HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION AND ITS REPRESENTATIVE, WHICH APPLICANTS HAVE THEIR TRUST IN

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Abstract: As a result of seniors and students polling there were determined characteristics of HEI and their representatives, arisen trust or distrust of the applicants. The study showed the difference in the opinion of seniors and students on the image of HEI representative who they could have confidence in. No differences in the opinion of the pupils of 10th and 11th grades and the students of the 1st and 4th years were discovered. The data received may be explained with the difference of social role of respondents (correspondingly a potential applicant, a student). No preferences depending on sex attribute of the students and pupils were revealed. The applicant has once entrusted the certain HEI its further professional development, more often doesn’t change its relation to it during the whole period of education in spite of the experience gained.

Keywords: information channel, students’s oppinion, university representative, trust

INTRODUCTION

Achievement of trust from the part of applicants, their parents, social institutions (employers), society is a strategic aim of any educational institution planning its activity for a continuous period, because a higher educational institution (HEI) is not just a business unit within market economy, but also a social subject (S.K. Sergienko, 2005). Any higher educational institution may perform its social mission, if it is held in respect and confidence of the company (E.A. Dagaeva, 2007).

Social partnership in the educational field promotes the increase of social capital of contemporary Russia. The confidence is considered as arising inside the society an expectation of permanent, decent, shared values oriented behavior from the part of other members of this society (F. Fukuyama, 1955). Potential of mutual trust and aid in the structure of relations between and among people is called a social capital (Coulmen, 1990). Similar to any other capital, the social capital is efficient (any behavior based on confidence is more efficient than that one based on rational calculations and formal rules), it is characterized with a tendency to accumulate. Its resources depend on collective memory (development continuity, traditions prevailing in the society, generally
accepted standards and values, etc.). Such capital within community bound with stable communications may be transferred, but not alienated from someone owned it (A. Porles, op. cit. T.P. Skripkina, 2006, p. 53).

However the social and economic transformations taking place nowadays in Russia, increasing dissociation of people, destruction of habitual models of behavior demolish interactions between the members of educational process that were common for our country. According to the data of social research (Yu.A. Zubok, 2006) 57% respondents think that nobody can be trusted (this index is rather stable). Another studies (G.U. Soldatova, 2006) revealed that Russians as a whole showed low level of social confidence. Not more than one third of respondents agreed with the statement that «people can be trusted» (in western countries – 85-95% respondents); the students feeling comfortable in the places of their education show the highest level of social trust among other groups of people, but they form just around 30%. Among pupils only the fifth part of them feels good in their schools; they are referred to a risk group relating to social ill-being and tendency to demonstration of distrust and opposition. Formation of good relations with the world around is possible provided that a man has confidence in this world, but at present Russian youths exactly lack such confidence (E.P. Krishchenko, 2006).

On the forming Russian market of educational services every HEI shall be concerned what opinion a potential consumer of its services have to it and its representatives, whether he trusts it or not. Such trust is usually arisen through communication. As in the most cases the applicants do not have any experience of communication with the HEI, and cooperation with HEI representative is minimal, the applicant has to base generally on the image of HEI and its representative and from this point advance his trust or distrust.

EMPIRICAL STUDY

The main aim of empirical study: to determine image characteristics of HEIs and their representatives, which as the applicants think promote advancing of trust.

Study base, cohort tested: 14 general education schools and 7 Moscow HEIs were the empirical base of research. Total amount of selection scope is 320 pupils of 10th and 11th grades and 130 students of the 1st year and 40 students of the 4th year.

Empirical study stages: The study was conducted through several stages in the year 2007. In our studies we didn’t profess to get representative results, as the study was deemed as a pilot one.

For getting empirical data to reveal respondents’ opinion a polling method was applied (corresponding to the purpose of polling a special questionnaire was executed). We asked the students of the 1st year what characteristics of HEI and its representative had arisen trust/distrust during the period, when they were selecting «their» HEI. The students of the 4th year and pupils of 10th and 11th grades took part in the poll.

A set of 11 psychological methods was also used (I.M. Karlinskaya, I.B. Khanina, 2001, 2011).

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

1. A problem of studying of potential applicants’ social networks, out of which information about HEIs, is rather urgent. Information incoming through various channels may be contradictive. Information received by an applicant through mostly reliable channel is usually predominant.
As a result of the empirical study conduct it appears that:

A. an information channel, through which information is received, influences the trust/distrust of the applicant in higher education institution. For different groups of the applicants their own channel is important for the receipt of information about HEIs (any information received through it arises the most trust);

B. among the consumers of educational services, relying on various communication channels for getting the information about HEIs there are some differences in personal characteristics;

Applicant’s sex factor doesn’t affect the choice of HEI information communication channel. No statistically significant differences in relation to their psychological profiles exist between the recipients of information through three channels – from family members, from literature, due to HEI visiting. Peculiarities of psychological profile of the persons using/not using the Internet for getting the information necessary for making choice of a HEI have been revealed.

