

Family Cultural Capital Influence on Educational Expectations and Class Differences

Muyi Yang^{1,a,*}

¹*University of Melbourne, Grattan Street, Parkville Victoria 3010, Australia
a. 136796562@qq.com*

**corresponding author*

Abstract: This paper explores the impact of cultural capital on family educational expectations based on data from the CFPS(China Family Panel Studies). After controlling for control variables such as gender and household registration, it was found that: objectified cultural capital, institutionalized cultural capital and embodied cultural capital all have a significant positive effect on family educational expectations. In addition, there is no significant class difference in the effect of cultural capital on family educational aspirations, but objective and specific cultural capital have a more significant effect on the educational aspirations of the upper class than those of the lower class, and objective and specific cultural capital are more influential within the upper class. In the context of education for upward class mobility, identifying the cultural capital shortcomings of the disadvantaged class that are inferior to those of the upper class and enhancing the educational expectations of families are key to promoting class mobility. Therefore, families, schools and society need to provide support in many ways to compensate for the cultural capital disadvantage of families.

Keywords: cultural capital, family educational expectations, class differences

1. Introduction

Education for upward mobility and the 'reproduction of culture' has long been a popular topic in educational research. In 'Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture', Bourdieu refers to cultural capital as an intangible asset that is transmitted from one generation to another in a 'reproductive' manner [1]. Similarly, he refers to cultural capital as endogenous, arguing that a stable path of reproduction can be formed through parenting patterns and educational expectations [2]. Many studies in the national and international literature have demonstrated a strong correlation between educational expectations and educational outcomes [3], with parents in higher class families having higher expectations for their children's schooling due to their extensive knowledge base [4]. And because of the differences in the composition of capital created within different classes, families within the upper class with rich cultural capital perform better and benefit more from education [5]. The "cultural reproduction" of cultural capital for the upper classes is thus undoubtedly a constraint on the intergenerational mobility of disadvantaged groups and a reason for reproducing educational inequalities. This is especially true in the context of the current national policy of "double reduction", which greatly reduces the value of parents' economic capital as a means of promoting students' educational strengths, and instead highlights the value of cultural capital [6]. Bourdieu also argues that students from culturally capital-rich families perform better academically when economic and

social factors are removed from their support [7]. This paper will explore the relationship between family cultural capital and educational aspirations and class differences, analyse the specific factors that influence educational aspirations, and provide practical implications for the promotion of family cultural capital and class mobility for the disadvantaged classes.

2. Literature Review

The definition of cultural capital in educational research has undergone a shift from interest in cultural resources, cultural competence, cultural values, habits, cultural assets, and cultural sharing [8]. Pierre Bourdieu, who first mentioned the concept of cultural capital as a cultural asset transmitted through different educational actions [1], then built on this concept by suggesting that cultural capital is an intangible asset that has an intergenerational impact in a 'reproduction' model. His writings on cultural capital range from the concept of cultural capital and 'refined' pursuits, i.e. the importance of reading habits, theatre visits, classical music appreciation and other high culture for students to gain an advantage in education, to the relationship between cultural capital and competencies, such as certificates or other institutionalized cultural capital [8]. Patricia McDonough refers to the importance of parents' 'first-hand' knowledge, i.e. their cultural capital [8]. Lamont and Lallo prefer to define it in terms of various uses as institutionalized, widely shared, high-status cultural signals [8]. Currently, there is no uniform standard for defining and classifying the concept of cultural capital, but studies based on family cultural capital have been developed in the literature based on Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital, which is divided into three perspectives: institutionalized, objective and embodied family cultural capital. Specifically institutionalisation is in the form of a capital that exists objectively and produces differentiation; objectification is in the form of cultural commodities; concretization is the internalisation of dispositions and behaviours etc. [9], or habits, in the human mind and body. In response to Bourdieu's theory of cultural regeneration mentioned above, the article will draw on Bourdieu's classification of the three dimensions of cultural capital.

