PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

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Trust, Fairness and Helpfulness of Japan and Slovak University Students

Abstract: *Introduction.* Trust is becoming one of the serious problems of university education, both in terms of the quality of education itself and in terms of the quality of knowledge, skills and competences that students and graduates acquire. Based on the level of perceived trust, students decide how strong and persistent their pro-social motivation will be, i.e. their perception of fairness and helpfulness and, above all, the extent to which students will be willing to apply these attributes towards others. *Purpose and methods.* With the use of analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction, generalization, induction, deduction, modeling, etc., the purpose of the paper is to study trust of higher education students closely related to the topic of fair and helping behavior. All of these three phenomena are investigated from both perspectives: passive (in situations when they are received by a student from other entities) and active (in

situations when they are actively performed by the student and are addressed toward the others). The empirical part presents the results of a questionnaire survey performed on $n = 405$ Japan students and $n = 443$ Slovak students, intended to find possible interrelations in their opinions regarding the general trust, fairness and helpfulness. *Results.* In the question aimed at expressing the opinion whether people can be trusted, or people cannot be too careful, as many as 68.89 % of Japanese and 66.82 % of Slovak respondents opted for the latter. 81.72 % of Slovak and 69.14% of Japan respondents preferred the opinion that people try to be fair. In the field of providing help, two thirds of the respondents (65.01 % and 69.63 %) expressed that people are generally mostly just looking out for themselves. *Conclusions and discussions.* The novelty of the paper stems from its theoretical, empirical as well as discussion part which confirm that it is useful to search the university students' trust, fairness and help from the viewpoint of mutual dependences existing between them. The perceived trust influences the extent and quality of furtherly applied trust, fairness and helpfulness; the perceived fairness predetermines the furtherly applied fairness, trust and helpfulness, and simultaneously, the help taken from others build the student's helpfulness, trust & trustworthiness, and fairness.

Keywords: trust, fairness, helpfulness, student, survey, comparison.

1. Introduction

Problem statement. Recent years have been a period of cataclysmic change and no university, whatever its origin is, can remain untouched (Law, 2013, p. 81). Although new opportunities and challenges are permanently arising, all processes for keeping them are very dynamic. They demand new and deeper knowledge of various aspects of the university environment and, especially, knowledge of students' current characteristics, traits, changed expectations, desires, escalated necessities, etc. Within this perspective, under-standing of motivation, satisfaction, personality traits such as trust, fairness and helpfulness might be considered important. This sensitive knowledge can be applied to "promote students' classroom engagement, to foster the moti-vation to learn and develop talent, and to inform teachers how to provide a motivationally supportive classroom climate" (Reeve, 2009, p. 19).

The state of studying the problem. Trust is one of the variables that has attracted great interest in the academic community (Mulyono, 2014, p. 63). It is a firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something (Soanes & Stevenson, 2003, p. 1893). It is "an individual's or group's willing-ness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open" (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999, p. 189). According to Heffernan et al. (2018), the students' trust can be considered "as an overall judgement that captures the components of ability, benevolence and integrity" (p. 233). If students believe that they can trust their teachers, they will be more likely to cooperate with instructional goals and

to be more actively engaged and, thus, to experience greater identification with the school (Mitchell, Kensler & Tschannen-Moranm, 2018).

Recently, numerous studies were devoted to the research of students' trust. For example, Mulyono (2014) relates trust and commitment to the students' loyalty and confirms their mutual dependence. Ulewicz (2014) considers trust as one of the most important elements that affect the process of building a great university. White (2018) examines relations of authority and trust between students and academic teachers from the viewpoint of student partnership; the partnership is an element with a strong positive relation to the students' trust. Sama, Brahmasari & Ratih (2017) introduce a concept that studies the influence of marketing mix to trust and trust towards the competitive advantage of private higher education.

Although the list of the studies mentioned could continue, it points to the variability of specific research aspects which are related to the students' trust. In addition, when examined deeper, a lot of studies are more internally specified. They study the students' trust towards various forms, methods or techniques of learning. For example, trust is linked to an online learning (Wang, 2014), e-learning (Dwyer & Marsh, 2017), active learning (Cavanagh, 2018), supportive learning – especially weekly workshops and Math Café (Gill, Greenhow, 2011), collaborative learning (Nurhayati, Rosmaiyadi & Buyung, 2017), etc.

Unresolved issues. However, the investigation of trust in relation to understanding of *fairness and helpfulness* of university students is still absent in the literature. Especially, the opinions comparison of students from Japan (i.e. unique and specific country) versus students from Slovakia (i.e. Slavic country in the Central Europe) could contribute to the knowledge base in the field. With this intention, a simple thought-research model for this paper was elaborated (*Figure 1*). Dashed arrows in the Figure illustrate relations among all of the three phenomena searched in a comprehensive (mutually indivisible) view of each term, i.e. trust versus fairness versus helpfulness. Solid arrows illustrate relations among them when the active as well passive perspectives are respected in a case of each searched term: received & applied trust versus received & applied fairness versus received & applied helpfulness.

