

Family socioeconomic and cultural factors in educational attainment: A cross-cultural comparative analysis

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ABSTRACT

This cross-cultural comparative analysis explores how family background encompassing family socioeconomic status (SES), parental involvement, parental education, family income, and school climate—shapes educational outcomes. Guided by Bourdieu's theory of capital, the study systematically reviews and thematically synthesizes findings from thirty (30) literature published between 2012 and 2024. Country cases span both developed and developing nations to highlight universal and context-specific influences. Results show family background factors are central to academic attainment, but their effects are significantly mediated by cultural values, national policy frameworks, and local socioeconomic conditions. Reliance on secondary data and variation in definitions across cultures are acknowledged as key limitations. Future research should prioritize data collection in underrepresented settings. This paper employed qualitative data mining, a cross-cultural comparative approach, systematically synthesizing literature to examine how family background variables through family socioeconomic status, parental involvement, parental education, family income, and school climate affect educational attainment across various national settings.

Keywords: Bourdieu's theory of capital, Comparative education, Cross-cultural analysis, Family income, Family socioeconomic status, Parental education, Parental involvement, School climate

1. INTRODUCTION

Family background, through facets such as family socioeconomic status (SES), parental involvement, parental education, family income and school climate, remains pivotal to educational achievement, influencing cognitive and emotional development, motivation, and access to learning opportunities from early years onward (Tsou, 2024; Utami, 2022; Mfum-Appiah et al., 2025). Increased parental education and SES foster enhanced learning settings, whereas greater income provides improved resources (Hussain & Khoso, 2021). Bourdieu's theory of capital suggests that families convey economic, cultural, and social capital, which influences a child's ability to maneuver through educational systems (Bourdieu, 2011).

Research indicates that these capitals are interconnected, with elevated parental income and education forecasting success (Masereka et al., 2023). Family income especially benefits early childhood cognitive outcomes (Duncan et al., 2011), while longitudinal data underscore how capital accumulation shapes attainment (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016). Recent research demonstrates that a positive school climate significantly contributes to students' academic achievement across diverse cultural settings (Klik et al., 2023). Yet, most studies either focus narrowly on these aspects, leaving the combined and cross-cultural effects underexplored (Chmielewski & Bell, 2024; Foulidi & Papakitsos, 2022). Such gaps, mainly in non-Western contexts, hinder targeted policy (Li & Xie, 2020; Low, 2023). This study fills these gaps by comparing both socioeconomic and cultural mediators of family background on educational attainment globally. Bourdieu's theory guides a qualitative synthesis designed to inform policy and practice.

This research analyzes family background on socioeconomic and cultural factors. Specifically, the study focuses on five aspects:

1. Family Socioeconomic Status (SES)
2. Parental Involvement
3. Parental Education
4. Family Income

5. School Climate

1.1. Research Questions

The present study is structured around the following questions:

1. In what ways does family socioeconomic status impact educational attainment across diverse cultural contexts?
2. How does parental involvement facilitate or constrain student academic trajectories in various countries?
3. What is the mediating influence of cultural values and norms on the relationship between parental education and educational outcomes across different nations?
4. How does family income directly and indirectly influence educational attainment across cultural contexts?
5. In what ways does school climate impact educational attainment across diverse national and cultural settings?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Bourdieu's theory of capital

Bourdieu's theory of capital explains how family background influences educational attainment. Economic capital encompasses tangible assets, social capital pertains to connections, and cultural capital comprises the knowledge and abilities esteemed by educational institutions. Children from richer families have better access to quality educational opportunities and higher academic success. The lack of capital drives educational inequalities, perpetuating disparities across generations (Bourdieu, 2011; Edgerton & Roberts, 2014).

2.2. Family Socioeconomic Status (SES)

A robust connection persists between family socioeconomic status and educational results. Recent research indicates that children from elevated SES backgrounds consistently benefit from enhanced educational settings and expanded support systems, leading to improved academic performance. Conversely, inadequate SES poses major obstacles—restricting access to high-quality resources, cultivating reduced educational expectations, and frequently confining students to cycles of disadvantage that sustain inequality across generations. The absence referred to is not merely a lack, but a catalyst for rising educational disparities (Musengamana, 2023).

