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Family Support as Social Capital: Academic Aspirations in Families vs. Child Care Institutions

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ABSTRACT:

Family support, as a dimension of social capital, significantly influences academic aspirations during adolescence. This study examines the relationship between social capital (specifically family support) and academic aspirations among adolescents with and without family affection.

The research employed an exploratory and comparative design in Uttarakhand, India, studying four children's homes (three government-run, one non-government) recognized under the Juvenile Justice Act 2015 and their five affiliated schools. The sample comprised 230 adolescents aged 11-18 years: children's home residents (n=115) selected through census method and non-deprived adolescents (n=115) chosen through random lottery sampling from affiliated schools.

Using an interview schedule, academic aspirations were classified into five levels and analyzed through Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Results showed significantly higher academic aspirations among adolescents with family affection (mean=2.604) compared to those without (mean=1.979), demonstrating a strong social capital effect ($F=70.502$, $p<0.01$).

The findings emphasize the importance of developing comprehensive social support systems, including family-like environments and enhanced community resources, to mitigate the effects of family deprivation on academic and career aspirations.

Keywords: Social capital, Academic aspirations, Orphans, Non-orphans

Introduction

The formation and development of academic aspirations represent a complex social-psychological phenomenon that significantly shapes educational trajectories and life outcomes. Drawing on Hopper's (1973) foundational work, academic aspirations can be understood as dynamic constructs that emerge through the intricate interplay of individual agency and social structures. These aspirations are fundamentally shaped by institutional frameworks, including family systems, educational establishments, and broader societal structures, as demonstrated in Sewell and Shah's (1968) seminal research on the sociology of education.

The adolescent period proves particularly crucial in the development of these educational aspirations, as it represents a critical juncture where socioeconomic factors, family dynamics, and cultural capital converge to influence future educational pathways. Bourdieu's (1973) theoretical framework provides essential insights into how academic aspirations, as a vital component of cultural capital, are transmitted across generations, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of both social and educational stratification in contemporary society.

This study contributes to this theoretical discourse by examining the differential impact of family support systems on academic aspirations. Through a comparative analysis of adolescents with and without family affection, this research investigates how varying levels of family environmental support influence the formation of educational aspirations and, consequently, the reproduction of educational inequalities. This investigation not only advances our understanding of the role of family structures in educational goal-setting but also provides insights into the mechanisms through which social capital influences academic trajectory development.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The relationship between social capital and academic achievement has been extensively examined in sociological and educational research, with the theoretical foundations of this study primarily drawing from the social capital theories developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and James Coleman (1988). These frameworks provide crucial insights into understanding how social relationships and family structures influence academic aspirations and educational outcomes.

Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualization of social capital as "a set of actual or potential resources that an individual acquires through enduring and strong relationships with his or her acquaintances and relatives" offers a particularly relevant framework for analyzing disparities in educational aspirations

between adolescents with and without family support. This theoretical lens illuminates how differential access to family-based resources can significantly impact educational opportunities and aspirational development.

The application of Bourdieu's framework to this study reveals how family structures fundamentally shape access to social capital and, consequently, influence academic aspirations. Adolescents with family support typically have access to more extensive social networks and resources, potentially leading to enhanced educational opportunities and higher academic aspirations. Conversely, those deprived of family affection often face significant challenges in developing academic aspirations due to limited access to family-based social capital.

This theoretical framework also provides insights into the potential role of alternative support systems. Children's homes and community support structures can potentially serve as substitute sources of social capital for adolescents deprived of traditional family support. Understanding these alternative sources of social capital is crucial for developing interventions that can help bridge the aspirational gap between adolescents with and without family support.

The synthesis of these theoretical perspectives provides a robust foundation for examining how varying levels of social capital, particularly through family support, influence the formation and development of academic aspirations among adolescents. This framework not only helps explain existing disparities but also suggests potential pathways for intervention and support.

Family support and academic aspirations

The relationship between family support and academic aspirations has emerged as a crucial area of sociological inquiry, with extensive research demonstrating the family's fundamental role as the primary institution of socialization.

Coleman (1988) emphasizes that family-provided social capital serves as a vital resource for individuals, particularly through parental time investment, guidance, and emotional support. This theoretical perspective is supported by empirical evidence from meta-analytical studies. Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a comprehensive analysis of 25 empirical studies, revealing a significant correlation between parental involvement and academic achievement. Their findings indicate that global indicators of academic achievement, such as overall GPA, show stronger correlations with parental involvement compared to subject-specific measurements.

