

**A MODEL OF SOCIAL CAPITAL FORMATION OF STUDENTS
WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS IN THE SYSTEM
OF MACRO-REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL CLUSTER**

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Abstract. The research subject in the article a model of social capital formation. The purpose of the article is to show the importance of social capital formation of students with special learning needs. The scientific novelty of the research is determined by an interdisciplinary approach to the formulation of the subject field and the proposed research methods at the conjunction of the sociology of education, pedagogy and management theory; the use of the concept of social capital in assessing the effectiveness of educational paths in the system of multi-level continuing education; an expansive interpretation of the concept of inclusive education. Due to the fact that the implemented state policy in the field of education, on one hand, focuses primarily on the modernization of the education system, on the mass and unified education, and, on the other hand, sets the emphasis on defining and implementing the practices and technologies of including students with special educational needs in the system - and in a sense, deviating from the typical model; due to the inability to integrate those students in a traditional way into the existing model of mass education, and at the same time due to the urgent need for such integration, due to the need to ensure the segregation without negative effects, but, on the contrary, with the positive effects of an additional benefit from the realization of their unique personal potential, we can categorize the students with special educational needs that belong to the subcategories of talented with those who have disabilities.

Indeed, both former and latter, due to innate and acquired unique features, properties and characteristics, which result in special educational needs, are forced to approach the choice of education and professional route with more attention and focus than other categories of students, and therefore, by the example of students with special needs, we observe the type of social actants, who are interested in and require the most advanced pedagogical technologies and educational environments - they are a kind of “privileged users”, who lawfully expect, due to the established legal order, the most from the education system to enable them to form a set of social capital, first

of all, professional and cultural, which would guarantee the barrier-free transition from one level of education to another within their strategic vision and the maximum return on stratification, that not only compensates for the existing limitations, but fully facilitates the development of their personal and social potential.

Since the main focus is on the formation of social capital of an individual who advances in a multilevel education system, and also since such a transit takes place in a specific educational environment of the region, of a municipal locality, at school, college, or at university level, it seems appropriate to focus on the regional and macro-regional education systems, paying special attention to those regions whose educational systems are integrated into the so-called educational clusters - associations that unite educational organizations of various types and levels. In this study, we turn to the experience of the Educational Cluster of the Southern Federal District, created by the initiative of the Council of Rectors of the Southern Federal District in 2015, and which currently includes a partner network of more than 300 educational institutions (including federal and base universities, colleges - first of all, pedagogical, - general educational organizations, educational organizations of continuous education, as well as pre-school educational organizations).

To the positive factors at the level of federal regulation, we can include the focus of the Federal Law novellas "On Education in the Russian Federation" to expand the individualization of students' educational paths, to legitimize the networking mechanisms of interaction between educational institutions of various levels, which makes possible the clustering policies that combine practices of individual educational organizations, infrastructure, and social partnership, including for the purpose to solve support problems, implement support tools, incl. scholarships, expanding participation in the modernization of the corporate sector, including in the framework of public-private partnership.

The negative aspects of the normative regulation in the considered sphere include a certain vagueness, fragmentation of the legal field, the absence of a number of basic documents, experience in law reinforcement, a significant advance of actual pedagogical and managerial practices, which leads to the antinomy of the legal and legitimate, deployment of mechanisms and practices, not fully entered in the field of official standardization, which, in turn, creates the need for the creation and testing of the development model of social capital of students with special educational needs in terms of macro-regional educational cluster.

In general, we can talk about a fairly well-established system of work with students with special educational needs, covering all levels of education and

consolidating the professional pedagogical community around recognized and shared strategic orientations and tasks, but one cannot but admit that the institutionalization of this system is far from complete, which allows to identify positive factors contributing to its development, increasing the coverage of target audiences, improving the applied technology and tools, as well as negative factors, causing the fragmentation of the legal framework and decrease of the effectiveness of the interaction of various educational institutions.

Keywords: Education, sociology of education, social capital, students with special learning needs, students with disabilities, continuing education, educational cluster

Introduction

The need for an effective response to significant challenges, including the ones in the sphere of modernization of the technological structure and transition to the knowledge economy determine the transformation of traditional social institutions that provide social elevators and configure social field. These processes and transformations can successfully be described with the sociological concept of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that is not well elaborated in the state of the art of the educational sciences.

