Designing a Curriculum Model Based on the Development of Social Capital for Iran Higher Education

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Abstract

Purpose: This research was aimed at designing a curriculum model based on the development of social capital for higher education in Iran. **Methodology**: The present study was an applied and qualitative one that was done using the theme analysis method to answer the research questions. The statistical population of this study included all curriculum planning, sociology and management specialists. The statistical sample of this study was fifteen faculty members of Islamic Azad University. A purposive sampling method was used to select the sample members. Data collecting instruments of the study were semi-structured interviews. **Findings**: Data analysis was done using MaxQDA software in Ad hoc method. The retest reliability method and the inter-content agreement method were used in order to calculate the reliability of the interviews. The results of the theme analysis led to the identification of 115 initial codes, which decreased to 79 ones. According to the findings, four components of goals, content, materials and educational methods, and evaluation were identified as the main components of curriculum based on the social capital in the university; each one had three structural, cognitive, and communication sub-components. **Discussion:** Higher education, in the light of the curriculum patterns, can provide opportunities for social capital development, and has the potential for implementation and necessary changes to the curriculum model for the development of social capital.

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1. Introduction

Today, besides human and economic capital, another capital called "social capital" has been taken into and discussions and researches on that have been increasing in recent years (Soogwan, 2014, p. 104). Unlike human capital and economic capital, social capital does not have physical and productive tools in individuals, but in essence, they are in the structure of activists' relations and their relationship (Kwon and Adler, 2014, p. 412). Social capital can be derived from the phenomena of mutual trust, social interaction, social groups, sense of collective and group identity, and group work in a social system. Social capital can be regarded as interdisciplinary, which is itself a factor in facilitating human communication, and has attracted the attention of educational sciences scholars by the end of the bureaucratic approach to organizing affairs (Ahmadi and Feizabadi, 2011, p. 36).

Despite the conceptual conflicts on the social capital, in the field of developmental studies, the social capital has been mentioned as a missing link, and this hope has been created for many development specialists who can be exploited to get rid of social inefficiencies (Ghasemi, et al., 2011, p. 244). This capital has been interpreted to various aspects such as norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of community activists by facilitating coordinated actions (Khosfar et al., 2013, p. 33). Social capital consists of situations and relationships that increase people's access to opportunities, information, material resources, and social status within the groups and social networks (Moallie and Bagheri, 2016, p. 80).

The scholars view social capital as a management phenomenon, and the elements of trust, shared values and behaviors, communication, cooperation, mutual commitment, mutual recognition, and network are mentioned for that and believe that social capital cannot exist without one of these features and it cannot be imagined an organization that survives without some of these features (Akbari et al., 2012, p. 457). For this reason, awareness of the status of social capital in any society is considered an important research topic. In particular, the discussion of social capital in our society is a relatively new subject. Understanding the status of social capital as a recognition of the state of social trust and the extent of the existence of social networks can lead to many social problems (Delawiz, 2008, p. 97). On the other hand, unlike the developed countries, social capital in Third World countries has not yet been addressed and has remained obscure in Iran (Soori, 2014, p. 53).

Knowing the factors that influence the strengthening or weakening of social capital, can help to expand social dimensions and increase the social and economic performance in societies (Bastani et al., 2012, p. 30). In fact, the development of social capital is a social learning process and occurs when the individual targeted actions act as a driving force behind the intangible behavioral patterns of social capital. If this connection does not work, the individual actions of humans in the community cannot maintain the effective and powerful forms of collective social capital (Chamlee-Wright, 2008, p. 42). All the benefits of social capital are realized if social capital is adequately developed and there are necessary means to support it at the community level (Tonkaboni et al., 2015, p. 8). In fact, when among the various types of existing capitals that provide the economic factors and fields, we are looking for an intermediate link that facilitates their optimal use and leads to sustainable development and the realization of justice in the countries, it seems we get to the cultural aspect that is the social capital (Mostafazadeh and Sadeghi, 2014, p. 183).

In this regard, it must be accepted that social capital is not a subset of human capital and belongs to groups and not individuals. The norms that make up the foundation of social capital are significant if they contribute to more than one person (Ghanadan and Andishmandan, 2009, p. 25). Social capital in a society is strongly influenced by the functioning of state institutions. Due to the wide and complex nature of government activities, there is no other way to strengthen trust among the people of the state, except through co-opting with citizens in a participatory structure (Karimi, 2008, p. 152); Therefore, in a general view, social capital is a social capacity that facilitates coordination in the group and society (Barati and Yazdanpanah, 2011, p. 26).

