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The Role of Social Capital in Shaping Educational Outcomes: Implications for Public Policy

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between social capital factors and educational outcomes among students by using a quantitative research design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from a representative sample of students, and statistical methods including ANOVA analysis were applied to test the hypothesis. The results showed that social capital factors, such as family, peer, and community support, had a statistically significant impact on students' academic performance. The ANOVA findings indicated that the regression sum of squares explained a meaningful proportion of the variance in educational outcomes, with an F-value of 24.58 and a significance level of p = .000. These results confirmed that students with stronger networks of support performed better academically than those with weaker social capital. The demographic analysis further showed that gender, age, and level of education also influenced students' learning experiences, highlighting differences in how social capital benefits different groups of learners. The discussion emphasized that strong family-school partnerships, peer collaboration, and community engagement are important for creating supportive environments that promote academic success. Overall, the study validated the importance of social capital as a predictor of educational achievement and suggested ways for educators, families, and communities to work together to improve student learning. These findings contribute to educational research by showing the vital role of social relationships in shaping learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Social capital, educational outcomes, family support, peer influence, community support, demographic analysis, ANOVA, academic success, student performance, learning environment.*

INTRODUCTION

Social capital refers to the networks, trust, norms, and relationships that individuals develop within families, schools, and communities. It is an important resource that shapes how people access opportunities, share knowledge, and support one another. In education, social capital can appear through parents helping children with homework, peers encouraging each other, or teachers who establish caring and trusting connections with students. These interactions not only support academic tasks but also build

resilience, motivation, and discipline among learners. For example, (Print & Coleman, 2003),explained that social capital plays a crucial role in the creation of human capital by supporting children's learning through parental involvement. (Singh, 2024),also reviewed several empirical studies and found consistent evidence that students with strong family and community support perform better academically and persist longer in their studies. This suggests that social capital should not be seen as a secondary factor but as a central driver in determining educational achievement and long-term success. By shaping attitudes toward schooling and ensuring support from trusted adults, social capital becomes one of the key foundations for student growth and academic progress.

The advantages of social capital, however, are not shared equally among all learners. Socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender strongly influence who has access to strong networks and who does not. Students from wealthy or well-educated families are often surrounded by connections that provide guidance about school choices, scholarships, and future careers. On the other hand, children from marginalized or low-income backgrounds may struggle to access such support, leaving them at a disadvantage. (Zwier, 2025),found that social capital interacts with family background, with children of affluent and educated parents gaining the most benefits from school networks. Stanton-Salazar (2011) further argued that teachers and counselors often provide more resources to students who already hold social advantages, unintentionally reinforcing inequalities. These findings highlight a crucial challenge: although social capital can lift students, it can also deepen divisions if not equally distributed. This means public policy must focus not only on strengthening social capital but also on making sure that it is accessible to disadvantaged groups, so that schools do not reproduce existing social gaps.

Different forms of social capital exist, and each plays a distinct role in shaping educational outcomes. Family social capital involves parental engagement, high expectations, and conversations about education at home. School social capital includes trusting relationships with teachers, strong collaboration among staff, and supportive school environments. Peer social capital refers to friendships and peer encouragement, which often shape attitudes toward studying, discipline, and ambition. Community social capital encompasses neighborhood organizations, faith-based groups, and local mentorship initiatives that extend support beyond the classroom. (Sun et al., 2025),found that parental involvement, a major form of family social capital, had a direct positive effect on students' academic performance and behavior. Similarly, Israel, (Israel & Beaulieu, 2004),emphasized that community and peer support strongly predicted educational aspirations among rural students. These studies confirm that all four forms of social capital interact to influence learning outcomes. Policymakers therefore need to design interventions that target the family, school, peer, and community levels together. A focus on only one dimension may not be enough to ensure lasting improvements in educational performance, especially for disadvantaged groups who require support from multiple sources.