Building on this foundation, Jeynes (2007) analyzed 52 studies focusing on urban middle school students, demonstrating that parental involvement significantly influences academic success, particularly among minority groups. The research revealed that subtle aspects of parental involvement, such as expectations, often prove more influential than physical presence at school, with effects remaining consistent across racial and gender groups.

Recent research has expanded our understanding of how parental absence affects academic outcomes. Mao, Zhang, and Zhang (2020), utilizing data from the China Education Panel Survey, found that parental absence, particularly maternal, significantly impacts children's cognitive performance and college entry prospects. These findings align with Beegle et al.'s (2006) longitudinal study in Tanzania, which demonstrated that maternal orphanhood resulted in approximately one year of lost education and significant developmental challenges, particularly for children not enrolled in school at the time of parental loss.

This body of literature provides a robust theoretical framework for examining the differential impact of family support on academic aspirations between adolescents with and without family affection. The research consistently demonstrates that family-based social capital plays a crucial role in shaping educational goals and achievements. Understanding these relationships is particularly important for developing interventions that can help bridge the aspirational gap between adolescents with different levels of family support.

The synthesis of these theoretical perspectives and empirical findings suggests that while family support significantly influences academic aspirations, the relationship is complex and mediated by various factors including timing of parental loss, socioeconomic status, and alternative support systems. This framework provides a foundation for examining how varying levels of social capital, particularly through family support, influence the formation and development of academic aspirations among adolescents.

Research Gaps

Current literature on social capital and educational achievement reveals significant areas requiring further investigation. While extensive research exists on disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged groups independently, there is a notable absence of comparative studies examining how family-based social capital differentially affects academic aspirations across these groups. Furthermore, existing research has primarily focused on broad educational outcomes rather than specific academic aspirations. This leaves a critical gap in understanding how family, as the primary source of social capital, influences the formation and development of academic aspirations among adolescents.

Research Problem and Significance

This study investigates the complex relationship between social capital and academic aspirations among adolescents with and without family support. The research specifically examines how family protection and affection, as components of social support systems, shape academic aspirations. By comparing adolescents receiving family affection with those in children's homes, this study addresses critical questions about the influence of environmental factors and guardianship on academic goal formation.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to identify specific challenges faced by adolescents deprived of family affection and to develop targeted strategies supporting their educational development. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for creating effective interventions that can enhance academic outcomes for institutionalized adolescents.

Research Question

How does family support, as a form of social capital, influence the educational aspirations of adolescents with and without access to familial affection?

Research Objectives

1. To analyze and compare the educational aspirations of adolescents with access to familial affection and those deprived of it.
2. To investigate the impact of family support on the educational aspirations of adolescents living in family environments versus those in institutional care.

Research Methodology-**Table -1**

Section	Description		
Research Design	The study explores the influence of family affection and parental support on the academic aspirations of adolescents. An exploratory and comparative research design was employed to analyze the differences in educational aspirations between adolescents with familial support and those deprived of it.		
Selection of Children's Homes and Schools	The study was conducted in five schools in Uttarakhand, focusing on respondents from these institutions. The details of the schools and participants are as follows-		
	Institutions Covered in the Study The institutions involved in this study are officially recognized under the Juvenile Justice Act and the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. They include:	Nearby schools	
	Government Girls Niketan, Kedarpuram, Dehradun Government Children's Home, Roshnabad, Haridwar Government Children Home Kishori, Bakh, Almora SOS Children's Village, Bhimtal (Non-Government)	Government Girls Inter College Ajabpur Kalan, Dehradun. Government Inter College BHEL Sector1 Ranipur, Haridwar. Arya Kanya Inter College, Almora. Saraswati Pandey Government GirlsInter College , Bhimtal. SOS Hermann Gmeiner School , Bhimtal.	
Age range of participants	The study included adolescents aged 11 to 18 years residing in government and non-government children’s homes (Bal Grih).		
Sampling Techniques	Census Method: All adolescents residing in registered government and non-governmental children’s homes were included in the study to ensure comprehensive representation of the deprived group. Lottery Method (Probability Sampling – Random Sampling): Non-deprived participants from the same schools were randomly selected in proportion to the deprived group. Sample Size: The total sample comprised 230 respondents, including 115 deprived adolescents and 115 non-deprived adolescents.		
Data collection period	From July 2023 to December 2023, data was collected from five schools using both quantitative and qualitative methods.		
Academic Aspiration	Code	Code	Re-code
	Clear career goals	Highest	High
	external influences	High	
	Career related confusion	Medium	Medium
	Temporary goals	Less	Less
	No career goals	Lowest	
Data Collection Method	Information on academic aspirations and social capital was gathered using an interview schedule.		
Ethical Consideration	Privacy: Participants' privacy was ensured by keeping their data anonymous.		

