

THE HOME-SCHOOL CONTINUUM: CULTURAL CAPITAL AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Gazal Bhardwaj^{1*}, Sital Mohanty²

^{1*}Senior Research Fellow, Department of Sociology, KIIT University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India,

²Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, KIIT University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

bhardwajgazal4@gmail.com¹

sital.mohantyfcu@kiit.ac.in²

Abstract

In order to resolve disparities and promote more inclusive learning environment, it is imperative to comprehend the effects of cultural capital. The study examines how cultural capital is transmitted through social, familial, and school settings. Further, it delves into how cultural capital influences students' motivation, performance, and aspirations. Systematic review that adhered to PRISMA principles used Scopus database (1994–2024) which initially extracted 593 documents using Boolean operators based on relevant factors and finally 35 studies found to be considered for making the research inference. The results show that through resource availability, family support, and excellent teacher-student connections, cultural capital can improve academic performance, abilities, and aspirations. But it can also reinforce inequality by denying marginalised students access to higher education. The study emphasises the importance of cultural capital in education as well as the necessity of culturally sensitive policies that promote inclusivity and equity through SLR.

Keywords: Cultural capital, Educational outcomes, SLR, Equity

1. Introduction

In order to comprehend how advantage and disadvantage are perpetuated in educational settings, cultural capital continues to be a vital lens. Possessing cultural knowledge, attitudes, and educational resources is important, but so is how these are viewed and understood in institutional contexts. DiMaggio (1982) demonstrated that, even when controlling for academic achievement, teachers gave more positive assessments to students who had higher levels of cultural capital. This study supports that cultural capital is a significant resource for individuals as well as a type of institutionally supported and socially mediated symbolic power that influences educational achievements. As contextualised, Cultural capital is a non-monetary assets which confer advantages and facilitate social mobility in a hierarchical society classified as embodied, objectified and institutionalised capital (Bourdieu, 1985). “Embodied cultural” capital is the enduring mental and physical tendencies and it encompasses the cultural practices, knowledge, and abilities what people get during their process of socialisation, especially in their home and school settings. Physical assets that can be economically transferred i.e. writings, instruments, artwork, and other cultural objects, make up “objectified cultural capital” and these items are physical manifestations of cultural capital which are transferable and possessed. The “institutionalised cultural capital” describes institutional acknowledgement and credentials, such as professional certifications and academic degrees. One can say that cultural capital foster social mobility that includes all of the advantages, education, and cultural understanding people gain by means of their socialisation and upbringing (Huang, 2019). It has been noted that cultural capital serves as a signaling mechanism that is seen in students' attitudes, behaviours, and self-presentation patterns. This suggests that although cultural capital might help students succeed academically, its unequal distribution leads to stratification within educational system (Wildhagen, 2010). The cultural assets of parents influence their children's educational paths in a variety of complex ways (Jæger and Breen, 2016). It is pertinent to understand cultural capital as a relational asset rather than just a personal ownership (Silva, 2005). The dynamics of cultural reproduction and inequality are closely linked to household and familial environments (Silva, 2005). Hence, it can be understood that cultural capital is a multidimensional and multifaceted concept rather than a

monolithic one. It is the accumulation of information, abilities, customs, and preferences that people acquire up from their social experiences and upbringing.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine through previous researches, how cultural capital is transmitted through social, familial, and school settings and evaluating the researches on cultural capital influencing educational outcome along the factors such as, students' motivation, performance, and aspirations. Since they encompass both the internal and external aspects of a student success; motivation, performance, and aspirations are key variables in the study of educational outcomes. It has been found that the major factor in determining students' involvement, determination, and willingness to overcome academic challenges is motivation, which includes both internal and extrinsic drivers (Baek & U.D.K., 2017). Further, students' hopes and motives for the future are reflected in their educational aspirations, which are significantly affected by their social and familial contexts (Tan & Fang, 2023). Furthermore, Performance is a direct indicator of students' academic success and learning development, making it a crucial variable to include in studies of educational outcomes. Research continually shows that cultural capital, which is transmitted through social networks, schools, and families, greatly improves students' academic performance by facilitating resource access, encouraging learning environments, and a good rapport between teachers and students (DiMaggio, 1982; Osman et al., 2021). Based on Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, the study looks at how students from privileged families are more likely to use cultural capital to improve their academic performance and goals. In accordance with PRISMA criteria, the study uses a systematic literature review method to examine relevant research published between 1994 and 2024. It looks into how students' motivation, performance, and aspirations are shaped by their social networks, school surroundings, and familial backgrounds. In order to develop inclusive educational systems that address inequalities and foster fair learning opportunities to all students, the results emphasise the significance of comprehending and utilizing cultural capital.