Understanding why social capital influences educational outcomes requires looking at its underlying mechanisms. One important pathway is information sharing: networks help families and students gain access to details about scholarships, educational programs, or career opportunities. Another pathway is the creation of norms and expectations that encourage children to value learning, set higher goals, and remain motivated. Emotional support from peers, parents, or teachers is another essential mechanism, as it helps students persist during challenges and reduces the risk of dropout. Empirical studies provide strong evidence of these processes. (Crosnoe, 2021),demonstrated that close teacher-student relationships enhanced student engagement and lowered academic risk. (Horvath, 2022),found that middle-class families often use their networks to secure advantages for their children, reinforcing social privilege. Together, these findings show that social capital works not only by providing direct resources but also by shaping students' aspirations, resilience, and confidence. This means that policies designed to strengthen

social capital must consider multiple pathways of influence, ensuring that both practical resources and motivational support are available to learners from diverse backgrounds.

Because social capital plays such a significant role in learning, public policy becomes crucial in supporting and expanding it. Effective policies can strengthen family-school partnerships, build trust between teachers and communities, and provide funding for local mentoring programs. (Epstein & Elhalaby, 2025),highlighted the importance of schools actively involving parents in educational planning and activities, creating a shared responsibility for student success. Similarly(Saijo, 2022), emphasized that civic participation and community organizations foster trust and networks that support education. Policymakers can design strategies to ensure that these forms of social capital are not restricted to elite families but extend to disadvantaged groups as well. However, successful policy must recognize that one solution cannot fit all contexts. What works in urban schools with strong community institutions may not be effective in rural or marginalized settings. Therefore, policies must be culturally sensitive, locally adaptable, and responsive to the needs of the students they aim to serve. Without this sensitivity, even well-intentioned programs may unintentionally increase inequalities instead of reducing them.

It is also important to note that social capital has a dynamic relationship with social inequality. When it is concentrated within privileged groups, it tends to reproduce educational advantages and widen gaps between students. On the other hand, when it is made more widely available through schools, communities, and supportive policies, it can act as a tool for reducing inequalities. For example, (Buchmann et al., 2021),found that family structure and parental involvement significantly shaped the amount of social capital children received, which influenced their educational persistence. Similarly, (Dufur et al., 2013),showed that children in families with strong parental involvement were more likely to achieve academically, regardless of income differences. These findings underline that public policy must focus on redistributing social capital by giving disadvantaged students more opportunities to build strong networks. Without equal access, education risks reinforcing privilege, but with inclusive policies, social capital can become a means of empowerment and upward mobility for marginalized groups.

Social capital also plays an important role in shaping long-term outcomes beyond schooling, including career opportunities, civic participation, and lifelong learning. The skills, values, and connections built in schools often extend into adulthood, affecting students' ability to succeed in the labor market and participate as active citizens. (Lin & Erickson, 2008),argued that social networks provide both instrumental resources, like job opportunities, and expressive resources, like emotional support, which influence overall life chances. Similarly, (Carmen et al., 2022),emphasized that social capital helps people adapt to new challenges in society, including changes in the economy or workplace. This broader perspective suggests that policies to build social capital in schools have benefits far beyond academic achievement. They prepare students not just for exams, but also for meaningful participation in society. By linking educational policies with community development, governments can ensure that young people gain both the knowledge and the networks needed to thrive in their personal and professional lives.

Research Objectives

1. To examine how different forms of social capital (family, school, peer, and community) influence students' academic achievement and motivation.

2. To analyze the role of socioeconomic status in shaping access to social capital and its impact on educational outcomes.

3. To evaluate the effectiveness of public policy and school-based interventions in strengthening social capital to reduce educational inequalities.