Approval: Necessary approvals were obtained from the principals of academic institutions and child welfare committees under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 (amended in 2021).

Right to Withdraw: Participants were informed of their right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time.

* Table prepared by researcher

RESULTS-

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE-

Table-2

Gender * Name of the School * Class * Type of Guardianship Crosstabulation

Type of Guardianship	Class	Gender	Name of the School										Total	
			Rajkiya Balika Inter College Ajabpur Kalan Dehradun		Rajkiya Inter College BHEL S.E. 1 Ranipur Haridwar		Arya Kanya Inter College Almora		Saraswati Pandey Govt. Ba. Inter College Bhimtal		SOS Hermann Gmeiner School , Bhimtal			
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Children’s Home Guardianship	6th	Male	0	0.00%	5	2.17%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	7	3.04
		Female	6	2.61%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	6	2.61
		Total	6	2.61%	5	2.17%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	13	5.65
	7th	Male	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	2	0.87
		Female	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	2	0.87%	5	2.17%	9	3.91
		Total	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	2	0.87%	7	3.04%	11	4.78
	8th	Male	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	1.74%	6	2.61
		Female	2	0.87%	0	0.00%	4	1.74%	4	1.74%	4	1.74%	14	6.09
		Total	2	0.87%	2	0.87%	4	1.74%	4	1.74%	8	3.48%	20	8.70
	9th	Male	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.43%	3	1.30
		Female	1	0.43%	0	0.00%	9	3.91%	1	0.43%	4	1.74%	15	6.52
		Total	1	0.43%	2	0.87%	9	3.91%	1	0.43%	5	2.17%	18	7.83
	10th	Female	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	10	4.35%	4	1.74%	3	1.30%	17	7.39
		Total	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	10	4.35%	4	1.74%	3	1.30%	17	7.39
	11th	Male	0	0.00%	1	0.43%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.43
		Female	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	7	3.04%	2	0.87%	4	1.74%	13	5.65
		Total	0	0.00%	1	0.43%	7	3.04%	2	0.87%	4	1.74%	14	6.09
	12th	Female	1	0.43%	0	0.00%	9	3.91%	4	1.74%	8	3.48%	22	9.57
		Total	1	0.43%	0	0.00%	9	3.91%	4	1.74%	8	3.48%	22	9.57
	Total	Male	0	0.00%	10	4.35%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	9	3.91%	19	8.26
		Female	10	4.35%	0	0.00%	41	17.83%	17	7.39%	28	12.17%	96	41.74
		Total	10	4.35%	10	4.35%	41	17.83%	17	7.39%	37	16.09%	115	50.00
Parental Guardianship	6th	Male	0	0.00%	5	2.17%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	7	3.04
		Female	6	2.61%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	6	2.61
		Total	6	2.61%	5	2.17%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	13	5.65
	7th	Male	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	2	0.87
		Female	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	2	0.87%	5	2.17%	9	3.91
		Total	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	2	0.87%	7	3.04%	11	4.78
	8th	Male	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	1.74%	6	2.61
		Female	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00
		Total	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	1.74%	6	2.61

		Female	2	0.87%	0	0.00%	4	1.74%	4	1.74%	4	1.74%	14	6.09
		Total	2	0.87%	2	0.87%	4	1.74%	4	1.74%	8	3.48%	20	8.70
	9th	Male	0	0.00%	2	0.87%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.43%	3	1.30
		Female	1	0.43%	0	0.00%	9	3.91%	1	0.43%	4	1.74%	15	6.52
		Total	1	0.43%	2	0.87%	9	3.91%	1	0.43%	5	2.17%	18	7.83
	10th	Female	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	10	4.35%	4	1.74%	3	1.30%	17	7.39
		Total	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	10	4.35%	4	1.74%	3	1.30%	17	7.39
	11th	Male	0	0.00%	1	0.43%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.43
		Female	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	7	3.04%	2	0.87%	4	1.74%	13	5.65
		Total	0	0.00%	1	0.43%	7	3.04%	2	0.87%	4	1.74%	14	6.09
	12th	Female	1	0.43%	0	0.00%	9	3.91%	4	1.74%	8	3.48%	22	9.57
		Total	1	0.43%	0	0.00%	9	3.91%	4	1.74%	8	3.48%	22	9.57
	Total	Male	0	0.00%	10	4.35%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	9	3.91%	19	8.26
		Female	10	4.35%	0	0.00%	41	17.83%	17	7.39%	28	12.17%	96	41.74
		Total	10	4.35%	10	4.35%	41	17.83%	17	7.39%	37	16.09%	115	50.00
Total		Male	0	0.00%	20	8.70%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	18	7.83%	38	16.52
		Female	20	8.70%	0	0.00%	82	35.65%	34	14.78%	56	24.35%	192	83.48
		Total	20	8.70%	20	8.70%	82	35.65%	34	14.78%	74	32.17%	230	100.00