2. Theoretical framework

Relationship between Cultural Capital and Educational Outcomes

Cultural capital influences educational outcomes in a variety of ways. The process of cultural reproduction enables the transmission of values, practices, and attitudes that are valued in educational institutions. Bourdieu (1984) stated that schools often operate in accordance with the dominant class's cultural norms, which benefits students who have been socialised to such standards. The field-habitus dynamic also explains how schools as "fields" reward pupils whose habitus, internalized systems of dispositions are consistent with the school's cultural norms. As a result, students from wealthy homes, whose familial circumstances naturally foster these traits, tend to have clearer academic paths. Empirical studies often support the significant relationship between cultural capital and academic achievement. Sullivan (2001) discovered that cultural capital transmitted within families had a considerable impact on academic achievement, with activities like reading advanced fiction and engaging in instructional media improving academic outcomes. Similarly, De Graaf et al. (2000) revealed that parental cultural capital associated with reading habits and intellectual home surroundings had a greater impact on children's scholastic progress than traditional indicators such as arts participation. In contrast, Lareau (2018) discovered that middle-class parents' "concerted cultivation" delivers children cultural capital that corresponds with school expectations, whereas working-class families' do not do so often, resulting in fewer educational gains and continued inequity.

Complementary theoretical frameworks further expand the understanding of cultural capital's impact on educational outcomes. Wigfield and Eccles (2000) revealed in their "Expectancy-value theory" that students' motivation and educational achievements are greatly impacted by their ideas about their own abilities (expectancies) and the importance they place on educational tasks, both of which are shaped by their cultural background and socialisation experiences. These expectations and values

have a direct impact on academic performance and choices, emphasising the importance of cultural capital in influencing achievement motivation and educational success. Similarly, Bowles and Gintis' Correspondence Principle (1976) asserts that schools reflect the hierarchical and fragmented structure of work settings, transferring dominant cultural capital that coincides with capitalist ideals and behaviours.

To sum up, cultural capital has a significant and complex impact on how educational paths are shaped. It raises access to cultural resources, improves non-cognitive abilities, and aligns students' dispositions with the expectations of the institution, all of which improve academic achievement. Cultural capital, however, is dependent on larger social structures, and if these interlocking gaps are not addressed, it may perpetuate current educational inequalities.

3. Method

This systematic literature review's reporting complies with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) standards. In order to conduct a systematic search, the study may adopt PRISMA method (Ghani et al. 2021; Moher et al. 2009). Therefore, this method has been adopted for analysing all existing available research examining how cultural capital gets passed on through family, society and school settings. Furthermore, to analyse the link between cultural capital and students' motivation, performance, and aspirations. The mechanism for finalising the previous literature to be considered for proceeding the study has been depicted through the flow chart in Figure 1.

