
PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION RETHINKING THE SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY IN CONSIDERATION THE INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY (BOOK REVIEW)

Peshawa Mohammed

Abstract: This book review introduces what is explained in the book about the theoretical and empirical basis for the relationship between social capital and higher education in Central Eastern Europe. It sheds light on the shaping of higher education in the regions where the research was conducted, under the influence of the social resources of the students. The review also focuses on how social theories helped in the interpretation of student success and the collected data. It includes a relevant description of the research topics as well as an overview of the book's overall perspective, argument, and purpose. The review tries to give the reader a summary of the content and offers a critical assessment of the content.

Keywords: higher education, social capital, student success, non-traditional students.

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With the expansion of the social demand for higher education and increasing the number of students especially the non-traditional ones (lower status and ethnic minority students and mothers with young children) since the turn of the millennium, they have become the topics of investigations by the educational researchers. The role of the economic system and its influence on higher education insisted on the revision of higher educational policies. This brought up many questions with itself like, how the roles of institutions and the ways of creating a prepared student to the markets can be changed. Previously, several research have been conducted in the mentioned topics, mostly in the Western European countries and the US, and priority was more given to the institutional aspects. So the researchers' questions and attention in this book were towards the higher education intuitions in Central Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Communist bloc, moreover the students' institutional integration and the external communities and associations during the university years in contributing to the development of higher education outcomes.

The book states that the role of student networks in shaping the higher education profile is much more than the invisible hand of meritocracy. Each student relationship network presents a context of behaviour, which is more likely to be effective than any curriculum or modern education approach. Due to the importance of the students' relationship network in producing contextual interpretations, it has been found vital to apprehend what type of social group of norms have been formulated and whether they can be viewed as campus culture. Discovering those types of relationships that serve the advancement of the students is the attention centre of the research team's interest.

The three chapters of the book consist of nine studies. The setting of the studies is the border regions in Hungary, Romania and Ukraine among Hungarian speaking higher educational students. The rationale and the raised question of why only Hungarian ethnic regions are the setting of the study been left unanswered while one of the aims of the study is answering the questions of the research in Central Eastern European countries.

It has been tried to bring attention to the idea that students are customers and products in the circle of the economic, sociological and educational world. So the ways students use their institutional and social resources in favour of their progress in academia and future careers are the centre of the attention of the studies in the book.

The social capital theory has been taken into consideration to interpret the relationship networks of the students and institution-student relations. Social capital is what provides access to resources embedding in social relationships. It enables people to mobilize these embedded resources to facilitate action. The idea of adopting the theory after a long avoidance is that the problems like equal access to education for groups of different social status, ethnic and demographic composition, and decreasing attention are also social problems and directly related to social capital theory. The structural functionalist perspective of the book towards the students' experience helps see different dimensions of education sociological problems in Central Eastern Europe. The reader is attracted to how does education contribute to the maintenance and wellbeing society and what are the relationships between education and other parts of the social system. The study aims to analyse the effects of students' institutional social relationships at university on students' success and finding the possibility of institutions' influence on increasing social integration. It is also the examination of some of the institutional factors that could influence students' academic performance and school context in creating values. The book attempts to depict the institution form through students' values, norms and needs. It explores the outside school social capital like family, friends, peer group and voluntary membership as they are playing a great role in institutional traits.

The book challenges the literature in interpreting social capital as Coleman's ideas on social capital have given the priority to analyse social capital in non-traditional students who are dominant in the campus community nowadays.

The significant issue for discussion is which type of social relationship helps the improvement of that specific sort of social capital which is the most helpful to the individual all through his/her profession.

Regarding the methodology part, the studies used quantitative more than qualitative approaches to evaluate the different components of accomplishment and achievement among students in high education and to quantify the circumstantial variables of institutions as these are related to student's achievement.

It doesn't only explore parental and related factors that predict academic achievement but the role of uneven situations surrounding young people in shaping their career. It mentions that because of interacting with different institutional actors, students gradually identify with the norms and values of the immediate institutional environment and adapt to the formal and informal expectations of the community.

Going back to the student's success, the book tries to shed light on the part of the literature that has not been enlightened well. It addresses that the evaluation of students' success by the external factor (a good job, and the ability to offer the working attitudes sought by the employers) and internal factors (problem-solving, motivation and self-regulation) within high education is disputed and this could be not enough

to clarify the new meanings of success since success is not only having a good grade and good performance during studying year. In the modern age, success has also a role in preparing for the future career. Thus, labour market and education are closely related. The necessary components to build success up are investigated and because of the complexity of the indicators of student success and the complexity of the theories on the subject, the reader needs a full concentration while reading. The researchers find that unequal investment is not the only reason for appearing the level differences of success among the students, but some of the reasons rooted inside the institutions as if we are presented a new definition of student's success concept by showing new dimensions. They claim the failure of Bourdieu's theory in giving adequate clarification of success differences within non-traditional students. Based on the Colemanian social capital hypothesis, which is about compensating social capital by relational sources for the reproductive impact of social status on a school career, the researchers elaborate the impacts of societal context and involvement into social networks in campus-society on decreasing the effects of social status differences.

To sum up, the first chapter of the book explains how social capital influences school performance. According to the presented studies the school context has a vital role in reducing the level influence of parental social status. The results show that personal care and teachers' attention reduces the individual and communal effects of social status. The main elements of school context which can moderate the reproductive effects of the school have been indicated.

In the second chapter, the concepts related to student success have been clarified in an overview. A complex indicator that opens up possibilities for creating new dimensions of success is introduced by examining the possibilities, dispositions and experiences in students within institutions. The concept of student success takes another form since various individual and institutional components contribute to student success.

In the third chapter, the focus is on the general and differentiated effects of the environment types on individual efficiency and student success. The dimensions of environment like (physical, cultural, organizational and compositional) have been examined all.

In my opinion, the book raises the awareness that there is a clash between the past and present or the previous system of education in Central Eastern Europe which was centralised and the new individualistic view for the socio-educational phenomena. In this way, we are informed about the ideological discrimination of religious people in the past and through social capital theory understanding, the book uncovers special features of the students belonging to religion-based communities like having a stronger attachment to traditional academic values and a better integration into the academic and social context of the institution than their peers.

It argues that the process of socialization and institutional environment dimensions in the time of heterogeneous student community requires the institutions to meet the varied needs of the students. Taking this into consideration, the different environmental dimensions and their effects on the status groups of students have been examined.

The book can be seen as a very supportive book in reshaping the educational system and policy of the region where the research was conducted. It creates education sociological image by high lightening the concepts of socialisation, social environment, institutional culture and connection networks of student and how they are combined and affect each other. It also opens new doors to further research related to

the field as it raised new questions and arguments. Thus, it productively contributes to changes and finding pathways to success in higher education in the region.

Author

Peshawa Mohammed, University of Debrecen (Debrecen). Email address:
Peshawa.mohammed@charmouniversity.org