Social Trust and Student Organizations: Experimental Explanation of Social Trust in Member and Non-Member Students of Student Organizations in Mazandaran University

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1- Introduction
The problem of student trust is that the formation of trust in all aspects in them has been subject to profound transformations, which is much more sensible in universities due to implementation of contemporary scientific and cultural data as well as adaptation of current social conditions with those in other parts of the world. The students do not limit their confidence in institutions and forums to restricted debates in their family and friends’ sphere and shape their confidence by reconsidering provided to them via information and communication tools (such as the Internet and satellite). The main objective of this study is to investigate the factors affecting social trust Mazandaran University. The main research question is: What social factors influencing university students is increasing and decreasing the level of social trust?

2- Theoretic framework
According to Putnam (2005), it can be stated that membership in student organizations, which provides a platform for further interaction between the students, can increase the level of social trust in them. In addition, he stresses the role of media, particularly television, in explanation of the reasons for a decline in confidence since TV drives people into their homes and takes away them from social interaction.

Rothstein and Stolle (2008) also believe that the institutions for law and order are responsible to identify and punish the traitors who commit crime, theft and other non-cooperative manners undermining trust. If citizens know that these institutions act fairly and efficiently, they can believe that there is a poor chance of the

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treacherous and untrustworthy people to escape from the clutches is law. As a result, citizens conclude that people have a good reason to avoid such behaviors and that the majority of people are trustworthy. According to Rothstein and Stolle (2008), it is the efficiency and justice of these institutions that is important for this generalized trust. In general, if the citizens believe in efficiency and justice of institutions, especially the judicial system and police, they trust other people with more ease. In explaining the generalized trust, they state that the institutions may cause a feeling of discrimination and injustice in citizens who are in direct contact with them, which results in loss of social trust in people. Consequently, according to the theory of Rothstein and Stolle, we can say that a personal sense of security with respect to other citizens in the society and actual discrimination experienced by citizens (in relation to institutions) in life can affect the social trust of individuals.

3- Methodology
This study was a cross-sectional survey. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The study sample included all the students of Mazandaran University in the spring of 2011 amounting to 9670 subjects as declared by Information Office of Education, University of Mazandaran. The sample size in this study was 370 according to Morgan Table. In order to reduce the error due to sampling and the potential inadequacy of some questionnaires, the sample size was raised to 380 but was reduced to 375 cases by elimination of incomplete questionnaires. Simple random sampling method was used in this study, and Cronbach's alpha was applied to assess the reliability of research instruments.

4- Results
Multivariate linear regression analysis indicated that all the six mentioned variables remained in the final model. Impact coefficients of final model of independent variables explaining the social trust showed that the variables of taking secure, the use of local media, hope for the future, the use of foreign media, experienced discrimination and membership in associations are effective upon social trust among students of Mazandaran University. It should be noted that from the variables under consideration, the impact of variables of discrimination experience and use of foreign media is negative upon the mentioned dependent variable. The mentioned model can explain 50.8% of changes in public trust. Furthermore, course analysis of the causal model of research shows that the effectiveness of the independent variables (according to direct and indirect effects) on social trust variable is different.

5- Conclusion
According to Putnam (2005), it can be said that membership in student organizations, which provides a platform for boosting the engagement of students,
can increase the level of social trust in them. The results of this study confirm Putnam's view. Putnam's theory was used with respect to the variable associated with use of mass media. In explaining the loss of social trust, he gives high importance to the factor of mass media, especially television since the use of mass media reduces the level of social interaction. The results show that the influence of foreign media on social trust is negative and significant but in connection with the use of domestic mass media, the impact is positive. In connection with variables of sense of security and experiencing discrimination, Rothstein and Stolle theory was used and the results confirmed their theory. On this basis, we can say that the sense of security and experiencing discrimination increase and decrease the level of social trust in society, respectively.

Keywords: Social Trust, Membership in Student Organizations, Mass Media Use, Hope for Future, Experience of Discrimination, Sense of Security.

Reference (In Persian)

**References (In English)**