

Abstract

This thesis is focused on the interpretation of the ninth-grade pupil's conceptions of hierarchical segmentation of society based on profession and obtained degree of education. Its main goal is to clarify student's perception of inequalities of social status among different work positions and to understand impact of study achievements on their vertical grouping. Theoretical part deals with sociological theories to explain the role of occupation and education in formation and maintenance of social stratification. Analytical part validates theoretical explanations by qualitative research conducted within one ninth class. Research questions are answered by qualitative analysis of data acquired by in-depth semi-structured interviews. Student's conceptions correspond to the basic three-dimensional hierarchical classification of the social layers defined in theoretical part. Mutual inequalities of those layers depend mainly on the level of work position which is related to particular layers. Pupils perceive different social status among vertically segmented vocational groups to be justified because individuals within those categories are distinguished by different personality traits. Achievement of specific social status depends to a great extent on educational performance, which is a measure of invested efforts. Students consider manifested intensity of those efforts to be the main characteristics which mutually differentiates representatives of particular hierarchical segments.