



Research Article

Investigating the Relationship between Parents' Social Capital and the Academic Achievement of Second-Grade Students in Rafsanjan

Zahra Mirzaei Poirkani¹  , Aazam Zarei² , Moazameh Alesadi³ 

1. Master's degree in educational management, education office of Kerman province, Rafsanjan, Email: zizimiri77@gmail.com
 2. Master's degree in educational management, education office of Kerman province, Rafsanjan Email: aazamzarei0@gmail.com
 3. Master's degree in educational management, education office of Kerman province, Shahrabak Email: amzmmh597@gmail.com
- * Corresponding Author: zizimiri77@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Social Capital,
Academic Achievement,
Second Grade,
Rafsanjan.



Received:

13 April 2023

Received in revised form:

04 May 2023

Accepted:

29 May 2023

Published:

July 2023

Pp.1-16


Background and Objectives: In the family environment, parents' support and appreciation of students' efforts can help increase their academic quality and inspire academic goal-setting and productivity. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between parents' social capital and the academic achievement of second grade students in Rafsanjan.

Methodology: This applied research was conducted with a descriptive correlational approach in 2023. Its statistical population consisted of all the students of the second year of elementary schools in Rafsanjan, numbering 6914 people, and based on the Karjesi and Morgan's table (1970), 360 people were selected as a statistical sample by stratified-random sampling method. In order to collect data, parents' social capital questionnaire with 20 questions as well as students' academic achievement test scores were used. The formal and content validities of the tools were confirmed by the experts and their reliability was obtained by using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient test which was $\alpha = 0.790$ for the parents' social capital questionnaire. Pearson correlation and multivariate regression tests were used to analyze the data.

Results: The results of the regression test showed that the student's social capital had the most relationship with the students' academic achievement. There is a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of parents' social capital (structural within the family, structural outside the family, cognitive within the family, and cognitive outside the family) with students' academic achievement.

Conclusion: Parents' social capital can be considered as an effective factor on students' academic achievement which includes social connections and personal and family relationships that a person has with a part of society. For students, parents' social capital plays an important role in increasing self-confidence, self-control, commitment to education and academic progress, motivation and critical thinking.

Citation: Mirzaei Poirkani, Z. , Zarei, A. and Alesadi, M. (2023). Investigating the relationship between parents' social capital and the academic achievement of second grade students in Rafsanjan. *The New Approaches in Humanities*, 1(2), 1-16.

 <http://10.22034/NAHQ.2023.173081>

Authors retain the copyright and full publishing rights. © Authors.

The Article is Published by [SAFIR-E-HEZAREH Publication Center](#).

This article is an open access article licensed under

[The Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](#) (CC BY 4.0).



Introduction

Social capital has emerged as a novel concept in economic, social, and managerial domains (Alvani & Seyednaqavi, 2002). It refers to networks of relationships among individuals, social norms, and mutual trust, which can serve as a valuable resource for achieving individual and collective goals (Putnam, 2000). In modern societies, social capital plays a crucial role in sustainable development, particularly in the field of education (Coleman, 1998). According to scholars such as Fukuyama (1996), parental social capital is the most important form of social capital, acting as a foundation for its transmission and accumulation across generations. The family, as the primary institution of socialization, not only increases the resources available to its members through interaction with other cultural, economic, and religious institutions but also contributes to the production and enhancement of public goods and services (Ghazanfari, 2011).

Previous research has shown that the social capital of both parents and students significantly impacts academic success (Nazoktabar & Vaisi, 2008). James Coleman (1998) also emphasized the role of social capital in facilitating the achievement of educational objectives. He posits that social capital within the family and society plays a vital role in building human capital for the next generation. Accordingly, this study investigates the relationship between parental social capital, student social capital, and the academic achievement of second-cycle elementary school students in Rafsanjan.

Social capital, as a common theoretical framework, enables collaboration across various disciplines, including political science, sociology, anthropology, and economics (Woolcock, 1998; cited in Parandi, 2009). The state of social capital in any society is largely influenced by its cultural and social conditions, with the educational institution serving as a key factor in its formation and transmission (Tajbakhsh, 2005). The process of socialization at various levels occurs through this institution, directly impacting the level of social capital in society.

