

# Social capital of students and faculty as a resource for improving the quality of education

## Capital social de estudiantes y profesores como recurso para mejorar la calidad de la educación

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#### ABSTRACT:

The article reveals the nature of formation of the social capital of students and faculty members under the conditions of their interaction in the process of educational and personal communication as a resource to improve the quality of education. Positive and negative aspects of the impact of social capital on the personal and professional development of students and faculty members were identified. The expediency of joint communication for students and faculty members, the student body and the teacher body was quantified. The article also characterizes the degree of trust that develops between the students and teachers. The degree of willingness of students and teachers to assist each other in the field of educational and extracurricular activities is assessed. The main mechanisms of the formation of social capital are outlined: a constantly ongoing resolution of conflicts in the process of educational and extracurricular communication given the existing level of trust between students and faculty and the willingness to provide mutual assistance.

**Keywords:** Social capital, trust, mutual assistance, expediency of communication, students and faculty.

#### RESUMEN:

El artículo revela la naturaleza de la formación del capital social de los estudiantes y miembros de la facultad bajo las condiciones de su interacción en el proceso de comunicación educativa y personal como un recurso para mejorar la calidad de la educación. Se identificaron los aspectos positivos y negativos del impacto del capital social en el desarrollo personal y profesional de los estudiantes y miembros de la facultad. Se cuantificó la conveniencia de la comunicación conjunta para estudiantes y miembros de la facultad, el cuerpo estudiantil y el cuerpo docente. El artículo también caracteriza el grado de confianza que se desarrolla entre los estudiantes y los profesores. Se evalúa el grado de disposición de los estudiantes y los profesores para ayudarse mutuamente en el campo de las actividades educativas y extracurriculares. Se describen los principales mecanismos de formación del capital social: una resolución constante de los conflictos en el proceso de comunicación educativa y extracurricular dado el nivel existente de confianza entre los estudiantes y el profesorado y la disposición a proporcionar asistencia mutua.

**Palabras clave:** capital social, confianza, asistencia mutua, conveniencia de la comunicación, estudiantes y facultad.

# 1. Introduction

At the present time, there exists a need to optimize the quality of students' education in modern universities. However, the process of improving the quality of education is hindered by an inefficient use by the students of their intangible assets - such assets as are covered by the concept of social capital which includes purposeful or expedient communication, trust and mutual support.

At the same time, students and even their university teachers treat their educational and extracurricular communication unidirectionally, that is without taking into account the degree of mutual understanding. As a rule, students and university teachers do not fully trust each other and not only in private but also in educational matters which negatively affects the development of their social capital. A relatively small number of students feel trust in their teachers but many even find it difficult to tell if they are willing to trust and help each other. Often, students believe in the powers and duty of teachers to assist them in solving their educational and extra-curricular issues while teachers rarely expect any help from the students. In other words, the majority of students do not have experience in the formation of social capital in their university or their social capital is small. At the same time, university teachers have some opportunities for the development of social capital, the capacity to trust and to ensure mutual support and assistance but do not fully use such opportunities. However, the question of the formation of joint social capital can and should be addressed by students and their university teachers. It is for these reasons that it is now important to determine and to identify trends in the development of social capital among students and university teachers (faculty).

At the present time, the relevance of the social capital concept is determined by the following circumstances. Firstly, according to research into the Scottish youth for the past 40 years by Ianelli and Paterson (2005), professional success of students will increasingly depend on the development of their communication skills and their social capital. Secondly, support for the civil and social activity depends on the ability to build interpersonal and intergroup trust relationships (Aguilar and Sen 2009). Thirdly, not always sufficient attention is focused on mutual assistance in the educational environment (Lin 2005). Consequently, educational leaders need to better understand this type of interaction.

The concept of social capital in modern scientific literature is very multifaceted. To a large extent, research into the value of social capital in the educational process is related to the well-known concept of J. Coleman (1994, 2000), one of the provisions of which is that the learning process becomes more efficient thanks to the establishment of positive interpersonal and intergroup relationships between students and their university teachers, their focus on a high level of mutual trust and respect. In this case, it is assumed that there is not only the authority of the teacher recognized by the student but there is also the authority of the student to be recognized by the teacher. However, according to R. Putnam (1996), social capital is defined not only by trust but also and rather more by the presence of social networks understood as interpersonal communication which can also be called a civil commitment. In this way, the more a person communicates and connects with other people, the more they increase their mutual trust. Social capital may also be defined as the ability to get access to the benefits based on membership in a group (Portes 1998). Thus, students must quickly grasp that there are opportunities to benefit from the trust and constructive interaction with their university teacher and classmates. Another approach may be to describe social capital as the impact of one's own social position which in the future will facilitate or hinder the acquisition of human capital (physical assets, education and skills) (Loury, 1977, pp. 175, 176). Yet, social capital should rather be defined as a sum total of trust, cooperation and social networking (Paldam, 2000). It is in this aspect that the concept of social capital can be more easily applied to study the interaction of students and university teachers during educational and extracurricular communication. Despite the fact that social capital remains a widely debatable concept (Hunter, 2006), in theoretical and empirical studies it can provide the leadership of universities and practicing educators with a conceptual understanding of social processes taking place in the student environment and to

help identify potential areas of improvement for individual and collective well-being.