2.3. Parental involvement

Involvement of parents in their children's education—like assisting with assignments, participating in school activities, and keeping in touch with educators—has consistently been associated with better academic outcomes and cognitive growth. Nevertheless, recent studies indicate that in the absence of parental involvement, students often experience academic difficulties, lower motivation, and weakened social-emotional abilities. This deficiency worsens current educational disparities, especially for marginalized or low-income families, increasing the likelihood of academic failure and negative long-term results (Omar, 2024).

2.4. Parental education

Recent studies show that parental education levels directly influence their children's academic achievements through cultural assets, elevated expectations, and the provision of resources. When there is a deficiency in parental education, children frequently establish diminished goals, get less educational support, and are more susceptible to ongoing disadvantages. The lack of parental education not only hinders current academic success but also perpetuates disadvantage across generations, greatly limiting chances for social mobility and economic progress (Xu & Fu, 2024).

2.5. Family income

Family income significantly influences a student's educational journey. Sufficient income allows families to offer necessary resources, stability, and chances for growth. When earnings are low, students often encounter underfunded schools, unstable living conditions, and persistent financial pressure—obstacles that hinder learning, involvement, and advancement. This kind of deprivation is frequently unspoken yet severely damaging, as research connects low income to ongoing achievement disparities and reduced educational success globally (Stanley & Olumuyiwa, 2023; Adzido et al. 2016; Um & Mincy, 2025).

2.6 School climate

School climate pertains to the quality and nature of school life, encompassing safety, relationships, educational practices, and the environment. It notes collective experiences, standards, principles, and anticipations among students, educators, personnel, and families, influencing how individuals perceive belonging and education in the school environment (Bradshaw et al., 2021). Research findings consistently show that an unfavorable school climate correlates with poor academic performance and mental well-being, decreased motivation, and more behavioral issues, revealing a significant barrier for educational success in various national and cultural settings (Kutsyuruba et al., 2015).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilized qualitative data mining, a cross-cultural comparative approach, to explore how family background through variables—such as family socioeconomic status (SES), parental involvement, parental education, and family income, and school climate—affects educational attainment across a range of national and cultural environments. Bourdieu's theory of capital was adopted as the guiding lens, shaping both the selection of core study variables and the strategies for interpretation. Relevant data between 2012-2024 were meticulously chosen for their comprehensive coverage and methodological strength. Countries were selected to illustrate different levels of economic development and cultural practices. Thematic synthesis was utilized to recognize and connect essential patterns, with particular focus on how socioeconomic, parental, and cultural factors are defined and assessed across various contexts. This methodological framework facilitates a comprehensive and detailed cross-cultural comparison that guides policy and upcoming research.

The review began with the formulation of a systematic search through comprehensive searches using relevant keywords such as “family socioeconomic status,” “parental involvement,” “parental education,” “family income”, and “school climate” in Google Scholar. This strategy was designed to ensure inclusion of a wide, relevant, and up-to-date selection of empirical studies published from 2012 to 2024.

Studies were considered for inclusion if they were written in English and explored at least one of the five major variables in connection to educational outcomes. Attention was given to ensure that selected works provided diversity in geographic or socio-economic context for a balanced synthesis.

Through this screening, thirty studies representing a broad mix of developed and developing countries were purposively chosen. Each selected article was closely examined and relevant findings—particularly those illuminating the ways in which family socioeconomic status (SES), parental involvement, parental education, family income, and school climate relate to educational attainment—were extracted for further analysis.

Relevant findings were manually identified, compared, and summarized. Comparative tables were developed to arrange similarities and differences among national contexts, educational policies, and cultural norms. Findings from each study were organized into detailed comparative tables, with each entry designed to go beyond simple outcome reporting by highlighting policy context, cultural features, and any structural influences pertinent to interpreting results. Country-specific context was included as necessary to enhance clarity and to ensure that readers could understand the basis for each comparison. All synthesis and thematic analysis were done manually, relying on thorough, repeated readings and comparisons of the published results.