As such, the key public institution, which function is focused on the reproduction of social capital, its formation and conversion into socially valuable positions - first and foremost the professional ones - is the institute of education, represented as a multilevel system of recruiting, ensuring the sedimentation of social experience, an established set of values, knowledge and competencies from a very early age to a virtually infinite - in terms of an individual biography - model of continuous education. In these conditions, the problem of incorporation into education system, into the formation of social capital and increasing the stratification impact of students with so-called special learning needs, which includes a diverse group with different characteristics and needs (students with disabilities, talented students, immigrants in the context of foreign language communication, etc.) is acute as ever.

However, within the framework of the empirical object of this study, it is appropriate to consider only two groups - students with disabilities and gifted students. Oriented to the maximum unification of management decisions, technologies and practices, but limited in terms of resources, the education system is not developing by forming separate subsystems designed to organize specialized training and form the social capital of students of different special learning needs, but rather by developing the widespread inclusion: that is making the students with different learning

needs a part of a unified educational space on the federal level, on the level of a specific educational institution, on the regional and macro-regional levels, which poses a problem to the education system. This problem of organizing an educational environment that would ensure the deployment of the optimal - from the point of view of special learning needs - strategies for personal development and the development of such a social capital that would guarantee the most effective career and stratification returns, which would allow, in turn, to guarantee the full actualization of the country's human resources potential, its incorporation into new industries that meet global challenges. Solving the significant challenges that nowadays face the economy, society, and the state involves the improvement of both theoretical ideas and management practices in the field of education, the social institutions of which ensure the forming of social capital, of socially acceptable and approved channels and mechanisms to form the social capital of students transferring from one level of the education system to another, and, as the resources are accumulated to advance the stratification and to convert the social capital in the most subjectively optimal, highly efficient model of social success, personal fulfillment and prestigious status in the society's structure.

Research Objectives

The study is expected to achieve the following theory and practice-oriented objectives:

- to provide practical application of the social capital concept, incorporating it in the current range of tasks in the development of the education system;
- to model the development of social capitals among students with special learning needs in a multi-level lifelong education system thus allowing for the broadening of the existing sociological state of the art in solving real pedagogical problems and policy regulations;
- to develop and test the scale for evaluating the effectiveness of the social capital accumulation amongst students with the special learning needs;
- to elaborate a program for deploying a partner network of a macroregional educational cluster that meets the conditions and tasks of facilitating and optimizing educational routes of students with special learning needs.

Results

The concept of social capital in relation to modeling the advancement of an individual or a group in a multi-level, lifelong education system allows to formulate an "ideal model", in which the education system appears as a set of mechanisms and tools functionally designed to create social situations, which serve to increase the pedagogical impact of the accumulation of

various types of social capital, including political (influence source), networking, incorporation into the professional community, economic (career and income guarantees via professional recognition and approval), cultural (professionalization and socialization), and finally, symbolic (a form of legitimizing prestige and status based on educational attainment).

An empirical evidence exists that social capital concept has a helpful application in the practice of inclusive education (Bates, Davis, 2004; Mcconkey, Mariga, 2010). An appeal to the theoretical, methodological and categorical apparatus of the sociology of education to solve problems in the field of education, or, in a broad sense, pedagogical tasks, allows, therefore, to consider and describe educational levels as sufficiently independent dispositions that compose the social field of education, and the advancement of an individual from preschool education, to primary to higher and to analyze the extent to which the educational environment and practices ensure the continuity of the development and implementation of social capital; and through this analytical assumption, we arrive at the possibility of building a model of the development of social capital in the conditions of a multilevel system of continuous education and the scale to assess the effectiveness of the students' social capital development with the use of pedagogical influence.

Due to the fact that the implemented state policy in the field of education, on the one hand, focuses primarily on the modernization of the education system, on the mass and unified education, and, on the other hand, sets the emphasis on defining and implementing the practices and technologies of including students with special learning needs in the system - and in a sense, deviating from the typical model; due to the inability to integrate those students in a traditional way into the existing model of mass education, and at the same time due to the urgent need for such integration, due to the need to ensure the segregation without adverse effects, but, on the contrary, with the positive effects of an additional benefit from the realization of their unique personal potential, we can categorize the students with special learning needs that belong to the subcategories of talented with those who have disabilities. Indeed, both former and latter, due to innate and acquired unique features, properties and characteristics, which result in special learning needs, are forced to approach the choice of education and professional route with more attention and focus than other categories of students, and therefore, by the example of students with special needs, we observe the type of social actants, who are interested in and require the most advanced pedagogical technologies and educational environments - they are a kind of "privileged users", who lawfully expect, due to the established legal order, the most from the education system to enable them to form a set