The following are some of the main factors that can be used to measure the social capital: Awareness of public, political, and social affairs, motivation in people who seek this kind of awareness, mutual trust, trust in public and governmental institutions, informal participation in voluntary activities (Bastani et al., 2012, p. 32). For this reason, the theory of social capital is based on the principle that resources are collected through social relations and is a tool for adapting to living conditions (Mohammadian et al., 2014, p. 226). Therefore, some features are formed in the form of solidarity between individuals of a family, a community or nation and different nations of the world (Majeebi and Nabavi, 2014, p. 32). Similarly, in order to develop more social capital, it is necessary to strengthen its institutions in society. Social capital is created in the assumptions provided by institutions such as the family, the state, religion, civil institutions and the educational system (Tonekabni et al., 2015, p. 8).

According to Newton (1997), it is not surprising that some scholars, along with the importance of the family, emphasize the great role of educational centers in expanding social capital, to the extent that they provide data showing education is strongly correlated with elements of social capital (Newton, 2008, pp. 68-72). Strategically speaking, higher education institutions are critical in decision making. In fact, higher education is a specialized field consisting of various subsystems and domains, including research, education, counseling, and the assessment of dynamic curricula, and its promotion requires the orientation and adoption of growth and evaluation policies depending on to existing environmental developments (Teichler, 2015, p. 815). Higher education can be considered as one of the main constituencies for the formation of social groups, because scientific, cultural, professional, and religious organizations and other groups in the university atmosphere and higher education have an opportunity to emerge. In fact, the underlying basis for the formation of social capital is formal and informal networks of institutions such as university and higher education (Dingaa, 2014, p. 247).

The main elements or sub-systems of higher education that need to be addressed strategically and effectively are "curricula" that planners and policy-makers in universities and higher education institutes have to make changes to adapt to environmental changes and the current need of communities. There is no doubt that the curriculum transmits the latest developments and achievements of human beings in various fields of science to the future active force (Torkzadeh et al., 2016, p. 42). Higher education is one of the main pillars in the Iranian educational system, and given that the curriculum in the previous sections emphasizes the teaching of lessons, the role of the higher education system is crucial for providing social capital (Tonkabni et al., 2015, p. 8).

Over the past three decades, it has always been repeated that higher education in Iran has developed steadily and its volume and size is not comparable to the pre-revolutionary years. For years, these statistics were regarded as rising level of literacy, and education as a sign of development. In fact, it is planning for the commercialization of humanities universities that determines what educational and research activities will serve in which sectors of society; in Iran, of course, has not yet come to an end (Azmoodeh and Shams, 2016, p. 7). Therefore, familiarity with patterns and the design of various patterns in the curriculum is necessary (Dehghani et al., 2011, p. 101).

Higher education curricula are among the factors that contribute to the realization of higher education goals. Accordingly, curriculum that is considered to be the heart of university centers, is a mirror of the roles and goals of higher education and worthy of attention. Consequently, the curriculum is constantly undergoing constant change and reform. Because the lack of modernization and updating of curricula gradually undermine the effectiveness of academic courses and disciplines, and raise issues of "disadvantaged curriculum " (Karami & Fattahi, 2013, p. 111).

As the same way, it has been argued that higher education does not have a significant impact on increasing social capital of the research sample and that the level of students' access to social capital has not been high and how this development will be operational in the higher education system of Iran, requires the further study (Salehi, 2014, p. 72). Unfortunately, in Iran, the curriculum that universities offer, are different from

the headings that society needs. The assignment highlighted for higher education is aimed at educating people who can only understand a number of concepts. Usually, these concepts and training are the theory, that is, the student is trained to be admitted to the master's exam. (Sabahi, 2016, p. 25).

For the long time, the curriculum and its patterns in higher education were considered as different ways of organizing content for students' needs. However, the skills needed to live in the world of the future and lifelong learning have made the curriculum no longer be as an academic responsibility. Consequently, curriculum designers are now faced with the challenge of incorporating more general skills. As a matter of fact, the mission of higher education has changed over the past. In this era, the university must educate people who, instead of storing information, can analyze and combine information and communication and management skills (Karami & Fattahi, 2013, p. 112).

