



Features of student virtual social capital: Characteristics, opportunities and limits

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Abstract

The relevance of this article lies in the need to study the possibilities of accumulating virtual social capital, maintaining it with the help of virtual social networks and using it in the educational, labor and leisure spheres. Since such resources can make a significant contribution to any area of a person's life: assistance in the field of education, and significant bonuses for employment. The purpose of the study is to identify mechanisms for acquiring, preserving and strengthening virtual social capital. Research methods: as a research method, a questionnaire survey was used to describe and analyze the features of using virtual social networks in the educational, labor and leisure spheres of users' lives. Research results: the article considers the features of virtual social capital formation. The novelty and originality of the research lies in the fact that for the first time students' idea of virtual social capital is considered. It is shown that virtual social networks are very popular with students. The factors that encourage users of virtual social networks to use their capabilities in solving significant issues in each of the studied areas are identified. It is determined that the social network is used mainly as a means of communication and information transfer, as well as a tool for organizing leisure, goals pursued in the educational sphere, in the field of career and leisure can be no less successfully implemented with its help. It is revealed that undergraduate students do not consider study groups in social networks to be effective, while master's students consider such groups effective. It is shown that it is more difficult to accumulate virtual social capital in the labor sphere than in the educational sphere, since this is due to the closeness of working groups and low career mobility of employees. It is determined that for the formation of virtual social capital in the labor sphere it is necessary firstly to find good real contacts. It is shown that it is necessary to form virtual social capital in the labor sphere depending on the type of work: if the work is in the classical sphere, then personal acquaintances and further real communication will be better suited here, and if the work is in the innovative sphere, it is better to build and maintain relationships in the virtual space. It is revealed that the use of social networks in the field of leisure is the most popular for the formation of virtual social capital. Practical significance: the data obtained in this work can be used in social psychology, labor psychology, management, as well as for further theoretical development of this issue.

Keywords: virtual social capital, virtual communication, Internet resources

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INTRODUCTION

As the process of globalization increases and new types of communication appear, the social connections of an individual expand noticeably, and most of them move from the real world to the virtual world, thereby simplifying the communication process. In the process of people entering the Internet space, there is a need to

study how virtual social networks participate in the formation of social capital. Researchers who express opposite opinions on this issue ambiguously evaluate

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such participation. Today, there are many approaches to studying and measuring social capital, but none of them is universal. The reason for this may be the multidimensional nature of the category and the complexity of its quantitative assessment (Bourdieu, 2002; Diskin, 2003; Radaev, 2002; Coleman, 2001; Lebedeva & Lomovtseva, 2006; Fedotov, 2006). Virtual social networks make a controversial contribution to increasing the social capital of an individual, and their contradictory assessment of scientists is obvious, which indicates the need to search for new research solutions in this area (Tartakovskaya, 2004; Churakov, 2001; Shadrin, 2002; Khanmurzina et al., 2020).

It should be noted that social networks are being explored as another way to support relationships with people who have similar interests and goals. In addition, virtual social networks may be necessary for those who have problems communicating live (Gradoselskaya, 1999; Rose, 2002; Zelinsky, 2008; Narutto et al., 2019; Putilina et al., 2019). Considering social capital as a resource of individuals, scientists note that by entering social networks and interacting with other people, an individual gets access to material and psychological resources, cooperation takes place in order to gain a dominant position in the social space, and the return on investment in social relations is expected in the form of profit (Stepanenko, 2004; Fukuyama, 2002; Byusse, 2002; Markaryan, 1971; Sidorina, 2007). It is when considering virtual social capital as a social resource that the problem of the organic relationship between the individual and society becomes particularly relevant.

The value of social capital is proportional to the value of the owners of capital and it is higher with the number of owners it unites, which, under equal conditions, determines the greatest value of the owners of social capital. That is why the owners of social capital are interested in a strategy for its reproduction (Kon'kov, 2006; Bespartochniy, 2010; Karasev, 2001; Povstyn, 2011).

An important advantage of virtual social capital is the ability to obtain information that is characteristic of social relations. Information is of high value for any type of activity, but it requires a lot of money to get it.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The aim of the study is to identify the relationship between the intensity of virtual social networks use and the social capital of an individual. The tasks are: to give a General description of virtual social networks use; to identify the priority method of communication of students in the educational, labor and leisure spheres of life; to compare the frequency of using groups in virtual social networks to solve issues in the educational, labor and leisure spheres.

This goal was specified in a number of research questions:

For what purposes do users primarily use social networks?

What is the intensity and frequency of social media use?

How many people do users contact through social networks?