1. *Table Prepared by Shikha Vinwal

This study involves 230 adolescents (115 orphans and 115 non-orphans) from four institutions in Uttarakhand, India, including both government and non-government Children's Home. The orphaned participants come from Rajkiya Balika Niketan, Dehradun (girls), Rajkiya Balgruh, Haridwar (boys), Rajkiya Bal Gruh Kishori, Almora (girls), and SOS Children's Village, Bhimtal (boys and girls). Non-orphan participants from the same regions were selected from nearby schools, ensuring a balanced comparison between orphaned and non-orphaned adolescents in terms of academic aspirations and social capital.

Table.3

How often do you receive help or support from family members (or caregivers) with academic tasks, emotional issues, or future planning? * Academic Aspiration * Type of Guardianship									
Crosstabulation									
Type of Guardianship	Academic Aspiration	How often do you receive help or support from family members (or caregivers) with academic tasks, emotional issues, or future planning?						Total	
		Low		Medium		High			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Orphanage Guardianship	Low	10	4.35%	33	14.35%	10	4.35%	53	23.04%
	Medium	0	0.00%	4	1.74%	30	13.04%	34	14.78%
	High	0	0.00%	1	0.43%	27	11.74%	28	12.17%
	Total	10	4.35%	38	16.52%	67	29.13%	115	50%
Parental Guardianship	Low	2	0.87%	1	0.43%	6	2.61%	9	3.91%
	Medium	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	15	6.52%	15	6.52%
	High	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	91	39.57%	91	39.57%
	Total	2	0.87%	1	0.43%	112	48.70%	115	50.00%
Total	Low	12	5.22%	34	14.78%	16	6.95%	62	26.95%
	Medium	0	0.00%	4	1.74%	45	19.56%	49	21.30%
	High	0	0.00%	1	0.43%	118	51.30%	119	51.73%
	Total	12	5.22%	39	16.95	179	77.82%	230	100%

The examination of familial support and its influence on academic aspirations reveals significant disparities between adolescents in family environments versus those in institutional care. Our analysis focused on three critical dimensions of support: academic task assistance, emotional support, and future

planning guidance, all of which constitute essential elements of social capital that shape educational trajectories. The findings demonstrate a substantial relationship between the frequency and quality of support received and the development of academic aspirations across both environmental contexts.

The data reveals striking differences in academic aspirational levels between adolescents with parental care and those in institutional settings. Among adolescents living with parents and receiving high levels of guidance and support, 39.57% demonstrated high academic aspirations, indicating the powerful influence of consistent parental involvement. In contrast, institutional care settings showed markedly different outcomes. Only 11.74% of deprived adolescents receiving high support in childcare institutions exhibited high academic aspirations, while a mere 4.35% of those receiving minimal support set high educational goals. Notably, 24.78% of deprived adolescents with high institutional support demonstrated medium to high academic aspirations, suggesting that while institutional support provides some benefits, it may not fully replicate the comprehensive effects of parental care.

The substantial 27.83% difference in high academic aspirations between adolescents in parental care and those in institutional settings underscores the critical role of family structure in fostering educational goals. This disparity indicates that regular parental involvement serves multiple functions beyond mere academic assistance. Family support creates an environment conducive to academic aspiration development through a combination of practical academic help, emotional stability, and guided future planning. The consistency and quality of this support appear to be as crucial as its quantity, particularly in fostering long-term academic aspirations.

Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Examining the Impact of Type of Guardianship and Social Capital (Family Support and Networks) on Academic Aspiration

Table-4

Between-Subjects Factors			
		Value Label	N
Type of Guardianship	0	Children's Home Guardianship	115
	1	Parental Guardianship	115

The present study employs Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to examine how type of guardianship and social capital influence academic aspirations among adolescents. This analytical approach allows for a systematic comparison between different guardianship environments while considering the role of family support and social networks.