Education is important for social mobility [10] and cultural capital, as an endogenous capital, can be culturally reproduced through parenting patterns and educational aspirations and can have a stabilising effect on the social stratification of children [2]. The influence of family class on children's educational expectations is more indirectly through cultural capital, with upper class families investing more cultural capital to raise their children's educational expectations [4]. Therefore, educational expectations have also become a focus of research on class mobility [10].

The existing literature on family educational expectations focuses on factors such as family background, parental involvement in educational behaviour, family socio-economic status and family commitment. There are also studies on class differences, gender differences, ethnic differences and other group differences. However, there is relatively little literature examining the factors influencing family educational expectations from a cultural capital perspective. In the existing studies on cultural capital and children's educational expectations, scholars have mostly looked at a combination of the Blau-Duncan model, the DiMaggio model and the Wisconsin model to explain the impact of cultural capital on educational expectations [7]. The Blau-Duncan model analogises the father's educational attainment with Bourdieu's institutionalised cultural capital, suggesting that the cultural capital of the family influences the educational attainment of children [7]. On this basis, in an empirical study of the parent-child education expectation gap, Zhang Nan illustrates that parents with higher education have higher expectations for their children to attend university because they can effectively use their own educational experience to provide academic and informational support for their children [11]. The DiMaggio model suggests that participation in refined culture, as objectified cultural capital in Bourdieu's cultural capital [7], positively influences children's educational aspirations. For example, the purchase of books and the provision of refined culture (objectified cultural capital) can better encourage children's educational and career aspirations [7]. The Wisconsin model measures family

cultural capital in terms of psychosocial variables and, by analogy with Bourdieu's specific cultural capital such as "habitus" [7], has been found to have a positive impact on parents' expectations of their children's education [12]. The importance of parents' perceptions of their children's education and habits on educational expectations has been pointed out by Cao Chixuan's study [13].

In summary, there is a wealth of research on cultural capital in relation to offspring educational attainment and on cultural capital and family educational expectations, but most of the research has been on cultural capital and offspring educational attainment and on the relationship between cultural capital and offspring learning behaviours, with few studies examining the relationship between different dimensions of cultural capital and family educational expectations and comparing the relative importance of the different dimensions. As mentioned above, the relationship between cultural capital and family educational expectations needs to be studied because of the importance of education for social mobility and the significant impact of family educational expectations on the educational and status attainment of offspring and on the promotion of class mobility [10]. In addition, the weakened role of economic and social capital under the 'double reduction' policy has highlighted the independent influence of cultural capital on educational outcomes [6], reproducing the theory of effective maintenance of educational inequality (EMI theory) [2] and leading to little success in national initiatives to promote equity in education. Furthermore, how and in what ways cultural capital contributes to family educational expectations can be found in the results of the influence of cultural capital of the upper classes on educational expectations, and ways to compensate for the cultural capital of the weaker classes.

3. Data and Methods

3.1. Data

The main empirical evidence of this paper is the effect of family cultural capital on family educational expectations. Based on this, the following model is developed using parents' educational expectations of their children as the explanatory variable and some selected variables concerning the dimension of family cultural capital as the core explanatory variables.

$$\text{Edu}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \text{CCA}_i + \mathbf{X}_i\boldsymbol{\theta} + \mu_i$$

Edu_i is expectations for home education, CCA_i representing the cultural capital of the family, \mathbf{X}_i is control variable affecting educational expectations, include gender, household registration, whether you plan to go abroad and net household income. μ_i represents random error. The main focus of the study is on the direction and significance of the coefficients. The data in this article comes from the CFPS (China Family Panel Studies) Family Tracking Survey, which contains data at four levels: individual, parental proxy, family relationships and household economics. When filtering the data, the data of parents and children are merged by Pid as the basis, using the surrogate and adult databases, and then the adult and family databases are merged by fid as the basis, and the family relationship database. Finally, both dependent and independent variables were made to be quadrupled according to family, child and parent. The selected variables were then removed according to not applicable, missing, refusal to answer, etc., resulting in a final filter of 2786 observations.