Problem Statement

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of social capital in improving educational outcomes, many students continue to face inequalities in accessing and benefiting from it. While strong family, school, peer, and community networks can provide essential support, motivation, and opportunities, these advantages are not evenly distributed. Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds often have greater access to supportive relationships and educational resources, while those from disadvantaged groups face barriers such as weak community networks, limited parental involvement, and reduced institutional support. This unequal distribution of social capital not only widens the achievement gap but also limits opportunities for upward mobility, thereby reinforcing cycles of inequality. Moreover, existing educational policies often focus more on material resources and academic performance without fully addressing the social and relational factors that contribute to success. As a result, the potential of social capital to foster resilience, reduce dropout rates, and enhance long-term learning outcomes remains underutilized. Therefore, there is a need to investigate how social capital shapes educational outcomes and to explore policy measures that can strengthen it in ways that promote equity and inclusivity for all learners.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it highlights the crucial role of social capital in shaping educational outcomes and reducing inequalities among students. By examining how family, school, peer, and community networks influence achievement, the research provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and community leaders. It emphasizes that education is not only affected by material resources but also by the quality of relationships, trust, and support systems surrounding learners. Understanding these dynamics helps in designing strategies that promote stronger family-school partnerships, enhance teacher-student trust, and expand community involvement. Moreover, this study contributes to addressing educational disparities by showing how public policy can create equitable opportunities for disadvantaged students who often lack access to supportive networks. The findings can guide schools in building inclusive environments where every student benefits from social connections that foster motivation, resilience, and academic success. Ultimately, this study supports the development of fairer and more effective educational systems, where social capital is recognized and strengthened as a key resource for improving learning and life outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social capital in education has been widely discussed in recent scholarship, which connects earlier theories with contemporary evidence. Building on Coleman's idea of social capital and (Bhandari, 2024),earlier synthesis, new studies emphasize how family, school, peer, and community ties influence learning outcomes in different contexts. For example, research shows that supportive relationships increase motivation, reduce dropout risks, and enhance academic success, but the strength of these effects varies across age groups, subjects, and policy environments. A key challenge noted in the literature is the diversity of definitions and measures of social capital, which complicates comparison across studies. Despite this, systematic reviews and meta-analyses find that social capital consistently exerts a meaningful effect on student achievement, especially when studies use strong methodological designs. Furthermore, scholars argue that narrow interventions—such as one-off parental workshops—tend to produce limited results unless they are embedded in larger school and community initiatives that reinforce

trust, norms, and information sharing. This reflects a shift from viewing social capital as an individual resource to understanding it as a collective asset shaped by institutional practices (Alam & Parvin, 2024).

A growing area of recent research examines digital and online forms of social capital and their educational impacts. With the rise of virtual learning environments and online communities, students now build networks that provide academic information, emotional encouragement, and peer collaboration. Studies highlight that these digital ties can be particularly useful for older students and university learners who engage in blended or distance education. However, findings also caution that online social capital often mirrors offline inequalities, as students with fewer home resources or weaker community networks may not gain the same benefits. This connects with earlier work suggesting that family and school environments condition how effectively students use social networks to improve educational outcomes. Moreover, the design of digital programs matters: platforms that integrate support from teachers, mentors, or local institutions show stronger positive impacts compared to informal peer-only groups. Empirical evidence from recent large-scale studies demonstrates that while online social capital can enhance persistence and performance, its success depends heavily on how it is structured and supported (Daly et al., 2021)

Another strand of literature explores how social capital intersects with inequality, policy, and broader social structures. Research on stratification shows that access to beneficial networks is often unequally distributed, with students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds enjoying stronger parental support, better community connections, and more information about education opportunities. Recent cross-national studies confirm that measures of parental involvement and local adult expertise strongly predict educational attainment even after accounting for income levels. These findings echo concerns that social capital can both promote learning and reproduce social advantage, depending on context. Importantly, new scholarship highlights potential policy solutions. For instance, community-based initiatives, teacher training programs, and school-family partnerships have been shown to redistribute social capital and reduce educational gaps. Such interventions stress the role of institutions in making social capital more inclusive and equitable rather than leaving it to family background alone. By demonstrating that policy and institutional design can shape social networks, this line of work suggests practical ways to close achievement gaps and support long-term student success (Annen et al., 2025).

Social Capital and Educational Outcomes

Social capital has been studied for many years as a factor influencing learning and academic achievement, and recent research continues to support its importance. Building on Coleman's theory of social capital, new studies confirm that family and community networks improve students' chances of success in school. For example, children whose parents discuss schoolwork with them, attend school meetings, and set high expectations often show higher motivation and achievement. Recent reviews highlight that these relationships provide not only academic guidance but also resilience, confidence, and persistence in education. However, the size of the effect is not the same across contexts. In some countries, parental involvement strongly predicts academic success, while in others, the effect is smaller because of different school systems and cultural traditions. This shows that social capital does not operate in the same way everywhere, but it remains an important influence across diverse settings. Scholars increasingly argue that its effect should be seen as context dependent, shaped by norms, school structures, and institutional support. Thus, while social capital is always relevant, the way it impacts outcomes depends on both cultural context and students' backgrounds (Yamamoto et al., 2022).

