

Participation in Helping Networks as Social Capital Mobilization: Impact on Influence for Domestic Men, Domestic Women, and International MBA Students

V Radcliffe, A Konrad, D Shin

Academy of Management Learning & Education, 2016

Abstract:

This study examines participation in helping networks among MBA students and its impact on subsequent ratings of influence by peers. Helping networks reflect the mobilization of social capital where network contacts exchange social and material resources. As such, helping networks are distinct from friendship networks, which represent access to social capital but not necessarily its use. We identify three dimensions of social capital mobilization with different effects on status, specifically, mutual helping, nonmutual help giving, and nonmutual help receiving. Findings indicate that social capital mobilization through nonmutual help giving is a positive predictor of influence among peers at a later point in time. Nonmutual help receiving and mutual helping are unrelated to influence when nonmutual help giving is controlled. Gender moderates this relationship, but international student status does not. Nonmutual help giving does not enhance the perceived influence of women, particularly among domestic men. These findings support theories of status devaluation for marginalized groups and have implications for the value of the MBA for female students relative to their male peers. Future research on the predictors and outcomes of social capital mobilization can enhance understanding of the organizational experiences of diverse identity groups.