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## Measurement of social capital in higher education: An alternative to the dilemma of development\*

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## Abstract

Oral communication or speech represents for any human being its essential (not unique) way of sociocultural interaction. With the establishment of orality in the Colombian judicial process, it is necessary for legal professionals to improve their oral communication skills. The objective of this research was to identify the characteristics of the speech process in the aspects of voice, diction, fluency and prosody of the research students of the Law Program of the Santiago de Cali University. A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out, selecting a non-probabilistic sample of 38 people. Univariate and bivariate analyzes were performed. It was evidenced that although the speech presented by the study population is functional for some everyday contexts, speech difficulties were found, such as dysfluency in 63.16% and in more than 50% of the dysprosody population, among others. This influences the discursive dynamic of Procedural Orality, which is the essential tool of the jurisdictional task of legal professionals.

**Keywords:** Communication, speech, voice, voice disorders, lawyer, fluency disorder

## Introduction

For the purposes of this article, relevant in the social sciences framework, community social capital was addressed as a field of study that contributes to development as an intangible value that transforms societies based on the potential of cohesion and associativity, based on trust and recognition of rules. Social capital makes sense from the convergence of public policies with collective actions of civil society characterized by values such as solidarity, tolerance, reciprocity and respect. Following Bourdieu (2000), it can be affirmed that throughout the 20th century, it has been demonstrated that social capital is a means that transforms societies and shapes the possibilities of development in each environment, since it is assumed as an incident capital facing the dynamics, generation and strengthening of relationships that lead to the construction of networks based on collective interests with a high impact on the community (Pircalabelu, Claeskens, 2016).

This investigation arose from the following question: At what level does the stock of social capital of the academic community of the existing institution potentiate significant relationships?

The project was carried out at the ECCI-Colombia University, Bogotá campus; it identified as a study context the interaction of the academic community during the first period of 2015; the students were taken as central participants, with the purpose of making a diagnosis that would make it possible to propose strategies for strengthening social capital. It was hypothesized that the stock of social

capital in the institution tended to be very low, in keeping with trends observed in the local context, which was not very different from the national reality. Two dimensions were mainly worked on: CS Structural and Cognitive CS, following the classification proposed by the World Bank, as well as other researches carried out and which are related to the importance of social capital in leadership in organizations (Tayyaba, Shen, Syed, Muhammad, Muhammad, 2016), (Avalo, Yagüe, Cangahuala, 2016).

Under this perspective and in coherence with the humanistic sense of the ECCI University, and the principles of relevance, equity, quality, efficiency and transparency evidenced in the institutional mission, this project was justified for making a diagnosis that would characterize and quantify the accumulation of capital social of the institution, so that it could later serve as a base in the construction and execution of policies and projects tending to solve problems of our population, starting from the promotion of associativity, the strengthening of the value of civic values, and the increase of trust, as a visible social asset of the institution.

## Theoretical references

The origins of the social capital date back to 1916, when the American professor Lyda Hanifan studied in the schools of the State of West Virginia (USA) and emphasized her research on the behavior of the development of family and community life, recognizing the relationship of incidence in the growth of economic and community problems.

The region was impoverished; and these studies allowed to identify the low levels of trust and the lack of motivation of people to participate in the civic life of the community, a conditioning factor of development in a specific environment.

In the decade of the 1960s, it began to gain visibility with the work of Jane Jacobs (1962), who identified that in the context of the city, there arises the construction of neighborhood urban networks, which constitute a form of social capital. These results were presented after identifying that the consequences of urban development of large cities in the United States were reflected in the loss of civic life and closeness among neighbors, and it was also perceived an increase in violence and urban crime.

In the decade of the 1980s, the concept gains popularity, being related to the economy; this as a result of the great contributions made by authors like Elinor Ostrom based on her work on the New Institutional Economy (NIE), who together with Ronald Coase and Douglass North address the study of transaction costs and the importance of institutions, their rules and mediations, proposing a new institutionalism that allows to address the economic phenomena articulated with their effects on society, and not isolated from them.

At the beginning of the decade of the 1990s, with the works of James Coleman and Pierre Bourdieu, literature began to be generated in the field of social capital; in the 1990s, Robert Putnam and Francis Fukuyama had already positioned the concept in academic and intellectual spheres, which allowed their global recognition.

Finally, Robert Putnam (2003) proposes a concept of social capital that arises from the identification and interrelation in a society of trust, rules and networks, with the networks generated between governmental participants and civil society.