Since this review drew solely on existing, published literature, there was no direct involvement of human participants and no need for ethical approval. Proper attributes were given to all included sources.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis procedure occurred in multiple interconnected phases, each designed to enhance the depth and interpretative richness of results. Initially, findings from the chosen studies were selected based on the five main variables: family socioeconomic status, parental engagement, parental education, family income, and school climate. This phase concentrated on emphasizing repeated patterns, fundamental mechanisms, and pertinent cultural or policy contexts for each variable.

The second stage focused on analyzing comparisons among various national and cultural contexts. This enabled the recognition of similarities and significant differences in how each family background factor affected educational outcomes, emphasizing both shared elements across countries and distinctive, context-specific findings. For example, variations in policy strategies or cultural perceptions regarding education might be perceived to greatly affect the influence of a specific variable.

The last phase consisted of synthesizing the results. This analysis transcended mere description by examining the interactions between economic, social, and cultural capital and how these were passed down through generations within the diverse policy and cultural contexts studied. The analysis sought not only to highlight similarities and differences but also to gain a deeper understanding of how family background influences educational equity and opportunities. This strategy facilitated the creation of contextually informed policy suggestions and underscored effective methods for achieving fairer educational results in various communities.

This process facilitated a detailed analysis of how each variable of family background—family socioeconomic status, parental involvement, parental education, family income, and school climate—affects educational attainment in different national and cultural contexts. The research revealed the interactions and overlaps among these elements by moving past the analysis of individual variables, considering the unique impact of cultural norms and policy frameworks in each situation. Through this comparative analysis, it is discovered that both international trends and distinct, context-specific dynamics, ultimately offering nuanced insights, are crucial for developing responsive, evidence-based educational policies aligned with both global and local priorities.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section illuminates the importance of each variable aligned to **Family Background**, specifically in the areas of

Family Socioeconomic Status, Parental Involvement, Parental Education, Family Income, and School Climate.

Family background

Family background, a combination of socioeconomic and cultural factors, influences an individual's life outcomes, educational attainment, and self-confidence. It significantly influences economic outcomes, affecting educational opportunities, self-perception, and confidence, which are crucial for labor market success (Filippin & Paccagnella, 2012).

Family socioeconomic status

Damian et al. (2015) state that family socioeconomic status (SES) is important for the educational attainment of children. Families with higher socioeconomic status (SES) possess more resources for educational investment, resulting in superior schools, materials, and extracurricular activities. In contrast, families with a lower SES can restrict access to education, continuing cycles of poverty. Understanding SES's role is crucial for reducing educational disparities and promoting equitable access to resources (Yan & Gai, 2022).

Table 1: Family socioeconomic status

Country	Data
Singapore	Singapore's education system consistently produces high-performing students, with socioeconomic status playing a significant role. The country's meritocratic approach, investment in education level the playing field for lower-income students, and its cultural emphasis on education as a path to social mobility minimizes socioeconomic disparities (Özer, 2020).
Kenya	Family socioeconomic status in Kenya significantly influences test scores and educational attainment, with increased parental investment contributing to higher college completion rates and reducing educational disparities (Oketch et al., 2012).
Germany	A study in <i>Frontiers in Education</i> reveals that family socioeconomic status significantly impacts educational performance in Germany. Early academic achievement can mitigate disadvantages associated with lower SES, emphasizing the need for early interventions (Bittmann, 2024).
United States of America	Educational opportunity disparities among racial groups in the United States decrease notably when family socioeconomic status factors are considered, highlighting the connection between socioeconomic and structural inequality. Early literacy initiatives targeting low-income families have reduced SES-related gaps in academic performance (Kruzik, 2023).
Philippines	Family socioeconomic status significantly influences educational advancement and adaptability in the Philippines. Research shows that although parental income influences the quality of education available, students from low-SES backgrounds display educational resilience when supported by strong family backing and community values (Garcia et al., 2025).
Norway	Evidence from Norway indicates that extensive social welfare systems mitigate the impact of SES on education. Increased income in early childhood notably enhanced educational results for families with low socioeconomic status. This illustrates how egalitarian welfare systems can reduce the connection between SES and achievement (Sandør et al., 2023).

