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Social Capital of the University: Humanitarian Representation in the Era of Digitalization

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Abstract

The actuality of this article is caused by the functioning in the modern conditions and search for effective forms of universities' development in the era of digitalization. Popularization of higher education, a demand for the society radically transformed its mission (development of nation's intellectual capacity), vision (integration of science, education and innovations) and format (expansion of university's subjectivity).

The goal is to explore the essence, role and growth factors of the university's social capital contributing to its strategic development. The leading research approach of the problem is social-cognitive approach, interpreted by the authors in terms of transformation of personal, professional and social interaction of all actors (participants) of higher education, and its principles (human-conformity as an individual focus of higher education and participation, defining need for responsible actors' co-partnership in the university activity).

Authors defined a university's social capital as an integral unity of the sustainable, mutual professional inter-relationships between education actors, designed to enhance efficiency of educational and research activity.

The building blocks of social capital of the educational organization are justified: norms and values, trust and professional social networking, providing conditions for preservation and reproduction of a knowledge system and culture in a synthesis of personal and public requirements. Effective realization of a university's social capital results in two unique structures – the corporativism, and the professional-corporate identity, essentially revealed by the authors. Components of a formalized assessment university's social capital condition are defined, and the conditions for their development are found out.

The article is intended for university's heads, teachers, researchers, issuing universities' strategic development.

Keywords: higher education, university, social capital, digitalization, social-cognitive approach.

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Introduction

An education system is responsive to all international changes in the environment, being their provider or the initiator. The era of digitalization is characterized by the change of human's developmental models, reconfiguration of creation processes, maintenance and knowledge transfer, transformations in the universities' processes of didactic and organizational management. Key aspects in digital transformation are fundamental changes in activity paradigm, stereotypes of the way of thinking, methods of work and management of production in all spheres of economy (Kupriyanovskij et al., 2017; Efimov & Lapteva, 2018). A setting is formed for the development of abilities for effective use of multidimensional data, information, generation of knowledge in the digital world by means of human individual characteristics; knowledge priority is on the advanced positions, i.e. values of knowledge and development of students' informative abilities are of a matter of priority (Levina, 2019). Enhanced human's cognitive abilities lead to the appearance of new types of sociocultural interaction, contributing to the multi-faceted civic development of the society.

Strategic priorities in education request creation of a new educational environment and space, promoting formation future human's personality (Gavril'eva et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2019; Egorov, Leshukov & Froumin, 2020). The universities are faced with a task to rethink educational approaches, processes and formats, allowing students to receive skills needed for personal and professional success and socialization in the XXI century.

The humanistic orientation of these issues, connected both with the human being as the object of humanitarian dimensions, and with the university with its sociocultural mission of spreading and transmitting values, science, and culture, is essentially important. A special focus of university's activity assumes its socially-important purpose: professional training, education, socialization, and development of a person in accordance with his requirements, abilities and motivation with focus on regeneration in the economic sector; reproduction and transfer of knowledge as the public benefit possessing availability and openness; preservation and enhancing intellectual and cultural heritage.

Global trends in educational development – fast-forward technological development, globalization, attempt on educational systems' unification, international educational environment and Life Long Learning (LLL), are aimed at formation of cardinal changes in higher education development in each country, caused by economic and sociocultural features. In general, common features are observed in the European educational systems: struggle for a certain balance of forces in the solution of education financing problem, autonomy of the universities with a focus on civic management. Understanding of each university's uniqueness and value, its historical, cultural and social mission, educational traditions and requirements for the teaching employees were significantly important.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The goal is to explore the essence, role and growth factors of the university 's social capital contributing to its strategic development.

Literature review

Traditionally, much attention is being paid to a University-teacher training and retraining system, as well as enhancing teaching skills in Russia, however, nowadays, in the era of digitalization, problems of universities' development as centers of human capital transition are actualized (Gil'meeva, et al., 2019). Consequently, a university should obtain certain "force" - the capital, promoting enlargement of the human's capital amount as a product (result) of educational activity. Recognizing presence of various capitals (human, intellectual, organizational, financial, etc.) we allocate a university's social capital as a "channel of action", stressing on actuality of its identification and measurement within increased information flows in the era of digitalization.