Based on the above-mentioned ideas, *the aim of the article* is to study trust of higher education students and its crucial aspects. With use of both theoretical and empirical analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction, generalization, etc. of knowledge and opinions, trust will be linked to fairness and helpfulness of university students. The empirical part will present the results of a questionnaire survey performed on $n = 405$ Japan students and $n = 443$ Slovak students, intended to find possible interrelations in this area. The survey's results, generalization of experience and relevance of presented inspirations will be incorporated in the paper's discussion and conclusion.
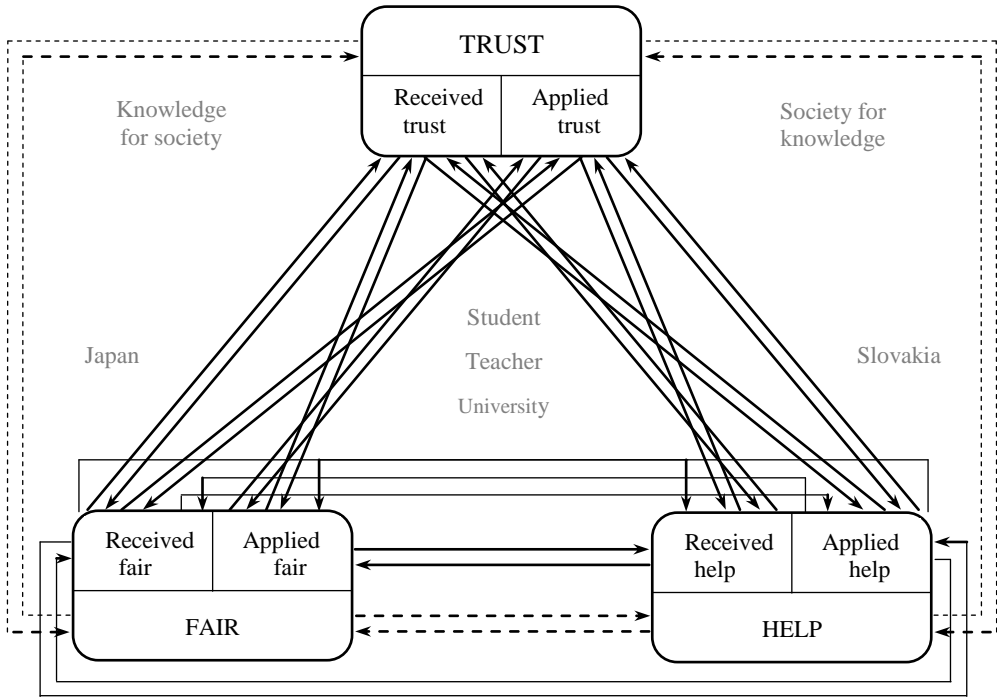
Figure 1. Thought-research model of the paper
Source: it has been developed on the basis of own study

1.1. Student trust

Trust is a dynamic phenomenon that stems from the mind and soul of an individual. It affects understanding of all social elements, values, and behavior of other individuals or groups. "Trust is influenced by many types of factors and elements, e.g. material, time, spatial, and especially, relational, intelligential, emotional, commemorational, experiential, cognitive, etc." (Blašková et al., 2015, p. 72). Since the "students almost every day keep in touch with their educational institution, this relationship can last for years" (Borges et al., 2016, p. 120).

From the perspective of higher education environment, several dimensions of students' trust might be viewed. In accordance with the paper's topic, trust dimensions defined in the following text are related to various forms of help and fairness too:

1.   *Trust towards the study subjects.* When considering learning trust, it is necessary to respect the individual intellectual potential of each student. From this perspective, trust towards the study subject is the belief in the benefits of the subject for students to grow, while the benefits of

passing the subject considerably exceed the accompanying negatives (time spent preparing for seminars, accomplishing the assigned tasks, etc.). There are many students at universities who excel in all fields of study. According to Slavík et al. (2012), these can be described as students – generalists. There are also many students who excel in a specific field and have chosen their study program on a targeted basis, on the basis of "long-term self-education and/or preparation for university studies (by participating in various student competitions). For such students, studying the chosen program is a reward" (Sandanusová, 2010). Probably, many students are successful in certain areas, however, they *feel insecure and distrustful* towards some subjects. For students who usually succeed in behavioral disciplines, such subjects usually include e.g. Mathematics, Informatics, Physics, etc. "It is important to help students not only to bridge the skill gap, but also to build their mathematical confidence" (Gill, Greenhow, 2011, p. 130). In contrast, students who are successful in technical disciplines, often feel some fear or distrust towards 'soft' subjects, such as Management, Human Resource Management, Organizational Behavior, etc. Both groups of students often need *'knowledge help'* from the teacher or more clever students.