Analyzing the data presented in Table 1 reveals that Family Socioeconomic Status (SES) influences educational attainment and does so through distinct mechanisms influenced by national context and policy. In Singapore, the blend of a merit-based education system and robust government backing has consistently reduced SES-related disparities particularly for low-income populations (Özer, 2020). This model illustrates how deliberate policy, combined with a cultural appreciation for educational mobility, can establish routes for underprivileged students. In Kenya, although family SES remains a significant factor, the introduction of conditional cash transfer programs has noticeably enhanced college graduation rates for low-SES students (Oketch et al., 2012; Kapula et al., 2022). Germany's emphasis on early interventions, like fostering basic skills in elementary education, acts as a strong safeguard against disadvantages linked to low socioeconomic status and highlights the significance of early, inclusive policy (Bittmann, 2024). In the United States, Bradley (2022) emphasizes that SES remains the strongest determinant of achievement, yet targeted programs show that early learning investments can narrow opportunity gaps. Garcia et al. (2025) highlights that although poverty limits school access in the Philippines, community cohesion and family support among low-income pupils foster academic resilience. In Norway, welfare policies and universal childcare substantially weaken SES effects, stressing that redistributive models can equalize socioeconomic opportunities (Hemler, 2025).

Leveraging these insights, addressing family background in terms of family socioeconomic status disparities in education is essential for fostering social mobility, driving economic growth, and promoting societal equity. Policies such as meritocratic systems and initiatives like conditional cash transfers empower disadvantaged families to access quality education, breaking intergenerational poverty cycles and fostering upward mobility (Kim et al., 2019; Needham et al., 2021). Early academic achievement interventions, such as emphasizing early childhood education, equipping children with foundational skills, reducing long-term socioeconomic inequalities, and enhancing future opportunities should be considered. These efforts contribute to a more skilled workforce, driving economic growth and reducing reliance on social welfare systems. Furthermore, reducing educational disparities enhances social cohesion by bridging socioeconomic gaps and promoting sustainable development (Wienke & Mathes, 2024; Guo, 2025).

These results emphasize that family SES affects educational success through both material and cultural aspects. Policies that align income assistance with educational reform offer the most sustainable path to equity by transforming economic resources into academic chances. These dynamics support Bourdieu's theory that educational achievement depends on the interplay of economic, social, and cultural capital. Recent research by Coley et al. (2024) indicate that

SES remains a factor influencing school achievement among racial and ethnic groups in developing nations, underscoring ongoing disparities despite international policy initiatives.

Parental involvement

Parental involvement in their children's education is essential for academic achievement and creates a nurturing atmosphere, emphasizing the significance of parental participation in tackling disparities linked to family backgrounds (Ain et al., 2021; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Muller, 2018; Topor et al., 2010).

Table 2: Parental involvement

Country	Data
Philippines	In the Philippines, parental involvement in education, including monitoring schoolwork, communicating with teachers, and participating in school activities, positively impacts children's academic performance (Quijano et al., 2023).
Chile	In Chile, parental involvement significantly enhances student well-being, learning outcomes, future academic success, and cognitive, social, and emotional development, with high and medium levels resulting in higher academic achievement (López et al., 2021).
Peru	Parental involvement significantly influences educational attainment in Peru. Higher-educated parents prioritize education and overcome financial constraints. Lower-educated families face barriers, emphasizing the need for equitable access to resources (Castro et al., 2016).
United States of America	Culturally aware parental involvement has proven to enhance student behavior, especially for minority youth from low SES backgrounds in the United States. Structured family-school collaborations boost academic motivation (Gershowitz, 2023).
Finland	In Finland, parental involvement through collaboration on trust between families and schools continue to be essential to the country's achievements. Educators actively engage with parents to ensure fair and inclusive educational settings (Koskela & Sinkkonen, 2025).
Indonesia	In Indonesia, informal home-based supervision compensates for parents' limited school involvement. Supportive parenting behaviors predict stronger academic motivation and fewer dropouts among low-income students (Hernawati et al., 2025).

