

Examining the Notion of Duality: The Interaction between Neo-Academicism and University Teachers' Agency within the Performativity Context Defined by Public Managerialism

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Abstract : Along with the predominant influence of neo-liberalism, public managerialism is viewed as a panacea for curing the institutionalized weakness caused by the monopoly of the public sector. In the name of efficiency, its outcome-led approach acquires a legitimate status and, in turn, it transforms into the discourse of performativity, reformulating the souls of individual members into the form of docile bodies who are willing to demonstrate their own ability in organizational contributions. The evaluation system and the organizational reconstruction are viewed as the crucial means for achieving this mission. Inevitably, university teachers are confined within a rigid and bureaucratic setting, in which they do not have too much latitude but are subject to the commands of senior administrators. However, the notion of duality highlights the interaction between structural constraints and agency. If the actor discovers the rules or properties of social structure, he/she is able to transform structural constraints into resources for developing creative actions, conceptualized as an agency. This study was designed for examining how duality operates within this hierarchical arrangement formed by public managerialism. Fourteen informants were interviewed from February to August 2014. The findings show that the evaluation system created the culture of neo-academicalism, addressing excellence in research and, in turn, motivating academic-oriented teachers. This correspondence provided a gateway for them to win honor, dignity, and prestige in groups. However, unlike the concept of duality, this agency was operating within the institutionalized context, regulated by structural constraint. Furthermore, complying with the rule/property of social structure was able to secure their advantages.

Keywords : public managerialism, social discourse, neo-academicalism, duality, structural constraint, agency

Conference Title : ICEPSOL 2017 : International Conference on Educational Policy Studies, Organization and Leadership

Conference Location : Lisbon, Portugal

Conference Dates : April 16-17, 2017