

THE ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF “TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS” IN
PEDAGOGY

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Annotation: This article examines the essence of the concept of *trusting relationships* as a pedagogical phenomenon within the framework of subject–subject interaction and dialogical communication in the educational process. Drawing on classical and contemporary works in pedagogical psychology, social psychology, and pedagogy, the authors analyze trust as a value-based attitude that determines the quality of pedagogical interaction between teachers and students. Special attention is given to the role of dialogue, joint activity, predisposition toward trust, and previous interaction experience in the formation and development of trusting relationships. The article systematizes scientific approaches to understanding trust and trusting communication, clarifies their socio-psychological and pedagogical foundations, and substantiates the significance of trusting relationships for creating a positive emotional climate, enhancing cooperation, and improving educational outcomes. On the basis of theoretical generalization, a working definition of trusting relationships between younger schoolchildren and primary school teachers is proposed, and key conditions for their formation in the pedagogical process are identified. The study creates a conceptual foundation for developing a theoretical model of forming trusting relationships in primary education.

Keywords: trusting relationships; trust; pedagogical interaction; dialogical communication; subject–subject relations; primary education; teacher–student relationship; pedagogical psychology; social interaction; value-based attitudes.

Modern ideas of pedagogical psychology make it possible to reveal the essence of trusting relationships within the framework of subject–subject relations and dialogue in pedagogical communication. At the core of dialogical communication lies subject–subject interaction among all its participants. Taking into account the activity of all parties involved in this interaction, a common collective subject is formed, characterized by a unity of goals [2, p. 402] and bringing into joint activity its own position, personal characteristics, and worldview. Thus, G.A. Kovalev writes about a shared psychological space and temporal continuity, when two subjects in a state of dialogue create a single emotional “event,” in which influence is replaced by the psychological unity of the subjects. In dialogue, as the basis for the optimal organization and management of developing contacts between people, a creative process unfolds, creating conditions both for mutual self-disclosure and mutual development, as well as for self-influence and self-disclosure of the personality [4, pp. 46–47].

Trusting relationships make it possible to impart dialogical and subject–subject qualities to the pedagogical process, which has a positive effect on the joint activity of the teacher and the student. As noted by A.A. Bodalev, activity, including educational activity, is in itself neutral. Of primary importance here is the organization of relationships in the process of activity. Any activity presupposes an orientation or predisposition toward it on the part of the interacting

subjects, as well as expectations regarding the other subject. In the pedagogical process, educational activity and communication are of the greatest significance. The relationships between primary school teachers and younger students imply an orientation toward learning activity and communication on the part of both the teacher and the student, as well as certain expectations of these participants in the pedagogical process toward each other. Trusting relationships give this predisposition a positive orientation, which subsequently has a beneficial effect on the course of the process and the results of joint activity.

In the research of S.A. Shein, it is noted that trusting relationships are a necessary condition for a full-fledged dialogue between a teacher and students [8, p. 50]. Characterizing various situations of pedagogical communication, S.A. Shein distinguishes between monologized and dialogized lines of development of pedagogical interaction. It is precisely the dialogized development of pedagogical communication situations that presupposes the establishment of cooperative relationships, which evolve from “adjusting” to a communication partner, from selfless and altruistic focus on the other, to unconditional and non-evaluative acceptance of them. Such development of pedagogical communication situations is based on the fundamental equality of the “personal (rather than status-based) positions of the teacher and the student, their equal value in trusting dialogue and joint creativity” [8, p. 51].

The analysis of basic concepts concerning the nature of trust, as well as the generalization of research data from socio-psychological sources on the problems of relationships and communication, was necessary for us to consider trusting relationships as a socio-psychological phenomenon. For a long time, the essence of trusting relationships was revealed only through the description of phenomenological characteristics, where trust and trusting relationships functioned as a background condition for the manifestation of other phenomena of interpersonal interaction and were interpreted only in light of solving specific research tasks. A broader consideration of trusting relationships is also included in the context of friendly relations (I.S. Kon), emotional relationships (L.Ya. Gozman), relationships in small groups (Ya.L. Kolominsky), and relationships studied within the so-called psychology of conflict (V.I. Andreev, M.M. Rybakova, I.I. Rydanova, and others), and so on.

In the studies of A.A. Bodalev and A.N. Sukhov, trusting relationships are associated with trusting communication. Communication is considered trusting when a person entrusts another with their thoughts and feelings, revealing various aspects of their inner world. M.S. Kagan and A.M. Etkind understand the essence of the communication process more broadly than mere communication in the sense of transmitting or receiving information. Communication implies the creation of “new information common to the communicating people and giving rise to a sense of community” [3, pp. 149–150]. According to M.S. Kagan, communication “generates community,” whereas communication is reduced to an exchange of information that presupposes the personal separateness of its participants. In this context, the role of trusting relationships becomes evident in the transition from an act of impersonal communication to an act of communication that presupposes the interconnection of interacting subjects within a unified dialogical process [3, p. 161]. Thus, communication is possible provided there is a value-based attitude toward one another, grounded in trusting relationships.