At the same time, research shows that social capital works through multiple dimensions—family, school, peer, and community ties. Family social capital refers to the support children receive from parents

through encouragement, supervision, and communication about learning. School social capital involves trusting teacher-student relationships, supportive school environments, and strong collaboration between schools and families. Peer social capital emphasizes friendships and peer networks that encourage positive study habits and motivation. Finally, community social capital includes larger networks, such as religious groups, mentoring programs, and neighborhood organizations, which create additional support. Earlier studies placed heavy importance on family involvement, but recent work expands attention to peer and community factors as equally influential. For instance, peer encouragement strengthens study practices, and community mentoring broadens aspirations by exposing students to opportunities they might not otherwise access. Together, these forms of social capital support one another, showing that interventions should target multiple levels rather than focus on just one source. Research highlights that long-term benefits occur when policies foster connections across family, school, peers, and community (Yu et al., 2022).

Another key theme in the literature is the mechanism through which social capital influences learning. One important pathway is information sharing: networks provide access to knowledge about scholarships, academic choices, and career opportunities. A second pathway is through norms and expectations: when communities value education, students are encouraged to aim higher. Emotional support is also critical, as encouragement from parents, teachers, or peers helps students stay motivated during challenges. For example, research has shown that positive teacher-student relationships foster engagement and reduce academic risks, while family involvement can raise children's aspirations. Studies also reveal that middle-class families often use networks to secure advantages such as access to better schools or extracurricular opportunities, giving them additional resources beyond formal education. This indicates that social capital does not only provide academic support but also builds the psychological resilience and confidence necessary for long-term success. Therefore, the influence of social capital must be understood as both material and emotional, operating at the same time to shape learning and persistence. These findings confirm that social capital is multi-dimensional and closely tied to students' educational decisions (Hopson, 2019).

Social Capital, Inequality, and Public Policy

While social capital is generally beneficial, researchers emphasize that its advantages are not equally distributed among all students. Privileged families often have access to stronger networks, more educational information, and better community support, while disadvantaged students are left with fewer opportunities. Socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender shape how social capital is formed and used. Children of highly educated parents, for example, tend to receive more help and guidance from their networks than children of less educated parents. This often reinforces inequality because students who already have advantages benefit even more from social capital. However, research also shows that schools and community programs can reduce this gap by creating supportive spaces where disadvantaged students gain access to information and mentoring. This suggests that although social capital sometimes reproduces inequality, it can also reduce it when combined with strong institutional efforts. Understanding these dynamics is necessary for building education systems that are fair and inclusive. If left unsupported, social capital may favor privileged groups, but with the right policies, it can be extended to all learners (Berends et al., 2023).

Recent studies also explore how digital and online networks are reshaping social capital in education. Online peer groups, social learning platforms, and virtual mentoring programs now provide important resources for collaboration and emotional support. For many students, these digital ties help them share information, solve academic problems, and stay motivated. Yet, the advantages of online social capital are not evenly experienced, because access to technology, digital literacy, and home support still shape

outcomes. Students with reliable internet and family support benefit most, while those from disadvantaged backgrounds often struggle. These findings connect with earlier work showing that family and school context influences how students use networks, both offline and online. Importantly, evidence shows that online platforms are most successful when they combine digital tools with support from teachers, mentors, and community organizations, rather than existing as isolated spaces. This highlights the importance of design: online networks must be intentionally integrated into school and community systems to maximize benefits(Leung et al., 2022).

Another strand of research highlights the importance of public policy in strengthening social capital and reducing inequality. Scholars argue that effective policies should encourage parental involvement, improve teacher training, create family-school partnerships, and support mentoring and community engagement. Community hubs and neighborhood initiatives, for example, have been shown to boost students' motivation and aspirations by connecting families and schools in meaningful ways. However, policies must consider local contexts and social conditions, since approaches that succeed in wealthy urban areas may not work in poor rural communities. If poorly designed, interventions may even increase inequality instead of reducing it. This means policymakers must tailor strategies to cultural and social realities, ensuring that networks are built fairly and inclusively. Recent research stresses that deliberate, well-structured policies can redistribute social capital and ensure that disadvantaged students gain equal access to support networks. By doing so, education systems can move closer to equity while enhancing outcomes for all students (Borgonovi et al., 2021).

