UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

SYNTHESIS ESSAY:Beyond the Degree: Researching the Societal Norms of Education and Their Effect on Individual’s Work Career Success

EN101: COMPOSITION

SECTION H2

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07 NOVEMBER 2024

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07 November 2024

**Beyond the Degree: Researching the Societal Norms of Education and Their Effect on Individual’s Work Career Success**

Education is often viewed as a right rather than a privilege, and this perception has fostered a stigma in our society. This way of thinking has established a norm that higher education is essential for success in one’s career. It is conception baked into our thinking about career success. This research explores how millennials' educational status influences their workplace experiences, emphasizing the societal norms that prioritize educational attainment. An individual's level of education is closely tied to their success, as today’s societal expectations and employment opportunities reveal a complex relationship between education and one’s career.

Societal expectations are a primary reason why education is so closely linked to expected success in the corporate workplace. It is a common conception that one’s education level creates a successful person. Mike Rose, in his essay “Blue-Collar Brillance”, debunks this theory. Through his anecdote he states, “Intelligence is closely associated with formal education-the type of schooling a person has, how much and how long-and most people seem to move comfortably from that notion to a belief that work requiring less schooling requires less intelligence.” (Rose 572). His statement derives from the personal account of seeing his mother encounter this stigma as a waitress. Since Rose grew up in a blue-collar family, his point of view of education’s relation to career achievement is relevant. His real-world example of his mother illustrates that education status has no relation to one’s capability in being successful at their job. Rose states, “…my mother learned to *work smart*, as she put it, *make every move count*.” (Rose 570). Rose explains his mother’s characteristics and work ethic that create her success, not her level of education. This story goes against the societal expectation in our world today about educations link to success.

 Societal expectations also expand to the idea that everyone has access to education to become “successful”. The article “From School to Work” develops on this idea. The differing backgrounds of individuals directly impact their ability to access educational resources. *The American Psychological Association* focuses on the differing paths one must take to achieve higher education status. As supported by, “About one-half of high school graduates in the United States do not go on to college, and of those who do, less than 25 percent obtain 4-year degrees.” (American Psychological Association 125). The common expectation of everyone receiving a high education level is unrealistic. This quote proves it cannot always be obtained for an abundant of reasons, ranging from low income to ethnicity backgrounds. Rose builds on this idea, giving evidence to this by telling a story about his uncle who did not have the privilege to attend school, “… Joe Meraglio, left school in the ninth grade” (Rose 572). Rose follows up this story with his uncle’s success despite him not having a degree in higher education, “…he moved from working in the assembly line to supervising the paint-and-body department.” (Rose 572). Rose proves through his uncle’s story, that hard work is valued more than a degree. The toxic cycle of this expectation is what influences the impact on individual’s inability to not be successful in the workplace strictly due to the “norm” of having a degree. Dweck develops this idea as she talks about expectations that result due to the mindsets of an individual. An example of this, “…he believed that education and practice could bring about fundamental changes in intelligence.” (Dweck 664). If a concept is created in one’s mind, it has influence on physical aspects of one’s decisions and performance in their life. The norm that education determines success creates a societal norm that equates success exclusively with an individual’s education level, even though not everyone has access to education at such a high regard.

Although education’s link to success creates negative expectations in society, it can prove to be true. In contrasting opinion, Viadero explains the large-scale effect education has. She explains her study on a nation’s economics in result of educational impact. Viadero's research illustrates a significant impact of education on a nation’s economy, emphasizing that both the quality and quantity of education are tied to economic success. The study shows, “…that technology and global competition are fueling a worldwide demand for better-skilled workers.” (Viadero). The article explains the growing world’s push to the education framework in our cultures. Viadero’s study mentions the stigma this data set creates, making education’s correlation to success grow deeper roots. Education, although not accessible to all, creates a more prosperous economy; highlighting how education is a key factor for success in the workplace. As evidence, “Increasing the proportion of the population receiving higher education is an objective requirement for economic development and is vital to expand the middle classes, substantially promoting common prosperity,” (Nikolaidis). By stating a direct impact, it can be concluded how much effect education has on America and other nations alike. The article “Does Education Attainment Promote Job Satisfaction?” also supports this statement. The article integrates data sets to show education’s direct impact on national success. As example, “Education is considered one of the most critical human capital investments,” (Solomon 1). The statement made in this article conveys that one’s education correlates to the overall prosperity of America’s economy. While the previous paragraph offers real-life examples to debate this issue, the evidence presented in these articles clearly indicates that education level does influence future success not only induvial, but nationwide.