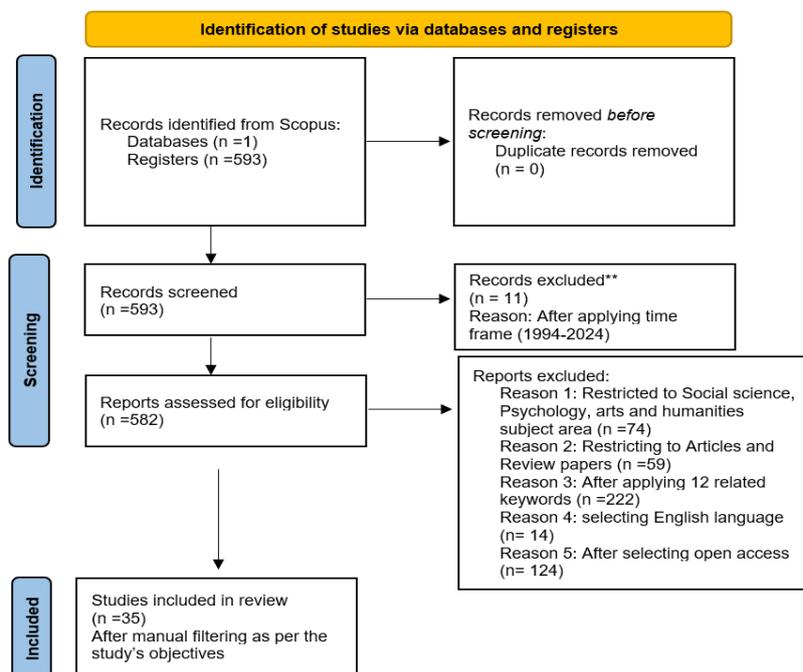


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram for selection of research papers

3.1. Database selection criteria

The review has been conducted using a systematic search procedure. The first step in the data collection process was to create a precise research string that would contain relevant papers from the Scopus database. Scopus was found to be the best suited database because this database contains information on high quality, multidisciplinary research that has had a substantial positive impact and enables the consolidation of data sets (Santamaria-Granados et al., 2020). Researches around the world to investigate the existing literatures using SLR have mostly used Scopus database for

extracting the papers in respective area of the study (Abdullah, 2021; Sweileh, 2020; Yang et al., 2021).

3.2 Search methodology

To find relevant research papers as per the finalised objectives, the boolean operator was employed using the keywords i.e., ("Cultural Capital" OR "Social Capital") AND ("Educational Outcomes" OR "Academic Achievement" OR "Student Motivation" OR "School Performance"). As of February 16, 2025, a total 593 documents were extracted after this directive given the command for a time frame of last 30 years i.e., from 1994 to 2024 which have been taken into consideration for conducting this study. This long-term standpoint provides insight for comprehending the trajectory of cultural capital's impact. Duplicate records were eliminated prior to screening. Since there were no duplicates in this case, all 593 records moved forward to the screening stage. The relevance of each of the 593 records to the study's objectives was assessed by reviewing their titles and abstracts. Eleven records were eliminated at this phase since they were not specific to the 1994–2024 time span. 582 reports were screened, and their eligibility was evaluated. To make sure, they fulfilled the requirements of the study, a more thorough analysis was conducted. A number of reports were not included for a variety of reasons: Firstly, the 74 reports were excluded after limiting the papers to the social sciences, psychology, arts, and humanities. Further, because 59 reports did not meet the requirements for articles or review papers, they were excluded. Furthermore, using 12 relevant keywords (i.e., cultural capital, academic achievement, student, educational attainment, academic performance, achievement, socioeconomic status, family, Bourdieu, academic success, students, and parental involvement), 222 reports were eliminated because they did not align with the research's specified emphasis. Also, since research papers and articles in English language was considered as an essential criteria for inclusion, 14 reports were excluded as they were in other languages. Lastly, since the research needed publicly accessible studies, 124 reports were excluded for not being open access. And thus, only those studies have been considered for making the inference which falls completely in line with the selected research objectives. Finally, the current systematic literature review concluded with the inclusion of 35 research papers having applied all the essential steps under the extraction process.

The overview of the finalised 35 studies along PRISMA model have been methodically arranged and summarised in the tabular form as have been shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of the studies incorporated for the systematic literature review

S. No.	Title of the Paper	Author (Year)	Cont ext	Study Design	Conclusion
1	Duration matters: peer effects on academic achievement with random assignment in the Chinese context	Cheng, (2020)	China	Random assignment experiment	There are no significant differences in the indirect impact of peer social capital across social class groups; it steadily rises over time among peers from similar backgrounds while staying constant among peers from differing backgrounds
2	Family influences in academic achievement: A study of the Canary Islands	Sanchez et al., (2013)	Spain	Quantitative survey research	High academic achievement was found to be significantly predicted by parents' educational background, expectations, socioeconomic level, and family size