3.2. Description of Variables

Dependent variable: This paper uses family educational expectations as the explanatory variable, and the data is obtained from the parent proxy section of the 2018 report on children's questionnaires, specifically the question "What is the least level of schooling you would like your child to complete?" ,

and The answers include 7 educational levels, in order of "no need to study": primary school, junior high school, high school, college, university, bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate. Due to the ordered nature of educational expectations, an ordered Probit model was used.

3.3. Core Independent Variable: Family Cultural Capital

This paper classifies family cultural capital into institutionalised cultural capital, objectified cultural capital and embodied cultural capital. Institutionalised cultural capital is cultural capital that is recognised through some system, such as certificates such as diplomas or title certificates [8] and, in the data provided by CFPS 2018, can be expressed in terms of the level of education of parents [14]. A number of Western scholars have also used parental education to add to the study of the impact of family background on students' educational expectations as an important component of family cultural capital [1].

Objective cultural capital is divided into physical and symbolic aspects [8] and is defined in the PISA test as the family's collection of books, arts-based extension educational resources [14]. In this paper, the number of books in the household, whether the children attend talent classes, and the household expenditure on culture and recreation are used as proxy variables. Specifically, the household economic questionnaire fs8: "Excluding newspapers, magazines and e-books, how many books do you currently have in your household?" fs8 : "How many books does your household have at present? Whether or not the child attends talent classes is taken from the parent proxy questionnaire wt4: "During the 1 month non-winter and summer holidays, has the child attended, or is the child attending, a talent development class (e.g. piano, chess, calligraphy, painting, sports, singing, dancing, etc.)? Yes is assigned a value of 1, otherwise a value of 0 is assigned. Household expenditure on culture and recreation from the household economic questionnaire: "In the past 12 months, how much did your household spend on culture and recreation, including buying books, newspapers and magazines, going to the cinema, etc.?" Bourdieu believed that only the dominant class would be keen on a certain type of interest in society that symbolised a higher level of taste, and would invest financially and practically in it [15].

Habituation, a concept central to Bourdieu's embodied cultural capital theory, is an internalised disposition acquired by individuals in the family that subconsciously influences children [12], Thus, the three proxies for 'habituation' in this paper are the child's attention span, the need to finish once started, and the importance of artistic and aesthetic experiences.

Control variables: By reading the literature on the factors influencing family educational expectations, most of the child characteristics, family characteristics were selected. Therefore, based on the data from CFPS, the control variables in this paper are specifically set to the four variables of children's gender, children's household status, whether they are considering sending their children abroad, and net household income. The gender of the child sets male to 1 and the rest to 0. The household, whether to consider leaving the country is selected on merit, and the non-agricultural household, and consider leaving the country are set to 1. For the upper class families, the tendency is to use their accumulated capital to obtain overseas education diplomas for their children and to change the educational playing field in order to maintain cultural reproduction [2]. Table 1 below shows the descriptive statistics for the variables mentioned above.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the main variables.

Variables	N	mean	sd	min	max
Educational expectations	2786	6.817	0.995	3	9
Family book collection	2786	51.571	188.637	0	6000
Does your child attend talent classes	2786	0.151	0.358	0	1

Table 1: (continued).

Household expenditure on culture	2786	373.126	847.766	0	10000
Father's education level	2786	2.687	1.238	1	7
Emphasis on artistic and aesthetic	2786	2.991	1.159	1	5
Concentrate when doing things	2786	0.758	0.427	1	4
Once started it must be finished	2786	0.683	0.465	1	4
Gender	2786	0.530	0.499	0	1
Account	2786	0.183	0.387	0	1
Whether to consider sending your child	2786	0.193	0.395	0	1
Net household income	2786	102959	204451	0	8200000