Research analysis shows that interest in the study of social capital of enterprises and corporations is maintained in academia (Coleman, 2001; Bourdieu, 2002; Popa, 2012; Plotnikova, Kuznetsov & Markova, 2017). Carrying out social, politological and economic research, the authors are developing a methodology of a social capital (Macherinskene, Minkute-Genrikson, & Simanavichene, 2009), realizing that it forms a basis for a wide range of social and economic events (Vilka, Baumane-Vitolinya & Kovalevskaya, 2014), considering its representation both within a contour of the society, and in the productive organization. A lot of researchers emphasize the role of a social capital in economic development of the enterprise and the region (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Shapovalova, 2013). Influence of a social capital on development of a human capital is proved (Bhukuth, Roumane & Terrany, 2018).

As it is represented in our research, presence of specific educational features does not allow to make direct transfer of economic and social science achievements on university's activity. Although, while providing educational service the vision of a university as an integral educational corporation (Gonzalez-Brambila, 2014; Quinn & Kim, 2018; Lopez, Civis, & Diaz-Gibson, 2018) we cannot put aside uniqueness of an "output product" as a result of educational activity – a human with formed personal and professional qualities. The peculiarities of Russian education have always been and will be priorities not only of education, but also of personal development.

From this stand point, there is a little research, devoted to a social capital in the system of education (Ushakov & Kukharev, 2016; Korotkova, 2017; Baeker, Muschallik & Pull, 2020). However, a problem of university's social capital determination in the context of identification of its features and problems of development in the context of humanitarian measurements in the era of digitalization is still open.

It is evident that there is a need to reasonably innovate the education system without losing its sociocultural meaning: continuous development of an interactive triad "teacher ↔ student" – "teacher ↔ educational environment", "student ↔ educational environment", where the university with its traditions and specific features is playing a role of an educational service provider. For the sake of maintenance of higher education values, special attention is given to rethinking and fundamental change of all professional and pedagogical kinds of interaction, and of the inter-relations between the actors of education, influencing formation of a university's social capital.

Methodology

The research is based on the achievement of social and humanitarian sciences, defining need for the content analysis, theoretical and methodological analysis, a pedagogical reflection and extrapolation.

The authors consider social-cognitive approach in terms of personal, professional and social interaction processes of all education actors within an educational activity as a methodological framework for studying a university's social capital in the conditions, determined by the era of digitalization. One of the key patterns of this approach is that the personality comprehends life and professional meanings in realities of the objective world, culture and speech by means of social interaction (Glavatsky, 2015; Levina & Nikulin, 2019). Social and communicative interaction should be carried out via system of the official, socially-oriented, declared professional inter-relations, classified according to the following criteria: place of occurrence (internal and external); way of occurrence (formal, informal and non-formal); kind of activity (on the basis of the management and submission; partnership and feedback).

Whatever the interaction is (either personal or professional), the subject interaction is affected by it, at a greater or lesser extent. Speaking abstractly, the systems of values of two communication subjects are “interacting” (i.e. person, organization, society), influencing each other. It is connected with features of each person and his (her) cognition (processing knowledge, perception, intelligence, norms of life) and is realized via means of continuous internal and external transformations of interior influencing the outside world and the outer - the educational environment. Treating each subject of interaction as a “person”, providing him (her) with value systems, and individual perception of the world (worldview), special university’s inter-relations are formed (i.e. professional society of education actors, where students, university members, and other stakeholders (representatives of business, society, state). Thus, initial social settings, enlarging edges of teachers’ professional actions are the base of interaction for the subjects of activity: a transfer of the settled forms of behavior, establishment and teachers’ professional development is taking place, shaping the unique educational environment via means of various kinds of pedagogical interaction. Special role is given to teaching staff – a pedagogical interaction, created on the basis of didactic laws and pedagogical norms, most strongly affects students, causing processes of their professional socialization. These interactions form basis of a university’s social capital.

The basis of implementation of a social-cognitive approach from a stand point of humanitarian measurements is formed by two basic principles: human-conformity (anthropocentrism) and participation.