3	Revisiting the Role of Cultural Capital in East Asian Educational Systems: The Case of South Korea	Byun et al., (2012)	South Korea	Quantitative Secondary data analysis	Both parental objectified (check the sentence) cultural capital and children's embodied cultural capital had a favourable influence by family SES
4	Academic achievement in Norwegian secondary schools: The impact of violence during childhood	Huang and Mossige, (2012)	Norway	Quantitative analysis of secondary data	Childhood exposure to violence affects young people's academic performance directly as well as indirectly through its influence on the social relationships and psychological well-being of young victims
5	Exploring the Role of Parental Education Level in Preservice Teachers' Judgments	Dickert and Glock, (2025)	Germany	Experimental study	Parental education level may be one component that leads to social differences in teachers' perceptions about students' academic ability
6	The Roles of Cultural Capital in Teacher–Student Interactions in China: A Qualitative Study of Students in Higher Vocational Colleges	Huang et al., (2023)	China	Qualitative	The embodied and institutionalised cultural capital of students has a significant impact on a number of teacher-student interaction aspects
7	Does housing instability matter for youths' educational attainment?	Kahlmeter, (2021)	Sweden	Longitudinal register data analysis	The relationship between housing instability and educational outcomes is greatly impacted by forced, repeated, and long-distance relocations, while single relocations have little effect on educational attainment
8	Family and school social capital, school burnout and academic achievement: a multilevel longitudinal analysis among Finnish pupils	Lindfors et al., (2018)	Finland	Multilevel longitudinal analysis	Better academic achievement and less school burnout were demonstrated by school social capital, which is the positive and encouraging relationships between students and teachers
9	The embeddedness of visionary agency within the economic-cultural-capital formation: A case of Sino-Malaysian high school graduates	Chiang et al., (2022)	Sino-Malaysia	Qualitative (Case study)	Fathers' employment and mothers' credentials continuously influence students' academic success
10	Compensatory school effects and social capital	Behtoui and Strömberg, (2020)	Global context	Quantitative	SSC (Static Cultural Capital) and school composition, that is, the class and ethnic origin of a school's students, are strongly correlated

11	The impact of cultural capital on school performance	Nunes and Andrade, (2024)	Global context	Quantitative analysis	Students' academic performance is influenced by their cultural capital. The RCC (Relational cultural capital) directly improves student performance when the SCC (Static cultural capital) is increased
12	Economic, social, and cultural capital and ESQ in academic achievement: A comparison of Afghan and Iranian students	Pishghadam et al., (2023)	Afghanistan and Iran	Quantitative comparative study	Students' degree of cultural capital and emo-sensory quotient (ESQ) had a considerably favourable influence in their academic achievement
13	Recipe for educational success: a study of successful school performance of students from low social cultural background	Osman et al., (2021)	Global context	Qualitative case study	Students cited a supportive home environment, unwavering emotional support, socialising with classmates who have similar educational objectives, and academic and emotional support from teachers as essential components of their educational success
14	Success Is Relative: Comparative Social Class and Ethnic Effects in an Academic Paradox	Oh and Kim, (2016)	United States	Qualitative comparative study	Meaning-making processes influenced by this structural-cultural interplay create contradictory conclusions when analysts move beyond a single or objective emphasize on academic accomplishment
15	Influences of Economic Capital, Cultural Capital, and Social Capital on Asian High School Students' Academic Achievement	Hee and Shuhan, (2022)	Asia	Quantitative	Among the different forms of capital that high school children received from their families, social capital had a major impact on their academic performance
16	It is the air that we breathe. Academic socialization as a key component for understanding how parents influence children's schooling	Bäck and U. D. K., (2017)	Global context	Theoretical analysis	Academic socialization, which is the transmission of parents' educational goals, attitudes, and expectations has a greater effect on students' academic performance than other types of parental participation

17	"I go to teacher conferences, but I do not understand what the teacher is saying": Somali parents' perception of the Swedish school	Månsson, (2015)	Sweden	Qualitative reflective study	Parents are aware of their own ignorance and lack of resources when it comes to providing their children with the best education possible in the Swedish educational system
18	Unequal homework: The hidden forces of social class contexts and parental self-efficacy in shaping educational outcomes	Mzidabi et al., (2024)	Global context	Mixed-methods study	Parental self efficacy and cultural capital are significantly predicted by a family's social status, which in turn contributes to educational disparities in achievement
19	How does cultural capital influence academic achievement in the Chinese context? A systematic literature review	Xie and Hutagalung, (2025)	China	Systematic literature review	In China, a lesser correlation between academic success and cultural capital. It implies that there is unfair competition between social classes within the family
20	A Review of the Relationship between Parental Involvement and Children's Academic Achievement and the Role of Family Socioeconomic Status in this Relationship	Şengönül, (2022)	Global context	Systematic literature review	Students' academic success is positively impacted by parental participation at home and at school, which includes communication, reading, encouraging, and high expectations
21	Understanding the nexus of school types, school cultures and educational outcomes and its implication for policy and practice	Ewulley et al., (2023)	Global context	Mixed method study	There are close connections among educational outcomes, school cultures, and the type of school organization
22	Can teacher support reduce inequalities in education? Re-examining the relationship between cultural capital and achievement	Radulović et al., (2022)	Global context	Secondary data analysis (quantitative)	Teachers' support influences the connection between students' reading performance and cultural capital