In countries such as Colombia, three measurements of social capital have been carried out in 1997, 2005 and 2011, under the World Bank (WB) methodology. These studies have shown low levels of trust and reciprocity in society, as well as demotivation for participation and care of the public sector from the strengthening of community associativity.

These studies at global level have identified a positive relationship of direct incidence between

social capital, education and development, based on findings in countries such as Finland, Japan and Norway according to OECD (2003), which present high levels of education and economic development, where citizens tend to participate actively in the civic life of their communities, as they are interested in establishing collaborative networks for the achievement of benefits, unlike Latin American countries.

Education contributes to consolidating ties of solidarity, cooperation and respect for civic norms; and it plays a key role in the generation of social capital (Aduna, García and Morales, 2011), (Chattopadhyay, 2014). In the educational community, interaction is generated between people, values, norms and experiences that their members share (*Habitus*) in terms of Bourdieu. The deeper and more solid these common values are, the stronger will be the sense of community (Fukuyama, 2001); in turn, this leads to promoting societies with a high degree of cohesion, offering mutual moral support, in such a way that Individuals share collective energy and support, once they have exhausted their own ones (Kawachi and Berkman, 2000).

## Materials and methods

The proposed methodological structure responds to four phases, called this way: research design, sample selection, application of the instrument and results. It is proposed a descriptive research with a quantitative approach, which allows creating new knowledge based on the identification of a delimited investigative tension.

The design starts from determining the type of research; the students of the ECCI University were determined as the study population, restricted to students enrolled from third semester onwards, due to the context of the project. Surveys were carried out and, in order to correctly represent the population, the probabilistic sampling theory was used to extract an adequate sample. Pilot tests were done to evaluate the questionnaire and the sample design; finally, the sample size was 355 students.

The field work allowed the application of the survey in two stages. The first one was composed of multiple correspondence analysis (Monroy, 2012), a multivariate descriptive analysis intended to observe the existence of association in certain information that correctly characterizes the

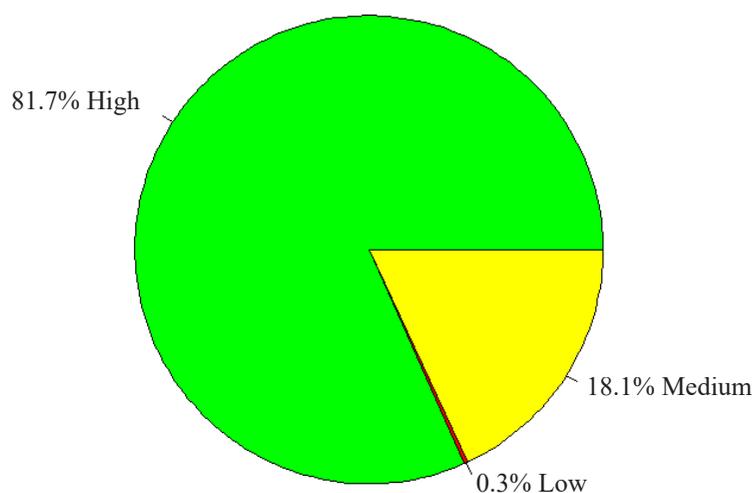
population. In the second stage, there were specified questions, which were analyzed through percentage graphs.

All of the above in order to determine how students perceived the generation of social capital in the environment of the academic community, and thus identify strengths that may positively affect the community's cohesion; in addition, to determine flaws and apply some type of intervention; all this with a view to always improving as a university that generates collective welfare.

## Results

Within the framework of social capital, trust has been shown to be the fundamental basis for interpersonal relationships. According to graph 1, students demonstrate and recognize that trust is an important input to establish beneficial relationships for them. In addition to this premise, there are other factors that need to be implemented, so that students can take better advantage of the university as a generator of knowledge and personal and social development; these can be strategies of assertive communication, at vertical level, promotion of team work, reciprocity and strengthening of belonging.

**Graph 1. What is the importance level of trust as a basis of social relationships?**



Source: the authors

According to Table 1, it is observed that the students indicate a constant promotion of values by the institution.