How often and for what purposes are social networks used for educational purposes?

How actively do users participate in communities that help with learning activities?

Does this contribute to learning activities?

How often and for what purposes do users use social networks when solving issues in the field of work and career development?

How actively do users participate in communities dedicated to solving work issues?

Does this help you organize one's work and build a career?

How often and for what purposes do users use social networks in the field of leisure activities?

How actively do users participate in communities dedicated to leisure activities?

Does this help with leisure activities?

How do users evaluate the role of social networks in three areas: study, work, and leisure? To what extent are users satisfied with each area?

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to study the main goals of using social networks. The majority of informants (97%) stated that they used the social network for communication. Most likely, this use of social networks is due to the total employment of informants, many students work and study. New technologies are well mastered, and the majority of students do not play games on social networks (56%). They try to spend time usefully: collecting information on a specific issue of interest (89%). It should be noted that the difference between the answers of students studying in the correspondence Department and students studying in master's programs is small. Respondents use social networks as a tool for maintaining existing contacts and finding new acquaintances (100%). Virtual social networks allow you to keep in touch with people with whom you once met, but there are no reasons for real meetings (79%). In this case, it is very easy to keep in touch with a person through a virtual social network. Contact with friends in social networks can go to another level: very close friends can use video calls, allowing friends almost to their home, and all other services are used with greater intensity (79%). Thus, with the help of virtual social networks, one can expand his/her contacts and strengthen his/her connection with old friends, thereby increasing one's virtual social capital.

The absolute majority of respondents said that friends used social networks as well as themselves

(86%). Students said that the average active use of social networks was four hours a day (78%). The majority (89%) noted that their pages could be online, but the users themselves did not use it, it was in the background, for example, listening to music, audiobooks or watching movies. Some informants (13%) noted a similar moment, but it was related to notifications - even if they were not in a social network, they received email notifications that they had been sent a message, had been invited to a group, or left a request to be added to friends. Which again will allow them to quickly find out information, even without being in a social network, and go there only when necessary. Although this is a deceptive effect of absence - Yes, the informant does not give feedback, but he/she is aware of what was answered. Therefore, it turns out anyway, one way or another, is passively in the social network, although there are no direct signs of this.

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the number of friends in virtual social networks. All informants (100%) said that they had more than three hundred friends in social networks. Virtual social networks help bring together all your friends, acquaintances, classmates and groupmates. This explains such data on the number of friends in social networks. Another task of the study was to identify the use of virtual social networks by informants for educational purposes. All informants (100%) use social networks for this purpose in one way or another, but with different intensity. Some students (19%) mentioned the fact that they used social networks to search for articles and books on their studies. Using social networks for educational purposes also helps to acquire virtual social capital. Virtual social networks solve this problem, because here a platform is formed in the form of a group, community or General dialogue, where information is displayed that is visible to all participants, which can be discussed if desired. If we talk about groups and communities where information about articles, books, and other scientific content is displayed, then virtual social networks act as a transmitter of knowledge, or rather a link in their transmission, which again helps with the accumulation of social capital.

Some students (53%) determined that it was more effective to use real contacts, while others believe that it all depends on the situation, what question is of concern at the moment and the speed of response to this question (47%). Moreover, students of the correspondence Department were sharp in their position and all stated the need for real meetings (100%), while undergraduates were less categorical about this issue and for the most part (56%) were inclined to say *fifty - fifty*. This may be because distance-learning students rarely see each other and it is more difficult for them to agree on something in a virtual social network without well-established real connections. For undergraduates, meetings are more frequent and have a permanent

basis. From these data, we can conclude that the educational social networks of part-time students are less developed than the educational social networks of undergraduates.

All students (100%) are members of groups that provide assistance in educational activities. Only their number and intensity of use varies. All students prefer to view news from groups, but the majority (89%) are limited to this. Passive participation in virtual study groups has a positive effect on real communication in their study group on learning issues, which supports social connections and contributes to the accumulation of social capital.