23	Family and community inputs as predictors of students' overall, cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning outcomes in secondary schools	Ekpenyong et al., (2023)	Nigeria	Predictive correlational study	Students' total cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor learning outcomes are greatly influenced by community inputs (school support, security networks, and reforms) as well as home inputs (social capital and parental participation)
24	Social origins and educational attainment: The unique contributions of parental education, class, and financial resources over time	Strømme et al., (2024)	United Kingdom	Longitudinal quantitative analysis	Elite degrees and higher postsecondary education are becoming more and more based on family background, especially parental financial resources, while broad education metrics are either unchanged or dropping
25	Research on the influence of family capital on academic achievement of first-generation college students in China	Zhao et al., (2023)	China	Quantitative analysis	Academic achievement and ability growth were highly predicted by family cultural capital. First-generation college students' academic success can be strongly impacted by family capital
26	Processes of natural mentoring that promote underrepresented students' educational attainment: A theoretical model	Hagler, (2018)	Global context	Theoretical model development	Mentoring connections provide essential cultural capital to support underrepresented students by increasing students' trust in non-parental adults and their belief that they can get help
27	The Mediation of Exam-oriented Cultural Capital: Economic Capital and Educational Inequality of Chinese High School Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic and School Closures	Yu et al., (2023)	China	Quantitative survey research	Economic wealth had a comprehensive impact on academic performance, particularly on students' academic standing

28	Cultural Capital and Its Impact on Academic Achievement: Sustainable Development of Chinese High School Students	Jin et al., (2022)	China	Quantitative survey	Embodied and institutionalised cultural capital considerably boosted high school students academic success whereas objectified cultural capital had no apparent influence
29	Educational outcomes and aspirations of upper secondary school students: The cultural capital and relative risk aversion perspectives	Puzić et al., (2019)	Global context	Quantitative survey research	School performance, gymnasium enrolment over vocational school, and expectations for higher education were all positively impacted by cultural capital and relative risk aversion
30	Family social support, community "social capital" and adolescents' mental health and educational outcomes: A longitudinal study in England	Rothon et al., (2012)	England	Longitudinal study	Positive family relationships and participation in extracurricular activities are linked to increased likelihood of achieving academic objectives
31	Enacting culturally responsive pedagogy for rural schooling in Ghana: A school-community-based enquiry	Anlimachie et al., (2025)	Ghana	Qualitative	Immediate environment, cultural capital, and important social figures, especially family and teachers had a considerable impact on rural children' goals and priorities for academic success.
32	Family social and cultural capital: an analysis of effects on adolescents' educational outcomes in China	Tan and Fang, (2023)	China	Quantitative analysis	There is a strong positive correlation between adolescents' educational aspirations and their family's social and cultural resources. However, academic accomplishment was significantly correlated negatively with both types of family capital, and academic effort was significantly correlated positively with only family cultural capital and negatively with non-

					significant family social capital
33	First-generation students' educational outcomes: The role of parental educational, cultural, and economic capital – A 9-years panel study	Barsegyan and Maas, (2024)	Global context	Longitudinal quantitative	Differences in educational achievements are partially determined by parental educational and cultural capital, with cultural capital being essential for selective university selections, even while dropout rates and university performance are comparable
34	Examining factors predicting students' digital competence	Hatlevik et al., (2015)	Finland	Quantitative	Mastery orientation, academic success, and home factors including language integration and cultural capital all influence students' digital competency
35	Parent involvement, cultural capital, and the achievement gap among elementary school children	Lee and Bowen, (2006)	United States	Quantitative survey research	Diverse parental demographics demonstrated various forms of involvement, with the largest correlation between student achievement and parents from dominant groups

An analysis of the 35 studies finalised for this research indicates that they fit into three broad categories i.e., the studies conducted in developed countries context, developing countries context, and global context which has been shown in the pie chart under Figure 2. Each of these clusters demonstrates both overlapping and unique patterns, which are described in detail in the following section.