2. *Trust towards oneself*. "In addition to the interest in study, self-confidence is also important, which stems from self-knowledge and self-awareness of one's own abilities, determines the desire for employment and is a manifestation of the student's aspirations" (Slavík et al., 2012, p. 230). Self-trust means the volitional conviction of the individual in his or her own power, one's own built potential and motivation. It represents the certainty of effective students' behavior in the academic environment. The student considers these psychological and intellectual dispositions to be so strong that they give him or her a considerable internal guarantee that s/he can succeed in the university studies.

   Self-trust allows students to be able to believe in the ability possessed, not easily give up in the face of every problem so that they are able to perform all tasks assigned independently and with maximal results (Nurhayati, Rosmaiyadi & Buyung, 2017, p. 57). It is the informed confidence one has in oneself (Dwyer & Marsh, 2017, p. 111) and although students should start at a university equipped for their learning, critical thinking and academic writing, and they should be able to do these tasks without much further help (Hilsdon, 2011, p. 20), the growing diversity of students makes such an assumption unrealistic (Haggis, 2006). This points to the need of *'personality help'* from others and calls for *fairness* in social relations.

3. *Trust towards the peers and friends*. Trust in one's own strength can be strengthened throughout the life by student's parents and siblings.

This is probably the most significant lifelong motivational impact. Of course, with increasing age and acquired learning experience, the share of another, wider social environment is also increasing. According to Martorell, Papalia & Feldman (2015), the interaction of inheritance and experience gained is increasingly influenced by the experience acquired by an individual. Thus, it is precisely the classmates and friends, with whom the student spends study time, that can greatly enhance his or her self-confidence.

For the existence of trust, the spirit of cooperation among students is essential (Thomas, 2012). In such a view, trust can be considered as the extent to which student delivers control to the others (students, friends) in belief that s/he will fulfill the duties and responsibilities s/he respects (Charlebois, Palmour&Knoppers, 2016). Unlike the family, the student chooses friends him/herself (initially often on the basis of felt sympathy). However, the ability to fully trust friends, the student's *fairness and helpfulness* are among the key attributes of staying in any social relationship. It follows that mutual friendly and peer support is an essential element of the student's motivation and academic success.

4. *Trust towards the teachers.* A higher education teacher should be a natural human authority, a professional mentor and a role model who his or her students fully trust. Trust towards the teacher is a belief in the correctness of the teacher's pro-social, pedagogical and scientific research anchor. "When students trust teachers and believe that they have their best interest at heart, they will be more likely to value school and school-related outcomes, to feel like they belong, and to work together with teachers to meet academic goals" (Mitchell, Kensler, Tschannen-Moranm, 2018). In this view, "empathy found its way into education and teaching" (Berkovich, 2018, p. 2). Empathy is currently not only becoming the special competence that is possessed by some of the most socially attractive teachers. This one becomes the critical necessity of each responsible academic and serves as firm pillar of professional trustworthiness for the teacher and the students. In such situations, the teacher performs the role of an advisor, counselor, facilitator, and a reliable partner in the process of the overall student's development. This evokes that apart from the *'knowledge and competence-development help'* also the *'evaluative fairness'* of teachers is important.

5. *Trust towards the university.* The university must be a dignified and honest partner of students in the process of their overall personality-cultivation progress. This type of trust represents the acceptance and positive belief of the student towards the university as an institution focused on the development of science, general knowledge, ethical and pro-social behavior and the like. Trust of students towards the univer-

sity have a lot of positive outcomes and impacts. For example, it affects the students' satisfaction and loyalty (Schlesinger, Cervera & Pérez-Cabañero, 2016); students' commitment (Mulyono, 2014), retention (Meer & Chapman, 2014), students' behavior toward transnational education partnership (Heffernan, Wilkins & Butt, 2018), etc.

Naturally, it is important to trust university in relation to the proper use of personal data of students too (Slade, Prinsloo & Khalil, 2018). However, according to Cheng (2016): "The current practice of quality evaluation has caused deterioration in the trusting relations between student and academic, as the evaluation is in favor of institutional competition and compliance, academic accountability and performativity, and value for money, and it encourages a consumerist culture" (p. 15). This calls for elimination of potentially impaired pillars of student's institutional trust and leads to the necessity of *'procedural fairness'* at the university and *'relational help'* of academic consultants provided to students.