Sources of social capital, although quite varied, show at the same time a certain similarity within the different scientific approaches. A study by Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) proposed a clear distinction between the sources of origin of social capital and the results of its impact. In that study it is stressed that social capital comes not only from altruistic but also from instrumental sources aimed at the interchange of services. They recognize the following four sources of the origin of social capital: the internalization of values, transactions of mutual nature, forms of collective solidarity (trust), imposed negative or positive sanctions. Which to some extent coincides with the three forms and sources of social capital according to J. Coleman: obligations and expectations which depend on the reliability of the social environment; information flow social structure opportunities and norms accompanied by sanctions (1990 p. 98).

Social capital helps both individual students and teachers and also collectives of students and teachers to evolve and improve. Since it is believed that the formation of social capital is not only important for the individual but also for the specific group and the organization as a whole (Donati 2014). The process of formation of social capital starts from the interpersonal interaction between specific individuals and groups and then starting to spread throughout the organization as a whole (Putnam, 2000). Social relations are conduits of information and interpersonal trust which can lead to an increase in the positive results of cooperation both for students and teachers themselves and for the university as an organization (Leana and Pil, 2006). In this way, we can assume that the successful development of the social capital of students and their university teachers will increase the social capital of the entire university which will be manifested in a steadily improving quality of education.

Social capital presupposes the effective interaction of students and teaching faculty members in the process of an *expedient communication*. According to the approach of P. Bourdieu, the copying and development of social capital requires a continuous effort ("sociability") and a permanent reproduction of contacts in which the mutual recognition of members of the group is re-affirmed and which supports interpersonal trust and solidarity within the group (Bourdieu, p. 104). From this it follows then that one of the major parts of social capital that supports and consolidates the results of its development is a process of continuing communication primarily serving the goals of the communicating parties. However, students are capable of varying degrees of purposeful communication with the teacher and, as a consequence, of varying degrees of interpersonal and inter-group trust and mutual assistance which affects their ability to achieve an optimal degree of social capital development.

Social capital is mainly expressed in the achievement of a certain degree of interpersonal and intergroup *trust*. Since trust is a separate concept and can be both a source of social capital and its result (Nooteboom, 2007). Social capital assumes that the more often a person interacts and communicates with others, the more their level of mutual trust is likely to increase (Putnam, 1996). As a result, trust should serve as only one of the several components of social capital, although a fundamental one. Thus, trust simultaneously creates and strengthens social capital and therefore should be viewed in conjunction with a degree of readiness of students and teachers to establish purposeful communication and mutual assistance in solving the educational and extra-curricular issues. Possession of only interpersonal trust without the willingness to engage in communication, mutual assistance and concessions does not really mean a developed social capital.

Social capital can be characterized by willingness of students and teachers to provide each other with *mutual assistance* not only in educational but also in extra-curricular activities. According to R. Putnam (1993), social capital is formed at the expense of the features of social organization, such as the level of trust, norms and networks that can improve the effectiveness of the community by facilitating coordinated activities. At the same time research by Sampson et al. (1997) indicates a close relationship between the concepts of social capital and collective efficacy. It underlines the high importance of trust and a common willingness of community members to involve themselves in the completion of projects and to provide mutual assistance (Bandura 1997, p. 477). Studies show that it is

not enough to just have the social capital (whether it be on the level of an individual or on the collective level) in order to achieve established goals, what you need is to have an independent and collective effectiveness. In other words, members of a group may have a high level of trust and solidarity and, consequently, a high level of social capital but only the willingness to render each other mutual assistance is in fact the link between their social capital and real social activities. One of the main approaches for the effective development of social capital is the creation of common definitive beliefs and attitudes shared by students and university teachers focused on mutual cooperation (Halpern, 2005). Since a university is a highly regularized organization bound by general corporate and educational values, this fact contributes to the development of a strong sense of common interests and solidarity. And the common beliefs that arise in the course of study and work at the university, in turn, are critical for the development of social capital (Portes, 1998).

While the positive impact of social capital on the formation of the individual and the group is expected in most cases, attention has also been repeatedly drawn to the objective dark sides of social capital (Woolcock 1998). Whereas the positive effects include the benefits of participation and compliance with accepted norms, at the same time there are negative consequences: social control, increase of the "free rider problem", a high emotional burden on the more successful people and the suppression of individuality (Portes and Landolt 1996). In addition, there is still uncertainty as to whether social capital is a fully independent and autonomous variable with unique features or whether it is derived from other social phenomena (Koniordos 2008). Overall, although social capital does not have a completely unequivocal influence, it tends to contribute to the quality of education rather than the opposite.

Thus, this author's concept of *social capital* can be interpreted as one of the main resources to improve the quality of the educational process that helps both individual students and teachers and collectives of students and teachers in general to communicate effectively in the appropriate communication and that manifests itself in achieving a certain degree of trust and willingness to provide each other with mutual assistance in the field of educational and extracurricular activities.

The following scientific hypothesis was put forward: achieving the optimal development of the social capital of students and their university teachers, the student and faculty collectives finds its expression in the pursuit of expedient communication, in increasing trust and the willingness to provide mutual support and strengthen mutual credibility in the academic and extracurricular area and has a positive effect on raising the quality and efficiency of education at the university.

To validate this hypothesis this research has its aim in identifying the nature of the formation of social capital of students and teachers as the main resource to improve the quality of education based on their own assessments of the current system of communication, trust and mutual support.