The goal of higher education (from a position of anthropocentrism) is to create the conditions for each student’s development, providing possibilities for human’s creative development and self-development. It is possible to solve a contradiction between the education individualization (following from this principle) and the need of rationing and education standardization (because of mass character of higher education), by means of creating educational environment, aimed at stimulating personal development, containing variable complex of forms, methods, tutorials. Indicators of teaching quality (steady developmental level in dynamics, actors’ of education and stakeholders’ level of satisfaction) can serve as a criterion.

The principle of participation implies responsible partnership of each higher education actor in the decision-making process (at all levels of educational processes) and effective use of their joint and collective potential for the solution of organizational and pedagogical tasks. At the university level, this principle is directed on harmonization of teachers’ developmental interests, creating conditions for their professional growth and providing collective social responsibility of the educational organization due to joint adoption of strategic decisions. In the context of pedagogical management, this principle is caused also by intra-subject inter-relations, which can be observed in: creation of psychological climate, favorable for students, and realization of various group teaching methods– such as projects and discussions. Thus,

realization of the participation principle enhances humanistic and democratic aspects of higher education developmental management.

Results

The efficiency of any university's activity depends on the performed efforts for the solution of the main objectives – it reflects optimum management decisions and the created organizational and pedagogical conditions. According to the Law Pareto 80/20, it is possible to optimize result and to increase efficiency of organization's activity, by choosing the most significant activities; they are innovative, administrative, organizational and pedagogical strategies for the university. Among factors, influencing educational process, the group efficiency, which cornerstone is professional interaction between employees and actors of the university is taking the leading position. The problem on improvement of professional interaction is essential for university's functioning and development in the era of digitalization as one of the possible efforts to increase the university's social capital return.

The authors define a social capital of the educational organization as a set of the sustainable mutual professional inter-relations between education actors, designed to increase efficiency of university's educational and scientific activity.

The social relations within a university are complicated and multi-faceted. At the same time, the structure of educational organization's social capital and organizational structure of the educational organization are identical. In the structural units of the educational organization professional interactions are closer, and the social capital functions within educational processes are more active.

The era of digitalization opens new prospects, but it offers new barriers to the actors of higher education, as well – educational activity's participant (or subject), providing him (her) with the motives and possessing the corresponding experience and competences for this purpose. Social and communicative interaction of education actors can be carried out by means of the official, socially-oriented, legally declared professional complex of pedagogical relations, appearing spontaneously in the educational environment of higher education institution and educational environment, in general. The initial social settings, defining activity borders, are the bases of educational activity, i.e. a transfer of the settled forms of behavior, adaptation and individual development of all education subjects is taking place.

According to authors' opinion, the components of university's social capital are created on classical representation - norms and values, trust and professional social networks, adopted to the specific features of functioning the system of higher education.

Each university, as a social structure, has a system of general educational and own norms and values that determine the acceptability of activities. Regulations and norms define the acceptability of teaching employee's professional activity, providing organized professional interaction between teaching employees, and sustainable organization of professional activity in the pedagogical team in terms of public usefulness. Education values are presented in the form of moral imperatives and act as the bases for university's development. They possess a high social value, serve as a reference point for the purpose of personality's unique development, providing him (her) with a unique vector of development. Values are written in the educational organization mission, which stands as university's meaning-forming heart of the idea and its positioning at the education market. At the same time, updating of model values, the system of identification and their fast-forward advancing is needed in the challenging time; only by means of creating an innovative environment in the present, it is possible to remain competitive.

The trust acts as a state of university employee's subjective experience, a form of recognition, which is characterized by confidence in teaching team and professional characteristics of education subjects, who teachers are interacting with and also their belief in success of their joint pedagogical activity and strategy, and developmental tactics. There can be individual (certain pedagogical employees) and collective subjects of trust in the educational organization. Formal interactions are supplemented by informal interactions between pedagogical employees, which are characterized by the need for communication on professional terms, sympathy, and trust.