Students use social networks for work purposes: to solve work issues with colleagues (86%), to search for information about work (56%), to post a resume (9%), to search for professional courses (19%). The labor sphere also needs social capital, because it is almost impossible to build a career without it. Students of the correspondence Department (79%) answered confidently that there was nothing better than real contacts, and the opinion of undergraduates was divided: those who worked without social networks said that they would prefer to use real contacts (89%), and those whose work was connected in some way with virtual reality noted that the speed of responses to work questions online was no lower than real appeals to the same people (100%). This is due to the closeness of work groups and low career mobility of employees. It is more difficult to establish connections here, since your colleague is a competitor in most cases, and it is problematic to learn from experience in this case, since it is not profitable to share your knowledge and best practices with a competitor. Therefore, to form a virtual social capital in this area, you must first find good real contacts, and then transfer them to the virtual plane. However, if people are immersed in virtual reality and all the main work takes place there, it is quite possible to build social capital by starting to communicate with new colleagues virtually. This is especially true for remote work, when there is no opportunity to see the team and superiors. Working groups in social networks help maintain the atmosphere in the team; this creates an additional place that is assigned to representatives of any labor collective, so that its employees feel more united. These groups often contain information about the company's mission, goals, and other motivational entries in groups or communities. Leisure is temporary, so there is no clear desire for students to build virtual social capital. To solve serious leisure issues, you need to appeal your contacts, and how to contact them is a matter of habit or convenience of getting information. Looking for a way to properly organize their vacation, informants turn to the closest circle of communication, maintaining contact with them, thereby maintaining their social capital. All students (100%) are included in groups and communities that are dedicated to leisure and

recreation. Leisure and recreation are an integral part of life and therefore informants are in groups and communities dedicated to leisure and recreation, to catch certain trends and understand where and when you can go to the benefit of a vacation, and what event is worth saving money for. Occasionally, friends on social networks invite you to events, and this not only increases the likelihood that a person will go to this event, it also strengthens the connection between these people: first in the virtual plane, then in the real one. Students' answers indicate that they do not feel dependent on virtual social networks, which means they can freely build live communication and solve issues in any sphere of life.

DISCUSSIONS

Time spent on social networks is one of the most important factors in building virtual social capital, because the amount of time spent on social networks directly affects the frequency of contacts with friends and acquaintances. In addition, students confirm that they actively devote four hours to virtual social networks every day, and passively - almost all day they receive notifications from social networks that come to their email. In the field of work and career, as it turned out, the most popular is to discuss work issues with colleagues, but the search for vacancies, professional courses, and places of practice is also in demand. The labor sphere also needs virtual social capital, because it is almost impossible to build a career without it, so students somehow use virtual social networks for work purposes. Leisure is temporary, so here students do not have a clear desire to build virtual social capital in the leisure sphere, since they only need to go to the theater or Museum once a month and for this purpose they can buy tickets on their own, after reading the poster and brief descriptions of performances. Virtual social capital is formed or strengthened in all respondents. To solve serious leisure issues, you need to appeal your real contacts, and how to contact them is a matter of habit or convenience of getting information, because to find out about any tour that your friends went on, it will be easier for someone to call and listen to how to organize everything, and for someone it is better to get written instructions in a social network in a message.

CONCLUSION

Currently, virtual social networks offer to solve a huge range of tasks, since it can set specific criteria, in contrast to the same Internet space. Using virtual social

networks expands the boundaries of communication. An individual can be acquainted with the educational or labor collective in advance, find a person in another city or even a country who can buy an item for them that is sold in this city. Nevertheless, at the same time, virtual social networks are a great tool for maintaining relationships with classmates and old friends. Students use virtual social networks for both academic, work, and leisure activities, and not just for socializing with friends or having fun. Many students do not accept virtual contacts, although they do refer to them from time to time. All students use social networks for educational purposes in one way or another, but with different intensity. Speaking about the performance, the students mostly responded that in the absence of virtual networking performance would not change; significantly smaller proportion of students said that without the use of virtual social networks would be more difficult and performance was worse. Students use social networks for work purposes mainly to solve work issues with colleagues first, then to search for information about work. Students of the correspondence Department are sure that there is nothing better than real contacts for solving work issues, and the opinion of undergraduates is divided: those who work at job without social networks, said that they would prefer to use real contacts, and those whose work is connected in some way with virtual reality, noted that the speed of responses to work questions online is no lower than real appeals to the same people. Students belong to any groups dedicated to their work, career, or search for advanced training courses. The attitude of students to such groups is passive, but they find the necessary information in them as needed, and the rest of the time they track news from these groups. Students who do not work with social networks said that they did not see much effect from them in the work plan, and students whose work is directly related to social networks said that social networks made it easier for them to work and without them and the work might be less organized. Students who do not use virtual social networks at work said that nothing would have changed in their work if there were no social networks, and those who use virtual social networks for work believe that the lack of social networks could deprive them of work at all. Most students note that they use virtual social networks in the leisure sphere in order to search for master classes, hobby trainings, organize holidays, and find people to communicate with.

Thus, we can conclude that most students are not always aware of how dependent they are on virtual social networks and virtual social capital.

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