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## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Method**

In this study we used a sociological survey method to obtain information about the field of consciousness of students and university teachers (faculty): regarding their opinion - whether the existing system of interaction between students and teachers is suitable for the task of developing social capital. Personal assessments of the importance of communication, trust and mutual assistance in the field of educational and extracurricular activities between a collective of students and a collective of teachers were studied.

For comparison and statistical analysis of the results were used non-parametric tests of two independent samplings as the values of the variables in this case did not obey the normal distribution law. To compare two groups of students of the first and fourth year of study and for the pairwise comparison of them with a group of teachers, we used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Mann and Whitney U-test. For the re-examination of differences

between the observed groups we applied a method of comparing K-independent samplings using the Kruskal-Wallis test.

For practical reasons there are three limitations in the analysis: 1) the study was carried out in one university; 2) as a whole, the study was conducted at the micro- and meso-level of analysis, i.e., social capital was studied only at the interpersonal and intergroup level; 3) one sociological measurement was carried out which gives an idea of the situation at one particular moment of time.

## 2.2. Questionnaire

A questionnaire containing 60 questions was developed for the implementation of the research objectives. In developing the questionnaire we took into account the main components of the concept of social capital by J. Coleman (1988): trust, communications and support. Structurally the questionnaire consisted of 6 sections covering the problems of the expediency of communication between the student and the teacher, the degree of trust between the student and the teacher, questions of willingness to provide mutual assistance. Also the questionnaire had 6 sections aimed at studying issues related to the interaction of a student collective with a collective of teachers. Each section contained questions about the main components of social capital which allowed to understand the personal assessment by students and teachers of processes of their interaction at the university.

## 2.3. Respondents

To participate in the study were invited students in the first and fourth years at the Department of Business of the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics. In total, 250 students were surveyed (125 students of the first year and 125 fourth-year students) constituting 52% of the total number of students at the department and 86 university teachers making up 43% of the total number of teachers engaged in educational activity in the department. The choice of this university educational program was due primarily to the fact that this group of students should develop an understanding of the special importance of interpersonal and inter-group trust and mutual assistance in the process of entrepreneurial activity and running own businesses.

The age spread among the students ranged from 17 to 24 years, the average age of the respondents was 19.4 years. The age spread among the university teachers ranged from 29 to 64 years, the average age of the respondents was 43.8 years. The national-ethnic character of the study was quite diverse: representatives of difference ethnicities and nationalities took part in the survey (Russians (76%), Ukrainians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Georgians, Dagestanis, Tajiks, Tatars, Mongols, Vietnamese) and of different religions (most were Christians (69 %), Muslims (25%), Buddhists - (1%)). The gender factor of the study was as follows: 61% of the respondents were female while 39% were male).

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## 3. Results

The analysis of the responses received showed a statistically significant difference between the group of first-year students and the group of fourth-year students ( $p < 0.001$ ). Also, there was a statistically significant difference between the first-year and fourth-year students, on the one hand, and the group of teachers, on the other ( $p < 0.001$ ). This fact confirms the assumption that social capital tends to fluctuate significantly over time (Schuller, 2007). At the same time there are few perfect groups -- such groups where absolutely all members share the same common standards and do not make references to various other notions. There is thus not only heterogeneity inherent in the different age groups of students but also within each group there are different patterns of behavior and of the development of the individual social capital.

At the same time, no statistically significant differences were found between the two groups of teachers with experience of less than 3 and more than 10 years of work at the University ( $p = 0.636$ ). In this case, we can say that, although in some issues teachers with different

work experience may show differing opinions, the level of their social capital, their desire for communication, their trust of students and their mutual readiness remain about the same. Therefore, the indices of optimal understanding by the student and the teacher of personal and extracurricular information (Table 1) are characterized by the following generalizations. In personal communication, students and teachers are as a rule guided by spiritual values. An overwhelming majority of students and teachers do not believe that social status can restrict their communication. Most teachers do not accept the use of profanity while more than half of the students do not object to its use in personal communication. Classroom facilities were viewed by the students and teachers as the most comfortable place of direct communication.

**Table 1**  
Indicators of optimum understanding of personal and out-of-class information by students and professors.

		<b>Students</b>	<b>Professors</b>
Compliance of information with values	Financial, %	9	2
	Spiritual, %	49	56
	Family, %	8	5
	Prestige, %	8	5
	Others, %	7	2
	Don't influence, %	19	30
Influence of status on communication	Status has influence, %	23	7
	Status doesn't have influence, %	71	91
	Cannot say, %	6	2
Respect of communication boundaries	Exists in communication, %	72	77
	Doesn't exist in communication, %	18	15
	Cannot say, %	10	8
Use of obscene vocabulary	Unacceptable in personal communication, %	44	95
	Acceptable but not much, %	49	5
	Acceptable in personal communication, %	7	0
Environment	In a classroom, %	54	61

Indicators of optimum understanding of academic information that affect the meaningfulness of communication in the communication space between the student and the teacher (Table 2) are reflected in the following observations.

First-year students are willing to spend their own time on self-study of information on

theoretical questions received from an academic opponent with a significant portion of them believing that they are interested in any type of information received from the teachers. Conversely, fourth-year students are more focused on obtaining information on practical issues. In academic communication more than half of the students say that the presence of unfamiliar terms makes it more difficult to understand academic information while for teachers it is not a problem which is likely related to their professional skills.