In recent decades, a severe erosion of social capital among adolescents has been

observed, both within the family and in external environments (Sharepour, 2001). Although levels of education and human capital within families have increased, social capital—measured by indicators such as the active presence of adults at home and the quality of family dialogues—has declined. The absence of parents from home due to work commitments has reduced their participation in local institutions like parent-teacher associations (Sharepour, 2001). Conversely, today's educational system excessively focuses on the academic development of students while neglecting adequate attention to their socialization process and social education (Abedi Berenjestanaki, 2011). This neglect can negatively affect the quality of individual and social life of students, who are the future citizens of society.

Academic achievement is recognized as one of the main indicators of an educational system's effectiveness. Numerous studies have confirmed a positive and significant relationship between family social capital and components such as achievement motivation (Ghazanfari, 2011), academic satisfaction (Amin Bidokhti et al., 2013), and academic success (Nazoktabar & Vaisi, 2008). However, a more precise understanding of the relationship between different dimensions of social capital (structural and cognitive, inside and outside the family) and academic achievement during the sensitive second-cycle elementary period, especially within a specific regional context like Rafsanjan, requires further investigation. Therefore, the main research question is: "Is there a relationship between parental social capital and student social capital with the academic achievement of second-cycle elementary school students in Rafsanjan?"

Analyzing the status of social capital in any society is essential, as this concept helps understand how to enhance individuals' performance in achieving various goals (Hoffman et al., 2005). Coleman (1998) emphasizes the utility of social capital as a resource for cooperation, economic growth, and social development, including attaining academic success. Parental social capital is considered an important resource for children's academic achievement. The existence of this capital within the family enables children's access to their parents' human capital

(Coleman, 1998). However, if the parents' human capital is not complemented by the social capital present in family relationships, it may disrupt the children's educational process (Ghazanfari, 2011). On the other hand, students, as the most important human capital and future builders of society, require special attention to the status of their own social capital (Sharepour, 2001). The findings of this research can provide practical solutions and constructive guidance for families, students, and educational stakeholders. By better understanding and strengthening social capital, the necessary foundation for students' academic progress can be established. Furthermore, the results of this study can serve as a basis for future research in this field.

Habibi (2014), in a study, stated that among high school students in Nowshahr, a significant positive correlation was found between social capital, intrinsic motivation, and academic achievement. However, only intrinsic motivation was able to predict academic achievement. Although girls had higher academic achievement, the level of social capital and intrinsic motivation did not differ significantly between genders. Gholami Kutenae and Ghorbannejad Shahroudi (2014), in a study on youth in Qaemshahr, reported a significant inverse relationship between family social capital (in its four dimensions: structural and cognitive, inside and outside the family) and drug addiction. The cognitive social capital dimension inside the family was the strongest predictor of reduced addictive behavior. Qamari (2013), in a study on high school students in Karaj, concluded that a significant positive relationship exists between social capital and academic achievement, as well as between intrinsic motivation and academic achievement. Similar to Habibi's research, girls' academic achievement was higher, but the level of social capital and intrinsic motivation was the same between genders. Kiamarsi and Momeni (2013), in a study among high school girls, stated that a significant positive correlation between social capital, happiness, and academic achievement was confirmed. Amin Bidokhti et al. (2013), in a study on students at the University of Gorgan, showed a significant positive relationship between social capital within the university and their academic satisfaction. Also,

