

Abstract of the Doctoral Dissertation

Slawomir Bzdziuch, M.Sc.

The significance of the Operational Program Knowledge Education Development for the development of human capital and social capital among students of Rzeszow universities (Sociological study)

This dissertation addresses the development of human capital and social capital among students of Rzeszow universities participating in various forms of support co-financed by the Operational Program Knowledge Education Development.

The dissertation is theoretical and empirical in nature. Chapters I through III provide a theoretical introduction that reviews existing knowledge to clarify the issues used in the work. Chapters V and VI, on the other hand, contain the empirical part within which the results from the statistical analysis of the collected empirical material are presented. In order to obtain answers to the questions posed in the work and to verify the assumed hypotheses, the author of this dissertation used triangulation of research methods. Within the framework of the mentioned triangulation, quantitative and qualitative methods and content analysis were used. A detailed description of the methods and research tools used, as well as the assumptions made within the framework of this dissertation, is included in Chapter IV, which is the methodological chapter. The conclusion to the dissertation synthesizes the results obtained from the empirical research and formulates the most important conclusions. The detailed structure of the dissertation is presented below.

The first chapter characterizes the concepts of "social capital" and "human capital" and points out the role of intangible forms of capital in the context of social development. Among the selected theoretical concepts of social capital, the views of such authors as Pierre Bourdieu, James S. Coleman, Robert Putnam and Francis Fukuyama were cited first of all. While characterizing human capital, reference was made to the concepts of Gary S. Becker, Jacob Mincer, Robert Lucas. Finally, the role of NGOs in the creation of intangible forms of capital and the development of civil society was discussed.

The second chapter presents the characteristics of academic youth. Referring to the inquiries of Marian Niezgoda and Piotr Sztompka, it was shown that youth is a social category, and within it, for the purposes of this work, a subcategory was distinguished, which is academic youth. Subsequently, selected theoretical concepts of youth are discussed, including reference to the theories of Karl Mannheim, Samuel N. Eisenstadt or Roland Inglehart. The final section

of the chapter focuses on the characteristics of academic youth in relation to their labor force participation.

The third chapter shows the genesis of the development of EU funds for higher education. A characterization of the ESF as a source of funding for activities related to the development of human capital and social capital was made. Aid programs that have been implemented in Poland since 2004 were described in a synthetic way, while the Human Capital Operational Program and the Knowledge Education Development Operational Program (WER) were discussed more comprehensively.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the methodology of own research. It discusses the purpose and scope of the research carried out in the dissertation. Research problems and hypotheses were presented, as well as variables and indicators. Then the selection of methods, techniques and research tools was presented. It was noted that in order to obtain greater reliability of research and accuracy of conclusions, triangulation of research methods was used by carrying out a survey among students of Rzeszow universities and conducting interviews with managers of projects co-financed by OP WER. The sampling used in the quantitative research and the sampling used in the qualitative research are also presented. The chapter also briefly characterized the universities included in the study.

The fifth chapter dealt with the analysis of the empirical material obtained from the research on human capital. In addition, the chapter presented information on the number and value of projects co-funded by the PO WER, and discussed the data collected from the metrics used in the student surveys. The mentioned analysis of the empirical material within this chapter was based on the verification of individual human capital indicators in terms of participation in OP WER support. The chapter also analyzed the responses obtained from interviews conducted with managers of projects co-funded by OP WER.

The sixth chapter analyzed the empirical material collected as part of the quantitative research conducted on social capital. In addition, this chapter also interprets the material collected during interviews with managers of projects co-funded by OP WER, which in this case concerned questions treating social capital.

The entire dissertation is summarized by a conclusion, a bibliography with a list of the sources used, and an appendix containing, among other things, the tools used during the conducted research.