Professional social networks are "channels" for functioning of professional interactions. Professional social networks are understood in terms of various types of pedagogical interaction between actors of the university (external and internal). The educational organization, in its turn, is a professional social network, success of which depends on density of "social fabric", quantity and quality of professional interactions between teaching employees. If professional interaction is organized at a high level, a number of professional interactions is always more than a number of pedagogical employees of the educational organization. Such result is possible only if a social capital acts as an object of management.

Formation of professional interactions between teaching employees is carried out at the levels, similar to the levels of university's organizational structure: level of the pedagogical employees (professional interaction, realized on formal, and informal channels); level of structural unit (professional interaction within a structural unit of the educational organization: departments, deans' offices, methodical associations, etc.); institutional level (professional interaction of higher education institution with institutes of the educational environment); inter-organizational level (inter-institutional professional interaction).

It is possible to outline main objectives in a university's social capital development:

- increase in appeal on the education market;
- development of university's corporate culture;
- demonstration advantages of work in the educational organization as a trial and error method of recruiting competent teaching employees;
- formation of education subjects' motivation and confidence in their professional and corporate, and civic importance of their activity;
- support in personal and professional development of each member of teaching team;
- creation of comfortable psychological and pedagogical climate for education subjects;
- implementation of analytical-predictive activity for university's management development (analysis of the team achievements, certain employees, forecasting and modeling of results in teaching, professorial-pedagogical, and students' teams).

Sustainable inter-relations between education actors should be created as a result of longitude work on search and choice of an optimum and most effective format for university's collaboration with social partner – regional labor market.

Despite the management focus of the provisions under consideration on the development of university social capital, a humanistic focus of the problem, connected with a human as a subject of humanitarian measurements, and with the system of higher education, bearing a sociocultural mission for distribution and transfer of values, science and culture is essentially important. In this case, humanitarian examination of those changes, which happen in the conditions of education digitalization, for the purpose of correlation both multi-directional target, value systems and ways of their achievement is important. Humanitarian maintenance and measurement process of achievement and realization of the received results within absolutely new opportunities and conditions of university's development is needed. Digitalization, in its turn, causes new formats and characteristics of professional-pedagogical (formal and informal) interactions. The formalized ways for the state assessment needed for the integral unity of management the development of educational organization's social capital is, at the same time, a humanitarian and administrative task. Integral assessment of a social capital should include aspect-based estimated comparison: cognitive criterion (account of target and value systems); ethical criterion (choice of funds for

goal achievement from a social and humanitarian position); technological criterion (resources for task implementation); administrative criterion (minimization of risks, optimization of advantages for the human's well-being).

As a result of application (activities, development) of educational organization's social capital (norms and values, trust, professional social networks) there are two sustainable characteristics – corporativism and professional and corporate identity.

Corporativism, being an organized agreement between a teacher, university and other social institutions of an education system (the organizations of additional professional education, the professional educational organizations, the educational organizations of the higher education, clusters, etc.) in the sphere of professional activity's collaborative implementation, is, first of all, a resource integration for the purpose of enlarging opportunities, and obtaining synergetic effect. The educational organizations' competitiveness and their positioning in an education market assumes the formation of a new type of intra-system interaction for the innovation of higher education system. Its "internal" corporate culture acts as the second aspect of educational organization's corporativism, reflecting philosophy and the strategy of management, supporting its reproducing values. Positioning itself as a member of pedagogical community, being the possessor of a definite social status, a teacher identifies himself according to certain regulations and corporate requirements of a profession. The corporativism functions as a dynamic standard mechanism, developing competitiveness and forming the internal standards of employees' professional activity, being typical for it, and they are needed for the realization of strategic tasks.

A unique teacher's developmental vector for the university, and for the career strategy is created, providing him (her) with the demands and abilities, interests and inquiries of other higher education actors. Respectively, in the course of professional and personal development, the pedagogical corporativism should be increased (in the condition of moral solidarity), stressing on a social responsibility, and purpose and value convergence.

The professional-corporate identity reflects the individualized internal state and self-feeling reflexing both of university's actor, and the university, in general.

A university employee's professional and corporate identity represents integrative characteristic of personal belonging to professional pedagogical community and to the definite educational organization, understanding and acceptance of professional values, the mission of the educational organization, convergence of his (her) own reputation with reputation of the educational organization and his (her) own future with a developmental vector.