social capital had a direct structural impact on academic satisfaction. However, both variables were evaluated by students as below the desired level. Abedi Berenjestanaki (2011), in a study on the role of schools in Mazandaran, showed that school principals have relatively good familiarity with the concept of social capital. There was a direct relationship between school programs and strengthening social capital, and students evaluated the school's role in creating grounds for participation, trust, and social cohesion (components of social capital) as appropriate. Ghazanfari (2011), in a study on female high school students in Sari, observed a significant positive relationship between family social capital (intra-family and extra-family communication) with achievement motivation and academic achievement. In regression analysis, intra-family communication, extra-family communication, and achievement motivation, in that order, had the greatest impact on academic achievement. Kheirkhah (2011), in his research, concluded that among education staff in Kurdistan province, a significant positive relationship was confirmed between social capital and organizational intellectual capital, as well as between the three dimensions of social capital (structural, cognitive, relational) and intellectual capital. Fazel et al. (2011), in a study on families in Qom, showed that factors such as religiosity, social acceptance, and socio-economic status had an increasing effect, while factors such as domestic violence and authoritarian parental relationships had a decreasing effect on family social capital. It was emphasized that fluctuations in family social capital are more influenced by external social factors. Nazoktabar and Vaisi (2008), in this study, stated that among the dimensions of family social capital, relations with relatives and neighbors, as well as communication with parents and school teachers, had a positive relationship with children's academic success. Also, attendance at group and religious ceremonies (as an indicator of extra-family connection) significantly impacted academic success.

Akçomak et al. (2012) in the European Union showed that social capital directly impacts innovation, with the structural dimension of social capital having the greatest effect. Adler and Kwon (2010) emphasized that social capital in

organizations leads to the creation of values such as cooperation, participation, and information sharing. Ommen et al. (2009), in a study on German doctors, reported a significant positive relationship between social capital within the hospital and physicians' job satisfaction. Rosenbaum and Rochford (2008) confirmed a significant positive relationship between social capital and students' academic performance. Neri and Ville (2007), although observing great diversity in the level of students' social capital, found no significant relationship between social capital and academic performance (a finding contrary to most research). Merlo et al. (2006), in a study, showed that the three dimensions of social capital (structural, cognitive, relational), by increasing customer orientation, knowledge sharing, and strengthening organizational processes, enhance the level of organizational creativity.

The literature review indicates that the relationship between family social capital (especially intra-family dimensions and connection with school) and academic achievement has been widely confirmed. Also, social capital in organizational contexts (school, university, workplace) is associated with positive outcomes. However, no research was found that simultaneously examines the role of parental social capital (differentiated into its four dimensions) and the student's own social capital in relation to academic achievement, particularly at the second cycle of elementary school level and in a specific region (such as District 2 of Sari). This research aims to fill this gap.

Methodology

This study, in terms of purpose, is applied research, and in terms of data collection method, is descriptive-correlational. The research was conducted during the academic year 1397-1398 (or close to it) within the educational community of Sari County. The statistical population of the study consisted of all second-cycle elementary school students in District 2 of Sari County, totaling 8,756 individuals. Using the Krejcie and Morgan table, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin

of error, a sample size of 377 was calculated. Sampling was performed using stratified random sampling based on gender (186 girls and 191 boys) to ensure adequate representation of the population. Data were collected using three main instruments:

Parental Social Capital Questionnaire: This instrument comprised 20 items on a five-point Likert scale, measuring four dimensions: structural intra-family, structural extra-family, cognitive intra-family, and cognitive extra-family social capital.

Student Social Capital Questionnaire: This questionnaire consisted of 30 items based on a five-point Likert scale.

Academic Achievement Score: The scores from the standardized academic achievement test administered in the month of Ordibehesht were used as an indicator of academic performance.

The face and content validity of both questionnaires were confirmed through consultation with academic advisors and supervisors. The reliability of the instruments was calculated and confirmed using Cronbach's alpha. The alpha coefficient was 0.802 for the Parental Social Capital Questionnaire and 0.921 for the Student Social Capital Questionnaire, indicating satisfactory reliability of the tools.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics were employed. After confirming the normal distribution of the data using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationships, and multiple regression analysis was utilized to analyze the combined effect of the variables. All analyses were performed using SPSS version 19 software.

