

Education as a Source of Social Capital : Theories and Empirical Analyses

Kazuhiro Arai
Yukari Matsuzuka
Hiroki Yamamoto

This paper attempts to explore the role of education in the formation of social capital. There are as yet few studies on sources of social capital in the area of education. We thus examine various aspects of the educational experience that potentially affect the development of social capital, including formal schooling, family education, and community education. The data we used is based on a web-survey of 3,694 respondents aged between 21 and 65 years old.

In the empirical analyses, we first extracted principal components of social capital, and developed their scores in order to infer the amount of social capital individuals have. Then the principal components scores were used as the dependent variable for twenty-nine multiple regression models with educational experiences as the major independent variables. More specifically, investigations were undertaken as to the extent to which different aspects of the educational experience such as years of schooling, academic performance, school life, curricula, and relations with teachers affect the amount of social capital accumulated. In addition, analysis was carried out regarding the effects of family and community education factors, including socio-economic background, parents' educational experience, parents' interests in school and education, relations with peers and neighbors, religion, and attitude towards mass media.

Our findings include that individuals with a larger amount of social capital are those who had cooperative learning experience at junior high school; whose favorite subject was social studies; who wanted to be like their teachers; who were well looked after by teachers; whose parents and relatives had strict moral and ethical discipline; who have a greater number of acquaintances who they believe would help when in need; or who have frequent contact with their old classmates.

The most important of our findings is that schooling and community education have a greater effect on the formation of social capital than parental and family education factors. That is, the social system based around schooling greatly contributes to the accumulation and development of social capital.