Characteristics of the psychological profile of respondents of the group №2 (people using Internet for getting necessary reliable information) are the following: they are pronounced extraverts, they have higher (in comparison with the representatives of the group 1, not trusting in the Internet information) indexes on the state of health, activity, mood, thirst for activity both with the world objective and social one. They are rather excitable, less short-tempered, though they are inclined to negativism and offence, less concerned about their health, tend to competition, communicative, it is more difficult to them to open up interpersonal relations, less sensitive to failures in communication, they are flexible in cooperation with the objective world, they have higher creativity, spontaneity, autonomy, self-understanding.

These two groups of applicants revealed may be target groups for PR-specialists, aimed at the establishment of efficient of HEI communication with its service consumers. Psychological characteristics of each target group representatives shall be accounted for the individualization of the process of HEI communication with them.

2. Characteristics of the HEI which upon respondents’ opinion arises trust/distrust.

Studying the HEI's image components influencing the confidence in it, it was determined that the most significant for the applicants (according to students) are the following (each respondent may enumerate several factors of HEI's image, influencing applicant’s confidence): (a) HEI's prestige in the society (77,5% of all responses), (b) HEI’s official rating (52,5%), (с) standing the test of time, good distribution of graduates, successes of the latter (40%); (r) HEI’s appearance (5%).

According to pupils, applicant’s relation to any HEI may be also influenced with the following factors: (1) cost of education (37,5 % responses), (2) competition for a place (22,5%), (3) home proximity (20%), (4) quality of education (15%).

3. Characteristics of HEI’s representative, who may be trusted according to the respondents.

We ask the pupils of 10-th and 11-th grades to describe the image of HEI’s representative they may trust. Such parameters as social status, visual appearance, age, sex are offered for valuation.

While describing HEI’s representative image by potential applicants, the following qualities were most often mentioned: tidy (32,9% of respondents), representative
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(21.1%), in a suit (18.4%), neat (15.8%), with a good diction (11.8%). 5.3% of respondents notice such qualities as stylish, communicable, kind. 3.9% of respondents prefer that a person acting as a HEI’s representative has an appearance corresponding to its position. 1.3% of respondents wish to see as a HEI’s representative a person being business-like, having all the information necessary and calm. We have compared the responses to the same question, relating to the description of representative trustable, of pupils of 11th grade and students of the 4th year being experienced in communication with the teachers of its HEI.

While comparing the data obtained through the poll of pupils and students, we discovered that the image of HEI’s representative who may be trusted: among the students the number of those preferring such representative is of high status is increasing. The students give age preference to the people of 30-40 years old, while pupils – to people of 40-50 years old, besides priority of qualities HEI’s representative shall have changes. No preferences depending on sexual attribute of students and pupils were revealed.

The data of responses comparison on the following questions was received: «What image HEI’s representative shall have so the applicants may trust him? What image HEI’s representative shouldn’t have so the applicants may trust him?».

Most participants (students) of the poll (among girls - 64%, boys - 36%) thinks that HEI’s representative, meeting the applicants, who they may trust, shouldn’t have untidy, daily appearance, wear sports clothes. His appearance can’t be bright and flash.

4. Stability of relation to the HEI’s representative.

The aim of this stage of study is to match opinion of students from different years (first and fourth) and pupils of 10th and 11th grades about the image of HEI’s representative who the can trust.

Having analyzed the answers of the first and fourth year students to a question of «HEI’s representative who may be trusted and spoken to», we’ve come to a conclusion that there are no clear differences in the opinion of students studying on the first or fourth year.

No significant difference was also found in the opinion of pupils of 10th and 11th grades.

A difference in the opinions of pupils and students was revealed. Preferred image characteristics of HEI’s representative, who may have confidence in: among the students in comparison with the pupils number of persons prefers that such representative has a high status is increasing. The students give preference to people of the age 30-40, while pupils – to the people of 40-50 years old. The priority of qualities that HEI’s representative shall have is changing among the students.

The data received may be explained with the difference of social role of respondents (correspondingly «a potential applicant», «a student»).

5. Stability of student’s relation to the HEI early selected.

This stage of study is aimed at determination of student’s relation changes to the HEI early selected for his further professional development.

During the period of education from the 1st to the 4th year within the process of interaction the student may change or remain unchanged.
its relation to the HEI, where he is studying. Having analyzed answers on three questions put before the students both the first and the fourth year (Do you regret that entered this HEI?, Would you like to change the HEI?, Would you recommend your best friend to enter the HEI you are studying in?), we may conclude that the students either of the first or the fourth year regret about entering the HEI, where they are studying, but their share is insignificant. A wish to change the HEI arises on both years, but it is less than a wish to continue studies in the current HEI. The most part of the students would advise their friends to enter exactly that HEI, where they are studying in.

Thus, relation of trust to the HEI, due to which the applicants became its students, has a great stability according to the students themselves. Having entrusted its professional development to a certain HEI, most students keep confidence during many years of its education. The students have ceased to trust its HEI require close attention of the administration and individual work with each of them.

LITERATURE


