

Understanding the Cultural Lens: Social Capital and Education Across Borders

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 03-12-2018 Revised: 29-12-2018 Accepted: 30-12-2018</p> <p>Keywords: Social Capital, Education, Cultural Diversity, Equity, Cultural Norms, Educational Outcomes</p>	<p>This study inspects the relationship between social capital and education, with respect to cultural variety, social capital networks and how they formed and used in the field of education. Trust and cooperation networks, or social capital, have a big impact on educational possibilities and results. These dynamics are greatly influenced by cultural norms and practices, with individualistic cultures placing more value on personal networks and collectivist cultures emphasizing community links. Addressing gaps in educational attainment and access requires an understanding of these cultural quirks. Educators and legislators may create inclusive policies that leverage the capabilities of diverse social capital networks to advance equity and excellence in education by recognizing and utilizing cultural diversity.</p> <p>© 2018 The Authors. Journal of K6, Education, and Management (j-K6EM). ISSN: 2580-2135. Published by Graduated Program of Educational Management, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin, Indonesia. This is an open access article under the open journal systems.</p>

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I. Introduction

Social capital, a notion that has been gaining recognition from sociological and economic spheres, ranks among the most studied areas in education, considering the influence it plays in relation to academic attainment and social justice generally. Social capital Defined in this way (as “networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit”) a scholar seeks information within a society (Putnam, 2000). The term social capital encompasses more than mere friendships: it integrates personal ties and society’s social structures in such a way that the status of family, school, or type of school only becomes a risk factor within the community. Educational relationships do not have a naturally occurring systemic structure since they are primarily concerned with the connections to individuals, particularly peers or any other type of social continuum. This also greatly affects the progress or regress of an individual in terms of growth. In any event, what becomes important is the existence of various networks that include, for example, peers, family ties, or even community organizations and the extent to which such networks relate to educational opportunities (Coleman, 1988).

This is in relation to different cultures as it does not only address the social capital in education since different cultural standards have different ways of molding the existing social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Indeed, social capital contains the core social structural and processual features of a particular society, coming in different shapes and orientations within various cultural settings. In other words, a socially constructed practice with social interactions and human relationships is developed and it can easily find many examples. There might be more social capital in developing cultures like most Asians due to the more collectivistic cultural practices which emphasize support for one another and collectivist goals (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002; Palmer & Maramba, 2015). On the other hand, social capital might be associated with personal

connections and personal growth in the individualistic societies as westernized societies have it, showing more development of independence and self-reliance respectively (Portes, 1998; Rodríguez-Pose & Von Berlepsch, 2014).

The concept of cultural diversity and how it is perceived differs in many ways across different societies that it is sometimes even intertwined with the very definition of social capital and education – material it no longer covers other spheres than the overtly visible network differences. Lest we forgot, social capital and education, within a social hierarchy, may perpetuate instead of bridge the differences and divide all members of a culturally diverse community (Gerhards & Hans, 2013; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). Societies that have a lot of social institutions in place from which they can draw, are more likely to include differences in abilities, assistance, and educational infrastructure to children of different communities ensuring that they have the opportunity to access equal quality education (Putnam, 2000). However, deficiencies in social capital can emerge when certain groups are systematically excluded from forming social networks due to institutional structures and cultural practices, or when there is a conflict between deeply held cultural values and educational needs. (Coleman, 1988).

Political and normative concerns are examples of an aspect of the structural and educational system that can result in education of marginalized groups through capitals such as health or education. It is these more complex aspects of the internal logic or social capital that appear to scholars in social sciences as the most complicated in comprehension (Tabellini, 2010). When it comes to classified – educational training, courses, or any other professional and personal growth activities, an typical, so-called ‘joint’ social capital arises. One area that will be able to specifically enhance the retention of inter-group resources and knowledge is social capital located in the respective group concept of higher education (Putnam, 2000).

2. Cultural Nuances in Social Capital

It is known that the formation and realization of social capital in education are tied to cultural orientations that express the social structures and principles for different civilizations. This influence on social capital affects its perception and functioning in educational systems thus leading to how students perform in terms of engagement and learning. An important cultural variation is the difference between individualist and collectivist populations having their own ways of establishing social networks and integrating within society (Triandis, 2001; Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2010).

Collectivist civilizations, including many Asian cultures, often base their social capital on strong familial ties and large communal networks that extend beyond the immediate household (Hofstede, 1984). Families have a critical role in the transmission of cultural values and educational objectives, and parents, grandparents, and other family members actively support children's academic endeavors (Chao & Tseng, 2002).

Individualist societies, on the other hand, are in line with the idea that the main tenets of the social structure should be achievement, freedom of speech, and personal success (Hofstede, 1984: 13). Social resources, such as individualized social connections based on individual achievement rather than group-based obligations, are also used in these cultures. While other, more external, community ties are still significant, one of the children's main goals is to be ambitious and self-centered by becoming more autonomous and possessing more personal qualities (Triandis, 2001).

