

A STUDY ON TEACHERS AND SOCIAL STATUS IN SOCIETY

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Introduction

Social status is the position or rank of a person or group, within the society and can be determined in two ways. One can earn their social status by their own achievements, which is known as achieved status. Alternatively, one can be placed in the stratification system by their inherited position, which is called ascribed status. Ascribed statuses can also be defined as those that are fixed for an individual at birth. Ascribed statuses that exist in all societies include those based upon sex, age, race ethnic group and family background. For example, a person born into a wealthy family characterized by traits such as popularity, talents and high values will have many expectations growing up. Therefore, they are given and taught many social roles as they are socially positioned into a family becoming equipped with all these traits and characteristics. Achieved status means also what the individual acquires during his or her lifetime as a result of the exercise of knowledge, ability, skill and/or perseverance. Occupation provides an example of status that may be either ascribed or achieved; it can be achieved by one gaining the right knowledge and skill to become socially positioned into a higher position of that job, building a person's social identity within the occupation.

Status in Different Societies

Status refers to the relative rank that an individual holds; this includes attendant rights, duties, and lifestyle, in a social hierarchy based upon honor or prestige. Status has two different types that come along with it: achieved, and ascribed. The word status refers to social stratification on a vertical scale. In society, pariah status groups are regarded with disdain or treated as outcasts by the majority of the population. The term derives from the Paraiyar (Pariah caste), members of which are treated as outcasts in Hindu society. In modern societies, occupation is usually thought of as the main determinant of status, but other memberships or affiliations (such as ethnic group, religion, gender, voluntary associations, fandom, hobby) can have an influence. The importance of social status can be seen in the peer status hierarchy of geeks, athletes, cheerleaders, nerds, and weirdos in Hollywood stereotypes of American high schools. Achieved status is when people are placed in the stratification structure based on their individual merits or

achievements. This status can be achieved through education, occupation, and marital status. Their place within the stratification structure is determined by society's bar, which often judges them on success, success being financial, academic, political and so on. America most commonly uses this form of status with jobs. The higher you are in rank the better off you are and the more control you have over your co-workers. In pre-modern societies, status differentiation is widely varied. In some cases it can be quite rigid and class based, such as with the Indian caste system. In other cases, status exists without class and/or informally, as is true with some Hunter-Gatherer societies such as the Khoisan, and some Indigenous Australian societies. In these cases, status is limited to specific personal relationships. For example, a Khoisan man is expected to take his wife's mother quite seriously (a non-joking relationship), although the mother-in-law has no special "status" over anyone except her son-in-law and only then in specific contexts. All societies have a form of social status. Status is an important idea in social stratification. Max Weber distinguishes status from social class, though some contemporary empirical sociologists add the two ideas to create socioeconomic status or SES, usually operationalised as a simple index of income, education and occupational prestige. Status can be changed through a process of social mobility. Social mobility is change of position within the stratification system. A move in status can be upward (upward mobility), or downward (downward mobility). Social mobility allows a person to move to another social status other than the one he or she was born in. Social mobility is more frequent in societies where achievement rather than ascription is the primary basis for social status. Social mobility is especially prominent in the United States in recent years with an ever-increasing number of women entering into the workplace as well as a steady increase in the number of full-time college students. This increased education as well as the massive increase in multiple household incomes has greatly contributed to the rise in social mobility obtained by so many today. With this upward mobility; however, comes the philosophy of "Keeping up with the Joneses" that so many Americans obtain. Although this sounds good on the surface, it actually poses a problem because millions of Americans are in credit card debt due to

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conspicuous consumption and purchasing goods that they do not have the money to pay for. Social Status (Social Power): If you view someone as a social superior, that person will have power over you because you believe that person has a higher status than you do. Political Power: Political power can influence the hierarchical system of power because those that can influence what laws are passed and how they are applied can exercise power over others.

Status Group

Max Weber also developed the idea of status groups. Status groups are communities that are based on ideas of proper lifestyles and the honor given to people by others. These groups only exist because of people's ideas of prestige or dishonor. Also, people in these communities are only supposed to associate with people of like status, and all other people are looked at as inferiors.

Status of Teachers

Teaching enjoys average to high status, depending in part on the amount of study required to prepare for employment. Since this ranges from a relatively brief time to many years, the levels of social and economic status span a wide range.

Review of Related Literature

There are a great number of publications related to PE teachers' role and status and students' education; however nobody has studied the social status of Cypriots PE degree holders. Throughout the review of related literature which is enormous the author has chosen some important literature and categorized it into two groups. The first one involves international articles and books and they are grouped into four brief subchapters. The first subchapter includes literature related to values and norms having special significance in education in general and in PE in particular. The second subchapter is about effective teaching (in general and in PE classes) and PE teachers. The next subchapter consists of references to articles and books related to physical education, health education and health "crisis" on an international level. The last one focuses on the job satisfaction from a general perspective and of PE teachers' and social capital. In the second part of the review of related literature a conscious attempt was made to discuss the status of qualified PE teachers in Cyprus. However it has to be stressed that there were not adequate resources on this topic. In the absence of such resources, the thesis presents articles of Cypriot authors and alternatively books which provided for PE in a general perspective.

International Literature

Cultural and Teaching Values and Norms

A society, culture comprises both intangible aspects (beliefs, ideas, values which form the content of culture) and tangible aspects (objects, symbols, technology which represent that content). Giddens (2001) argues that the fundamental bases to all cultures are the ideas which define what is considered important, worthwhile and desirable.

Values give meaning and provide guidance to humans as they interact with the social world. For example, in some countries, one important value is to be faithful to a single sexual partner. Some cultures value individualism highly where others might place greater emphasis on shared needs. Some groups might value traditional religious beliefs where others might prefer progress and science. Norms are the rules of behaviour which reflect or embody a culture's values. For instance, for a high level of education, cultural norms would encourage students to study hard, parents to make sacrifices for the education of their children and adults to participate in learning activities throughout their lives. On the one hand, any Human being is an independent person with spiritual circumstances of his/her personal life and on the other hand he/she is a socialized person with a whole system of feelings, ideas that characterize his/her group or environment. Eleutheriades (1985) mentioned that education is a society's work.

Young people should learn the basic values of their society in order to be creative, original and responsible. In the contemporary world where we live we are forced to face innovation and uncertainty. Schools will help the students to prepare for the unknown. Education functions as the most fundamental social organization and institution which influence a human's behaviour in a beneficial way. However, according to Blau and Duncan (1962) the social status of parent affects the educational level achieved by their children, which in turn affects occupational level and social status. Status attainment is achieved by a combination of parent's status, one's own efforts and abilities, and luck. It has to be mentioned that the initial thesis of Blau and Duncan, stated that the lower the level from which a person starts, the greater is the probability that they will be upwardly mobile. After continued research, this statement proved to require modification. In 1962, the United States Bureau of the Census began a new research based on their questions and the results showed that it was better to start at the top of the stratification system rather than at the bottom in order to achieve a higher social status. Parents who held

high-status occupations were usually able to give their children more years of quality education than those who did not hold high-status jobs.

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