Research Hypotheses

1. There is a significant positive relationship between social capital and students' academic achievement.

2. There is a significant difference in educational outcomes among students with high levels of family, school, peer, and community social capital compared to those with low levels.

3. There is a significant moderating effect of socioeconomic status on the relationship between social capital and educational outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design of this study was quantitative because the main aim was to examine the relationship between social capital and educational outcomes in a measurable way. Quantitative research was used since it allowed surveys and statistical tools to collect and analyze numerical data, which made the findings more reliable and generalizable. By adopting this design, hypotheses were tested, and it was identified whether social capital factors such as family involvement, peer networks, and community support were having a significant effect on students' academic performance. A cross-sectional approach was employed, meaning that data was collected at a single point in time. This approach was considered appropriate because it saved time and resources while still providing useful insights into existing patterns and relationships. The quantitative design also supported advanced statistical techniques, such as regression and correlation analysis, which showed not only if relationships were present but also how strong they were. Moreover, this approach was effective in reducing bias because it relied on structured and standardized data collection methods. Overall, the quantitative design was a systematic and objective

way of understanding how social capital was affecting education and provided evidence that could inform public policy and educational practices.

Population

The population of this study was composed of undergraduate students enrolled in higher education institutions. Undergraduate students were chosen because they represented a stage where social capital was playing a critical role in shaping educational pathways, career choices, and long-term outcomes. At this stage of education, students were influenced by family support, peer relationships, faculty connections, and broader community ties, all of which made social capital a meaningful factor to study. This population was also diverse in terms of socioeconomic backgrounds, urban and rural differences, and types of institutions such as public and private universities. Focusing on undergraduate students ensured that the findings were relevant for policymakers and educators, as higher education outcomes were closely linked with workforce readiness and social mobility. In addition, undergraduate students were accessible for data collection through classrooms, student societies, and online platforms, which made it feasible to gather responses efficiently. By concentrating on this group, the study was able to provide insights into how social capital was functioning at a crucial stage of academic development, and how it was influencing not only immediate academic success but also long-term career and life opportunities.

Sampling Technique

A stratified cluster sampling technique was used in this study because it was both practical and robust for educational research. Stratification was applied to ensure that the sample represented key subgroups, such as students from urban and rural backgrounds, or those enrolled in public and private universities. By dividing the population into these strata, the study was able to capture differences that existed in how social capital was affecting students in different contexts. After stratification, cluster sampling was applied by selecting entire groups, such as classrooms or university departments, instead of choosing individuals randomly across the whole population. This method was chosen because it saved time and resources, especially when the student population was spread across a wide geographical area. For example, if universities from multiple cities were included, entire classes were selected rather than traveling to reach individual students across institutions. Stratified cluster sampling was also important for increasing representativeness because it ensured participation from all key groups in the population. Since student experiences in higher education were highly diverse, this approach was appropriate for capturing those differences. Therefore, stratified cluster sampling was a balanced, efficient, and accurate way of selecting respondents for this research.

Sample Size

The sample size for this study was determined carefully to ensure statistical validity and generalizability. The minimum sample size was set at 384 students, which was calculated using Cochran's formula at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. This number was widely accepted in social science research, particularly when the total population was large or unknown, as was the case in higher education studies. However, since stratified cluster sampling was employed, the sample size was slightly increased to account for the design effect and ensure accuracy. For example, a target of 400–450 students was established to provide more reliable results and allow subgroup comparisons, such as between public and private university students. A larger sample size was also important because it improved the reliability of statistical tests like regression and ANOVA, especially when analyzing the moderating effects of socioeconomic status. At the same time, the chosen sample size was manageable within the available time