**Table 2**  
Indicators of optimum understanding of academic information by students and professors.

		<b>Students</b>	<b>Professors</b>
Readiness to deepen your knowledge yourself	Ready, %	74	83
	Not ready, %	16	7
	Cannot say, %	10	10
Difficulty with unfamiliar terms	Terms are difficult, %	53	36
	Are not difficult if there are not many of them, %	40	20
	Don't influence communication, %	7	44
Impact of distortion of scientific reality	Prevents communication, %	70	53
	Does not prevent if it is not significant, %	23	20
	Does not influence communication, %	7	25
Preferred type of information	Theoretical, %	2	15
	Practical, %	73	3
	Any, %	25	82
Impact of violation of logics on communication	Prevents communication, %	77	38
	Has insignificant impact, %	17	51
	Does not influence communication, %	6	11

Indicators that reflect the compliance of the teacher's appearance with the ideal teacher image developed by students and the teacher appearance criteria influencing the level of personal trust between the student and the teacher (Table 3) can be characterized by the following observations.

Particularly interesting is the fact that, in determining the credibility of a person, the majority of students and teachers do not attach particular importance to clothing style, to the state of footwear or to the availability and status of gadgets and hairstyles. Therefore, it is manners of behavior that largely determine the trust that students or teachers have towards their interlocutor.

**Table 3**

Indicators showing compliance of professors' and students' appearance with the ideal image and its influence on mutual trust.

		<b>Students</b>	<b>Professors</b>
Clothes	Dressed in a similar way, %	11	10
	Fashionably dressed, %	17	0
	Doesn't influence trust, %	72	90
Hairstyle	Beard and moustache, %	8	0
	Clean-shaven, %	11	2
	Ordinary haircut, %	25	13
	Unconventional haircut, %	4	2
	Doesn't influence trust, %	52	83
Footwear	Similar shoes, %	7	10
	Fashionable shoes, %	10	0
	Doesn't influence trust, %	83	90
Mobile devices	Have complicated devices, %	32	0
	Have popular expensive devices, %	15	5
	Have simple cheap devices, %	3	5
	Doesn't use devices, %	0	5
	Doesn't influence trust, %	50	85
Manners	Manners influence trust, %	78	74
	Manners influence only in personal communication, %	7	3
	Doesn't influence trust, %	8	15
	Cannot say, %	7	8

Indicators that reflect a professional tactfulness in communication and that influence the level of trust between the student and the university teacher in the academic process (Table 4) can be characterized by the following generalizations.

The greatest degree of trust in the course of study is generated by the use of personal experiences and humor by students and their university teachers. Students and teachers believe that the understandability of the examples greatly facilitates the process of learning and understanding complex information. The most trust of students and university teachers is earned by academic opponents capable of expressing valid debatable but not conflict-



provoking arguments.

**Table 4**

Indicators of professional etiquette in student-professor communication at university.

		Students	Professors
Implementation of personal experience	Is trustworthy, %	66	63
	Is not trustworthy, %	14	12
	Cannot say, %	20	25
Humor	Is trustworthy, %	89	83
	Is not trustworthy, %	6	7
	Cannot say, %	5	10
Clear examples	Yes, if it results in more complicated information, %	44	45
	Yes, if the audience requires that, %	29	18
	Is not trustworthy, %	4	12
	Cannot say, %	23	25
Trust when the idea is of conflicting nature	Student capable of a discussion, %	57	76
	Student capable of a conflicting discussion, %	7	5
	Student able to refrain from discussions, %	10	5
	None of the abovementioned, %	8	10
	Cannot say, %	18	4

Indicators that reflect personal mutual support in extra-curricular activities between the student and the university teacher (Table 5) are summarized in the following.

About half of the students and the vast majority of university teachers are ready to render each other mutual personal assistance despite the difference in social status. At the same time more than half of the students said that they had no experience of providing such assistance or support. Also, as opposed to teachers, for a large part of students mutual support or assistance is not the main value in life. However, most of the students are willing to use personal relationships to assist their university teachers.

**Table 5**

Indicators of out-of-class mutual help between a student and a professor.

		Students	Professors
Willingness to help	Yes, in spite of a different social status, %	52	75

	No, because of a different social status, %	9	0
	Are not ready to help, %	19	5
	Cannot say, %	20	20
Experience in helping others	Have experience, %	28	68
	Don't have experience, %	55	12
	Experience only in academic matters, %	17	20
Family	Brought-up in a two-parent family, %	70	-
	Brought-up in a one-parent family, %	21	-
	Small age gap with parents, %	6	-
	Culture is different form Russian culture, %	3	-
Help as a value	Yes, %	14	75
	No, %	59	7
	Cannot say, %	27	21
Using personal relations for help	Yes, %	43	52
	No, %	34	10
	Cannot say, %	13	38

Indicators that reflect mutual assistance between the student and the university teacher in the academic process (Table 6) are characterized by the following conclusions.

More than half of the students and teachers accept overtime studying of academic subjects but only on their own initiative. Quite a significant number of students and university teachers are ready to use instructional time to provide personal assistance. In general, fourth-year students exhibited a much greater readiness to provide personal assistance to teachers than first-year students even if it led to a violation of accepted standards of corporate behavior.

