people believe that there may be more and more social problems; fifth, education system. Most people believe that the education system is gradually becoming more reasonable and have greater confidence for the education system; however, some people still believe that the current distribution of educational resources is unfair and will affect future development.

The social environment is a complex social system, and there are bound to be many problems, as far as the youth group is concerned, the social environment has a great influence on their development and social confidence, a good social environment is the basis for improving the social confidence of the youth, from the current situation, there are many problems that need to be solved urgently in China. Some scholars point out that education affects the development of youth, but the current situation shows that China has problems such as incoordination of educational content, incoordination of educational ideology, incoordination of carrier operation, and incoordination of supply and demand relationship, etc., this affects the future expectations and future development prospects of the youth group to a certain extent [19].

#### Social prosperity and social confidence

Social prosperity mainly is people's subjective feelings about whether their current social structure environment is good or not and whether it has been improved [20]. Studying social confidence from the perspective of social prosperity is currently a hot topic in domestic research, mainly represented by Li Hanlin and Wei Qingong. Professor Li Hanlin constructively put forward the relationship model of social prosperity and social confidence [21], as follows: It can be seen from the model that both social prosperity and social confidence are explained from social matters and individual matters; social prosperity is mainly the current judgment, mainly the individual cognition for society and self from an objective perspective, while social confidence is future prediction based on the social prosperity; the model shows that social confidence is predicted based on the social prosperity, it can be said that the social prosperity affects social confidence to a certain extent.



**Fig 1.** The relationship model of social prosperity and social confidence

People make expectation based on the social prosperity degree at present, when the expectation is realized, their social confidence can be increased, but when the expectation does not reach; their social confidence will decrease [22], as follows:

**Table 1.** The relationship between the degree of social prosperity and the realization of goals

social prosperity degree	expectation	realization degree	reality judgment	social confidence
	increase	unchanged	lower	
satisfaction	unchanged	weaken	lower	lower
	increase	increase slowly	lower	
	increase	unchanged	increase	
relative deprivation	unchanged	weaken	increase	lower
	increase	increase slowly	increase	
	increase	unchanged	lower	
trust toward government	unchanged	weaken	lower	lower
	increase	increase slowly	lower	

It can be seen from the table that expectation, realization degree, and reality judgment largely affect the increase and lowering of social confidence. It can be said that social confidence should not only consider the current situation, but also the actual development state of the future social economy. The expectation, realization degree of and realistic judgment affect this social confidence to varying degrees.

Zhang Yan and Li Hanlin believe that a well-developed society should be a prosperous society, and it should also be a society where people have good expectation and confidence for the future. It is found that China's social prosperity and social confidence index are relatively high via research, people generally have high expectation for the future and are confident for the future.

Li Hanlin divided social prosperity and social confidence into three levels in "Research on Paying Attention to and Strengthening Social Prosperity and Social Confidence", 0-33 means "poor", 33-66 means "fair", and 66-100 means "good", according to actual surveys, China's current social prosperity index is 63 and the social confidence index is 75, people have good expectation for future development. Li Hanlin believes that although the social prosperity and social confidence index is relatively high, we should systematically and long-term track and study the social prosperity and social confidence of our country. [23] We should pay attention

to the study of social confidence as much as social prosperity, and build a long-term and dynamic social confidence monitoring mechanism.

### 3.3. Conduct Research from the Perspective of Class Status

Sun Liping believes that the social class in our country is in a breaking period, the connection of various classes is reduced, and the identity of the same class is strengthened [24]. There are certain commonalities in the cognition of different classes and social environments are similar, so there are also certain commonalities in social confidence. Some scholars point out that in cities; the number of urban residents who identify with the middle class is relatively small, while most of them identify with the middle and lower classes and the lower class, most youth groups identify with the lower classes in society and have lower social confidence indexes. [25]. In the research of "Youth's Class Status Confidence and Its Influencing Factors", the researchers found that the social confidence of the youth group is low, but there are also significant differences within the youth. There are also three types of social classes within youths, current class status, such as education level and professional status, constitute the objective basis for urban youth's confidence in individual matters in the future. Specifically, urban youth with higher education level, higher income level, and higher occupational level mean that the current class status is higher, usually; they have relatively high expectation and confidence for the future development of the individual. However, youth groups with lower education levels lower income level, and lower occupational levels (such as young migrant workers) are unclear for social development, their future expectation is lower, and self-confidence is lower, then their social confidence is low.