Table 2 reveals that parental involvement significantly affects student outcomes, yet this must always be interpreted considering national context and family resources. In the Philippines, parental involvement and supervision correlate positively with enhanced student performance, reflecting the cultural significance attached to education as a collective family endeavor (Datu & Yang, 2021). In Chile, integrated methods focusing on student welfare and parental involvement lead to significant enhancements in social-emotional and academic growth, a correlation that is particularly evident for marginalized populations (López et al., 2021; Gubbins & Otero, 2019). Berthelon et al. (2024) and Castro et al. (2016) note that the experience in Peru illustrates that when parents have higher education levels, their children achieve more stable educational outcomes, whereas families with lower education frequently require specific interventions to achieve comparable advantages. In the United States, structured and culturally attuned involvement programs foster academic resilience and bridge racial inequities. Evidence from Finland notes how proactive teacher–parent collaboration ensures both equality and trust foundations for strong educational outcomes (Kelly et al., 2018). In Indonesia, formal parental involvement is balanced by relational support, reflecting adaptive methods that sustain learning motivation even in economic crises (Yulianti et al., 2019).

These strategies address educational inequalities, promote social mobility, and foster better student development, highlighting the need for tailored strategies to parental involvement. Expanding on these examples, active parental involvement is crucial in reducing educational inequalities and enhancing social mobility. Studies prove that parents actively involved in their children's academics significantly influence their academic performance and overall development. Parents supporting their children's education leads to better grades and improved social and emotional skills (Cuartero-Enteria & Tagyam, 2020). Focusing on student well-being and parental involvement has been linked to better social and emotional skills and academic achievement, especially in less advantaged communities (Shao & Kang, 2022; Stanford, 2023; Gubbins & Otero, 2019). Targeted programs to increase parental involvement, particularly for families with lower education levels, result in better student educational outcomes. These efforts build a more skilled workforce, reduce educational inequalities, and encourage social mobility, ultimately supporting overall student development (Chiodi & Escudero, 2024). Recent analyses confirm that parental involvement in education is a known predictor for academic success (Jeynes, 2024; Kim, 2022).

The evidence shows that parental involvement serves as a crucial connection between family and educational environments, promoting both academic and socio-emotional development. Fostering social capital through mutual trust between home and school lessens educational disparities and boosts student motivation. Culturally sensitive teacher training and parental initiatives can enhance these relationships. A recent study by Proff et al. (2025) emphasizes that ongoing partnerships between parents and schools continues to be a common predictor of academic success in post-pandemic scenarios.

Parental education

Parental education is crucial to a child's educational success, influencing their learning environment and aspirations. Parents with higher education levels value education, engage in activities, and have higher expectations. Investing in a child's future shapes their educational trajectories and long-term socioeconomic outcomes (Hu et al., 2024).

Table 3: Parental education

Country	Data
Germany	Parental education significantly impacts educational performance in Germany, with educated children performing better. Policies supporting diverse family backgrounds are needed to address challenges and promote academic success (Lindemann, 2024).
Canada	A study in the Canadian Journal of School Psychology emphasizes that parental education significantly impacts students' academic performance. Higher-achieving parents provide a supportive environment and set higher expectations, while lower-achieving students face challenges and disparities (Duncan et al., 2021).
United States of America	In the United States of America, higher-educated parents actively support their children's education, setting higher academic expectations and encouraging aspirations. Children from lower educational levels may receive less support and expectations, leading to educational disparities (Avnet et al., 2019).
Mexico	In Mexico, parents' education levels significantly influence their children's educational attainment and persistence, even after accounting for family financial resources (Mungaray et al., 2021).
Australia	Parental education and family background in Australia significantly influence educational attainment, with higher levels indicating better achievements due to resources, values, and socioeconomic status (Hancock et al., 2018).
Fiji	Parental education and family background in Fiji significantly impact educational attainment, influencing future economic and social mobility. Higher-educated parents provide better resources, highlighting the importance of addressing these factors (Sharma et al., 2015).
China	Parental education significantly influences intergenerational learning results. Parental expectations and self-directed learning expectations influence children's success (Xu et al., 2025).

Table 3 indicates that the connections between parental education and student achievement though consistently beneficial vary significantly depending on the national system and cultural setting. In Germany, the level of educational mobility increases alongside parental education, but this progress is most successful when policies are in place that support families from varied backgrounds (Lindemann, 2024; Blossfeld, 2023). Canada's favorable outcomes, particularly within immigrant populations, demonstrate how family education aids in integration and fosters high ambitions (Aliya & Gulnur, 2022; Duncan et al., 2021). In the United States, the difference between children of well-educated and less educated parents frequently highlights more profound inequalities in resources and assistance (Avnet et al., 2019; Benner et al., 2021). In Mexico and Australia, parental education is associated with increased school retention, whereas in Fiji, although parental education levels may not directly influence overall scores, the home learning atmosphere and parental involvement are crucial elements (Hernández-Padilla et al., 2023; Mungaray et al., 2021; Hancock et al., 2018; Sharma et al., 2015; Raj & Chand, 2023; Dockery et al., 2022). In China, parental educational expectations and aspirational values influence their children's success despite economic limitations, demonstrating how parental education fosters resilience even in rural areas (Chen et al., 2023).