**Table 6**  
Indicators of mutual help between a student and a professor at university.

		Students	Professors
Ready for extra classes	Yes, if it's on your own initiative, %	59	57
	Yes, if it's the initiative of the other party, %	6	10
	Yes, if it's the initiative of the administration, %	1	0

	Yes, if it's free, %	25	20
	Not ready, %	6	3
	Cannot say, %	3	10
Using academic time to help others	Ready to use, %	36	60
	Not ready to use, %	22	20
	Cannot say, %	42	20
Violate corporate regulations to help others	Ready to help, %	27	23
	Not ready to help, %	45	54
	Cannot say, %	28	23
Loss of respect as a result of helping others	Ready, %	20	10
	Not ready, %	32	65
	Cannot say, %	48	25

The degree of understanding of personal information that affects the expediency of communication in the communication space between the university teacher collective and the student collective (Table 7) is characterized by the following observations.

University teachers either never or very rarely use the student collective to deal with personal issues. The vast number of the final year students believe that they have no experience in the transmission of non-academic information on behalf of a group to the faculty. As a rule, students and teachers believe that communication between the student collective and the university teacher collective (faculty) should be based on the proximity of views and values. Interestingly enough, the view of the fourth-year students was that the overall performance of their study group had no effect on the personal relationships with their university teachers. But first-year students and the teachers themselves believe that such a relationship does exist. Most of the students and teachers do not believe that collective sympathies of the student and teacher groups influence the resolution of extracurricular issues.

**Table 7**

Indicators of optimum understanding of personal information by a group of students and academic staff.

		Students	Professors
Involving students for the solution of nonacademic problems	Often, %	5	0
	Sometimes, %	10	7
	Rarely, %	35	46
	Never, %	50	47
Experience of accepting	Has positive impact, %	39	85

information	Has negative impact, %	9	3
	No experience of out-of-class communication, %	52	12
Compliance of views	Communication based on common values, %	73	73
	Communication based on different values, %	8	12
	Cannot say, %	19	15
Influence of academic progress on out-of-class activities	Yes, such dependence exists, %	27	42
	Yes but such dependence does not exist, %	21	20
	There is no dependence, %	52	38
Group fellow-feelings in nonacademic matters	Yes, such dependence exists, %	25	33
	Yes but such dependence does not exist, %	30	18
	There is no dependence, %	45	49

The degree of understanding of academic information that affects the meaningfulness of communication in the communication space between the university teacher collective and the student collective (Table 8) is characterized by the following observations.

As a rule, students and teachers believe that, in academic communication, either formal channels of communication of information are effective or the type of channel doesn't matter. In contrast to the fourth-year students, about half of the first year students and teachers find that, in dealing with educational issues within the student and teacher groups, they are trying to take into account academic and professional workload. Very interesting is the willingness of almost half of the first-year students and the majority of the teachers to participate in the development and testing of new learning technologies and in promoting research in this area. About half of the students of all years said that the collective of their study group is ready to independently make concessions and to smooth out conflicts between their individual members and teachers.

**Table 8**

Indicators showing optimum understanding of academic information by a group of students and professors in the course of studies.

		Students	Professors
Use of communication channels to solve academic problems	Official channels are effective, %	39	57
	Unofficial communication channels are effective, %	20	5
	Doesn't influence, %	41	38
Comparison of task complexity	Is taken into account, %	40	46
	Is not taken into account, %	23	10
	Cannot say, %	37	44

Aim to introduce innovative technology at university	Positive, %	45	78
	Negative, %	7	0
	This aim is not relevant, %	33	5
	Cannot say, %	15	20
Aim to resolve conflicts	Positive, %	48	70
	Negative, %	10	0
	This aim is not relevant, %	24	15
	Cannot say, %	18	15

Indicators related to the use of IT-technologies affecting the degree of trust between the student and faculty collectives (Table 9) can be reduced to the following conclusions.

The greatest confidence in the three-quarters of the students and the teachers is inspired by the use of multimedia software in academic activities and the use by academic opponents of the Internet as a means of communication. At the same time, quite a considerable part of the students and teachers believe that the current level of development of gadgets and the duration of interaction with the gadget has a positive effect on inter-group trust.

**Table 9**

Indicators showing students' and professors' attitude to the level of IT utilization.

		Students	Professors
Multimedia based lectures	Influences trust, %	75	82
	Doesn't influence trust, %	17	3
	Cannot say, %	8	15
Number of devices	Positive, %	38	28
	Negative, %	10	5
	Doesn't influence trust, %	52	67
State-of-the-art devices	Positive, %	48	23
	Negative, %	7	5
	Doesn't influence trust, %	45	72
Using the Internet as a means of communication	Influences trust, %	75	49
	Doesn't influence trust, %	10	20
	Cannot say, %	15	31

Interaction with a device per unit of time	Positive, %	41	41
	Negative, %	12	10
	Cannot say, %	47	49

Indicators of the acquisition by the student body of applied knowledge and of the satisfaction of teachers from the student use of this knowledge influencing the degree of trust between the student group and faculty (Table 10) are defined by the following statements.

First-year students and teachers accept any proposal regarding the choice of learning style, whereas the fourth-year students are more trusting of a practically oriented training. Compliance with the established traditions of the university in every-day activities influences confidence levels and almost all teachers are convinced that the observance of this condition establishes the trust between them and the student body. The vast majority of students are willing to have more trust in teachers if the latter treat them as colleagues. At the same time, teachers find it difficult to clearly describe the students as their partners in academic activities. Public (media) exposure of a teacher or a student significantly influences mutual confidence in the academic process in a positive way.