Over the past two decades, many countries, including Iran, have somehow experienced the development of higher education, a phenomenon called "massive higher education". Recent evidence suggests that society has been faced with the spread of higher education with social erosion in its small and large dimensions. Traditional virtues such as obedience and loyalty cannot bring innovation and improvement. Human capital is not sufficient as a source of organizational performance and should be supported by social capital based on responsibility, integrity, trust, and respect for human existence (Salehi, 2014, p. 58).

Therefore, considering the importance of educational institutions, especially higher education, for the comprehensive development of all educational systems of the country, there is a need for strategic planning; to adopt it, we need to use the curriculum patterns to address the main issue of the research "how to design a model based on the curriculum for the development of social capital of Iranian higher education".

2. literature Review

One of the most important social and cultural policies in many countries can be the production of social capital through the training of human resources. Higher education systems can provide a suitable basis for their cultural, social and moral development in various fields by utilizing the assumptions of social capital and providing educational opportunities for all social groups. Surely, if this social policy is considered in the curriculum of higher education, it will have many economic, social and cultural consequences (Salehi, 2014, p. 57).

Several studies have been conducted in different countries that show a very close relationship between social capital and community function. In Iran, studies have been carried out in a more limited way about the effects of social capital, and this debate has not yet received much attention in social discussions, while studies in this area are highly expanding (Suri, 2014, p. 55). Social capital in Iran is a relatively new concept and its researches is in the early stages, but in general it is a very common concept. Nevertheless, its potential value depends on its proper and operational definition (Mostafazadeh and Sadeghi, 2014, p. 78).

In this study, the main purpose of designing the optimal model is based on the development of social capital for Iran's higher education system. In this model, it was used the components of social capital from Srisakdaa et al. (2016), Bahr and Martin (2016), Gershman (2016), Hau and Kang (2016), Godechot (2016), Korotchenko et al. (2015) Roshayani (2015), Trepule (2014), Gumus (2007), Yorke and Peter (2006), Putnam (2000), and Coleman (1993) the designs.

Hamidi Zadeh (2018), in his research indicated that a total of 94 factors contribute to the decline of social capital. The identified factors are categorized in four social, political, economic, and technological dimensions. Mohammadian et al. (2018), in their research indicated that Zanjan province has the most social capital level and Tehran and Ilam provinces have the lowest level of social capital in the research efficiency. On a national scale, there is a relatively constant trend in social capital level. Shawardi (2017), in his research indicated that the average of all components of social capital is in the interest of social capital of the real

society. Sabah and Beheshtifar (2016), in their research indicated that there is a reverse statistical relationship between social capital and its components with the employees' organizational apathy.

Khosravi and Vaziri (2015), in their research indicated that there is a significant difference in the rate of application of social capital indices in different bases, and the social trust index has not been used much in elementary school books, but the social participation indices have been used more. This research, based on the current situation, attempts to achieve the desired a curriculum model based on the components of social capital development in higher education (Islamic Azad University). In addition, according to the missions of Islamic Azad University, it is possible to identify the weaknesses and strengths by measuring the extent of each component, and finally, the curriculum model would be designed based on the development of social capital for Iran's higher education with the goals of 1) identify the main components of social capital in higher education curriculum, and 2) Determining the features of the appropriate curriculum based on the components of social capital in higher education.

3. Methodology

The present study was an applied and qualitative one that was done using the theme analysis method to answer the research questions. The statistical population of this study included specialists of curriculum planning, sociology and management. The statistical sample of this study was 15 faculty members of Islamic Azad University. A sample sampling method was used to select the sample members. In this regard, the researchers initially tried to examine the existing theoretical and empirical backgrounds by examining existing theoretical foundations. Subsequently, using a targeted approach and applying theoretical saturation criterion, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 specialists of curriculum planning, sociology and management, with an average duration of 45 minutes. The entire stream of each interview was recorded using a tape recorder and a copy was made to analyze the data obtained from the interview. Data analysis in this study was carried out using the Ad hoc method. Using this method, the coding and classification of available text units into logical categories (themes) was first performed, considering three learning feature, mutual exclusion and independence; the coding steps were performed using MaxQDA software. The retest reliability and the internal agreement methods were used in order to calculate the reliability of the interviews. Three interviews were selected for calculating the test's open reliability, and each of them was coded twice in a 15-day interval by a researcher. A researcher colleague was asked to participate in this section in order to calculate the reliability of the interview with the internal agreement between two coders. After training on coding techniques, three interviews were coded again by the researcher and co- coder. The reliability of the coders for the interviews conducted in this study was 0.81, which was more than 0.8%, and the reliability of the coding was confirmed; it can be claimed that the reliability of the interviews was desirable.