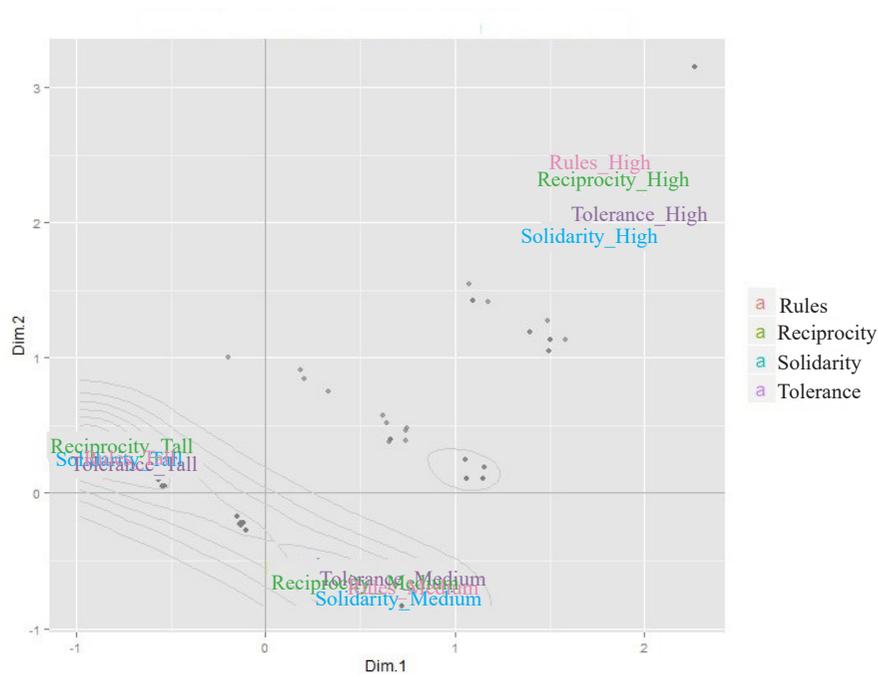
**Table 1. Figures for promotion of values at the University**

	Tolerance	Solidarity	Reciprocity	Rules
High	50.43	49.86	37.54	55.87
Medium	44.13	41.83	55.87	39.26
Low	5.44	8.31	6.59	4.87

Source: the authors

Figure 2, based on table 1, shows the relation among the categories of responses; students who consider that there is a great promotion of tolerance in the university. In addition, it is observed that the promotion of values is high for the other aspects; which can be an indication of the level of integration of students with the university; that is, if they only attend classes and do not mind relating to the university in any other way, it can be presumed that they will not be aware of events or other academic or welfare programs offered, and which could influence their responses in the survey; that would be an uninformed element. Therefore, it is presented an "obvious" relationship: the more informed the student, the better the perception of the promotion of values in the institution.

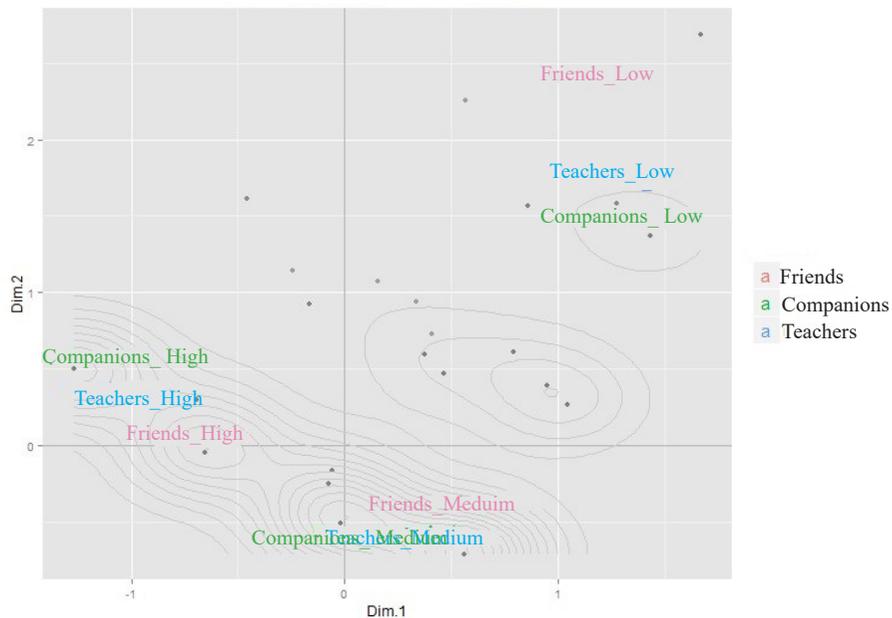
**Graph 2. Promotion of values in the University**



Source: the authors

In table 2 and graph 3, it can be seen that there are three groups of students, typified by the categories “High”, “Medium” and “Low;” that is, the characteristics of each student weigh a lot when analyzing the confidence that they perceive of the main participants to which they are exposed; for example, a person who does not trust their closest friends, will not either have confidence in his/her classmates and professors; on the contrary, a person who fully trusts their friends, will also tend to trust his/her classmates and professors.