4. Results

According to Table 2, the regression results for Objectified Cultural Capital 1 (family book collection), Objectified Cultural Capital 2 (child's participation in talent classes), Objectified Cultural Capital 3 (family cultural and recreational expenditure), Institutional Cultural Capital (father's highest education), Specific Cultural Capital 1 (emphasis on artistic and aesthetic experiences), Specific Cultural Capital 2 (child's attention when doing things), and Specific Cultural Capital 3 (once started, must be completed) on family educational expectations can be seen. The results show that all three cultural capital variables have a significant positive effect on family educational expectations after controlling for the control variables of gender, household registration, whether or not to leave the country, and net household income. The impact of Objectified Cultural Capital 2 (children attending talent classes) and Concrete Cultural Capital 3 (having to complete it once started) is the greatest. The results of the regression of all variables in (8) are consistent with the trends presented in (1)-(7).

Table 2: Ordered Probit regression results.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Objective cultural capital1	.0002*							.0001
	(.0001)							(.0001)
Objective cultural capital2		.2063**						.1583*
		(.0638)						(.0656)
Objective cultural capital3			.00006*					.00002
			(.00002)					(.00002)
Institutional cultural capital				.080**				.0748**
				(.018)				(.0189)

Table 2: (continued).

Specific cultural capital 1					.0641**			.0496*
					(.0188)			(.0190)
Specific cultural capital 2						.0873*		.0338
						(.0369)		(.0418)
Specific cultural capital 3							.1252*	.1116*
							(.0340)	(.0385)
Gender (M=1)	.0473	.0574	.050	.0484	.0419	.0458	.0546	.0679
	(.0437)	(.0438)	(.043)	(.0187)	(.0437)	(.0436)	(.0437)	(.0441)
Household (Non-agricultural household = 1)	.4094**	.3831**	.3978**	.3597**	.4221**	.4432**	.4459*	.3106*
	(.0589)	(.0601)	(.0599)	(.0605)	(.0583)	(.0585)	(.0584)	(.0634)
Consider going abroad (Yes=1)	.4933**	.4897**	.4854**	.4939**	.4817**	.4862**	.4871*	.4610*
	(.0560)	(.0560)	(.0561)	(.056)	(.0561)	(.0561)	(.0560)	(.0566)
Net household income	1.73e-07	1.54e-07	1.56e-07	1.33e-07	1.84e-07	1.87e-07	1.93e-07	1.02e-07
	(1.09e-07)	(1.10e-07)	(1.10e-07)	(1.10e-07)	(1.08e-07)	(1.08e-07)	(1.08e-07)	(1.13e-07)
R2	0.026	0.0268	0.0259	0.0282	0.0270	0.0260	0.0273	0.0342
Obs	2786	2786	2786	2786	2786	2786	2786	2786

Table 3 shows the marginal effects of the three cultural capital proxy variables on the regression of family educational expectations. Based on the results in the table, it is clear that the richer the cultural capital of the family, the higher the expectations of family education, and that there is a significant positive correlation between the two, meaning that the cultural capital of the family has a

positive impact on the expectations of family education in the whole sample. Specifically, taking institutional cultural capital as an example: the probability of a father's educational expectations for his child being in the PhD range increases by 0.0082% for each additional degree level of the father's education.

Table 3: Cultural capital and the average marginal effect of family educational expectations.

	Objective cultural capital1	Objective cultural capital2	Objective cultural capital3	Institutional cultural capital	Specific cultural capital 1	Specific cultural capital 2	Specific cultural capital 3
Primary Schools	-1.44e-06	-.0011	-2.02e-07	-.0005*	-.0003	-.0002	-.0008*
Junior High School	-6.65e-05	-.0052*	-9.36e-07	-.0025**	-.0016*	-.0011	-.0037**
High School	-.00003	-.0281*	-4.98e-06	-.0133**	-.0088**	-.0060	-.0198**
Tertiary	-8.963-06	-.0071*	-1.26e-06	-.0033**	-.0022*	-.0015	-.0050**
Undergraduate	.00001	.0130*	2.30e-06	.0061**	.0040*	.0027	.0091**
Masters	.00001	.0113*	2.00e-06	.0053**	.0035**	.0024	.0079**
PhD	.00002	.0174*	3.08e-06	.0082**	.0054**	.0037	.0122**