4. Findings

Regarding the demographic characteristics of the interviewees, four ones were female and eleven ones were men; all of them had Ph.D. degree. The major of one of them was the educational management, the major of five ones was curriculum planning, the major of two ones was sociology, the major of two ones was human resource management, the major of one was government management, and the major of two ones was Philosophy. The results of the theme analysis led to the identification of 115 primary codes, which were reduced to 79 cases by examining the researchers as well as revising the interviewees. According to these findings, four components of goals, content, materials and educational methods and evaluation were identified as the main components of social capital in the university; each with specific characteristics presented in the form of table and figure below. As it can be observed in the table below, the main

components of social capital in the curriculum of higher education were goals, content, materials and educational methods, and evaluation; each of them had three structural, cognitive, and communication components.

Table 1. Organization of the present research code

Curriculum components	goals	Structural	Based on Management Principles
			Based on the principles of civil participation
			Creating social partnerships
			Creating social compatibility
			Creating social cohesion
			Alignment with new demanded fields
		cognitive	Adherence to the new perspectives of higher education
			Potential for creating social trust
			Adherence to social morality
			Creating Social Commitment
			Creating Social Responsibility
			Create Social Partnership
		communication	Having the potential of promoting social support
			Having the potential of promoting social participation
			having the potential for political participation
			Aligning with Global Considerations
			having the potential of economic participation
	content	Structural	Based on leadership
			Based on civil partnership
			Based on social partnership strategies
			Central justice in the development of social participation
		cognitive	Based on the model of globalization
			To create a social commitment
			having interdisciplinary content
			Strengthening social cohesion
			Strengthening social identity
			Enhance accountability
			Promotion of social protection
			Promote social morality
			Promotion of social cohesion
		communication	having the potential of promoting social participation
			Promoting interdisciplinary concepts
			Provide interactive content for inclusive participation
	Materials and educational methods	Structural	The emphasis on the teaching in exploration method
			Emphasis on group problem solving methods
			Emphasis on belonging to scientific communities
			Attention to how to use scientific resources
			Introduction of experts in the field of specialty
			Provide a way to create a theorizing seat
		cognitive	Facilitate the establishment of scientific communication
			Adherence to the intimate relationships among members of the scientific group
			Dissemination of scientific values and norms

			Creating seriousness in education and scientific curiosity in learning
			Based on the famous symbols of higher education in the world
			Promote group thinking
			In accordance with the rational thinking
			Emphasis on Interactive Teaching
			Use of critical resources as supplementary of academic books
			Future Study Attitude
			Paying attention to the obligation of professional commitments
			Provide clear and explicit educational goals
			Emphasis on Learning Objectives and Training Missions
			Facilitate Agility
		communication	Change the curriculum with the participation of learners
			Increase the possibility of creating scientific communication
			Attention to playing a role in society
			Fit the curriculum with individual and spatial differences
			Attention to the proportion and correlation of the valuable content
			Conducting a scientific conference
			Attention to engaging with scientific partners
	evaluation	Structural	Participatory determination of evaluation criteria
			Attention to group performance
			Special attention to the elements related to the profession
			Paying attention to more interaction
		cognitive	Paying attention to comparative assessment of learners
			Change the evaluation criterion based on periodic needs
			Attention to familiarity with professional values
			Attention to research values in each lesson
			Interact with standard documents
			Scientific Participation of Learners
			Critical Thinking
		communication	Attention to global professional components
			control the scholars of the field
			Scientific Collaboration Projects
			Interaction with Religious Leaders

5. Discussion

Currently, one of the most important challenges to higher education in many countries is the development, modification and improvement of university curricula, so that they can educate graduates who are responsive to the needs of the community and the existing institutions and, at the same time, address scientific and technological developments (Hosseini, 2014, p. 168). Some believe that the university should avoid itself from the current problems of society, in fact, the university itself is socially in the heart of a larger community that, ontological or epistemological, will never have the ability to disrupt and isolate it.