The youth group is an important force of the stability of our society. Lei Kaichun believes that if we want to continue to maintain the confidence of youth's class status, we are not only vigilant at class solidification and polarization, but also strengthen fair social competition environment.

### 3.4. Relative Deprivation and Social Confidence

Relative deprivation is the gap between people's expectation and actual gains, especially the negative emotions caused by comparison with the reference object. The relative deprivation is not absolute deprivation, but comparison result, it is manifested in social development and changes at a deep level. People's relative deprivation is affected by the social macroscopic environment, and once they think that they are weaker than the reference object, they will have relative deprivation. Relative deprivation affects social confidence to a large extent.

Some scholars analyze the relative deprivation from the perspective of social class, the middle and lower classes in society often compare economic and social status with the upper class, resulting in relative deprivation, this relative deprivation reflects social injustice and social differentiation to a certain extent. Some scholars point out that due to the stability of the social structure, people who have strong deprivation experience may maintain pessimistic attitude for a certain period of time. Youth group is often people with a strong deprivation, this type of group has stronger comparative psychology, but the actual socio-economic status is lower, when comparing with groups with higher socio-economic status, this type of deprivation is often strongest, which affects the social confidence of this group to a certain extent. "The Status Quo of Social Confidence of Urban Youth and Its Influencing Factors" is a study on urban youth in Shanghai, the research data shows that the social confidence index of urban youth is low, especially young migrant workers; Shanghai is a city with a strong deprivation, especially the economic status, this kind of deprivation experience is an important reason for the low social confidence of urban youth.

Moreover, in "Social Prosperity and Social Confidence in the Process of Development-Concept, Scale and Index Construction", it simply mentions the social confidence condition generated by the relative deprivation through expectation, realization degree, and reality judgments, the

following three situations will cause social confidence to be low: when the expectation rises, the realization degree is unchanged, when the reality judgment rises, social confidence will decrease; when the expectation is unchanged, the realization degree is weakened, and when the reality judgment rises, social confidence will lower; when the expectation rises, the realization degree slow grows, and social confidence will lower when reality judgment rises. As follows:

**Table 2.** The relationship between social expectation and goal realization

social prosperity degree	expectation	realization degree	reality judgment	social confidence
	increase	unchanged	enhance	
relative deprivation	unchanged	weaken	enhance	lower
	increase	increase slowly	enhance	

#### 4. Research Review

Judging from the few literatures currently, the author consulted CNKI and found that there are only 20 papers on social confidence. The main characteristics in a small amount of literature are: focus on studies on socioeconomic status, social environment, etc., has seen some major factors affecting social confidence, and reveal the essential significance of social confidence to a certain extent; moreover, most studies are mainly empirical research, expound the connotation of social confidence from the empirical angle; the existing studies mainly focus on the macroscopic level, predict the social confidence index from the macroscopic perspective, and grasp the overall trend of social confidence.

However, as far as current studies are concerned, there are still some shortcomings, which are mainly manifested in the following two aspects: first, there is less exploration on the significance of social capital for future confidence other expectation; the social capital here mainly is interpersonal relationships, social networks, etc., interpersonal relationship is also a very important factor in the youth group, which has a certain impact on their social confidence; second, as far as the research objects are concerned, there is few studies on the social confidence of urban youth, and there may be shortcomings in the studies on the social confidence of urban youth. In the existing literatures, there is few involved in the classification and analysis of youth group, because there are still certain differences within the youth group, such as young migrant workers and local youth in the city, and there is a lack of internal comparative analysis; third, the existing research largely focuses on empirical research, and lacks the theoretical exploration of social confidence; fourth, pays attention to the studies on social confidence at the macroscopic level, there is insufficient studies on social confidence at the meso-micro level, while exploring the forecast of social confidence at the macroscopic level, we should strengthen the studies on the social confidence contents of a certain aspect in a certain group of society, and it is conducive to study, solve and reflect substantive and effective problems.

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