**Graph 3. Trust in students**



Source: the authors

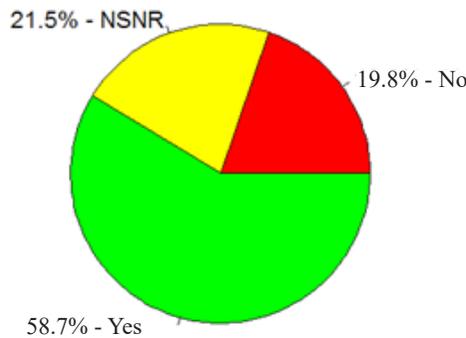
**Table 2. Trust factor in students**

	Friends	Classmates	Professors
High	57.72	24.92	34.38
Medium	42.4	62.17	54.72
Low	4.87	12.89	10.88

Source: the authors

However, it can be seen from figure 4 that the outlook is not so optimistic, because only a little more than 50% of the students trust their closest friends in great extension; and something even more striking is the fact that, contrary to what might be thought, for the characteristics and similarities (age, career, etc.) that students share, the next participant that generates more confidence in them is not their classmates and/or the university, but their professors; this can be explained by the figure of respect that these infuse in their students.

**Graph 4. Opportunities to encourage associative work**

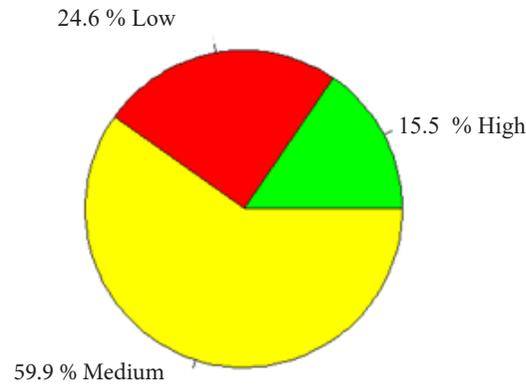


Source: the authors

It is evident the lack of knowledge students have about the opportunities that the university offers to be part of groups that encourage associative work; but the problem does not lie in the lack of existence of these programs, but in the effectiveness and functioning of communication channels within the institution, as there are more students who do not know about the existence of opportunities to associate, than students who think that those opportunities do not work. Although the graph does not show a “negative” trend, the university as a knowledge generating and social welfare institution has the requirement to inform and ensure that students identify these opportunities.

Figure 5 shows that students do not perceive alliances with internal and external networks; that is, they do not seem to be aware that they can create associative relationships with other national and international institutions that encourage their own and common development; the possible reasons may be associated with the lack of incorporation of more research training and internationalization in the curriculum.

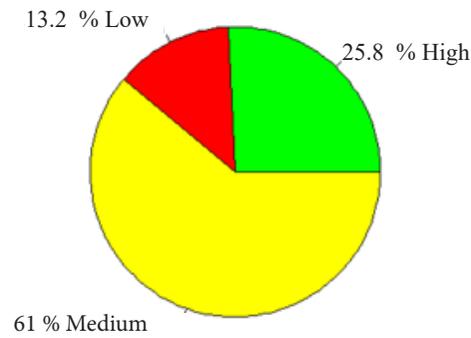
**Figure 5. To what degree can you identify internal and external networks at your university?**



Source: the authors

Contrary to the above, figure 6 shows that there is a perception on the part of students regarding the efforts made by the academic community to be part of associative networks.

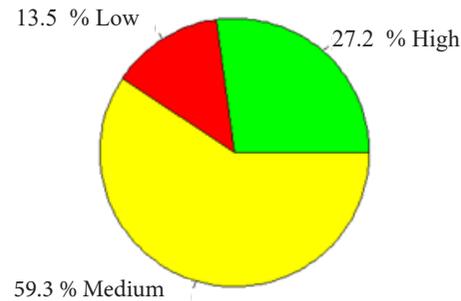
**Graph 6. How willing is the academic community to be part of associative networks?**



Source: the authors

According to graph 7, there is a tendency on the part of students to think that the information channels in the institution, in general terms, are efficient.