Results

The findings of this study, conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between parental social capital, student social capital, and academic

achievement, are as follows:

In the descriptive findings section, the statistical sample consisted of 377 students (49.3% girls and 50.7% boys) from the fourth to sixth grades in District 2 of Sari. The mean score for parental social capital was 69.01, and for student social capital was 111.84. The mean academic achievement score was reported as 15.97.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Research Variables	Number (N)	Mean (Mean)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Parental Social Capital	377	69.01	7.02
- Structural Intra-Family	377	17.94	2.16
- Structural Extra-Family	377	16.34	2.71
- Cognitive Intra-Family	377	17.06	2.78
- Cognitive Extra-Family	377	17.66	2.12
Student Social Capital	377	111.84	6.49
Academic Achievement	377	15.97	2.61

Table 2. Results of Pearson Correlation Test Between Main Variables

Relationship Between Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance Level (Sig.)
Parental Social Capital and Academic Achievement	0.455	0.000
Student Social Capital and Academic Achievement	0.598	0.000
Structural Intra-Family and Academic Achievement	0.376	0.000
Structural Extra-Family and Academic Achievement	0.268	0.000
Cognitive Intra-Family and Academic Achievement	0.222	0.000
Cognitive Extra-Family and Academic Achievement	0.488	0.000

The results from the Pearson correlation test clearly indicate the existence of positive and significant relationships among the research variables. At the overall level, parental social capital has a positive and significant relationship with students' academic achievement, with a moderate strength ($r=0.455$). This finding suggests that the networks of relationships, level of trust, and norms present in the family environment act as a supportive and facilitative foundation and can influence children's academic performance. However, a noteworthy point is that student social capital was associated with academic achievement with a stronger correlation coefficient ($r=0.598$). This result underscores the particular importance of the student's own social networks, including relationships with peers and teachers, and participation in school groups, in their academic success. In other words, while the family provides the initial foundation, the social skills and networks that the student themselves build constitute a more direct and influential factor in their progress.

When the different dimensions of parental social capital were examined separately, it was found that all four dimensions (structural and cognitive, intra-family and extra-family) independently had a positive relationship with academic achievement. Interestingly, the cognitive extra-family dimension (with a coefficient of $r=0.488$) showed the strongest correlation. This dimension encompasses the attitudes, trust, and values that parents hold towards the broader society, institutions, and individuals outside the familial circle. This finding emphasizes the key point that parents' positive attitudes towards the surrounding social environment and their trust in institutions such as the school can transmit a sense of security and belonging to the child and facilitate their more effective participation in the educational process. Following this, the structural intra-family dimension ($r=0.376$), which refers to the quality and quantity of objective interactions and bonds among family members, played the most significant role. The cognitive intra-family (such as shared values) and structural extra-family (such as membership in associations) dimensions, although associated with lower coefficients, maintained their significant influence. These results highlight the

multidimensional nature of the concept of social capital and the concurrent importance of both the emotional atmosphere within the home and the family's constructive connections with the outside world for advancing children's educational goals.

Table 3. Results of Multiple Regression for Predicting Academic Achievement

Predictor Variables	Beta Coefficient (β)	t-value	Significance Level (Sig.)
Parental Social Capital	0.136	2.606	0.010
Student Social Capital	0.513	9.805	0.000
Model Statistics:	R = 0.608	R ² = 0.369	F = 109.402, Sig. = 0.000

To determine the contribution of each independent variable in predicting academic achievement and examine their combined effect, multiple regression analysis was employed. The regression model demonstrated high statistical validity ($F = 109.402$, $p < 0.01$) and was able to explain approximately 37% ($R^2 = 0.369$) of the variance or changes in students' academic achievement scores. This value indicates a considerable explanatory power for a model that considers only two main variables and confirms the prominent role of social capital in academic success.

The analysis of standardized coefficients (β) in this model confirmed the correlation findings and revealed important details. While both parental social capital and student social capital significantly contributed to predicting academic achievement, the weight or share of these two variables was not equal. The beta coefficient for student social capital ($\beta = 0.513$) was considerably larger than that for parental social capital ($\beta = 0.136$). This substantial difference in coefficients clearly shows that among the two studied sources of social capital, the student's own social capital plays a stronger and more determining role in predicting their level of academic achievement.

