

**KNOWING OUR STUDENTS BETTER:
FINDINGS ABOUT STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRUST
ACCORDING TO A SPANISH STUDY**



During the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024, Prof. Juan Carlos Torre Puente, Prof. Esther Castañeda and Prof. Sara Sánchez Ruiz from **Escuni**, a Spanish Catholic university college specialized in education located in Madrid, carried out a study among university students that are being trained to become tomorrow's teachers. The study aimed at finding out about the students' perceptions regarding trust: **trust in themselves, trust in others and trust in education.**

The study, mainly based on a questionnaire of 60 scale-type questions, covered more than 500 students (years 1 to 5), engaged in early childhood, primary education, pedagogy and social education studies (mainly at Escuni itself). Aged around 20 on average, almost half of them came from Catholic institutions.

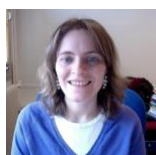
- According to the students surveyed, **trust is an act of faith in another person that combines a high level of certainty with a high level of risk.** The loss of trust in interpersonal relations may lead to severe physical and psychological effects such as damage, personal breakage, injuries, trauma, sobbing, disappointment.
- For respondents, a teacher they would trust is somebody close (122 responses), supportive (96), kind (87), who listens without judging (65), concerned with students (42) and empathic (33). Both good personal manner and good communication seem to be key elements of a teacher that inspires trust to their pupils. Likewise, the way of teaching says a lot of the way teachers are. A trusted teacher is thus described as an intellectual authority loving his work, with whom one may easily interact and who treats their pupils not only as students, but above all as persons. In this regard, we can assert that **the profile of the teacher matters a lot as “the messenger is the message”.**

- With reference to trust in entities, **the highest levels of trust concerned the health sector, the army, NGOs and educational institutions. However, it is a matter of concern that more than half of respondents expressed little or no trust in the Catholic Church (61%) and in religious congregations (66%).** With reference to individuals, it does not come as a surprise that 88% of students place all their trust on teachers and 65% of them trust little or not at all religious members. These figures seem to go hand in hand with a vision that has gained ground in the country during the past decades, which is not favourable to the Church nor to its different actors.
- Globally speaking, responses regarding trust in the future showed high confidence in education to transform the world and therefore the importance conferred to pursuing studies to find their own place in the world. Likewise, it was found out that boys (particularly those coming from public schools) had a higher self-esteem than girls, that self-efficacy is higher in the last years of study, that girls are more confident about a better future than boys, that overall self-confidence increases throughout the career and that first- and second-year students are the most satisfied with university life. **All in all, students are clearly aware of the need for trust and its risks, rather self-confident, with faith in the future and satisfied with their university experience.**

Most of these findings match fairly well the trends already identified by the **Worldwide study on youth values**, carried out in 2013 and 2017 respectively by IFCU.

Nota Bene:

- *The aforementioned study has just ended and has not been published, yet.*
- *To receive the publications resulting from the Worldwide study on youth values undertaken by IFCU, kindly contact us.*



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