Social constraints in university educational environment

Gulmira Kassen\textsuperscript{a}, Anar Mukasheva\textsuperscript{b}, Nazym Satybaldina\textsuperscript{c}

\textsuperscript{a,b,c} Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, 050038, Al-Farabi street 71, Almaty city, Republic of Kazakhstan

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Abstract

Social restrictions may be interpreted as factors, impeding personal development not only in specialized educational institutions. In educational process hindrances arise that deprive students of opportunities to achieve targeted results. The study of basic determinants of social constraints of students was implemented. It is based on classic studies in social philosophy of Confucius, Aristotle, I. Kant, Hegel and other authors. The study allowed to differentiate social constraints into four blocks of basic determinants of social constraints, that are environmental, motivational, communicative and pragmatist ones. In the environmental block advantage is taken by constraints related to cognitive environmental discomfort. In the motivational block the following constraints are in the lead: domination of negative motives, low involvement in academic activity. The results of investigation of social constraints arising in the educational environment of the University and hindering the learner's ability to achieve the desired result of training, limiting the process of their self-development and further self-realization.

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Keywords: Social constraints; education; environment; personality; teacher; student

1. Introduction

Various aspects of the problem of social constraints were considered in works of many thinkers...
and scholars of the past and present, for instance, Lao - Tzu, Confucius, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Machiavelli, B. Spinoza, T. Hobbes, I. Kant, Hegel, Marx, F. Engels, Nietzsche, M. Weber, K. Leontiev, N. Berdyaev, Heidegger, M. Foucault, T. Parsons, R.A. Wilson and many other authors. The problem of social constraints is dialectically related to the problem of freedom, especially social freedom. It is possible to define social constraints as manifestations of social necessity in the form of system complex of explicit (evident) and implicit (concealed) social and cultural norms and rules, behavioral models, stereotypes of thinking, ways, means and also results of self-expression of people, that are consciously or subconsciously followed by people; people cannot or do not want to go beyond them even when it is necessary for themselves or for the society in which they live. The fact that means, ways and results of self-expression of people are mentioned in the above definition indicates that social constraints include not only ideal norms and rules but also products of material culture. We may even admit that social constraints are of mixed material and ideal nature. Besides, social constraints may be interpreted as leading social and educational factors, impeding personal development not only in specialized educational institutions (children's homes, orphanages, boarding schools, etc.) but in everyday activities of an individual. To our opinion, this problem is especially pressing for education.

2. Problem Statement

In educational process a lot of hindrances, troubles arise that deprive students of opportunities to achieve targeted results, restrict the process of their self-development, deprive them of opportunity of self-fulfillment, self-fulfillment in intersubjective interaction included. All of this leads to the aggravation of personal and problems with studying.

Based on observation of the students’ development process for many years of lecturing at the University we can state that social constraints appear under conditions when capabilities of a students to satisfy their educational needs are restrained (or even limited):

1. needs in interpersonal relations within educational process;
2. needs in inter-subject exchange of activities;
3. needs in social interaction within educational process;
4. needs in self-respect;
5. needs in self-expression;
6. needs in self-assertion in educational activities;
7. finally, needs in self-actualization of personal potential in educational process.

Based on the observed phenomena we suggested that study of basic determinants of students’ social constraints would help develop a rehabilitation strategy for removing social constraints in future.

3. **Research Questions**

1. The study of the problem of social restrictions in the theoretical aspect.
2. The establishment of a dialectical relationship between problem of social constraints and the problem of freedom.
3. Analysis and synthesis of available scientific definitions of “social constraints” and the development of the author's formulation of the search term.
4. The purposeful surveillance of vital functions of really functioning student study groups and study the social restrictions existing in the university practice.
5. The use of certain methods to identify social constraints in the educational environment of the university (on a sample of 265 people).
6. Compilation of all data and the analysis of all statements of students using the empirical discourse analysis.
7. Processing of the obtained results on the basis of factor analysis (using a statistical software program «SPSS – 12» for Windows), and interest rate analysis.
8. The statement of the most common social constraints and their differentiation into four blocks of the basic determinants of social constraints: environmental, motivational, communicative and activity.
9. Identification of social constraints on the three basic blocks, which by the results of six methods used are the most problematic areas in the educational process of high school (environmental, communicative and activity).

4. **Purpose of the Study**

Study of basic determinants of students’ social constraints and identify problem areas in the educational environment of the university.
5. Research Methods

Self-actualization test, Cattell’s personality multiple-factor questionnaire, Leontiev’s test of orientations for meaning of life, Bubnova’s procedure for diagnostics of actual structure of personal value system, Raven’s Progressive Matrices, Buzin’s short selection test (SST), adapted Procedure for retrospective questionnaire of attitudes and method of empirical discourse-analysis.

6. Findings

We stated the most common social constraints and depending on their meaning to differentiate them into four blocks of basic determinants of social constraints, that are environmental, motivational, communicative and pragmatist ones.

In the environmental block advantage is taken by constraints related to cognitive environmental discomfort such as underestimation of students’ potential by teachers (61 %), impossibility to display creativity and imagination within the frames of certain educational subjects (48 %), unavailability of individual trajectory of learning (42 %), unfavorable microclimate in a study group (33 %), absence of competitive conditions for learning (27 %), constraint by a teacher of research activity and independent thinking of students (17 %), corruption and bureaucracy of the system (7 %).

Smaller percentile of social constraints relates to family environmental discomfort. The students mention only infantilism of their parents with regard to their future profession (17 %), and inactivity of family environment in formation of their professional skills (9 %).

In the motivational block the following constraints are in the lead: domination of negative motives, cultivated by unmotivated teachers (38 %), low involvement in academic activities also caused by inadequate level of organization by a teacher of effective learning process (30 %), low level of aspirations (28 %).

The communicative block includes: absence of communicative and empathic environment (45 %), low interpersonal tolerance of subjects of educational environment (37 %), distance in communication with teacher (29 %), detachment from teacher’s personality (25 %), domineering of aggression on the part of teachers and the whole system (23 %), communicative deviations (17 %). The lowest percentile is gained by the following social constraints of this
block: low inter-ethnic tolerance (3 %), conformism of teachers (7 %).

In the pragmatist block the following social constraints prevail: ineffective organization of pedagogic and personal interaction of teacher and students (72 %), passivity in educational process (46 %), low involvement of creative and pragmatist potentials of students in educational process (35 %), low level of commitment in academic activities (27 %).

7. Conclusions
Realities of practice of university education and abundance of information streams in the conditions of pluralism of educational goals and approaches determine the needs in developing new technologies of organization of university educational environment. New technologies of organization of university educational environment will be developed that are going to contribute to the removal of social constraints and formation of all-around personality of each student oriented to the system of values and needs of modern society.

8. References