6. *Trust towards the society*. "Social trust at the individual level is subject to first-hand experience of the social world and the people in it, and daily contacts with others, which enable a truster to make a judgment about the trustworthiness of generalized others" (Huang, van den Brink & Groot, 2011, p. 290). Stated more concretely, trust in society anchors the accumulation of all types of trust that the student feels. They combine trust in one's own strength, trust in family and friends, trust in study subjects, trust in teachers, trust in the university, etc. with overall belief in social order, morality, responsibility and fulfillment of interiorized pro-social expectations. It is therefore the result of *'so-far provided help'* and *'the received fairness'*. However, it simultaneously instigates the *'need to help others'* and *'need to be fair'* towards other individuals and groups.

The above-mentioned dimensions emphasize that trust is a very sensitive characteristic. Trust is usually very difficult to build; it is based on a myriad of reasons. Disruption or even loss of trust can be caused not only by a major failure in relation to the individual or group under consideration. It may also be caused by unintentional or merely inadvertent behavior, which in other circumstances would not be of particular importance. However, in the given situation, and based on the previously perceived perceptions or indications, a serious disruption or even loss of confidence may occur and, subsequently, impaired trust may cause various imperfections in provided fairness and/or helpfulness.

1.2. Fairness and helpfulness
As in the case of opinions on the topic of students' trust, the considerations of fairness and helpfulness could be also targeted at two directions

or perspectives. The first perspective may be to describe the nature of *fairness* and *helpfulness* when these terms/approaches are performed toward the student *from other* persons, groups and institutions. The second perspective may be to focus attention on describing *fairness* and *helpfulness* when these terms/ approaches are performed *by the student* toward other persons, groups and institutions.

1.2.1. Student fairness

A student feeling of fairness can be defined as the accumulation of such experiences, emotions, and complex forms of student treatment that s/he receives, considers cognitively, and evaluates as objective, correct and gene-rally ethical. The attributed 'quality' of behavior decency of the others certainly affects the academic motivation of the student and largely predetermines the ethics and fairness of the student's behavior towards other individuals and groups.

Fairness is equated with justice which means integrity and excludes favoring (Zhang, 2014). It might be viewed and explained in "a context that focuses on distributional justice and equality of opportunity but also on principles of freedom and choice" (Smith, Todd & Laing, 2017, p. 336). Creating situation in which fairness is clear therefore presents a hopeful way of managing the impact of individuals' social emotions on their justice judg-ments and justice-related actions and reactions (Blader et al., 2010, p. 46).

Numerous recent studies are focused on researching fairness within these three dimensions: (a) distributive fairness; (b) procedural fairness; (c) interactional fairness (Greenberg, 1990; Caglar, 2013; Yilmaz, 2014; etc.). Tost & Lind (2010) have even tried to differentiate between two groups of justice theories: "Findings from research on distributive, procedural and interactional justice perceptions indicate that people readily differentiate between fair and unfair treatment, while system justification research indicates that people resist the perception of injustice, suggesting that such differentiation is unlikely" (p. 7). Of course, different characteristics may be considered as fair or unfair sources of inequality depending on the subjective or collective normative beliefs (Brunori, Peragine & Serlenga, 2013, p. 20).

From this perspective, fairness in higher education could also be considered as equality of educational opportunity that should be perceived as a widely agreed principle; this principle "merges two powerful ideas: that all young individuals should have equal chances to succeed in life and that more hardworking students should emerge in the education competition" (Brunori, Peragine & Serlenga (2012, p. 767).

Zhang points out that being a fair teacher includes especially the pro-per selection of the contacting objects, fair application of teaching contents, fair communicating methods, proper selection of contacting targets, and fair evaluation of the communicating effects (Zhang, 2014). These qualities or

approaches could be inspirational also for the students when trying to develop their fairness towards the others. "Indeed, the consequences of the fairness of one group member's specific encounters can reverberate throughout a group because those unaffected by particular decisions often witness, evaluate, and react to the fairness of those encounters" (Blader et al., 2010, p. 47). This means that it is necessary to measure whether a school's process is fair, with particular attention to the student's right to legal counsel (Berger & Berger, 1999).

As it is clear from the presentation of previous opinions, in the vast majority of cases, fairness is examined in relation to fair behavior applied to students. However, the purpose of this paper is to focus the attention on the opposite direction of fairness – *fairness applied by students to others* (students, teachers, parents, etc.). In this sense, the student fairness can be perceived as applying such behavior towards others, which is characterized by sincerity, an attempt to maintain honesty, adherence to the rules of decency, cooperation and belonging. Student fairness, as opposite to correctness of the expressions received from others, can be described as willingness, ability, competence, or even as a form of interpersonal intelligence, determining the moral suitability of behavior to others, keeping moral principles and respecting the rules enshrined in the envisaged environment (at the university, internship, student practice, public, etc.).