A.U. Kharash writes about the presence in the subjects of interaction of a state of readiness for the influence of other people (attitude, predisposition), a tendency toward certain actions and evaluations with respect to others. The attitude or predisposition toward communication, both of

the subject itself and its expectations regarding another subject, predetermines the outcome of interaction. In the process of productive communication, relationships undergo changes from maximum disunity to complete unity:

1. from complete closedness initially associated with role-based defense;
2. to discursive defense associated with pseudo-disclosure;
3. to open defense;
4. to the rejection of the use of defense mechanisms, which presupposes trusting relationships [7, pp. 35–37].

Summarizing the views of scholars on the nature of relationships and communication presented above, it can be concluded that the emergence and development of trusting relationships in the pedagogical process are influenced by the following factors:

- joint activity of the subjects of interaction, primarily the teacher and the student;
- the predisposition or readiness of both subjects of interaction for certain behaviors and types of relationships;
- previous experience of interaction.

Trusting relationships impart subjective significance to pedagogical interaction and color the situation of interaction with positive emotions. In the pedagogical process, trusting relationships may arise as subjectively experienced connections between students and teachers through communication and activity, when two interacting subjects (teacher and student) not only enter into contact, but also create something third—relationships as an “ideal product” of communication.

When considering trusting relationships in the context of other phenomena of interpersonal interaction, scholars have addressed individual aspects of this concept (V.I. Andreev, L.Ya. Gozman, Ya.L. Kolominsky, I.S. Kon, M.M. Rybakova, I.I. Rydanova, and others). The most systematic studies of this problem were carried out by T.P. Skripkina and V.A. Safonov in connection with the examination of the concepts of “trust” and “trusting communication” [204; 213].

Thus, V.A. Safonov defines trusting communication through the significance of the information disclosed to the interlocutor about oneself and the attitude of trust toward the partner. According to V.A. Safonov, one person entrusts another with specific, meaningful material; therefore, trust in a partner is not of a general nature but is “always concretely correlated with the content being disclosed” [204, p. 266]. The scholar also examines the prerequisites for the emergence of trusting communication in each specific situation and trusting relationships toward a specific person. First of all, this is associated with knowledge of the partner’s personality traits and characteristics, and with confidence in the presence of certain moral qualities in them. Trust in relationships may arise simply because the interlocutor’s demeanor (appearance, ability to conduct a conversation, etc.) disposes the partner to trust. However, the basis of trusting communication is an attitude toward trust as a general predisposition—a readiness to demonstrate trust in a particular relationship.

The attitude toward trust reflects “the needs of the individual, characterological features, habits, and the current mental state,” that is, the entire “set of internal conditions” (S.L. Rubinstein) [cited in 5, p. 266]. Interaction is also associated with the assessment of specific conditions of

communication, which influence the inclination toward trust or distrust of one's interaction partners [5, pp. 40–42].

T.P. Skripkina conceptualizes trust and trusting relationships within a unified model of trust, where trust acts as a specific type of relationship toward any object, presented to the subject as a significant experience manifested in the correlation of value-based attitudes toward oneself and the world. This made it possible for T.P. Skripkina to distinguish between trust in the world, trust in oneself, and trust in others. Trust in another person is viewed by T.P. Skripkina as a particular case of an individual's interaction with the world, since the other person appears as a part of the world with which the subject enters into interaction. Trusting relationships are a qualitative characteristic of this interaction and arise under conditions of mutuality, the presence of an attitude toward trust, and the involvement of the interaction partner in one's own inner world [6, pp. 208–209].

An analysis of the theoretical approaches discussed above allows us to expand the understanding of the category of “trusting relationships.” Considering trusting relationships only as an ethical category does not provide a complete picture of their deeper essence. In philosophical and ethical interpretations, trusting relationships represent a special type of social relations that arise in joint activity and are based on moral credit and voluntary mutual obligations. In socio-psychological sciences, trusting relationships are interpreted as a qualitative characteristic of interaction and emerge under conditions of mutuality and the presence of an attitude toward trust among the interacting subjects.

Trusting relationships as a pedagogical phenomenon are not one-dimensional, where only the teacher trusts the student or the student trusts the teacher. However, the specifics of organizing the pedagogical process in primary school, as well as the age-related characteristics of younger schoolchildren, make it legitimate to introduce the concept of “trusting relationships of younger schoolchildren toward the primary school teacher.” As a result of generalizing theoretical approaches to the problem of trusting relationships in philosophy, socio-psychological sciences, and pedagogy, we have formulated the following working definition.

Trusting relationships of younger schoolchildren toward a primary school teacher are understood as subjectively experienced selective connections between a younger schoolchild and the teacher, based on the manifestation of trust as a positive attitude toward what is happening, toward oneself, and toward other people. In the essential characteristics of the process of forming trusting relationships, we identify:

- a) the readiness of interacting subjects to demonstrate trust (predisposition);
- b) a value-based trusting attitude toward each other (trustfulness as a personality trait of the younger schoolchild; the humanistic position of the teacher oriented toward trust in interaction with students);
- c) previous experience of interaction and joint activity aimed at achieving the goals of the younger schoolchild's personal development on the basis of trust.

Presenting trusting relationships as a pedagogical phenomenon requires an examination of the existing connections and interdependencies that characterize the process of forming trusting relationships. This paragraph presents the main scientific approaches to this issue, which allows us to proceed to the construction of a theoretical model for the formation of trusting relationships in the pedagogical process of primary school.

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