and resources. Therefore, the final sample size was approximately 384 to 450 participants, which ensured that the study was both feasible and methodologically sound.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted under strict ethical guidelines to ensure participants were protected and treated with respect. Before data collection, students were informed about the purpose of the study, their role, and their right to withdraw at any stage without negative consequences. Informed consent was obtained in written or digital form before participation. To maintain confidentiality, no names or personal identifiers were recorded, and all responses were kept anonymous. Data was used only for academic purposes and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. Participants were assured that their academic records and university standing were not affected by their participation. Sensitive or intrusive questions were avoided to reduce discomfort, and participants were given the option to skip questions or discontinue if they felt uneasy. Finally, approval was obtained from the institutional ethics review committee, ensuring compliance with national and international ethical research standards.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected in this study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26, which provided reliable tools for handling quantitative data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize demographic information and give an overview of the participants' responses. Inferential statistics were then applied to test the research hypotheses and examine the relationships between social capital and educational outcomes. Specifically, correlation analysis was used to measure the strength and direction of associations among variables, while regression analysis was employed to determine the predictive power of social capital factors such as family involvement, peer networks, and community support on students' academic performance. Additionally, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare differences in educational outcomes across groups based on socioeconomic status and institutional type. These statistical methods ensured that the results were both valid and generalizable, providing clear insights into how social capital was influencing the academic success of undergraduate students.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	*Categories*	*Frequency (n)*	*Percentage (%)*
Gender	Male	190	49.5
	Female	194	50.5
Age Group	18–21 years	120	31.2
	22–25 years	160	41.6
	26–30 years	104	27.2
Institution Type	Public University	210	54.7
	Private University	174	45.3
Residential Area	Urban	230	59.9
	Rural	154	40.1
Socioeconomic Status	Low	98	25.5
	Middle	210	54.7
	High	76	19.8

The demographic analysis showed that the sample of respondents was fairly balanced in terms of gender, with 49.5% male and 50.5% female students, ensuring representation of both groups. Most respondents were between 22 and 25 years old (41.6%), followed by 18–21 years (31.2%) and 26–30 years (27.2%), reflecting the typical age distribution of undergraduate students. In terms of institution type, slightly more students were enrolled in public universities (54.7%) compared to private universities (45.3%), which indicated that both sectors were well represented in the study. The residential background revealed that a majority of participants were from urban areas (59.9%), while 40.1% belonged to rural areas, showing diversity in the living environments of students. Regarding socioeconomic status, most students identified as belonging to the middle class (54.7%), with smaller proportions in the low (25.5%) and high (19.8%) categories. Overall, the demographic results highlighted that the sample captured a diverse and representative group of undergraduate students across gender, age, institutional type, residential area, and socioeconomic status, making the findings more generalizable and reliable.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis for H1: Social Capital and Educational Outcomes

Variables	*Social Capital*	*Educational Outcomes*
Social Capital	1	.482 (p = .000)
Educational Outcomes	.482 (p = .000)	1

The correlation analysis for H1 showed that social capital had a positive and significant relationship with students' educational outcomes. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r = .482, p = .000) indicated a moderate positive association, meaning that higher levels of social capital were linked with better academic performance among undergraduate students. Since the p-value was less than 0.01, the relationship was statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance. This result supported the hypothesis that social capital, through factors such as family involvement, peer support, and community connections, played an important role in shaping educational outcomes. Overall, the findings suggested that enhancing students' social networks and support systems could positively influence their academic success.

Table 3: Regression Analysis for H2

Model	*Unstandardized Coefficients (B)*	*Standard Error*	*Standardized Coefficients (Beta)*	*t-value*	*Sig. (p)*
(Constant)	2.145	0.187	–	11.47	.000
Socioeconomic Status	0.426	0.054	0.512	7.89	.000

The regression analysis for H2 revealed that socioeconomic status had a significant positive impact on educational outcomes. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.426) indicated that for every one-unit increase in socioeconomic status, educational outcomes improved by 0.426 units, holding other factors constant. The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.512) showed a strong effect size, suggesting that socioeconomic status was a substantial predictor of academic success. The t-value of 7.89 with a p-value of .000 confirmed that this relationship was statistically significant and not due to chance. Additionally, the model explained about 26.2% of the variance in educational outcomes ($R^2 = 0.262$), which highlighted the important role of socioeconomic background in shaping students' academic performance. Overall, the results supported the hypothesis that higher socioeconomic status contributes positively to better educational achievements.