Certainly, the active students' fairness is, to a large extent, (co-) determined by the confidence and perception of fairness level of behavioral patterns and forms perceived and experienced from the other party. Differently stated, perceived trust and received fairness are critical factors as well as creators of subsequently applied trust and fairness. The quality of previous and accepted trust &fairness predetermines the quality of future trust &fairness. In this sense they also form the willingness of students to help others, i.e. students' helpfulness.

1.2.2. Student helpfulness

The help provided to students is extremely important. Despite the pretended overconfidence, many students need some form and scope of support. In this view, help given to students can be defined as providing appropriate material support or financial assistance (Isserstedt, 2007), organizational and administrative services (Ulewicz, 2017; Yatskiv & Ishmuhametov, 2016; Sokół et al., 2015;), learning support or counseling (Kim & Park, 2018; Niehaus et al., 2017; Klimova, 2015), psychological or mental aid (Lipson et al., 2019; Rueckert, 2015; Eisenberg, Golberstein & Hunt, 2009), expressing appropriate belonging (Gomez-Rey, Barbera & Fernandez-Navarro, 2017; Sarmini & Prasetyo, 2017; Blašková, Blaško & Tršková, 2015), etc. by other classmates, teachers, university administrative staff, and other entities.

It is common that students often feel overloaded and stressed (especially in the first year of their studies). They do not just have to contend with demanding university content, which is represented by lectures, seminars, new topics, the need to think critically and independently, the accented ability to learn effectively, and so on. They also have to struggle with loneliness and family isolation. Tachine, Cabrera & Yellow Bird (2017) mention that "the student centers on campus provide a 'home away from home' environment" (p. 785). It can be added that such relationship assistance often helps to overcome any difficulties associated with the demandingness of studying.

The above-mentioned *passive understanding of help,* i.e. help provided to the student, finds its reflection in an *active understanding of help,* i.e. help provided by student to the others. In this sense, students' helpfulness represents the readiness for appropriate forms of contributive behavior, altruism, care for others, willingness to assist in any situation of need, replacement of 'my and individual egoism' by 'our and societal progress', etc.

Ryan & Deci (2018) opine that „under nurturing condition, pro-sociality comes naturally to most people" (p. 630). Continuing the logical line of this paper, the opinion of Rockenbach, Hudson & Tuchmayer (2014) could be presented too: "Becoming a more compassionate and socially aware person as a result of service work is positively linked to committing oneself to a meaningful life marked by helping others, civic engagement, and service" (p. 312).

Although helping others often demands a lot of energy, time, will, sometimes also material or financial costs, etc., it is very beneficial. Moreover, the university students should have such a personality inclination and 'proactive humanness'. The reason is that helping gives benefits or yields not only to the addressee of the provided help. It also increases a value of oneself, sense of usefulness, social recognition, dignity, etc. of the helper.

According to Weinstein & Ryan (2010), helping and prosocial behaviors would satisfy all three basic psychological needs: (a) via helping others effectively, the helper is able to experience *competence;* (b) through a sense of empathy and interest in others, the helper can experience *relatedness;* (c) based on internal perceived lotus of causality, the helper's *autonomy* is engaged. Satisfaction of these needs can result in various positive outcomes such as "positive mood and vitality" (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010, p. 222). In other words, justice research has demonstrated that the way people engage with other parties is based on their evaluation of the fairness of the other parties' actions (Blader & Tyler, 2009).

2. Purpose and research methods

The purpose of the article is to research opinions of the university students about trust, disclose potential relations of trust to perceived help/fullness and fair/ness, and compare results obtained between two relatively different countries: Japan and Slovakia.

The methodological basis of the study *is* built on the main premise that the quality of helpful, trustworthy and fair approach applied by teachers, university and other forming entities predetermines students willingness 'to return by their actions' all of accepted behavioral patterns to these entities. Moreover, the positive influential effect could even cause a sharing or dissemination of such pro-social behavioral patterns toward other individuals or groups (peers, friends, colleagues, etc.). The mentioned premise can be supported or completed by following three opinions:

(1) Trust is the perceived likelihood by which an individual expects that another individual or group, at worst, will not knowingly or willingly do the individual harm, and at best, will act in the individual's interests (Huang, van den Brink & Groot, 2011). (2) According to Nurhayati, Rosmaiyadi & Buyung (2017), it is important „to instill self-confidence in students". Intentionally developed or strengthened trust leads student to the more positive acceptation of other statuses, processes, people, conditions, chances, limits, etc. It enables him or her to properly understand the importance of being contributive, fair, helping and socially high-recognized. (3) In addition: "The activation of neural alarm system by social events or personal uncertainty switches the justice judgment process from the uncritical assimilation of justice information that characterizes the system justification mode to the system critique mode, in which individuals abandon their initial fairness heuristic and instead they vigilantly evaluate the justice of the outcomes, procedures, and treatment, which occur in their social environments" (Tost & Lind, 2010, p. 13).