A professional and corporate identity of the university represents an integral unity of belonging to a professional-pedagogical community and society in general, following the values and the mission of higher education, service to society and science with maintenance his (her) own educational traditions and a unique developmental vector, positioning of his (her) place and role in a social development.

A professional-corporate identity is realized in a corporate way of thinking; belonging to the university allows to enlarge and strengthen personal and professional interconnection of education subjects. In the process of professional establishment, scientific contacts are being increased, and social and professional interaction. performed for scientific, organizational-pedagogical purposes and informal communication is being extended.

The condition for the formation of a professionally corporate identity is the presence of the mission, values and meanings of the educational organization of higher education, which is developed as a unique social ecosystem, as an open socially-oriented university, defining vectors for a high status positioning. Having a professional-corporate identity means being aware of each teacher 's own significance, with personal achievements becoming meaningful to the university, raising its status and rating, while corporate norms and values through personal values via means of various information channels are transferred to the external environment.

According to authors' opinion, "professional-corporate identity", being a dynamic phenomenon, and participating in the process of employees' professional and personal development via internal convergence of their values, values of a pedagogical community, and values of the organization.

This constructs are "corporativism" and "professional-corporate identity" (visible performance of social capital of the university), which are based on traditions of solidarity in the inter-generational and inter-human relations, on philosophical and worldview competence of teaching employees in the university. Development of a social capital suggests an opportunity for scientific and personal development for achievement of a final goal and, at the same time, realization of functioning mission – quality of education.

Discussions

Nowadays, it is stated that there is no unified approach to the analysis of social capital's properties and forms of its manifestation. A focus of the research is on its features and concepts in various socio-humanistic spheres. Speaking abstractly, there are two main conceptual lines and their followers – "a material form" (Bourdieu, 2002) and "relations" (Coleman, 2001). Numerous scientific disputes on these positions have been quite active for half a century. Acknowledging the rights of both scientific positions, it

was found out, that a problem on identification and management social capital's development, in case of material forms, is simpler to perform, via rigid average economic indicators of the activity.

As for the issues of research into the social capital of the university, there are two directions (Van Waes, De Maeyer, & Moolenaar, 2018; Sezgin et al., 2019; Rudick et al., 2019). The western researchers most often consider the university as a corporation of a special type, to which all norms of the economic enterprises can be applicable, and, respectively, consideration of a social capital lacks its specific forms. Within the Russian social, economic and educational traditions, the university is not treated as an economic object from a position of the financial profits. Consequently, the problems of universities' management are significantly separated from the problems of productional management – a reference point on a human factor is occurred. Direct transfer of economic knowledge and achievements to the educational system is impossible – here other patterns and mechanisms, as well as difficulties of formalization of processes are performed.

However, it was revealed by the authors that there are possibilities for development and adoption of scientific achievements to the sphere of the higher education; a great role belongs to outlining and identification various types of capital, in particular, a social capital of the university.

Conclusion

In the process of the research, a university's social capital is determined by the era of digitalization in the new conditions, so the authors have come to the following conclusions:

- 1) supplementary resources for professional interaction of subjects' educational activity are actualized by means of a university's social capital; it creates new formats of university's strategic development, via professional social networks on the basis of norms and mutual trust;
- 2) social capital of the university forms new categories of educational space and has an impact on the success and efficiency of educational and scientific activities in the era of digitalization;
- 3) the impact of management and corporate culture on the formation and maintenance of the university's social capital must be continuous and constantly renewable;
- 4) only stable and mutual professional ties are transferred to the status of social capital of the university, which are professionally and socially useful for the university-teacher, teaching team and educational organization in general;

5) an ability to accumulate university's social capital is not an individual university teacher's characteristic, it is a feature of the professional inter-relations within a network, which is created by a teacher;

6) the main functions of the social capital of the educational organization are: mutual enrichment of knowledge and dissemination of innovations in the educational space; reduction of professional autonomy of the teacher of higher education; continuous improvement of the level of professionalism of university staff; increasing the university activity and the importance of its role in society.

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