The research design incorporates two distinct groups under the independent variable "Type of Guardianship." The first group comprises 115 adolescents under Children's Home guardianship (coded as 0), while the second group consists of 115 adolescents under parental guardianship (coded as 1). This balanced sample design enhances the statistical validity of the comparative analysis and ensures equal representation of both guardianship contexts.

The even distribution between the two guardianship categories (N=115 for each group) strengthens the statistical robustness of the analysis and minimizes potential sampling bias. This methodological approach enables a direct comparison of how different guardianship environments might influence academic aspirations while accounting for variations in social capital resources.

This analytical framework positions the study to examine not only the direct effects of guardianship type on academic aspirations but also the potential interaction effects between guardianship environments and social capital resources. The coding scheme (0 for Children's Home and 1 for Parental Guardianship) facilitates clear interpretation of the statistical results and allows for systematic comparison between the two groups.

The balanced design and careful consideration of both guardianship type and social capital as key variables provide a strong foundation for understanding how different care environments influence academic aspirations among adolescents. This analysis contributes to our understanding of how institutional versus family-based care environments might differently affect educational goals and aspirations.

Statistical Analysis of Guardianship and Social Capital Effects on Academic Aspirations

Table-5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Academic Aspiration					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	77.683 ^a	2	38.842	105.216	.000
Intercept	.081	1	.081	.221	.639
Social Capital (Family Support and Networks)	26.027	1	26.027	70.502	.000
Type of Guardianship	18.260	1	18.260	49.462	.000
Error	83.800	227	.369		
Total	1369.000	230			
Corrected Total	161.483	229			

a. R Squared = .481 (Adjusted R Squared = .476)

The analysis of variance reveals significant relationships between guardianship type, social capital, and academic aspirations. The corrected model demonstrates robust statistical significance ($F = 105.216$, $p < .001$), indicating that the combined effects of guardianship type and social capital substantially influence academic aspirations among adolescents.

Social capital, encompassing family support and networks, emerges as a particularly strong predictor of academic aspirations ($F = 70.502$, $p < .001$). This finding strongly aligns with Bourdieu's theoretical framework, which emphasizes the crucial role of social networks and family support in educational outcomes. The high F-value suggests that social capital serves as a primary determinant in shaping educational goals, regardless of guardianship type.

The type of guardianship also demonstrates a significant independent effect on academic aspirations ($F = 49.462$, $p < .001$). This result indicates substantial differences in academic aspirations between adolescents under parental guardianship versus those in institutional care. The strength of this relationship suggests that the guardianship environment plays a crucial role in fostering academic aspirations.

The non-significant intercept ($F = .221$, $p = .639$) indicates that baseline academic aspirations are effectively zero when controlling for guardianship and social capital. This finding underscores the critical importance of these environmental and support factors in developing academic aspirations.

The model's explanatory power is demonstrated by an R-squared value of .481 (adjusted R-squared = .476), indicating that approximately 48.1% of the variance in academic aspirations is explained by guardianship type and social capital. This moderately strong effect size suggests that while these factors are crucial determinants, other variables not captured in the current model may also influence academic aspirations.

The unexplained variance (Error = 83.800) points to the potential influence of additional factors not included in the current analysis, such as individual motivation, peer influences, or institutional quality. This residual variance suggests opportunities for future research to identify and examine other variables that might affect academic aspirations.

Analysis of Estimated Marginal Means by Guardianship Type

Table-6

Estimated Marginal Means				
Type of Guardianship				
Dependent Variable: Academic Aspiration				
Type of Guardianship	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Children's Home Guardianship	1.979 ^a	.060	1.861	2.097
Parental Guardianship	2.604 ^a	.060	2.486	2.722
a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: 1How often do you receive help or support from family members (or caregivers) with academic tasks, emotional issues, or future planning? = 2.8130.				

The analysis of estimated marginal means reveals substantial differences in academic aspirations between adolescents under different guardianship arrangements. Adolescents under parental guardianship demonstrate notably higher academic aspirations, with a mean score of 2.604 (95% Confidence Interval [2.486, 2.722]). This finding stands in marked contrast to those under Children's Home guardianship, who exhibit a lower mean score of 1.979 (95% Confidence Interval [1.861, 2.097]).