of social capital, first of all, professional and cultural, which would guarantee the barrier-free transition from one level of education to another within their strategic vision and the maximum return on stratification, that not only compensates for the existing limitations, but fully facilitates the development of their personal and social potential. Since the main focus is on the formation of social capital of an individual who advances in a multilevel education system, and also since such a transit takes place in a specific educational environment of the region, of a municipal locality, at school, college, or at university level, it seems appropriate to focus on the regional and macro-regional education systems, paying particular attention to those regions whose education systems are integrated into the so-called educational clusters - associations that unite educational organizations of various types and levels. In this study, we turn to the experience of the Educational Cluster of the Southern Federal District, created by the initiative of the Council of Rectors of the Southern Federal District in 2015, and which currently includes a partner network of more than 300 educational institutions (including federal and base universities, colleges - first of all, pedagogical, - general educational organizations, educational organizations of continuous education, as well as pre-school educational organizations).

The issues related to theoretical foundations, methods and technologies for identifying, accompanying and supporting students with special learning needs, as well as the problems that lie in the field of social practices of managing the education sector and institutionalizing the system of work with this category of students, have become, undoubtedly, highly relevant in recent years (Chenoweth, Stehlik, 2003; Smyth, 2004; Huang, 2008). It is evident both in the field of the expert discourse of pedagogical science and at the level of public and political discussion, which causes the appearance of a scientific trend for research in the field of work with students with special learning needs.

The theoretical discourse of this problem encompasses the areas in the field of typology and classification of special learning needs, the creation and testing of methods of psychological diagnostics and identification, methods and technologies of pedagogical support, the development of a support system, the integration of innovative pedagogical solutions into practice of educational organizations at the various levels.

As part of the discourse to institutionalize the system for working with students with special learning needs and the creation of new governance mechanisms in the field of education, the focus is on the task of developing a state policy. In addition to this, attention is paid to the needs of the labour market and the interests of the state, civil society and business, forming an

integrated management system and support of this category both at the federal and regional level.

However, one of the critical tasks under this condition refers to the organization of work with students, providing thus the mechanisms for social partnership and effective interaction between pre-school educational institutions, organizations of secondary vocational education and, in particular, higher education. These activities are to be done due to the requirement to modernize the system of teachers training, to improve the advanced training and career growth of teachers with sufficient competence in the field of work with this category of students.

Discussion

The presented range of tasks is part of a broader context of modernization of the socio-economic and technological sphere in the Russian Federation, which leads to the theoretical and methodological framework for analyzing problems in managing work systems with students with special learning needs, in accordance with which the institutionalization of this system takes place within the framework of the branch of education.

The accent on the special learning needs is to be determined by the ongoing transit to a new economic and technological structure, the deployment of economic institutions that meet global standards of the digital post-industrial economy. Therefore, we are talking about new approaches to the training of professional personnel for the needs of high-tech industries, especially in such areas as space and aviation technology, artificial intelligence, IT, robotics, etc. No coincidence that the many of the programs, whose target audience are students of general education organizations, are focused on the development of academic, intellectual and practical professional success of engineering and technical focus.

Another, no less significant, context is related to the fact that increasing attention to the tasks of working with young people fits into the social policy of the state, including strategies and tools for developing human capital, gradually improving the real quality of life while re-thinking and redefining the standards for the quality of life of society.

In general, we can talk about a relatively well-established system of work with students with special learning needs, covering all levels of education and consolidating the professional pedagogical community around recognized and shared strategic orientations and tasks, but one cannot but admit that the institutionalization of this system is far from complete, which allows to identify decisive factors contributing to its development, increasing the coverage of target audiences, improving the applied technology and tools, as well as adverse factors, causing the fragmentation of the legal framework and decrease of the effectiveness of the interaction of

various educational institutions.

To the positive factors at the level of federal regulation, we can include the focus of the Federal Law novellas “On Education in the Russian Federation” to expand the individualization of students' educational paths, to legitimize the networking mechanisms of interaction between educational institutions of various levels, which makes possible the clustering policies that combine practices of individual educational organizations, infrastructure, and social partnership, including for the purpose to solve support problems, implement support tools, including scholarships, expanding participation in the modernization of the corporate sector, including in the framework of public-private partnership.

The adverse aspects of the normative regulation in the considered sphere include a certain vagueness, fragmentation of the legal field, the absence of a number of essential documents, experience in law reinforcement, a significant advance of actual pedagogical and managerial practices, which leads to the antinomy of the legal and legitimate, deployment of mechanisms and practices, not fully entered in the field of official standardization, which, in turn, creates the need for the creation and testing of the development model of social capital of students with special learning needs in terms of macro-regional educational cluster.

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