**Table 10**

Indicators showing the acquisition of practical knowledge by students and the satisfaction of professors from the fact that students implement this knowledge

		Students	Professors
Commitment to theoretical teaching style	Request of theoretical teaching style is trustworthy, %	16	10
	Request of practical teaching style is trustworthy, %	29	3
	Any request is trustworthy, %	30	62
	Cannot say, %	25	25
University traditions in academic practice	Influences trust, %	42	90
	Doesn't influence trust, %	39	0
	Cannot say, %	19	10
Treating professors/students as colleagues	Influences trust, %	67	15
	Doesn't influence trust, %	12	25
	Cannot say, %	21	60
Media level of professors and students in a discipline	Influences trust, %	42	67
	Doesn't influence trust, %	32	18
	Cannot say, %	26	15

Indicators that reflect the mutual assistance between the student body and faculty as a whole outside of the academic process (Table 11) are summarized in the following statements.

Final-year students do not consider their study group to be cohesive enough to solve the extra-curricular problems of the faculty body. The body of first-year students exhibits the most positive attitude to extracurricular classes with teachers. Students, especially those in the fourth year of study, believe that students have little or no connection with their university teachers even in dealing with educational issues. Whereas most teachers found it difficult to say whether there existed any such connection at all. In contrast to the fourth-year students and teachers, first-year students are ready to provide assistance to teachers and students in spite of their actions of a negative character. Most of the students and teachers said that the provision of mutual assistance significantly influenced their reputation outside of the relevant collective.

**Table 11**  
Indicators of mutual help between a group  
of students and professors out-of-class.

		Students	Professors
Group cohesion	Influences mutual help, %	34	48
	Doesn't influence mutual help, %	26	3
	Group cohesion doesn't exist, %	24	0
	Cannot say, %	16	49
Attitude to out-of-class activities	Positive, %	32	54
	Negative, %	25	5
	Cannot say, %	43	41
Connection of students and professors out of the faculty	Exists, %	13	28
	Doesn't exist, %	61	10
	Cannot say, %	26	62
Willingness to help solving problems despite academic misconduct	Willing in any case, %	27	23
	Willing if there's no academic misconduct, %	21	25
	Not ready, %	27	5
	Cannot say, %	25	47
Respect of academic staff out-of-class	Exists, %	45	31
	Doesn't exist, %	21	25
	Cannot say, %	34	44

Indicators that reflect mutual assistance between the student collective and faculty in the educational process (Table 12) can be characterized by the following statements.

The vast majority of students and faculty approve the application of the system of rewards developed at the university and believe that it facilitates mutual assistance. The most important aspect to the faculty, as opposed to the collective of students of all years, is the desire to study the traditions of the university and to participate in the development of such traditions. More than half of the teachers are willing to use their private extracurricular time for research work with the students while only a relatively small number of students are ready to take this step. For the sake of mutual convenience and effectiveness of assimilation of information, the teachers and students are ready to review and re-draft study plans.

**Table 12**  
Indicators showing willingness to help between a group of students and professors in the course of the academic progress.

		Students	Professors
System of academic incentives	Influences mutual help, %	77	77
	Doesn't influence mutual help, %	10	3
	Cannot say, %	13	20
Possibility to use support staff in your own interests	Influences mutual help, %	30	59
	Doesn't influence mutual help, %	51	5
	Cannot say, %	19	36
Formation of university traditions	Influences mutual help, %	27	85
	Doesn't influence mutual help, %	57	5
	Cannot say, %	16	10
Readiness to use out-of-class time for research activities	Influences mutual help, %	32	52
	Doesn't influence mutual help, %	40	7
	Cannot say, %	28	41
Willingness of a group to restructure the curriculum	Influences mutual help, %	50	47
	Doesn't influence mutual help, %	27	15
	Cannot say, %	23	38

## 4. Discussion

Our study is a social survey of Russian students and teachers regarding their personal views on the issues affecting the expediency of communication, the existing level of trust and mutual assistance within collectives of students and teachers and provides subsequent analysis of the survey results in line with the primary objective of the study.

In the previous section ("Results"), we presented and systematized in table form the



statistical data based on the results of the survey of students and teachers. Analysis of the data thus obtained allowed us to describe the following findings and to formulate the main conclusions of our study:

1. *Expediency of communication.* In the course of the study, during comparison of the responses of students of the first and the fourth year, we revealed that the first-year students had a more strongly expressed preference for such indicator as a general desire for expedient communication with teachers. In this way, with regard to the issue of willingness to expand information received from the teacher and the willingness to provide assistance, despite the difference in social status, a negative trend can be traced in answers given by fourth-year students (Table 2). This process can be viewed as one of the manifestations of the ambiguous effects of social capital (Portes 1998). High social pressure on students who have studied in the same group for four years is manifested less in a desire to excel academically and more in a desire to exploit the accumulated social capital. Thus, senior students have less desire to study academic information provided by the teachers and, as a result, less orientation towards expedient communication with the teacher.

It is believed that the presence of a certain social capital in the student body and the constant communication with the teacher on the basis of common interests develop social links and establish general norms and values having influence to bear on the process of communication in student communities which, in turn, facilitates the process of learning (Carpenter, et al. 2010). Seeing as the most significant and convenient for student communication values were spiritual values (See section "Results", Table 1), we can assume that the value of mutual assistance as life values will be high. However, only a small percentage of the students consider mutual assistance to be an absolute value ("Results", Table 5). Consequently, the personal focus of students towards the priority of spiritual themes and interests in communication with the teacher do not change their life values fast enough.