The difference in mean scores (0.625) represents a significant gap in academic aspirations between the two groups. The non-overlapping confidence intervals provide strong statistical evidence that this difference is not due to chance, suggesting a systematic variation in how different guardianship environments influence educational goals.

The higher mean score among adolescents with parental guardianship aligns with theoretical frameworks regarding the importance of consistent family presence in educational development. This finding suggests that parental guardianship creates an environment more conducive to fostering ambitious academic goals, potentially through mechanisms such as direct encouragement, role modeling, and sustained emotional support.

Conversely, the lower mean score among those in Children's Home guardianship indicates potential systemic challenges in fostering high academic aspirations within institutional settings. This disparity suggests a need for targeted interventions aimed at enhancing support systems within Children's Homes to better nurture educational ambitions among resident adolescents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study provides significant empirical evidence on the relationship between social capital, family support, and academic aspirations among adolescents in different guardianship environments. Through rigorous statistical analysis utilizing Univariate ANOVA, our research reveals compelling patterns in how family support shapes educational goals and aspirations. The findings demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between guardianship type and academic aspirations ($F = 49.462$, $p < .001$), with adolescents under parental guardianship exhibiting substantially higher academic aspirations (Mean = 2.604, 95% CI: [2.486, 2.722]) compared to their peers in institutional care (Mean = 1.979, 95% CI: [1.861, 2.097]). This marked difference in mean scores (0.625) provides robust empirical support for Coleman's (1988) theoretical framework on social capital and its role in educational outcomes.

The quantitative analysis reveals particularly striking disparities in high academic aspiration levels between the two groups. In family environments characterized by high levels of support, 39.57% of adolescents demonstrated high academic aspirations. In contrast, within institutional care settings, only 11.74% of adolescents receiving comparable levels of support exhibited similar aspirational levels. This substantial 27.83 percentage point difference illuminates the profound impact of family structure on educational goal formation. The statistical model demonstrates strong explanatory power ($R^2 = .481$), with social capital emerging as a crucial predictor of academic aspirations ($F = 70.502$, $p < .001$). These findings align with and extend previous research by Jaynes (2007) and Fan and Chen (2001), which emphasize the significant influence of parental involvement on educational outcomes.

Our analysis of institutional care environments reveals nuanced patterns in the relationship between support and aspirations. While overall outcomes in institutional settings are lower, the data shows that 24.78% of adolescents receiving high institutional support achieved medium to high academic aspirations, compared to 4.35% among those receiving minimal support. Through the theoretical lens of Bourdieu's (1986) social capital framework, our research identifies three critical dimensions of family support that influence academic aspirations: direct academic assistance, emotional stability, and future planning guidance.

The sociological implications of these findings are substantial, particularly for understanding how different social structures and support systems influence educational aspirations. The unexplained variance in our model (Error = 83.800) points to the complex interplay of additional sociological factors that warrant further investigation, such as peer networks, institutional quality, and broader socio-cultural influences. Our findings contribute to the sociological literature by demonstrating how social capital operates differently across various care environments, highlighting the need for more nuanced theoretical frameworks that account for these distinctions.

CONCLUSION

This research makes a significant contribution to sociological understanding of how family support, conceptualized as social capital, influences academic aspirations among adolescents in different guardianship environments. The findings reveal substantial disparities between adolescents under parental care and those in institutional settings, demonstrating that while institutional support can positively influence academic aspirations, it currently falls short of replicating the comprehensive benefits of family-based support.

The study's theoretical significance lies in its empirical validation of both Coleman's and Bourdieu's frameworks on social capital, while also extending these theories by demonstrating how social capital operates differently across various care environments. This research advances our understanding of the mechanisms through which family support influences educational aspirations, identifying three critical dimensions: direct academic assistance, emotional stability, and future planning guidance.

These findings have important implications for social policy and institutional practice. They underscore the necessity of developing enhanced support systems within institutional care settings that more effectively approximate the multifaceted nature of family-based social capital. Policy interventions should focus on strengthening all three dimensions of support identified in our analysis, rather than solely emphasizing academic assistance. Furthermore, institutions should consider structural modifications to better facilitate the development of social capital among adolescents in care.

Future research should examine how specific aspects of institutional care can be enhanced to better support the development of academic aspirations, particularly focusing on the mechanisms through which social capital operates in different care environments. Additionally, investigation into the unexplained variance in our model could provide valuable insights into other sociological factors influencing academic aspirations. Through such continued research and targeted interventions, we can work toward creating more equitable educational opportunities for all adolescents, regardless of their guardianship status.

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