Now, the university is not just a place of higher education, but is a place to discuss various social and institutional matters for the promotion of social communication skills (Yemeni, 2014, p. 8).

To this end, the researchers in the first step tried to draw up an initial view of the subject by examining theoretical and empirical foundations. Subsequently, using semi-structured interviews with 15 university specialists, supplementary data were collected and coded out based on the theme analysis method. According to the findings of this research, it can be said that higher education curriculum can contribute through four main processes of goals, content, educational materials and methods, and evaluation of the development of social capital. It should be noted that each of these processes is defined through separate indices in the form of triple structural, cognitive, and communication dimensions.

It was observed that there is a significant difference between the views of experts (faculty) and executive and educational experts of Islamic Azad University in the curriculum goals index of the cognitive and evaluation components with the communication component. There is no difference in the components of social capital in the content index and materials and educational methods. Comparison of the results of the present study with the other studies showed that in all cases, they were matched, but in the following cases, the mismatch and the distinctive aspect, can be expressed: The mismatch of research done by Kamali et al. (2016), with the findings of this research is that there is a significant difference between educational materials and methods between the scientific group and there is no significant difference among the goals and content and evaluation. The mismatch the research done by Sabah and Beheshtifar (2016), with the findings of this research is that the higher education does not have a coherent program to eliminate this significant difference, especially in eliminating employees' neglect. There is no difference between the viewpoint of employees and higher education professionals and demographic characteristics in the research done by Torkkzadeh et al. (2016), while the grades of evaluation differ in the components of social capital. Khosravi's research (2015), is also different in terms of the degree and priority of the components of social capital in the curriculum. In the research done by Mostafazadeh and Sadeghi (2014), the objective dimension of social capital component is designed. Tavakkoli et al. (2014) also did not consider the curriculum models in the development of social capital. In the research done by Pakseresht (2014), the communication model strategy does not respond independently. Karami and Fattahi (2013), argued that change in all curriculum patterns is essential for the development of social capital. Khosravi et al. (2013), argued that divergence and addressing the subject of curriculum innovation will disperse the main mission of higher education.

Also, with regard to the mismatch of the present study with the studies done abroad, it can be said that Catherine et al. (2018), pays attention to specific disciplines in the university during several validations. In Westbury (2016) study, sometimes the relationship between components secretly impedes progress in the thinking of the curriculum review. Terpul et al. (2015), did not pay attention to a diverse learning approach in the curriculum model. Participation did not have an effect in the research done by Nielsen et al. (2015), the trust did not have a high degree of prioritization in Lee et al. study (2015).

Higher education, in the light of the curriculum patterns, can provide opportunities for the development of social capital, and in order to promote it, it is first necessary to recognize the conceptual model of the components of the curriculum and social capital, and then to a conceptual model of the above-mentioned components and the interactivity that the components disrupt to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework for analysis. In addition, the results of the internal data and outcomes of higher education should be specified. Higher education should be careful about the curriculum and the role of each expert (faculty) and executive and educational expert in the current situation, in order to provide a reasonable logical model in a desirable situation. Higher education experts can understand the quality of design and validate the curriculum model in the development of social capital. Findings of the research indicate that each of the curriculum patterns in the components of social capital is in a low level and that there should be radical reforms. There should be a review of all the components in higher education, according to the views of experts interviewed (faculty) and executive experts and educational needs. Higher education should know

what is expected of the development of social capital from the educational system and apply that expectation in each of the curriculum patterns and then transfers to the other organizational members through a coherent model and continuing education, serving experts (faculty) and executive and educational experts. The curriculum model has worked poorly on the development of social capital and responding to the expectations of experts (faculty) and executive and educational experts. Higher education has the potential to carry out the necessary changes to the curriculum model for the development of social capital. Specialists (faculty) and executive and educational experts in higher education can develop in collaborative activities and trust. The purpose of the design is to reduce the distance between the current situation and the optimal situation of the curriculum model in social capital of higher education. A prominent feature of this research is that for the first time, there is a plan for higher education, especially in Islamic Azad University, with regard to the weaknesses in accordance with the expectations and opinions of the faculty members; therefore, it can be a proposal model for all institutes.

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