Parental education significantly influences the benefits of education (Yulianti et al., 2020). Research indicates that when parents actively participate in their children's education, it leads to better academic performance and enhanced future economic prospects. However, if not addressed through targeted interventions, the advantages of parental education may inadvertently widen existing socioeconomic disparities among families (Huguley et al., 2021). Building on these insights, higher parental education levels lead to better academic performance, higher educational attainment, and improved socioeconomic outcomes. Parents with higher education create stimulating learning environments, set higher academic expectations, and actively engage in their children's education. These findings highlight the need for tailored educational policies to reduce disparities and promote equal opportunities across diverse socioeconomic backgrounds (Wilder, 2023; Alcaraz, 2020; Dubow, 2009).

In various contexts, parental education acts as an essential type of cultural capital that conveys ambition, discipline, and enthusiasm for learning to the upcoming generation. Adult literacy and ongoing education programs provide transformative routes for undereducated parents to aid their children's education. Investing in community training and lifelong learning can reduce the educational gap and enhance intergenerational mobility. This is supported by findings from Kolesnikova et al. (2023) who indicate that parental education enhances children's socio-emotional well-being and academic self-confidence in Australia and various other developed settings.

Family income

Family income significantly impacts educational attainment, as it provides resources for quality education and enhances future prospects. Addressing income disparities promotes educational equity and upward mobility (Cooper & Stewart, 2021).

Table 4: Family Income

Country	Data
United States of America	The study highlights the significant impact of family income on children's educational outcomes in the US. income inequality widens gaps between low- and high-income families, with higher-income families having better resources and supportive environments. At the same time, lower-income children face challenges like under-resourced schools and financial stress (Duncan & Murnane, 2016).
Fiji	In Fiji, family income significantly impacts educational attainment, providing better resources, private tutoring, and access to better schools. Higher-income levels also lead to a stable home environment and greater parental involvement in education, enhancing academic performance and promoting future economic and social mobility (Raj & Chand, 2023).
Ghana	Family income positively affects students' academic performance in Ghana, with high parental income improving motivation, learning processes, and academic outcomes (Kwarteng et al., 2022).
Nigeria	In Nigeria, higher family income is linked to improved primary school retention rates, indicating that family income significantly influences educational participation and success (Obibuba & Mohammed, 2024).
Japan	Family income directly influences educational spending and child success. Income reforms prompted by policy increased educational spending by households, subsequently enhancing students' academic performance and diminishing intergenerational inequality. Specific financial assistance enhances the development of human capital and promotes long-term growth (Naoi et al., 2021).

Table 4 indicates that family income continues to be an important predictor of educational attainment, yet its practical importance fluctuates based on the responses of national and local policies to resource disparities. In the United States, increased family income expands achievement disparities primarily by providing access to superior schools and enrichment activities; therefore, it is crucial to focus on redistributing education funding and enhancing infrastructure (Duncan & Murnane, 2016; Cooper & Stewart, 2021). Fiji is notable as government measures—like comprehensive free tuition and subsidized transportation for rural schools have bridged much of the gap, facilitating almost universal primary enrollment, even for low-income and isolated families (Raj & Chand, 2023; Escobar Carías et al., 2025). In Ghana and Nigeria, family incomes influence not just access but also the capacity to supply essential learning materials and support, which in turn enhances motivation and retention (Kwarteng et al., 2022; Obibuba & Mohammed, 2024; Odom et al., 2024). Kachi et al. (2020) identified that in Japan, evident socio-economic inequalities in early childhood education implies that obstacles to income-related access arise prior to primary school. This indicates that although current Japanese social policies have somewhat reduced inequality, initial income assistance is crucial to guarantee fair educational access.