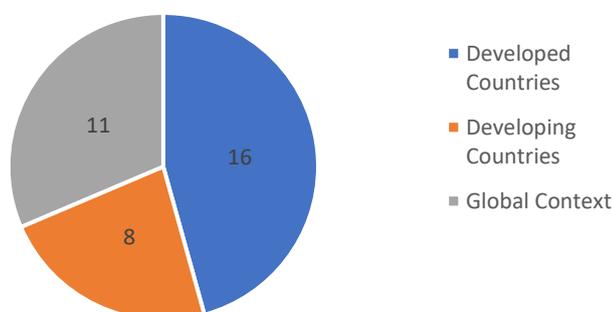


Figure 2: Context Wise Segregation of total Reports Considered (in numbers)
 Source: Calculated based on Table 1

In developed nations, research on the impact of cultural capital on academic attainment typically focusses on structural and institutional issues that perpetuate inequality. A prominent trend is the exploration of how long term factors such as housing insecurity, parental education, teaching biases,

and exposure to childhood trauma influence learning outcomes. In countries such as Sweden, Norway, and the United Kingdom, authors traced these affects over a time period of 15 years or more under the longitudinal study. Developed countries also highlight aspects, such as, digital skills, academic burnout, and teacher-student relationships, demonstrating how achievement is influenced by both familial background and institutional assistance.

In developing countries, research emphasises the importance of family background, community support, and economic hardship in attaining educational outcomes. Educational achievement is frequently defined in terms of limited resources, first-generation college attendance, and the importance of emotional and motivational support from parents and educators. Studies conducted in Nigeria, Afghanistan, Malaysia, and Ghana show that, cultural capital is not only inherited but also built through strong family and community ties. Also, parental education, employment stability, and the family environment influence students' ambitions. It indicates the importance of support systems in transforming potential into achievement, in spite of resource limitations.

In global studies, there is a major emphasis on synthesising educational attainment theories and verifying their relevance in a variety of situations. Many of these studies propose theoretical models or mixed-method frameworks to generalise the impact of family capital on academic success. The studies in global context also look at how intersectional aspects such as ethnicity, social class, and institutional type influence students' experiences. It implies that narrowing the academic achievement gap would involve collaborative efforts from families, schools, and policymakers.

Further, in order to understand the scholarly influence of these findings, it is also required to consider the publishing quality of the records taken for the study. Table 2 shows the distribution of selected papers by journal quartile, based to the SCImago Journal Ranking.

Table 2: Distribution of papers by journal quartile

Journal Quartile	Number of papers	Percentage (%)
Q1 (Top tier)	21	60
Q2	10	29
Q3	3	9
Q4	1	2
Total	35	100

Source: SCImago, 2025

The table depicts the distribution of the 35 papers chosen for this study depending on their journal quartile ranking. The vast majority of publications (60%) are published in high-impact Q1 journals, indicating a strong emphasis on quality and trustworthiness. Papers from Q2 and Q3 publications provide valuable viewpoints. However, a small percentage (2%) originate from Q4 journal. This distribution highlights the meticulous selection procedures used to ensure the credibility and relevance of the research sources.

To further develop comprehension of the study, an overall distribution of sub-variables used in the analysis is shown in the following table. The quality of publication sources is emphasised in Table 2, but Table 3 turns focus to how frequently various sub-constructs of cultural capital and educational outcomes occur in the chosen literature.

Table 3: Sub-variable frequency distribution

Type of variable	Main variable	Sub-variable	Sub-construct usage frequency(in %)

Independent	Cultural capital	School; Schools (Under School setting)	47.74
		Familial setting	20.84
		Social setting	31.42
Dependent	Educational outcomes	Motivation	12.75
		Performance	66.48
		Aspirations	20.77

Source: Authors' Calculation

The distribution shows that the most often researched aspect of cultural capital is the school environment (47.74%), underscoring the critical influence of educational environments, teaching strategies, and institutional structures on students' academic performance. A greater understanding of how schools serve as both academic institutions and as channels for social norms and cultural values is reflected in this emphasis. Other relevant settings include social (31.42%) and familial (20.84%) contexts, suggesting that peer relationships, community context, and family background are crucial for the development and dissemination of cultural capital. It emphasises that cultural capital has a solid foundation in everyday socialisation, value transmission, and emotional support networks rather than being generated exclusively within institutional bounds. These settings are fundamental in determining students' attitudes, self-esteem, and access to educational possibilities.