Based on the full sample it is not possible to determine which cultural capital produces the greatest effect between the upper and lower classes leading to the difference between the two classes, so a grouped regression is required. Therefore, this paper classifies classes from an economic perspective, using the net household income variable in a median grouping regression, with the disadvantaged class below the median and the upper class above the median, and then comparing the significant differences in the study coefficients. Specifically, in Table 4, the influence of objective cultural capital1 (family book collection), institutional cultural capital (father's highest level of education), specific cultural capital1 (valuing artistic and aesthetic experiences) and specific cultural capital2 (focus on doing things) on educational aspirations is higher and more significant for the upper class than for the lower class. When comparing the role of cultural capital within the upper classes horizontally it is also the objective cultural capital that is more influential than the specific cultural capital. Conversely, the effect of objective cultural capital2 (participation in arts classes) on educational aspirations will be more pronounced in the lower classes. This indicates that if the disadvantaged want to promote class mobility, efforts need to be made to strengthen objective and specific cultural capital such as 'family book collection' and 'habitus'.

Table 4: Class differences in the impact of cultural capital on family education.

Class category	Economic perspective (net household income)	
	Upper class	Lower Classes
Objective cultural capital1	.0002* (.0001)	.0006 (.0004)
Objective cultural capital2	.1849* (.0785)	.2391* (.1153)

Table 4: (continued).

Objective cultural capital3	.00004 (.00003)	.0001 (.00007)
Institutional cultural capital	.0990** (.0246)	.0760** (.0290)
Specific cultural capital1	.0628* (.0282)	.0614* (.0256)
Specific cultural capital2	.1091* (.0534)	.0984 (.0553)
Specific cultural capital3	.0636 (.0585)	.0386 (.0593)
observations	1430	1356

5. Conclusion

Although there is a social problem of "cultural reproduction" in our country, and there is already a differentiation in educational choices, there is no clear class differentiation in the dominant cultural capital [7], which is consistent with the findings of this study. The input of cultural capital, although influenced by the family context, has its own dynamics and is not acquired through the sole means of intergenerational transmission [7]. The persistence of the theory of the uselessness of education in the context of the difficulty of producing a child from a poor family certainly affects upward mobility. The underprivileged therefore need to use their initiative to make up for the shortcomings of their family culture to gain access to class mobility.

Firstly, the findings of this paper show that, controlling for gender, household registration, whether or not the household went abroad and net household income, the empirical results for the full sample suggest that increases in all three types of cultural capital increase household educational expectations. Secondly, the group regressions in this paper divide the sample into upper and lower strata by economic level (net household income) using a median group regression. The regression results show that objective cultural capital 1 (family book collection) and specific cultural capital 2 (attention to tasks) are significant for family educational expectations in upper class families but not in lower class families, suggesting that good habits and adequate objective cultural capital are factors that explain the high expectations of the upper class for their children's education. The second is that the objective cultural capital 2 (taking art classes) pair is more significant in disadvantaged class households and that the class characteristics of cultural capital are not significant [7] and the difference in significance between the two class variables is not significant. While economic level and parental education can limit objective and institutional cultural capital, concretized cultural capital can break through the limitations and be provided [7].

Therefore disadvantaged groups need to strengthen the family factor [1] and the advocacy of the national education administration [14] if they are to compensate for the cultural capital disadvantage of their families. Families from disadvantaged backgrounds should raise the profile of 'habitual' and arts-based outreach resources. Although the entry point of "double reduction" is extra-curricular tutoring, it is based on the participation of parents in education [15], and the participation of children's education should pay attention to a good cultural atmosphere, positive and effective communication, and the establishment of home-school association to make the school and home education concept of the same frequency, to promote inertia [1]. In addition, parental educational values act on educational expectations free from the constraints of the social context, and therefore the education sector of the national government needs to focus on promoting the value of education and guiding the disadvantaged classes to have positive attitudes towards educational expectations [16]. For artistic

outreach resources, parents need to avoid overly utilitarian-oriented educational goals [17], establish a healthy educational philosophy from the student's main subject position, and organise regular family participation in various cultural activities [14].