Research shows that social capital comes from professional relationships, education systems, and different methods of growth. It is important to appreciate the fact that relationships within specific cultural contexts exert critical influences in the relationships between cultures and education. This culture fosters high collectivism and strong bonds among family and community members, thereby enhancing academic success and social cohesion (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Conversely, the encouragement of individualism in

achievement oriented individualistic cultures can lead to competition and examinations distress (Triandis, 2001). In a global community, it is the combination of culture, social dynamics and learning experiences that aids the provision of qualitative education to all children in an equitable way.

3. Impact on Educational Attainment

The impacts concerning how social network quality is created and valued and networks of trust can rise result in a specific degree that may prevent or even elevate one's attainment level, as well as that of others. This develops the educational opportunities of an individual and indeed the educational performance of an individual across a certain society. The presence of significant community networks may help reduce national educational inequalities where there is considerable social capital among community organizations and high levels of engagement (Coleman, 1988). Social capital increases strong boundary spanners that facilitate the allocation of resources when necessary and prevents the overallocation of resources by other boundary spanners, especially in academia. Strong social capital also maximizes social cohesion by reinforcing the perceived ties to other group members under educational goals (Putnam, 2000). In these cases, the absence of overt educational differences in achievement and attrition, that are mostly notable in the dominant lines of inequality and network connections, may well indicate the advantages of social capital networks.

On the other hand, in areas where the social structure operates like a zero-sum game, personal success tends to overshadow community support, likely leading to greater disparities in educational access and achievement. (Portes, 1998). When resources and support systems for underprivileged students are severely lacking, it only worsens the issue, reinforcing social stratification and exclusion. (Bourdieu, 1986). This attitude of self-pride and individual achievement ample appreciably marginalizes those disadvantaged groups like the ethnic groups and the children from low-income

families among others who have no access to the social networking system which is offered to their better off colleagues (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). Therefore, within children's education systems, there is a potential lack of upward mobility coupled with unjust inequalities as it is likely that these children will struggle to fit or rather, succeed in schooling.

Code of conduct varies between societies and within different ethnic groups which entails that some students will not make much progress or reach their goals in education, unless the said cultural restrictions are addressed. Schools may choose to adopt measures and strategies that will help in promoting the enhancement of every social capital available in cases where society is characterized by strong community social capital (Triandis, 2001). Encouraging relationships with and supporting families and communities within and outside the education system is one way of working towards more equality in terms of access to education and children's experiences of it. Moreover, when individual success is valued, efforts to fix educational gaps could concentrate more closely on measures of academic performance, ignoring the structural obstacles that excluded groups must overcome in order to succeed in school (Triandis, 2001).

Addressing the balance between cultural subtleties and academic success piloting, resources and education policy requires understanding of how social capital works in different cultural contexts. This is something that the educators, policy makers, and other people shall be concerned about, the place of cultural values, norms, and social structures in the provision of educational opportunities, and students' achievements (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002).

We may argue, however, that fair education system that acknowledges cultural heterogeneity as well as the adverse social environs of the families present, has yet to be put in place as yet.

4. Policy Implications

Adhering to the application of equality and inclusiveness for all learners who come from different cultural backgrounds may cater to educational policies and practices quite well since this addresses an issue of cultural diversity (Banks, 2015). Therefore, policy makers have to understand that one-size-fits-all approaches to education may not be applicable in many cultural contexts because of the differences in social capital that exist (Hofstede, 2001). Rather than the above alternative, policy planners are increasingly advancing the understanding that it is critical to adopt policies and practices that are socially inclusive and promote the different traditional forms of communities' social relations (Ladson-Billings, 1995). It is possible for policymakers to devise more sophisticated and effective measures for raising the quality of education and ensuring equity in diverse societies while respecting and appreciating the variety of cultures that exist.

These strategies will contribute to educating an ethical and informed populace; eliminating opportunity gaps; and leveraging existing social capital inherent to the community, schools, and homes (Banks, 2015). It is high time that political elites pay more attention to how schools and families as well as local communities interact in designing culturally relevant learning in terms of children's experiences and culture, as opposed to advocacy of equal educational systems (Banks, 2013). Teachers can enrich the learning experiences of all students by incorporating different perspectives, ways of knowing and different types of practices and cultural settlements in the design of the curriculum and strategies (Lee, 1995).

Additionally, the existing policies from a cultural perspective could assist in alleviating the numerous discriminatory factors that affect minority, gender or other disadvantaged populations while pursuing education (Levenson, 2005). To this end, it is predicted that a radical departure from approaches that only recognize culture and discrimination toward inclusive and culturally proficient education is the only way forward (Banks, 2013). Government interventions that pretend to act by

embracing culture and diversity and advocating for equity will not do in the current world order (Gay, 2002).

In order to enrich the learning experience of the historically marginalized students, there is a need to have well-tailored teacher education programs that would take care of instilling cultural competence and sensitivity to the teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Moreover, it is the duty of the policy makers to ensure that other programs that are concentrated on the interests of the students rather than the formal schooling system are provided with the necessary financial assistance. Such a policy will most likely encourage the people living in that particular community to participate actively in determining the courses of action and constructs education soundly, taking into consideration the objectives and needs of that society (Banks, 2013).