On the dependent variable side, the most often studied sub variable is the educational performance (66.48%), which reflects a significant amount of attention given to quantifiable academic markers, like grades and test scores. Though comparatively less frequently examined, aspirations (20.77%) and motivation (12.75%) are as important in determining students' educational outcomes. Students' aspirations, such as their desire to pursue higher education and a job, are frequently influenced by their parents, society, and information availability. Moreover, students' internal drive, emotional commitment, and perseverance towards learning are reflected in their motivation. Therefore, the inclusion of these non-cognitive outcomes represents a move in educational research towards a more comprehensive approach that emphasises both performance and the psychological elements that support sustained academic engagement.

Building on the thematic focus of sub-variable usage, it is also crucial to look into the terminological patterns and conceptual emphasis reflected in the chosen studies. To that purpose, Table 4 shows the frequency distribution of keywords used while finalising the reports for the study, providing insight into the dominating constructions and repeating themes in the nexus of cultural capital and educational outcomes.

Table 4: Keywords usage frequency table

Keyword	Usage frequency (in %) (rounded)
Cultural capital	12.71
Academic achievement	6.90
Student	7.73
Educational attainment	1.23
Academic performance	0.93
Achievement	14.32
Socioeconomic status	0.55
Family	14.98

Bourdieu	4.18
Academic success	0.83
Students	32.20
Parental involvement	3.42

Source: Authors' calculation

The frequent use of phrases like "students," "family," "achievement," and "cultural capital" illustrates the dominating discourse areas that drive this field of study. These keywords suggest that the scholarly emphasis is mostly on how students navigate the educational system within the larger framework of parental influence and cultural capital. It emphasises the student-centric nature of most research, with outcomes often assessed in terms of academic performance or success. Meanwhile, the frequent use of the terms "family" and "cultural capital" indicates a strong focus on the significance of home surroundings and inherited or acquired social resources in shaping educational paths. This keyword pattern supports the study's relevance by demonstrating that the chosen literature is conceptually consistent with the fundamental variables under consideration.

Overview of the studies incorporated for the systematic literature review, Context Wise Segregation of total Reports Considered, Distribution of papers by journal quartile, Sub-variable frequency distribution, and Keywords usage frequency table, have helped in setting the basis for a thorough discussion of the themes and inferences found in the existing literature. The discussion section has integrated multiple dimensions observed from the 35 reports and examining the role of cultural capital in shaping the knowledge output among the students, which facilitates a greater understanding of the various ways in which cultural capital influences educational results.

4. Discussion

4.1 Significance of Family Background and Cultural Resources

Cultural capital influences educational outcomes through a variety of pathways, often encouraging achievement but at times reinforcing inequities. One of the most crucial aspects is family background, including the parents' social and educational status. Baeck and U.D. K. (2017), and Sánchez et al. (2013), stress the importance of academic socialisation, parental expectations, and educational levels in predicting academic achievement. According to their findings, parents who are educated tend to establish high academic expectations for their children and instill good study habits, creating an environment conducive to success. Rethon et al. (2012) found that such conducive family dynamics boost not just academic performance but also mental wellness. Moreover, families' cultural resources, such as books, museum trips, and educational outings, are substantially linked to greater academic aspirations and trajectories (Tan & Fang, 2023). Hence it can be understood that, students who have access to these resources are more likely to excel academically and pursue higher education.

4.2 Impact of Teacher-Student Connections

The teacher-student connection is also crucial, since it has the potential to heighten or reduce educational disparities. Lindfors et al. (2018) found that excellent teacher-student relationships prevent burnout while improving academic performance. Huang et al. (2023) discovered that students' institutionalised and embodied cultural capital frequently influences the success of such interactions. They revealed that when students and teachers have similar cultural origins, interactions are more encouraging and successful. This alignment promotes trust and mutual understanding, which boosts student engagement. Moreover, it has also been found that teacher support can help reduce disparities and bridge cultural divides (Radulović et al., 2022). Based on these studies, one can observe that supportive connections between teachers and students improve academic performance and reduce burnout, particularly when cultural alignment exists.