Building on these studies, addressing family income disparities is essential for fostering equitable educational outcomes, supporting workforce development, and promoting long-term economic growth (Olaboye et al., 2024). Reducing income disparities in education can lead to more equitable outcomes and improved economic prospects. Implementing policies in a region is successful when targeting family income, increases workforce productivity, and reduces social welfare costs, but it must address systemic issues (Kline & Moretti, 2014).

In general, income disparity continues to be a key barrier to educational access. Financial stability influences access to educational tools, extracurricular activities, and nutrition essential factors of academic proficiency. Incorporating economic capital into Bourdieu's theory shows that money alone is not the key advantage. Rather, it is its transformation into cultural and social resources that leads to academic success. Consequently, income-support policies should focus on leveling the playing field for early learning conditions. Recent research as noted by Shullai & Panda (2024) verify that family income and education persist in jointly accounting for academic disparities, highlighting the universal impact of economic capital.

School climate

School climate refers to the multifaceted quality and nature of education, encompassing norms, objectives, values, relationships among individuals, teaching methods, and organizational frameworks that collectively influence the daily experiences of students, educators, and school personnel. It mirrors the environment of a school in terms of safety, academic assistance, social interactions, connectedness, and the state of the learning environment. A supportive school climate encourages involvement, respect, and belongingness which creates environments where students are inspired to succeed—an insight that strongly links with contemporary research (Kearney et al., 2020).

Table 5: School climate

Country	Data
United States	A supportive school climate is strongly linked to improved student performance and reduces the chances of disciplinary referrals and suspensions. Research highlights the crucial importance of school climate in promoting equity, especially for marginalized student groups in the United States (Welsh et al., 2025).
Norway	A positive school climate is strongly linked with improved mental well-being among Norwegian upper-secondary pupils. Inclusive and supportive school climates also mitigate the negative impact of socioeconomic disadvantage (Hansen & Barene, 2025).
Philippines	A supportive school climate has been noted to significantly academic performance and involvement among Filipino students, especially in flexible learning areas. School climates that encourage collaboration and respect with effectively managed classrooms develop academic resilience, thus maintaining higher achievement among students in the Philippines (Banzon-Manulat, 2025).

Japan	Positive school climate in Japan is linked to improved quality of life and a decrease in bullying and peer relationship issues among students. Meta-analytic findings from Japanese schools additionally support that the school environment significantly influences academic success and student well-being (Nishimura et al., 2020).
Ghana	School climate is a strong indicator of teacher job effectiveness in public schools in Ghana. The "open climate" type promotes improved teacher effectiveness, relationships, and job satisfaction, whereas a "familiar" climate significantly boosts teacher motivation and performance. Enhancing beneficial climate attributes is crucial for better educational results in Ghana (Bentil, 2021).
Australia	Australian studies confirm that students' perceptions of a positive school climate are strongly linked to gains in both writing and numeracy achievement. Multilevel research from Australian high schools demonstrates that school climate mediates the effects of socioeconomic status and fosters greater school identification, engagement, and academic success among diverse student populations (Maxwell et al., 2017).

Table 5 shares the uniqueness of school climates in the United States, Norway, the Philippines, Japan, Ghana, and Australia. In the United States, positive school climates mitigate student suspensions, highlighting the importance of students' perceptions in understanding equity, especially among marginalized groups (Wang et al., 2023). Norwegian schools that encourage supportive school climates show higher mental well-being among secondary students. Key factors, such as self-efficacy, peer relationships, and classroom atmosphere help lessen the negative impacts of socioeconomic disadvantages (Urke et al., 2023). Recent evidence in the Philippines highlights that adaptable and inclusive school climates are crucial for fostering student engagement and resilience, particularly during times of educational disruption (Bercasio & Dugan, 2025). In Japan, recent research shows that focusing on peer connections in a supportive school climates results in reduced bullying cases and enhanced student well-being, while creative peer assistance initiatives promote social skills and adaptability (Kondo & Kato, 2024). In Ghana, transparent and friendly school climates clearly enhance teacher performance, contentment, and enthusiasm, thereby increasing overall student success (Ugbe, 2024). Research from Australia shows that favorable views of school climate directly enhance improvements in writing and numeracy skills, with climate acting as a mediator for socioeconomic status results and promoting increased engagement among various groups (Tomaszewski et al., 2023).