References

- [1] Yang Tao. *Study on the influence of family cultural capital on college students' learning commitment*[D]. Shanxi University of Finance and Economics, 2021.
- [2] Yang Jindong. *Structural tensions and equity concerns: A study on the class response and sustainability of the "double reduction" policy*[J]. *Journal of Yunnan University for Nationalities (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, 2022, 39(06): 121-126.
- [3] Tomaszewski W, Huang Y, Xiang N, et al. *Investigating the drivers of higher education expectations among students from low and high socio-economic backgrounds in Australia*[J]. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 2021, 109: 101822.
- [4] Zhu Xiaowen, Han Hong, Cheng Yuxuan. *Class differences in adolescents' educational expectations - a study of micro mechanisms based on family capital investment*[J]. *Journal of Xi'an Jiaotong University (Social Science Edition)*, 2019, 39(04): 102-113.
- [5] Jarness V, Strømme T B. *Advantages of upper-class backgrounds: Forms of capital, school cultures and educational performance*[J]. *The Sociological Review*, 2022, 70(6): 1199-1219.
- [6] Jæger M M. *Equal access but unequal outcomes: Cultural capital and educational choice in a meritocratic society*[J]. *Social Forces*, 2009, 87(4): 1943-1971.
- [7] Yu Xiulan, Han Yan. *How to produce "noble sons" from humble families: A class breakthrough based on the perspective of cultural capital*[J]. *Higher Education Research*, 2018, 39(02): 8-16.
- [8] Lareau A, Weininger E B. *Cultural capital in educational research: A critical assessment*[J]. *Theory and society*, 2003, 32(5): 567-606.
- [9] Xue Xiaoyuan, Cao Rongxiang. *Cultural capital, cultural goods and cultural institutions - the theory of cultural capital after Bourdieu*[J]. *Marxism and Reality*, 2004(01): 43-49.
- [10] Cai Qingfeng, Cheng Zhangji, Chen Wuyuan. *Social capital, family education expectations and class mobility: An empirical study and reflection based on the "Chinese Family Tracking Survey"*[J]. *Educational Development Research*, 2021, 41(20): 9-21.
- [11] Zhang Nan. *Analysis of the relative importance of factors influencing the gap between parent-child educational expectations: An empirical study based on CEPS survey data*[J]. *Basic Education*, 2021, 18(02): 28-41.
- [12] Liu, T.Y., Wang, C.Z.. *Does family cultural capital really help children develop good habits? --The mediating role of parental involvement in education and educational expectations*[J]. *Educational Science Research*, 2019(11): 51-57.
- [13] Cao Chixuan. *Research on the influence of family capital on students' educational expectations*[D]. Nanjing Normal University, 2019.
- [14] Li Xiaohong, Wang Suan, Chen Chen, et al. *The influence of family cultural capital on students' reading literacy: an empirical study based on a multilayer logistic model*[J]. *Journal of East China Normal University (Education Science Edition)*, 2022, 40(08): 57-66.
- [15] Zhang Yafei. *A study of parents' educational participation behavior in primary and secondary schools in Beijing and Shanghai*[D]. East China Normal University, 2022.
- [16] Yu Xiulan. *Parents' social background, educational values and their educational expectations*[J]. *Nanjing Normal University Journal (Social Science Edition)*, 2020(04): 62-74.
- [17] Jiang Danyang, Lu Wen. *Why educational anxiety arises: educational values, social mobility and family participation*[J]. *Educational Inquiry*, 2021(05): 7-12.