Employment opportunities are a significant contributor to why education can have such an impact on one’s success. A person's education level is directly linked to their career opportunities. “Blue-Collar Brillance” is an example of this argument. Rose’s mother does not have a high education level, thus forcing her into the waitress profession. Rose expands on how his mother handles this reality and how she develops into her job. For example, “My mother quit school in the seventh grade…”, her low level of education limited her job opportunities (Rose 571). Due to her educational background, Rose makes obvious the limitations and challenges she had when finding a job. The article “Does education Attainment Promote Job Satisfaction?” picks up on the nuances of job opportunities association to education level. Due to the norm of education giving one a higher role in society, it has an impact on the satisfaction one has in their career. Satisfaction is a factor put into consideration of a nation’s economic success. Shown, “For example, educational attainment has been negatively associated with organizational, job involvement and organizational identification” (Solomon 1). Employment opportunities can be a direct tie to satisfaction in one’s career. This has a negative impact on the already created norm in society about one’s education level affecting their success in life.

 Succes is one’s career is also limited by the opportunities given. Employment opportunities are not only limited by educational status but the evolving market. As jobs become available at certain times, the required level of education for each position follows. This creates an influx or fall in the quantity and/or quality of education needed for jobs in a certain time frame to be filled. As said in paragraphs above, education affects economic growth, and it is also observed that an economy's status influences changes in the job market influencing the education standard for jobs. An example is shown from Viadero, “A highly skilled workforce can raise economic growth by about two-thirds of a percentage point a year,” (Viadero). The article highlights the cause-and-effect of education, the job markets, and the nation’s economy have on each other. The American Psychological Association supports this as, “… various programs are not well tailored to the needs of adolescents and young people.” When talking about job markets for young individuals (American Psychological Association 130). Due to the ever-changing job market, employment opportunities are a major reason as to why educational status affects millennials careers.

To counter, an individual’s education level should influence the opportunities for their career in life. Although it is a negative cycle that job opportunities have on education bias, it is warranted. A high level of education is hard to achieve. It takes numerous hours of work, resources, and mental toughness. All these factors contribute to the advantage of being able to receive employment in favor of a less educated person. There is a factual reason as to why an employer would want one with a degree rather than an individual without. Viadero explains this idea by quoting Mr. Hanushek in his article, “You get paid for what you know…” (Viadero). Mr. Hanushek goes on to mention the idea of what education brings to a society, “It’s not just a vague concept that people ought to go to school more,” (Viadero). The article emphasizes that individuals with higher education typically enjoy better job prospects and discusses how degrees contribute to a stronger economic foundation for a nation. While the argument connecting education to better job success is valid, it cannot be seen as a universal norm for society.

The argument above is convincing, a degree alone cannot provide an individual with all the necessary skills to be successful at their job. A high level of education does not qualify someone for excellence in their career. Rose reasons this through his advocation for lower-educated workers, “To acknowledge a broader range of intellectual capacity is to take seriously the concept of cognitive variability…” (Rose 576). To reason that education level affects an individual’s capability for a job, it is a societal norm is not a fact. In the article *Two Mindsets,* there is more evidence given to break the conception of education level affecting a person’s place in society. Dweck explains a story about an atmosphere observed in a classroom. The teacher created a harmful environment stemming around an individual’s knowledge. For instance, “…she was creating a mindset in which everyone in the class had one convincing goal-look smart, don’t look dumb.” (Dweck 665). The idea that not having a certain level of knowledge, negatively impacted on the students’ perceptions about themselves. The stigma created in this classroom is a small glimpse of what our society is doing to individuals on a large scale. An individual’s education level cannot be the overarching factor determining one’s success in the workplace. If education was the key factor of someone’s capability are society would be a hierarchy, giving the best jobs to the “smartest” individuals. This theory is disproven every day by individuals in the workforce. A degree alone does not equip an individual with all the skills needed to succeed in their job.

The research done, although it shows a few benefits for higher educated individuals in society today, does not dictate one’s success in their career. The societal norm created around education has led to stigmas regarding seeing less educated individuals of less value in the workplace. This perspective has established the norm that higher education is essential for career success. Education level does not make one better at their job; it’s the person’s characteristics. Ultimately, an individual’s level of education remains closely linked to their success, reflecting the complex relationship between education and career opportunities in today’s society.

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