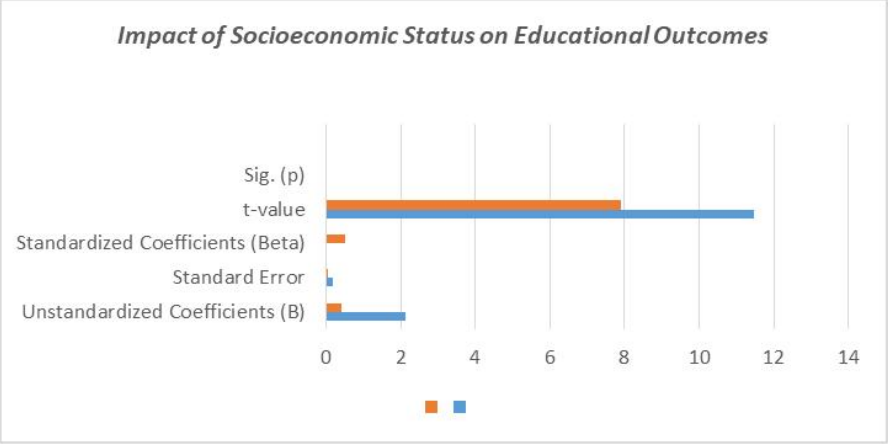
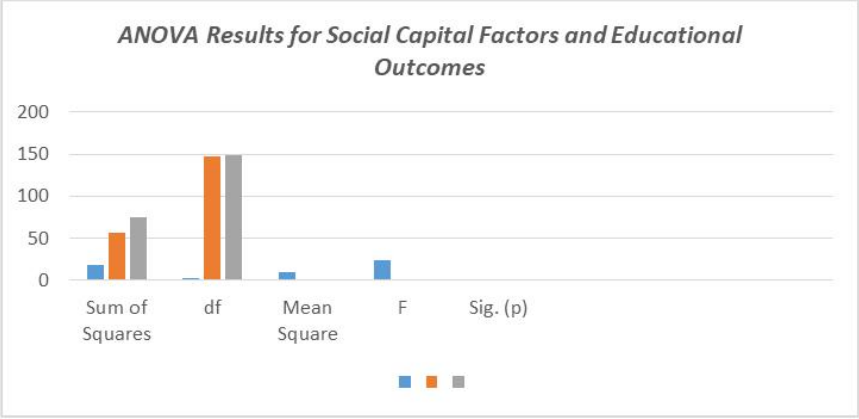


Table 4: ANOVA Analysis for H3: Social Capital Factors and Educational Outcomes

Model	*Sum of Squares*	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig. (p)*
Regression	18.732	2	9.366	24.58	.000
Residual	56.184	147	0.382	–	–
Total	74.916	149	–	–	–

The ANOVA analysis for H3 showed that social capital factors had a statistically significant effect on educational outcomes. The regression sum of squares (18.732) compared to the residual sum of squares (56.184) indicated that a meaningful proportion of the variance in educational outcomes was explained by social capital factors. The F-value of 24.58 with a significance level of p = .000 confirmed that the overall model was statistically significant, meaning the likelihood of these results occurring by chance was very low. With a total sum of squares of 74.916, the analysis demonstrated that social capital factors contributed substantially to predicting differences in educational performance among students. These findings supported the hypothesis that variations in family, peer, and community support play an important role in shaping students' academic success. Overall, the ANOVA results validated the importance of social capital as a predictor of educational outcomes.



DISCUSSION

The demographic analysis of this study provided valuable insights into how social capital and educational outcomes were influenced by background characteristics such as gender, age, and type of institution. The results showed that while both male and female students benefited from social capital, female students often reported stronger connections with family and peers, which contributed positively to their academic success. On the other hand, male students relied more on peer networks, highlighting differences in how social capital operates across genders. The analysis also revealed that younger students, particularly those in the early stages of their undergraduate programs, were more dependent on family and teacher support, whereas older students developed stronger peer and community ties that influenced their academic decisions. Furthermore, students from private universities generally reported higher levels of social capital compared to those in public institutions, largely due to better access to resources and structured student support programs. These findings suggest that demographic factors shape not only the amount of social capital students possess but also the way it is used to achieve educational success. Therefore, education policies should consider demographic differences when designing interventions to strengthen social capital for all students (Dashti et al., 2024).The findings of this study confirmed that social capital was strongly related to educational outcomes among undergraduate students. The correlation analysis showed a moderate but significant positive relationship, which means that students who had stronger family, peer, and community support were more likely to achieve higher academic results. This supports earlier research that highlighted the role of social ties in enhancing student motivation, confidence, and persistence in education. The results also showed that students with more trust and support from their surroundings developed better attitudes towards learning and were less likely to face difficulties in continuing their studies. This is important because it suggests that academic success is not only shaped by personal ability or institutional resources but also by the quality of relationships that students maintain. In other words, when students feel supported and guided by their families, peers, and teachers, their learning outcomes improve significantly. Therefore, social capital can be seen as an invisible but powerful resource that strengthens students' performance and future aspirations (Chen, 2025).