In other words, the regression model suggests that the social skills, relationship networks, and sense of belonging that are directly created and perceived by the

child themselves are a better predictor of their academic success than merely the networks and resources provided by their parents. This finding underscores the necessity for educational and training programs to focus not only on the family but also on empowering the student themselves in the realm of social relationships. The family can lay the groundwork, but it is the student's active agency within their social environment that ultimately impacts the academic outcome.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between parental social capital, student social capital, and academic achievement among second-cycle elementary school students in District 2 of Sari. The findings clearly showed a positive and significant relationship exists between parental social capital (with a correlation coefficient of 0.455) and student social capital (with a correlation coefficient of 0.598) and academic achievement. A prominent point was the higher predictive power of the student's own social capital ($\beta = 0.513$) compared to parental social capital ($\beta = 0.136$) in the regression model. This means that although supportive networks and family relationships (parental social capital) are important, the student's own understanding, sense of belonging, and network of relationships within the school and community contribute more significantly to explaining their academic success.

Furthermore, all four dimensions of parental social capital (structural and cognitive, inside and outside the family) individually showed positive relationships with academic achievement. The strongest relationship belonged to the cognitive extra-family dimension (trust and social norms outside the family), followed by the structural intra-family dimension (intensity and quality of family relationships). This finding emphasizes that social capital is not merely an intra-family concept; positive parental interactions with the broader society (such as the school, neighborhood, cultural institutions) and the transmission of these attitudes

to the child play a vital complementary role in academic success.

Comparing these results with the research background shows that the current findings are consistent with most domestic studies, such as Ghazanfari (2011), Nazoktabar and Vaisi (2008), and Qamari (2013), as well as the foreign study by Rosenbaum and Rochford (2008), all of which emphasized a positive relationship between family social capital and academic performance. However, they are inconsistent with the finding of Neri and Ville (2007), who reported no significant relationship. This inconsistency can be attributed to differences in measurement tools, the socio-cultural characteristics of the studied samples (Iran vs. the country of Neri and Ville's study), and likely differences in the age of the subjects. The second cycle of elementary school is a sensitive period for the formation of a student's social identity, and social capital at this stage may have a different impact.

In the final analysis, it can be said that social capital provides the necessary foundation for effective learning and academic perseverance through various mechanisms, such as facilitating access to informational and supportive resources, creating norms of social control and commitment, and strengthening a sense of belonging and intrinsic motivation. This research supports Coleman's (1998) theory, which views social capital as an essential complement to human capital (such as parental education) for achieving desired outcomes like academic success.

Based on the findings of this study, the following practical recommendations are offered to improve academic achievement by strengthening social capital:

For parents: Active participation in parent-teacher associations and local networks, improving the quality of dialogue and intimacy within the family, and avoiding frequent relocations of residence or the child's school to maintain the stability of their social networks.

For the education system: Incorporating communication and social skills programs into school curricula, establishing and supporting diverse student groups and associations (scientific, cultural, athletic), and holding awareness workshops for parents on the role of social capital in academic success.

For teachers and school administrators: Creating a classroom atmosphere based on mutual trust and respect, encouraging teamwork and collaborative projects, and strengthening the home-school connection through continuous and constructive communication with families.

For students: Encouraging participation in school group activities and extracurriculars, strengthening positive relationships with peers, and utilizing opportunities for constructive interaction with adults and community institutions.

Acknowledgments

Gratitude and appreciation are extended to all those whose sincere cooperation made the execution of this research possible. Without the collaboration of these dear individuals, the implementation of the present study would not have been feasible.

Conflict of Interest

No financial, scientific, or personal conflicts of interest were involved in the conduct of the present research.

Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of scientific research. Participants took part in the study with full awareness, and their information was considered confidential. The results were used solely within the framework of the research's scientific objectives, and the names or personal details of participants were omitted.

