ACTIVATING CAPITAL TO GAIN EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Abstract:
In a competitive society like Singapore, education has become a highly valued form of investment. Investing in education begins very early in the life of a child with parents harbouring high hopes of reaping some forms of attractive returns from early investment, usually in the form of social advancement. From the first day a child enters kindergarten, competition in the field of education is activated voluntarily by many parents. Families from different socio-economic groups possess different kinds of capital. As argued by researchers, possession of capital alone is not enough to gain educational advantages for a child in school but rather the skills in activating the capital in their possession. Using Bourdieu’s concepts of the field as an arena of competition, this paper looks into the possession of the various guises of capital by four Chinese families from different social economic groups, the skills and strategies they apply in their activation of the capital in their possession, and the kinds of advantages they were able to gain for their children in school, from the time the children were in kindergarten to their entry into the formal educational system in Primary One.

Strand: The economizing of education

Keywords: investment, capital, advantages