In the process of communication, all members of a social network receive certain benefits from the presence of broad social relations that make up a specific resource of social capital development which they can use in the future (Burt, 2000; Williams, 2007). Thus, while the majority of students respond that the difference in social status does not limit their communication with the teacher, yet it turned out that communication of a large part of students with their teacher requires a certain behavior framework ("Results", Table 1). Further evidence of this is the fact that the majority of students and teachers would prefer to limit their personal communication to being within the university walls ("Results", Table 1). In addition, half of the students are trying not to engage in dialogue with the teacher outside the classroom. In summary, a large part of students and teachers do not seek to establish a system of broad social relations and contacts with one another even if it could bring them significant benefits in the future.

Considering the issues of communication of students and teachers in the academic process, it may be noted that the students in this area of communication are more focused on getting new information from their teachers than getting such information during interpersonal communication ("Results", Table 2). At the same time the students would like more to receive practical information from their teachers while the teachers do not view the matter of which particular type of information they receive or impart to students as being especially important to themselves. Also, a significant number of students of all years have the greatest trust in those teachers that are focusing on practical teaching style. In summary, during the academic process at the university, students are more focused on communication with their teacher only in the academic area in order to obtain practical and applied knowledge and skills which they cannot get out of the scientific or educational literature.

With regard to the impact of academic performance of student groups on the resolution of personal extracurricular issues with the teachers, slightly more than half of the students do not see any direct dependence in this issue ("Results", Table 7). Conversely, for a large part of the teachers, the academic performance of students influences the teacher's willingness to engage in communication with them with a view to dealing with their personal issues. At the same time, students cannot see any dependence between a teacher's willingness to solve their extracurricular issues and the level of sympathy for the teacher on the part of the relevant student group. Consequently, in the process of communication, most of the students strive not to take into account teacher's objective personal sympathies in addressing their educational and extracurricular issues.

Considering the issues of judgments of students about the impact of teacher workload on the communication process, it is believed that direct interaction of students with the teachers in the

educational process gives students the opportunity to co-measure the workload among the teachers (Hargreaves, 2003). During the educational process, a significant number of the students and the majority of teachers try to use official channels of communication believing that they provide the most stable and successful communication. ("Results", Table 8). Also, student groups strive to measure and compare the complexity of the tasks and the workload of teachers compared to other groups while aiming for the speediest resolution of conflicts ("Results", Table 8). Although students may receive a direct benefit from the high level of social capital but if they try to deliberately act to increase their social capital solely for the purpose of personal enrichment, it creates a paradox (Schuller et al. 2000). More explicit and instrumental approaches create less social capital which is understood in terms of shared values, and mutual assistance. Developing contacts only because they are useful while not paying attention to generally accepted standards can work, at least in the short term, but it is unlikely to help increase social capital in the future. Consequently, in the process of expedient communication, a large number of the student groups strive to take into account the large workload of teachers and, unfortunately, try to use it for personal gain (increase in academic grades) while trying to avoid possible conflicts affecting the course of the educational process

2. *Trust*. It may be noted that, with the fourth-year students as opposed to the first-year students, the use by the teacher of the Internet as a communication means and a way of contacting them generates less trust ("Results", Table 9). With the majority of the fourth-year students, the greatest trust is inspired by a teacher who uses expensive gadgets and technology in the academic process. This fact can be attributed to the high level of demand exhibited by the final year students for prestige and material success on the part of those who teach them which is viewed as an indicator of quality of teaching at the University.

Regarding the degree of trust among the students themselves, it may be noted that the greatest trust enjoy classmates who are willing to voice debatable but not conflict-provoking judgments ("Results", Table 7). It is significant that public acceptance is more effective when coming from peers, in this case, from students who know how hard-working the relevant student is and what style of thinking he has, and not when it is coming down from the authorities, in this case, from the teacher who determines the "quota of public acceptance" (Bersin 2012). But for 15% of the fourth-year students, much more credible is a student who is able to refrain from making independent judgments. Conversely, for the majority of teachers teaching these students, it is much more important that their students should have independent judgments ("Results", Table 7 - 76%). This fact may serve as yet another confirmation of the fact that the accumulation of social capital produces a certain amount of pressure on the members of the student group suppressing individuality to an extent. In summary, an extended period of studying at a university, even despite the positive focus of the teachers there, affects a certain number of students by causing the rise of a degree of conformism in their style of behavior.

It is not just that different people have different ideas about how social capital can be increased. There will always be debate about how actually to take into account the amount of investment (regardless of quality) committed to the creation of social capital (Schuller 2007). Thus, for students and teachers to a large extent it is important that there should be development of classroom technical equipment and ability to work with modern technology, as a component of the resource for the development of quality education. While for the second and a very significant part of the students and teachers the influence of the level of use of the latest means of communication on the level of academic and extracurricular trust between the student and the teacher is minimal ("Results", Table 9). In summary, advanced technical equipment of classrooms and the high technical competence of teachers contribute to the establishment of the greatest degree of trust between the student group and the teacher.

A particular challenge for the development of trust between students and teachers and as a result a problem for the development of social capital is the fact that only a small number of teachers clearly see their students as colleagues and partners in the scientific field being studied ("Results", Table 10). It is believed that the perception of students as equal colleagues in the studied area, a sort of "reviewers" of the teaching quality can significantly improve the quality of research and university training (Shein and Tsai. 2015). An indirect result of this trend may be the growth of the negative orientation of students towards engaging in scientific and research activities and the establishment with them of a negative life balance in their studies. As a consequence of this fact there is a reduction in the level of trust between the student and the teacher and, as a result, a falling efficiency of the educational process and the opportunity to conduct joint long-term research.