Methods of research. *Sociological research,* performed via a *questionnaire technique,* was chosen as the most proper from the perspective of time, cost and return expected. Apart from identifiers of the respondents (course, gender, and age), the questionnaire consisted of three items (questions). As mentioned above, the focus of items was on trust, fairness and helpfulness, while each of the items has provided two predefined statements/responses, as follows. Item-1: Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people? ([A] Can be trusted; [B] Cannot be too careful); Item-2: Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair? ([A] Try to be fair; [B] Take advantage); Item-3: Would you say that most of the time, people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves? ([A] Try to be helpful; [B] Look out for themselves), (Kokubo, 2016).

Information base of research. In detail, surveys in both countries – Japan and Slovakia – were performed in 2019. The number of Japan respondents was *n* = 405 of which 144 were males and 261 were females. Respondents were students of three universities, specifically: Atomi University, Meiji University, and Wako University.

The number of Slovak respondents was $n = 443$ of which there were 300 males and 143 females. The respondents were students of the University of Žilina and attended four study programs: Management, Informatics, Information Management and Computer Engineering.

Table 1 documents the characteristics of Japan and Slovak respondents. This shows that Slovak respondents were older on average (21 versus 19 years of age). Another small difference is the distribution of respondents by gender: in the set of Japan students, there were much more females than males, while in the set of Slovak students, the situation is opposite. Disproportion of Slovak respondents was influenced by the fact that two of addressed study programs have more technical character, one program is a combination of management and informatics and only one program is fully behaviorally orientated.

Table 1. Basic characteristics of respondents

Country	Japan ($n = 405$)		Slovakia ($n = 443$)	
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Female
	144	261	300	143
Average age	19	18	21	21
	19		21	

Source: it has been developed on the basis of own study

3. Research results

For the purposes of this paper, the attention was focused on evaluating three issues associated with trust. The data obtained were primarily investigated by quantifying the frequencies (*Table 2*). In the first question, aimed on ***trust,*** respondents had the opportunity to comment on whether *(A) People can be trusted* or *(B) People cannot be too careful*. Up to 68.89 % of Japanese respondents and 66.82 % of Slovak respondents favored the latter, i.e. answer *B*. If generalized expressions will be impersonated and related directly to the personality of the respondents (because many respondents look at and comment on the generalized behavior of other people through the perspective of their own behavior – the perspective of their own reassessment), it can be stated that participated students generally *do not trust others*. This result suggests a deepening relationship crisis that affects the global society, including the academic environment.

The second question examined ***fairness.*** Respondents were to decide whether *(A) People try to be fair* or *(B) People take advantage*. Again, the opinions of both Japanese and Slovak respondents were similar. Both groups

tended to choose the first answer, i.e. statement *A*. In detail, 81.72 % of Slovak students think that people behave fairly. On the other hand, for Japanese respondents, the response rate is significantly lower: 69.14 %. Compared to the answers to the first question (and subsequently to the third question), the results are much more positive. Despite the preference not to care too much about others, fortunately, in the area of fairness, respondents maintained their positive behavioral perspective. In other words, they are ethically tuned and resolutely reject pure egoism.

Table 2. Responses on trust, fairness and helpfulness

Question	Option	Japan		Slovakia	
		Freq.	[%]	Freq.	[%]
1. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	(A) Can be trusted	126	31.11	146	32.96
	(B) Can't be too careful	279	68.89	296	66.82
2. Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair?	(A) Try to be fair	280	69.14	362	81.72
	(B) Take advantage	125	30.86	80	18.06
3. Would you say that most of the time, people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves?	(A) Try to be helpful	123	30.37	153	34.54
	(B) Look out for themselves	282	69.63	288	65.01

Source: it has been developed on the basis of own study

For higher imagery, the values from Table 2 were subsequently processed into graphs (*Figure 2* and *3*).

The last question focused on the willingness to provide **help.** Most Slovak (65.01 %) and Japanese (69.63 %) respondents are in favor of statement *B* (second answer). Generally, they characterize people's behavior by *taking care of themselves*. If these results are transferred to student personalities, i.e. if their general vision of others' behavior are transferred to their own behavior, both Slovak and Japanese students show less willingness to help others. This can be attributed to some degree of undermined trust, often inflicted on incorrect behavior by other individuals and groups.
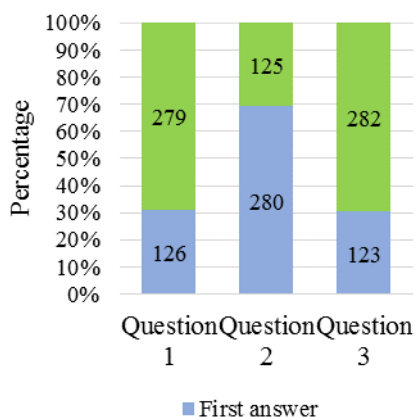
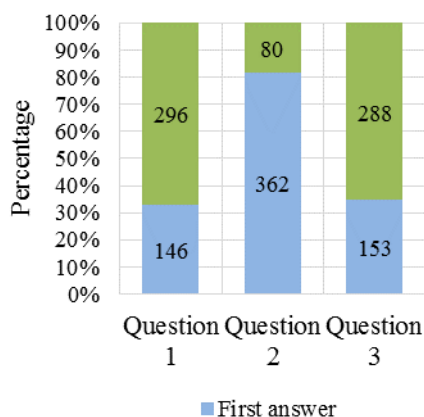***Figure 2.*** Responses to questions – Japan