**Graph 7. At what level can the communication channels at the University be considered effective?**



Source: the authors

## Discussion

Social capital, as intangible capital, allows formal social relationships that affect the creation of social fabric, from the promotion of networking based on recognition of trust, normativity and reciprocity, social values that stimulate associativity as a means of cohesion that privileges the interest of the community, and potentiates better possibilities of development and welfare for the community.

The results here obtained show that the behavior of generation of social capital in the ECCI community tends to be discreet, keeping coherence with the national trend; these results can be interpreted from their recognition in light of the theoretical framework built in relation to social capital, which identifies components that allow the establishment of community associative relationships, which according to Bourdieu and Coleman affect the social structure, and make it possible to visualize the needs of society and address them from the strengthening of networks and the recognition of the regulatory environment.

What can be seen in general terms is that there is an association among response options, that is, students who tend to believe that the university greatly promotes some specific value (empowerment, teamwork, etc.) also believe that the remaining values are promoted in parallel, in other words, students with low perceptions of leadership development (as an example) also have low perceptions in the promotion of other values.

The first generality that appears in the analysis is that people who have not experienced a sense of exclusion, have neither felt (being) isolated by other factors, such as their sexual preference, or their ethnicity, etc.; this could show that students, in general terms, do not present great inconveniences in these aspects that affect the ownership and identity of the conglomerate. However, it is necessary to pay a little more attention to the students who have presented problems in this aspect; we can see that the response options with the highest classification with the largest number of subjects are the socioeconomic-average condition and the average religion. that is to say, that the most common situations of exclusion to which students have been subjected at some point in their lives are their socio-economic situation, most likely due to lack of resources, and religious freedom.

For the other situations, the percentages are not very high, and the response options appear very isolated against the main agglomeration; this does not mean that they have to be left aside, on the

contrary, the university institution has drawbacks in the feeling of exclusion; what happens is that we are in an academic community, the characterization of people who commonly compose it are very far from the people of the community in general.

Finally, it can be observed that for low perceptions responses tend to be scarce, in relation to the perception of the environment, because students in general have a good perception about the institution, which we could qualify as medium-high.

It is possible to affirm that the perception of improvement that the institution has shown is greater in the students who are closest to it; that is, students who are well informed about the university, who know better its strong points, and therefore believe that the institution is on the right track. Therefore, the image of the university towards the students depends entirely on how much its image is favorably displayed towards its students; however, it requires more promotion of associativity and participation in networks.

Community social capital is assumed as a source of social growth that transforms realities, from the articulation with other material resources that can influence the level of development of a population, based on the sphere of education.

## Conclusions

Social capital is an incident factor in the development of a community, since it affects from education, the quality of the generated networks, as well as the possibilities of social cohesion, promoting the recognition of the norms and the identification of social values, which appear with greater incidence in societies that recognize social capital, contrary to those environments that do not know it; In this sense, it can be affirmed that social capital positively affects development.

In the context of the study carried out in "Universidad ECCI," it is observed that the students showed a high level of recognition in the face of values such as trust and tolerance, and that they recognize that in the daily life of the institution, they are encouraged and recognized.

In relation to trust, the behavior shown demonstrates that people tend to trust more in the individuals in their environment; in general, confidence levels are high in close circles; in this sense, an institution that promotes trust will be able to transform its immediate environment, generating a better approximation to the construction of social capital.

A society with greater access to quality education generates greater possibilities of inclusion and social mobility; in this sense, the link between social capital and education becomes a positive relationship, which opens different possibilities to the generation of alternatives to development, in a holistic perspective, which is not limited to economic development, but also involves human and social development of the community.

Thus, it is possible to affirm that the relationship between quality education and social capital is one of reciprocity and interdependence, since one cannot expect a society to have a good stock of accumulated social capital, if there's no access to quality education; at the same time, a society with access to quality education will generate associative networks that potentiate community social capital (networks), beneficial for all.

Finally, in order to potentiate social capital from education, it is necessary that higher education institutions, in addition to promoting values of positive social behavior, require to create mediations so that the entire community may know the integration alternatives that may arise with the purpose of generating individual and collective benefit, evidenced in networks; in this way, it can be affirmed that an institution creates social capital with a collective sense that be assumed as a source of transformation of the particular society of the specific environment.

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