In any organization and any collective, including any university and any collective of students or teachers, there is not only a "race for personal satisfaction" (Pabon, 2014) but also a "race for

public recognition". Thus, the greatest confidence both by students in the teachers and by teachers in their students is generated by focus on public and media popularity, wide popularization of one's own research ("Results", Table 10). Possibly, this fact is connected with the fact that an increase in awareness of the university where the students and teachers study and work increases its prestige which is one of the results of increasing the social capital of the academic organization. Thus, the desire to raise own popularity and the popularity of the university significantly increments trust between the student and the teacher consequently increasing social capital resources within the entire university thereby developing mutual focus on improving the quality of education.

The desire to instill in the students respect for the traditions of the university is one of the foundations for the development of social capital. After all, social capital is focused, inter alia, on the mobilization of solidarity within a particular group (Smith and Kulynych, 2002). It should be noted that the vast majority of teachers would like to see a collective of students that knows the history of the university, the best graduates and the best university teachers from the entire life of the university ("Results", Table 10). Whereas at the moment less than half of the students have trust in the teaching staff's knowledge of the university's history ("Results", Table 10). In summary, a joint study of the traditions of the university has a positive effect on the growth of solidarity and trust between the student body and faculty, on the achievement of success both in the students' studies and in the teachers' work.

3. *Mutual assistance.* It turned out that the fourth-year students are less inclined to be willing to provide personal assistance to their teacher in extracurricular issues. Final year students were also more intolerant towards violation of corporate standards by teachers which can be attributed to an increased socialization and respect for the generally accepted norms of the university community. Thus, mutual assistance is an important component of social capital, and reduced focus by the fourth-year students on providing mutual assistance is an obstacle to the development of social capital as a resource for improving the quality of education.

It turned out that a considerable part of the students negatively assesses the degree of cohesion of their student body both as a whole and with regard to the willingness to assist teachers in dealing with personal problems ("Results", Table 11). Based on the students' personal evaluation, it was found that first-year students who have not been studying at the university for more than two months feel more united and ready for mutual support and assistance than the final-year students who have studied at the university for more than three years. Thus, a large number of the students of the fourth year do not consider their group cohesive enough for the reason that there is no focus on the provision of mutual assistance as one of the components of the social capital resource.

Most students are not willing to assist teachers in improving their knowledge about their university, about the most famous graduates and about the best traditions of the university ("Results", Table 12). At the same time, it is believed that respect for the academic traditions of the university, the assimilation of corporate norms that directly affect the integrity of students and their professional development contribute to the development of social capital (Paccagnella and Sestito 2014). Nevertheless, the teacher collective objectively has demands for accepting assistance coming from the students and the desire to accept such assistance with regard to expanding their knowledge of the university's history. In summary, the reluctance of students to assist teachers in studying the traditions of the university may have a negative impact on specifics of mutual assistance in educational communication.

It is believed that the focus of teachers and their style of communication with the students determine the involvement of students in the educational and scientific process (Uden et. al., 2014). However, although students have a positive attitude overall to science and research, most of them were not prepared to spend personal time outside the classroom on conducting research for the benefit of the teaching staff ("Results", Table 12). Conversely the teachers said that they could devote personal time to research for the benefit of students. The situation is compounded by the fact that more than half of the students do not feel a connection with professors outside and sometimes inside of their university department ("Results", Table 11). Thus, while students are not perceived by teachers as equal partners in the scientific work, the teachers are still willing to set aside some time for additional training of the students while the students themselves do not want to do research under the circumstances where they will be in a subordinate position.

The most convergence of the students' and teachers' assessments is seen on the matter of importance of the incentive system existing at the university for the academic process ("Results", Table 12). The existing system of educational incentives also has a positive effect on the willingness of collectives of students and teachers to review study plans to provide for more

comfort of the opposite side. In summary, students and teachers positively evaluate the impact of educational incentives on the development of trust and mutual support between the team of students and teachers as a resource to further enhance the quality of education.

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## 5. Conclusion

The study found that, during the formation of the social capital of students and university teachers as a resource for improving the quality of education and along with tangible positive results, in some areas there may be observed an imbalance which may have an ambiguous effect not only on the personal and professional development of students but also on the quality of the educational process as a whole. Such an imbalance develops due to the mistaken belief that students and teachers will be freely able to reach an optimum level of development of social capital in the long process of interaction in just one of the areas of communication (academic or extracurricular). Because achieving the optimal development of social capital in one of the areas of communication does not ensure the effectiveness of its development in another area. Social capital is formed simultaneously both in university training and during extracurricular communication. In the process of academic and extra-curricular communication students and teachers need to constantly strengthen mutual interpersonal and collective trust and mutual support.

The study of the social capital of students and teachers should be viewed as quite important for the development of modern universities. Studies of social capital can help to identify the problem- and promising areas in personal and professional development of students. They can also give opportunities to improve the quality of education through the establishment of frameworks for the effective interaction of students and teachers.

This study does not fully exhaust the study of the problem of formation of the social capital of students and teachers, therefore, for the successful development of the subject it is proposed to carry out in the future similar studies in other universities of Russia and the world.

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