Figure 3. Responses to questions – Slovakia

Source: it has been developed on the basis of own study

For a more detailed analysis of the data collected, the ***interrelations between the answers*** to all three questions and the possible dependence of the answers on the respondents' gender (using Wizard software) were examined. In addition to the general dependency (as measured by the Chi-Square Test), specific correlations were also examined, in relation to the designation of option *(A)* for each of the questions (*Table 3* and *4*).

Table 3. Correlation between items – Japan

Combinations analysed	Chi-Square Test		Product-Moment Correlation	
1st versus 2nd question (trust versus fair)	z	5.086	r	0.253
	P-value	<0.001	P-value	<0.001
	Significance	yes	Significance	yes
1st versus 3rd question (trust versus help)	z	2.505	r	0.124
	P-value	0.012	P-value	0.012
	Significance	yes	Significance	yes
2nd versus 3rd question (fair versus help|	z	3.032	r	0.151
	P-value	0.002	P-value	0.002
	Significance	yes	Significance	yes

Source: it has been developed on the basis of own study

The results of the analysis of *Japanese data* differ significantly from the Slovak ones. The statistically significant dependence was confirmed among all the issues examined (*Table 3*). Characteristics for *Chi-Square Test:* C = 1.96; admissible error = 5 %; confidence interval = 95 %; if: z > C => not independent; if: z < C => independent. Characteristics for *Product-Moment Correlation:* C = 0.097; admissible error = 5%; confidence interval = 95 %; if: /r/ > C => not independent; if: /r/ < C => independent.

Table 4. Correlation between items – Slovakia

Combinations analysed	Chi-Square Test		Product-Moment Correlation	
1st versus 2nd question (trust versus fair)	z	1.147	r	0.055
	P-value	0.251	P-value	0.252
	Significance	no	Significance	no
1st versus 3rd question (trust versus help)	z	2.599	r	0.123
	P-value	0.009	P-value	0.009
	Significance	yes	Significance	yes
2nd versus 3rd question (fair versus help)	z	0.47	r	0.022
	P-value	0.639	P-value	0.640
	Significance	no	Significance	no

Source: it has been developed on the basis of own study

An analysis of the data from *Slovakia* (*Table 4*) showed the dependence between the first and third question. The dependencies between questions 1 and 2 and between questions 2 and 3 were not statistically significant. It can be stated that up to 43.2 % of respondents who marked option *(A)* in the first question also tended to choose option *(A)* in the third question. It follows that these students are inclined to trust people while trying to be helpful. Characteristics for *Chi-Square Test:* C = 1.96; admissible error = 5 %; confidence interval = 95 %; if: z > C => not independent; if: z < C => independent. Characteristics for *Product-Moment Correlation:* C = 0.093; admissible error = 5 %; confidence interval = 95 %; if: /r/ > C => not independent; if: /r/ < C => independent.

In addition to the interdependence of individual statements, the authors of the paper also decided to examine the potential dependence of respondents' statements on their *gender*. Gender influenced only the choices of Japanese respondents in the second question, i.e. question on fair/ness: answer *(A)*

was reported by 73.95 % of females and 60.42 % of males. Among the Slovak respondents, the dependence on gender was not proven at all (*Table 5*). Characteristics for *Chi-Square Test:* C = 1.96; admissible error = 5 %; confidence interval = 95 %; if: z > C => not independent; if: z < C => independent.

Table 5. Correlation between gender and responses – Slovakia and Japan

Dependence by gender	Japan		Slovakia	
	Chi-Square Test		Chi-Square Test	
1st question (trust)	z	1.39	z	0.893
	P-value	0.164	P-value	0.372
	Significance	no	Significance	no
2nd question (fair)	z	2.822	z	1.01
	P-value	0.005	P-value	0.312
	Significance	yes	Significance	no
3rd question (help)	z	1.294	z	1.645
	P-value	0.196	P-value	0.100
	Significance	no	Significance	no

Source: it has been developed on the basis of own study

4. Conclusions and discussion

Ideas move mountains, especially in these days, and a communication strategy centred on an emotional connection with customers/students is paramount; being loved is good for the operation of university, its image, and other important indicators. Being hated means a failure to connect with students, thereby drastically decreasing the university's education-market share (Jílková, 2016, p. 118), and the confidence in general ethics of higher education.