Comparative studies show that school climate consistently influences academic achievement, student well-being, and teacher performance, irrespective of cultural setting. Recent research indicates that supportive school climates correlate with enhanced academic success, increased engagement levels, and better social-emotional outcomes in various educational systems (Klik et al., 2023). Additionally, encouraging school climates enhance inclusivity, lower absenteeism, and advance equity.

Research utilizing structural equation modeling and multilevel studies over the last two years indicates that student perceptions of climate can explain substantial variances in academic performance, even after accounting for individual and socioeconomic factors (Amsalu & Belay, 2024). These trends are observed in both developed and developing nations, indicating that efforts to improve school climate—through empowering educators, creating peer support networks, and promoting adaptable learning are essential strategies for globally enhancing educational quality.

6. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study offers a significant contribution to the field of comparative education by synthesizing recent empirical evidence on how family socioeconomic status, parental involvement, parental education, family income, and school climate shape educational attainment across different cultural and policy environments. By drawing from both developed and developing contexts, it broadens the scope beyond traditional single-country or Western-centric analyses and allows for the identification of universal and context-specific influences. The integration of Bourdieu's theory of capital into the comparative framework deepens the analysis, emphasizing the interplay of economic, cultural, and social resources in facilitating or constraining educational opportunities. Moreover, the study advances the conversation by highlighting the roles of local policies and cultural mediators, demonstrating that the impact of family background is neither homogenous nor static, but instead is shaped by policy decisions, community norms, and institutional practices. The detailed, transparent methodology also serves as a clear model for future literature synthesis seeking to explore complex, multi-dimensional issues in education.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this research are based on Bourdieu's theory of capital, which argues that educational success is significantly influenced by interconnected types of capital: economic, cultural, and social. This theoretical perspective elucidates how family resources represented by family socioeconomic status, parental involvement, parental education, family income, and school climate—act as both facilitators and obstacles to educational opportunities in various contexts. Utilizing Bourdieu's framework, the research not only validates the theory's fundamental claims but also illustrates its significance in various cultural and policy contexts.

The findings from this comparative review have direct implications for educators, policymakers, and researchers who are concerned with advancing educational equity. The results underscore the importance of developing interventions that are context-sensitive, recognizing that family socioeconomic status, parental involvement, parental education, family

income, and school climate operate differently depending on national policy, cultural orientation, and local resources. Policies such as early childhood programs, conditional cash transfers, and culturally informed parental engagement initiatives emerge as effective tools for mitigating disadvantages and fostering upward mobility. The study suggests that policy frameworks must go beyond one-size-fits-all solutions by tailoring support to local realities, integrating family and community strengths, and targeting the most vulnerable populations. Furthermore, the research points to the need for ongoing comparative and longitudinal studies, particularly in underrepresented regions, as a basis for refining interventions and informing the design of equitable, inclusive educational systems. By articulating both the mechanisms and mediators of family background influences, the study guides stakeholders toward more holistic and sustainable reforms that can help all children reach their full academic and social potential.

8. CONCLUSION

This cross-cultural comparative review reaffirms that family SES, parental involvement, parental education, family income, and school climate are central to educational attainment. Their influence is mediated by policy, culture, and context. Key strategies include expanding targeted support (e.g., cash transfers, scholarships), promoting family and adult education, and reducing income-based disparities through inclusive, culturally sensitive policies (Yan & Gai, 2022; Wilder, 2023; Hussain & Khoso, 2021). Future work should further examine underrepresented contexts.

8.1. Contributions, Implications, and Recommendations

By integrating cross-cultural research, this analysis highlights that although family socioeconomic status, parental involvement, parental education, family income, and school climate are key factors in educational attainment, their impacts are significantly influenced by national policy structures and cultural norms. The research enhances comparative education literature by highlighting how structural and cultural factors collectively generate challenges and opportunities for families and educational institutions. Policymakers should prioritize specific supports that tackle both economic disparities and culturally ingrained obstacles to educational success. Further studies, especially longitudinal and mixed-methods research, are required to clarify causal mechanisms and produce context-specific solutions.

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