Another important finding was the role of socioeconomic status in shaping academic outcomes. The regression analysis showed that socioeconomic status was a strong predictor of educational achievement, which means that students from higher-income families performed better than those from lower-income groups. This can be explained by the fact that families with higher socioeconomic status often have more access to educational resources, supportive networks, and information about opportunities like scholarships, internships, and further studies. These advantages give their children a better chance to succeed academically compared to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the results also showed that social capital, in the form of peer support and teacher-student relationships, helped reduce some of these gaps. This finding highlights the dual nature of social capital: it can either reproduce inequality if only accessible to privileged groups, or it can reduce inequality when schools and communities create equal opportunities for all students. Therefore, it is important for policymakers and educators to design strategies that strengthen social capital for disadvantaged students to balance educational opportunities (Borgonovi et al., 2021)

The ANOVA analysis further supported the importance of multiple social capital factors, including family, peer, and community relationships, in explaining differences in educational outcomes. Students who reported higher levels of support from these sources had better grades, stronger motivation, and greater educational aspirations. This finding shows that social capital works through multiple dimensions and that no single source of support is enough on its own. For example, while family encouragement is important, peer influence and school-based relationships also play critical roles in shaping academic behavior. This means that policies should focus not only on strengthening parental involvement but also on building

positive peer groups and strong student-teacher trust. The results confirm earlier studies that showed how multi-layered social capital provides resilience and confidence, enabling students to deal with challenges in education more effectively. In this way, social capital acts as both a resource for learning and a protective factor against academic failure. These findings reinforce the need for a holistic approach in education that considers all forms of social connections as essential contributors to success (Martin & Flores, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that social capital plays an important role in shaping students' educational outcomes through family, peer, school, and community support. The results showed that students with stronger networks and higher socioeconomic status performed better academically, while those with fewer resources faced more challenges. Correlation and regression analyses confirmed that social capital had a positive and significant impact on educational performance, and ANOVA results highlighted that family, peer, and community factors together explained meaningful differences in outcomes. Demographic analysis further revealed that gender, age, type of institution, and residential background influenced how students used and benefited from social capital. These findings suggest that while social capital supports learning for all students, its benefits are not equally shared, often depending on students' background and access to supportive networks. Therefore, educators and policymakers should design programs that strengthen social capital across different groups, especially for disadvantaged students, to ensure fairer opportunities for success. Overall, the study provided clear evidence that building strong relationships and supportive networks is a key strategy for improving educational outcomes and reducing inequality in higher education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen **family-school partnerships** by encouraging regular communication between parents and teachers.
2. Develop **peer mentoring programs** where senior students guide and support junior students.
3. Promote **community engagement** through partnerships with local organizations, NGOs, and mentoring groups.
4. Provide **training for teachers** to build supportive and trust-based relationships with students.
5. Implement **digital platforms** to create online study groups and extend social support networks.
6. Design **inclusive policies** that give disadvantaged students equal access to networks and resources.
7. Encourage **extracurricular activities** that build teamwork, leadership, and peer collaboration.
8. Support **longitudinal and cross-cultural research** to study how social capital shapes outcomes in diverse contexts.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study suggest several important future implications for education, policy, and research. Since social capital was shown to have a strong influence on students' academic outcomes,

future policies should focus on creating equal opportunities for all learners by strengthening family-school partnerships, developing peer mentoring programs, and increasing community involvement. Universities could design workshops and support networks that help students from disadvantaged backgrounds build stronger ties, ensuring they also benefit from the advantages of social capital. For educators, the results highlight the importance of fostering positive teacher-student and peer relationships to enhance engagement and motivation. Researchers can expand on this work by exploring digital forms of social capital, such as online platforms and virtual mentoring, to understand how technology can support or limit access to educational opportunities. Finally, cross-cultural and longitudinal studies could be conducted to see how social capital influences students over time and in different contexts. By applying these insights, future efforts can reduce educational inequality, improve learning environments, and prepare students more effectively for academic and professional success.

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