Referemces:

- Abedi Berenjestanaki, M. (2011). *Determining the role of schools in strengthening the social capital of middle school students in Mazandaran Province* [Master's thesis]. Islamic Azad University, Sari Branch. (In Persian)
- Adler, P.S., & Kwon, S. (2010). Social Capital: Prospects for a New Concept. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(1), 17-40. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2002.5922314>
- Akçomak, İ. S., & Ter Weel, B. (2012). The impact of social capital on crime: Evidence from the Netherlands. *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 42(1-2), 323-340. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2011.09.008>
- Alvani, S. M., & Seyednaqavi, M. A. (2002). Social capital: Concepts and theories. **Management Studies Quarterly*, 33-34*. Tehran. (In Persian)
- Amin Bidokhti, A. A., Jafari, S., Norouzi, N., & Khosravinia, M. (2013). The impact of social capital on academic satisfaction. *Biannual Journal of Educational Planning Studies*, 2(3), 107-138. (In Persian)
- Coleman, J.S. (1998). *Foundations of social theory*. Cambridge: MA, Harvard University Press.
- Fazel, R., Soleimani, M., & Rashidi Ale Hashem, R. (2011). Family social capital and its effective factors (Case study: Qom city). *Iranian Sociological Studies Quarterly*, 1(2), 41-54. (In Persian)
- Fukuyama, F. (1996). *Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity*. New York, NY: Free press.
- Ghazanfari, S. (2011). *Investigating the relationship of family social capital on achievement motivation and academic achievement of third-grade female high school students in Sari* [Master's thesis]. Payame Noor University, Tehran Center. (In Persian)
- Gholami Kutenaee, K., & Ghorbannejad Shahroudi, Y. (2014). Investigating the effect of family social capital on youth addiction (Qaemshahr city). *Biannual Journal of Contemporary Sociological Research*, 2(4), 115-139. (In Persian)
- Habibi, M. (2014, March). The relationship between social capital and intrinsic motivation with academic achievement of high school students in Nowshahr. Paper

- presented at *The First National Conference on Educational Sciences and Psychology*, Marvdasht, Iran. Andisheh Sazan Mobtaker Javan Co. (In Persian)
- Hoffman, J., Heolscher, M., & Sherif, K. (2005). Social capital, Knowledge management, and Sustained superior. *Journal of Knowledge management*; 9(3), 93-100.
- Kheirkhah, H. (2011). *Investigating the relationship between social capital and intellectual capital of the organization (Case study: Kurdistan Province Education Departments)* [Master's thesis]. Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj Branch. (In Persian)
- Kiamarsi, A., & Momeni, S. (2013). Investigating social capital and happiness with academic achievement in high school female students. *Journal of School Psychology*, 2(1), 119-130. (In Persian)
- Merlo, O., Bell, S., Menguc, B., & Whitwell, G.J. (2006). Social Capital, Customer Service Orientation and Creativity in Retail Store. *Journal of Business Research*, 12(59), 1214-1221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2006.09.021>
- Nazoktabar, H., & Vaisi, R. (2008). Analyzing the relationship between family social capital and children's education. *Process Management and Development Quarterly*, 68-69*, 123-149. (In Persian)
- Neri, F., & Ville, S. (2007). Social capital renewal and the academic performance of international students in Australia. *Journal of Socio-Economics*, 37(4), 1515-1538. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2007.03.010>
- Ommen, O., Driller, E., Köhler, T., Kowalski, C., Ernstmann, N., Neumann, M., ... & Pfaff, H. (2009). The relationship between social capital in hospitals and physician job satisfaction. *BMC health services research*, 9(1), 81. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-9-81>
- Parandi, M. (2009). *Investigating the relationship between social capital and knowledge sharing among high school teachers in Sanandaj* [Master's thesis]. Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran. (In Persian)
- Putnam, R.D. (2000). *bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York. Simong Schuster.
- Qamari, M. (2013). The relationship of social capital and intrinsic motivation with academic achievement of high school students in Karaj. *Quarterly Journal of Education and Evaluation*, 6(22), 45-58. (In Persian)

- Rosenbaum, E., & Rochford, J.A. (2008). Generational patterns in academic performance: The variable effects of attitudes and social capital. *Social Science Research*, 37(1), 350-372. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2007.03.003>
- Sharepour, M. (2001). The erosion of social capital and its consequences. *Journal of the Iranian Sociological Association*, 1(3). (In Persian)
- Tajbakhsh, K. (2005). *Social capital, trust, democracy and development*. Tehran: Cultural Research Bureau. (In Persian)