4.3 Role of Peers and School Environment

The peer and school environment also influence educational outcomes. Osman et al. (2021) revealed that students from underprivileged circumstances may achieve academic success provided they have a caring home, affirming teachers, and healthy peer interactions. Peer social capital, such as the networks and values shared by students, can have a cumulative impact on academic performance. However, Cheng (2020) cautions that when peers come from similar backgrounds, this capital might create echo chambers, restricting exposure to alternative ideas and critical thinking. These findings highlight that, while peer and school contexts can help students achieve academic achievement, their actual potential resides in encouraging diversity, inclusivity, and supportive relationships that extend students' viewpoints and learning opportunities.

4.4 *The increasing significance of Digital Capital*

Another growing concept is digital capital. Hatlevik et al. (2015) emphasised the growing significance of digital skills and access to technology in modern education. According to them, students with digital competencies are more likely to thrive in school and in their future employment. As education systems become more technologically advanced, the incorporation of digital literacy into cultural capital becomes increasingly important. Thus, digital capital emerges as a critical component of cultural capital, providing students with the tools they need to thrive and flourish in an increasingly digital academic and professional environment.

4.5 *Structural Inequalities and the Limitations of Cultural Capital*

While cultural capital can promote educational outcomes, it also has an adverse impact by sustaining social disparities. Lee and Bowen (2006) showed that children from dominant or affluent social groups acquire inherent cultural capital, which gives them an innate advantage and widens the achievement gap. Whereas, low-income households may face challenges in providing valuable cultural experiences for their children, limiting academic chances and perpetuating cycles of disadvantage, as found by Şengönül (2022). This lack of cultural exposure not only affects students' learning possibilities, but it also shapes how educators perceive them, as shown by Dickert and Glock's (2025). Their findings revealed that teachers may unconsciously lower expectations for children whose parents have lower educational achievement. Such prejudices can impair students' performance and limit their academic potential. Aside from these discussed challenges, structural and cultural differences also inhibit academic engagement. These challenges are more pronounced for families with immigrant or minority identities. According to Månsson (2015), immigrant or minority background parents may struggle to navigate the school system, resulting in lower parental involvement and cultural mismatch, which can significantly effect academic performance. Furthermore, as Kahlmeter (2021) points out, housing instability undermines educational continuity and produces an unstable learning environment, further hindering student advancement. These structural barriers demonstrate how instability, whether social, cultural, or material, can impede students' ability to fully participate in educational opportunities. Such disturbances frequently overlap with deeper hierarchies within families and societies, affecting how cultural capital is accessible and utilised. For instance, Xie and Hutagalung (2025) cautions that in China, the association between cultural capital and academic achievement may be limited, as intra-household status is more important. Mzidabi et al. (2024) indicate that differences in social status impact parental self-efficacy, resulting in achievement discrepancies. These findings highlight that unless the underlying structural and social inequalities are addressed, the benefits of cultural capital may continue to be unevenly distributed, expanding rather than reducing educational disadvantages.

Therefore, one can develop a more sophisticated understanding of cultural capital and influence on educational outcomes by taking into both its positive and negative effects. Despite its potential benefits, cultural capital can also serve to perpetuate current disparities and put obstacles in the way of underprivileged children's progress, which are required to be addressed.

5. Conclusion

The study highlights how cultural capital shapes educational outcomes in a knotty and multidimensional way. Cultural capital has the potential to improve academic performance and aspirations but it can also perpetuate educational disparities. In order to resolve this paradox, culturally responsive initiatives must be put in place to reduce disparities and acknowledge the dynamic and context-dependent nature of cultural capital. Learning settings can be made more equal by utilising community networks, and cultivating positive teacher-student interactions. It is imperative that systemic improvements be made to encourage equity and opportunity for all students, irrespective of their socio-economic background. This viewpoint is expanded by new ideas such as emotional and sensory capital, which highlight the significance of emotional intelligence and sensory experiences for academic performance. In order to inform policies that support inclusive and equitable educational systems, more study should examine the complex interactions between various forms of cultural capital and their effects in various cultural contexts.

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