From the perspective of impaired social ties, following opinion of Fukuyama is relevant: "When celebrate the breakdown of hierarchy and authority, one critical factor is neglected: trust, and the shared ethical norms that underlie it. Communities depend on mutual trust and will not arise spontaneously without it" (1995). This emphasizes the need for developing university students' trust, fairness and helpfulness as the university graduates are bearers of next progress in the whole society.

In this line, Study of Raza et al. (2018), participated by 350 university students of Karachi, has examined the impact of chosen attributes on know-

ledge sharing attitude among university students. The results show that students' attitude, trust, subjective norm, motivation and rewards have a significant positive impact on knowledge exchange behavior between university students: "Students need motivation, trust factor and perceived behavior that lead the knowledge sharing attitude between them" (Raza et al., 2018, p. 287). This supports the results of Japanese respondents presented in *Table 3* which document the strong dependency of trust, fairness and helping others. At the same time, although the answers of Slovak respondents (Table 4) confirmed that the strong dependency exists only between the trust and help provided to others, other relations cannot be refused.

Borges et al. performed a quantitative and descriptive study on a sample of 513 Brazil students regarding the differences in student trust in public versus private higher education institutions. The results indicate that "students belonging to a private university trust more in it than students from a public university trust their institution. It was also found that women rely more on their universities than men, and that trust in the university by the students tends to decrease with time" (Borges, 2016, p. 119). Also, the study of Yilmaz, conducted at 1,042 Turkish students, revealed that there is a relationship between the students' fairness perceptions in the learning environment and their satisfaction with life. The students perceived the learning environment as partially fair and rated their satisfaction with life at a moderate level. "Female students' fairness perceptions regarding the learning environment were significantly lower than male students'" (Yilmaz, 2014, p. 1074). This is partially different from the results presented in Table 5 where the dependence on sex was confirmed only in the group of Japan respondents, concretely in the question on fairness. However, although the survey presented in this article did not confirm gender-dependency in the topic of trust and helpfulness (in the set of Japan respondents) and any gender-dependency in the set of Slovak respondents, it can be stated that, supported by the above-mentioned studies, different understanding of trust, fairness and helpfulness of female versus male students potentially exists there. This means that the students' individual willingness to use the above-mentioned pro-social competences could be individually differentiated, with regard to various other factors or powers.

Based on the thought model of this article (*Figure 1*) which illustrates the possible links among the students' trust, fair/ness and help/fullness, and especially based on the results presented in both the theoretical and empirical part of the paper, the following *conclusions* could be drawn:

1. The connected linkages of all of the three academic phenomena chosen for this paper, i.e. trust, fair and help, point out that it is possible and even useful to search these phenomena in their mutual dependence. This

scientific perspective underlines the importance of social ties and overall academic motivation of students.

2. All of the three studied phenomena should be investigated from both chosen perspectives: passive and active. The passive perspective consists of an *experience-recognized matter-of-fact,* i.e. when these terms/approaches are performed toward the student by other persons, groups and institutions. The active perspective consists of phenomena's *conscious-applicable matter-of-fact,* i.e. when these terms/approaches are performed by the student toward other persons, groups and institutions.

3. The perceived as well performed students' trust influence (positively as well negatively) both the students' fairness and helpfulness. The survey's results, presented in Section 3, especially responses of Japan students, could serve as an indication that the mutual dependencies of the studied phenomena exist also in partial form: the perceived fairness acts on and predetermines the furtherly applied fairness and both trust and helpfulness, and simultaneously, the help taken from others builds one's helpfulness, trust & trustworthiness, and fairness.

4. Although the opinions of students regarding trust, fairness and helpfulness were researched on the sets of respondents from two different countries, i.e. Japan and Slovakia, the results obtained are similar/comparable in two out of three studied phenomena: trust and help. Only in the case of fairness, the results differed more strongly. It could be judged as very interesting because Japan is known as an Asian country with a unique hierarchical culture and high rate of technological growth, while Slovakia, on the other hand, is a European country with a Slavic naturel, described often as a culture of non-formal relationships and re-imported engineering (especially automotive) industry.

The above-mentioned conclusions represent the ***novelty of this article***. They could also serve as an inspiration or prospect for further scientific researches that should be performed with the participation of university students in other countries. Alternatively, trust, fairness and helpfulness could be explored using other types or sets of respondents, e.g. employees and managers of both manufacturing and non-manufacturing organizations.

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