Finally, one cannot underestimate the significance of appreciating cultural variation in the face of defining the course of action in educational practice. In this regard, they pioneer measures that target offering up more inclusive systems of education which, however, enables all pupils to do well academically and socially by altering their culturally responsive perspective to the faculty's existing social capital structure (Gay, 2002). Whether or not cultural diversity should be promoted is such a deform question.

5. Challenges and Opportunities

Even if educators and policymakers give priority to ensuring fairness and excellence in the educational sector, there are many challenges to overcome when promoting social capital because of the variations in culture in a given setup. Social capital does not hinder the social diversity from the consideration of its contributions and implications to society as much as educational system; however, this in return hinders formulating prescriptions that can be applied to all students' circumstances of different cultures without any difficulty (Putnam, 2000). Without an appreciation for the transformations that

cultural background demands, a lot of policies and practices might do very little to help many students, which would in turn enhance the levels of haves and have-nots when it comes to educational accomplishments (Bourdieu, 1986).

It is also possible that traditional educational methods are not able to be utilized successfully because social capital operates differently in different cultural settings (Coleman, 1988). To overcome such difficulties, one needs an in-depth understanding of how such elements as culture and social capital in the education sector are intertwined and at the same time must, in a more explicit way, adopt approaches that are appreciative of other social capital levels and most importantly, the variety of social capital. Embracing cultural variety presents a chance to learn from other educational methods and develop innovative approaches that cater to unique social capital landscapes, despite the constraints given by cross-cultural variances in social capital (Hofstede, 1984).

Teachers and policy makers have a more inclusive and effective plan in overcoming issues of equality and excellence, by appreciating and using diversified cultural skills Culture – what a pity we need it. Culture compels us to explore the kinds of education that may better befit the purposes, values, and interests of various bodies and question the existing norms of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Moreover, learning about different teaching philosophies presents particular problems and basic solutions because it encourages innovative thinking and the creation of new strategies as well as such interventions which are outside one's culture (Portes, 1998). We can make use of the differential multicultural in the power of culture and therefore transform education and equal opportunities for learning to reality for all learners by promoting a spirit of harmonious collaborative learning and transfer of knowledge across different nation states.

It is very important to develop effective programs in implementation of practices with a cultural focus. These programs, in turn, should take into account and appreciate the various loci of power and the existence of these within our nations frontiers as well as beyond them, enabling changing and expanding

the conceptual boundaries and understanding and practice of social capital. (Putnam, 2000). The socio-political complications of the community have made problems easy to single-out thus allowing important development of thinking since it is recognized that every society has cultural diversity heavily biasing the socio-cultural explanations of most economic theories Economic theories have favored social ties within homogenous societies and naturally exclude diversification of the assets available which is inclusive of social capital (Banks, 2013). We can build curricula that allow each learner to be his or her own unique person who is also able to acquire knowledge and socialize with success even in this interconnected world by appreciating culture as a yet another driver and component of quality education.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, to fully appreciate and make use of social capital in education, cultural sensitivity is a very relevant subject. The establishment of learning environments which embrace all students and promote their achievement can be realized only where differences of culture containing unique heritage in respect of students' backgrounds are considered (Hofstede, 1980; Rogošić, & Baranović, 2016). Sincerely speaking, at culturally sensitive teaching techniques, instead of changing the classroom to the nearby society, the society has changes to fit the classroom. Utilizing a culturally diversified curriculum involves making full use of students' cultural heritage to ensure that their cultural wealth is appreciated and that every student is given the same standard of education without any form of discrimination. From this perspective, it can be said that the knowledge of the various forms of inequality resulting from social structures is important for educational quality, particularly in terms of social capital creation and educational equality.

Education throughout the world cannot be left to fate, if it is intended at all to be availed of by all children. This means that proper education

should be made available to all children, and that it is not simply a geographical or age or other factor. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for the education system to have a single system that reflects the dominant culture, with disposed aspects of culture simply tacked on. Dealing with the issue of cultural diversity, which is often shunned by others, can also lead to some major breakthroughs in inclusive educational practices and policies that recognize interiors of each student (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Such work,' the author indicates, 'will disposition people of various cultures, disciplined intellectuals and even politicians of power to communicate, work together, and self-examine each other much more than they are ever prepared to do.

Embracing cultural sensitivity in education means using differences to create equal and enriching learning experiences for every student, not just acknowledging them. Teachers can capitalize on the distinct abilities and viewpoints that every student brings to the classroom by appreciating cultural diversity (Hofstede, 1980). Teaching strategies that are sensitive to cultural differences not only recognize the various social capital landscapes that exist within and between countries, but also capitalize on these differences to promote educational excellence and equity (Gay, 2013). By using this method, teachers can adapt their lessons to the needs of a wide range of students and foster learning environments where each person is respected, appreciated, and capable of succeeding.

To put it another way, cultural sensitivity is a fundamental idea that ought to direct our actions when utilizing social capital for educational purposes rather than only being a catchphrase.

Acknowledgment

By committing to diversity, inclusivity, and equity, we can create educational institutions that enable every student to reach their full potential and meaningfully contribute to society. As we go, let us not lose sight of the day when individuals from all social and cultural backgrounds can use education as a ray of hope and opportunity.

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