Chapter 25

Parental Involvement Contributes to Family Cultural Capital in J District in Shanghai: Based on Taoyuan Private Primary Migrant School

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ABSTRACT

Family cultural capital can be defined as a series of family cultural elements that are mainly held and transmitted by parents, that can contribute to children development. Many studies reveal that the family cultural capital of the migrant works is insufficient, which exerts negative effects on the development of their children. The study focuses on exploring the relationship between parental involvement and family cultural capital. The authors selected Taoyuan migrant as a case which has conducted home-school collaboration reform for more than three years, using the methods of interview, questionnaire, and observation to get two mains findings: (1) The model of parental involvement experienced a change process from self-elimination to active-participation, in which the school played a major role. (2) When parents adopt the model of active-participation, family cultural capital changes in three main forms of activation, increasing and transformation.

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INTRODUCTION

Urbanization takes a central place on its reform and development in China. It is regarded as a major drive for China’s future economic growth. Urbanization Program (2014-2020) which comes out under Xi Jinping-Li Keqiang leadership points China’s urban population will increase by 100 million between 2014 and 2020, to exceed 800 million. A new wave of urbanization is coming, with profound implications for china’s economy and society (Zheng, Zhao, Sarah, 2017).

Under the urbanization, large quantities of rural people flow to cities. At the end of 2017, there are nearly 244 million floating people (National Health Commission of the PRC, 2018). It arises a new set of questions on the life and development problem of rural-urban migrants and their children. They can earn more money and provide adequate material support for life indeed, but they also need to bear unfair and unwelcoming life in big cities, such as the lake of society ware, health care and other rights. It’s also worth mentioning that the floating makes huge effects on Chinese traditional family life. As the statistic shows (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China,2017), it creates about 15.5 million “left-behind” children who separate from the migrants and stay with their grandparents or other older relatives, and 19.0 million migrant children who are brought to big city to live and be educated. There are two main types of rural-urban migrant. One is that the people who are high-level intellectuals, technical talents or excellent and professional in some areas. One is that the labors who work at the lower end of the market and industries. This article focusses on the weaker group because they are facing more serious problems.

Affected by the registration system, rural-urban migrants and their children are mainly excluded from local educational resources, health care and citywide social welfare programs. Most of those children enter the private schools specially designed for them rather than local public schools. Compared to public schools, those ones are weak in many aspects, such as material resources, teacher quality, policy supports (Shang, 2013; Wang, Davis, & Bian. 2006). Many researches have pointed the phenomenon that migrant children’s educational and social achievements are worse than local students’, which is related with school, family and society (Jiang, 2010; Gao, 2011). It confirmed that education have become a secret reproductive way of social class.

The Cultural Capital Theory carried out by Bourdieu’ (Bourdieu, 1989) provide a conceptual version to explain the how people’s achievements connect with their family background and daily life. After that, a lot of researches used the framework to explore differences among the levels of performance and achievement of children from different social classes. In China, migrant workers are regarded as the weak group in the social development process. Many studies have revealed that the family cultural capital (FCC) of the migrant workers is insufficient, which exerts passive effects on the education achievements and social statuses of their children. More and more empirical studies, especially quantitative studies, have confirmed that it’s too difficult for students who were from poor and humble families to become outstanding. Those researches successfully reveal and explain the phenomenon that migrant children are facing disadvantaged development status, giving rise to the tendency of “the fatalism of cultural capital” -- The more cultural capital children hold, the more likely they are to succeed in education. How to break the “magic spell” of fatalism? How to further explore the possibility of improving the “cultural capital” of vulnerable groups under the premise of explanation? It requires a thorough study of the mechanism of the operation and changes of cultural capital.