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A.E. Akhmetova¹ , D.E. Nessipkaliyev^{2*}  Z.A. Nagaybayeva² 

¹Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University
Almaty, Kazakhstan

^{2*}S.D. Asfendiyarov Kazakh National Medical University
Almaty, Kazakhstan

*e-mail: n.dauren89@mail.ru

**FAMILY AS A RESOURCE OR BARRIER:
THE IMPACT OF TRADITIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS
ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES**

Abstract

Amid growing educational inequality in post-Soviet countries, including Kazakhstan, the family remains one of the key factors shaping a child's academic trajectory. This study aims to analyze how family traditions, parenting attitudes, and the socio-economic status of parents can both facilitate and hinder children's educational success. The research uses a mixed-methods approach: on the one hand, semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine parents representing different regions, types of settlements, and social strata; on the other hand, a survey of 132 parents of schoolchildren in Almaty was conducted, providing quantitative support and confirmation of the patterns identified. Special attention was given to cultural components such as gender roles in the family, perceptions of education as a value, types of parental motivation, and strategies of interaction with schools. The results show that the family can act both as a resource and as a barrier to a child's educational trajectory. Key factors that determine the nature of this influence include: family income level, type of school, cultural attitudes toward the parental role in education, and internal motivation and adaptability to new conditions. Particularly striking are the differences between families oriented toward long-term educational investment and those whose strategy is limited to surviving under current conditions. The article highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to educational policy that considers not only families' material resources but also cultural patterns, parenting practices, and gender aspects of parental involvement. The practical significance of this work lies in its applicability for the development of parent education programs, school-based support services, targeted assistance for vulnerable families, and initiatives aimed at reducing the socio-educational gap in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: family as resource and barrier, educational inequality, parental educational strategies, socio-economic status of the family, cultural capital, gender roles in education, parental involvement, Kazakhstan.

А.Е. Ахметова¹, Д.Е. Несипкалиев^{2*}, З.А. Нагайбаева²

¹Абай атындағы Қазақ ұлттық педагогикалық университеті
Алматы қ., Қазақстан

^{2*} С.Д. Асфендияров атындағы Қазақ ұлттық медицина университеті
Алматы қ., Қазақстан

*e-mail: n.dauren89@mail.ru

ОТБАСЫ - РЕСУРС НЕМЕСЕ КЕДЕРГІ: ДӘСТҮРЛЕР МЕН ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК-ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ ЖАҒДАЙДЫҢ БІЛІМ НӘТИЖЕЛЕРІНЕ ЫҚПАЛЫ

Аңдатпа

Посткеңестік елдерде, оның ішінде Қазақстанда да білім беру саласындағы теңсіздік күшейіп келе жатқан жағдайда отбасы баланың академиялық траекториясын айқындайтын негізгі факторлардың бірі болып қалуда. Бұл зерттеу ата-аналардың отбасылық дәстүрлері, тәрбиелеу ұстанымдары мен әлеуметтік-экономикалық жағдайлары балалардың білім жетістіктеріне қалайша оң немесе теріс әсер етуі мүмкін екенін талдауға бағытталған. Зерттеу әдіснамасы аралас тәсілді қамтиды: бір жағынан, әртүрлі аймақтардан, елді мекен түрлерінен және әлеуметтік топтардан шыққан тоғыз ата-анамен жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбаттар жүргізілді; екінші жағынан, Алматы қаласындағы мектеп оқушыларының 132 ата-анасына сауалнама жүргізіліп, анықталған заңдылықтарды сандық түрде нақтылау мен толықтыру қамтамасыз етілді. Ерекше назар мәдени құрамдастарға отбасындағы гендерлік рөлдерге, білімге құндылық ретінде көзқарасқа, ата-аналық мотивация түрлеріне және мектеппен өзара әрекет стратегияларына аударылды. Зерттеу нәтижелері отбасылардың баланың білім беру жолында бір мезгілде ресурс та, кедергі де бола алатынын көрсетті. Бұл ықпалдың сипатын айқындайтын негізгі факторлар: отбасының табыс деңгейі, мектеп түрі, ата-аналардың білімге қатысты мәдени ұстанымдары, сондай-ақ ішкі мотивациясы мен жаңа жағдайларға бейімделуге дайындығы. Ұзақ мерзімді білімге инвестиция жасауға бағытталған отбасылар мен күнкөрістің ағымдағы стратегиясымен шектелген отбасылар арасындағы айырмашылықтар ерекше айқын көрінеді. Мақала білім беру саясатына тек материалдық ресурстарды емес, сонымен қатар мәдени үлгілерді, тәрбиелік тәжірибелер мен ата-аналық қатысудың гендерлік аспектілерін ескеретін кешенді көзқарастың қажеттілігін атап көрсетеді. Зерттеудің практикалық маңызы – оның нәтижелерін ата-аналарды оқыту, мектептік сүйемелдеу, осал отбасыларға мақсатты қолдау және Қазақстандағы әлеуметтік-білім беру алшақтығын азайтуға бағытталған бастамаларды әзірлеу барысында пайдалану мүмкіндігінде.

Түйін сөздер: отбасы ресурс және кедергі, білім берудегі әлеуметтік теңсіздік, ата-аналардың білім беру стратегиялары, отбасының әлеуметтік-экономикалық жағдайы, мәдени капитал, білім берудегі гендерлік рөлдер, ата-аналық қатысу, Қазақстан.

Ахметова А.Е.¹, Несипкалиев Д.Е.^{2*}, Нагайбаева З.А.²

¹Казахский национальный педагогический университет им. Абая
г. Алматы, Казахстан

^{2*} Казахский национальный медицинский университет им. С.Д. Асфендиярова
г. Алматы, Казахстан

*e-mail: n.dauren89@mail.ru

СЕМЬЯ КАК РЕСУРС И БАРЬЕР: ВЛИЯНИЕ ТРАДИЦИЙ И СОЦИАЛЬНО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО СТАТУСА НА ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫЕ РЕЗУЛЬТАТЫ

Аннотация

В условиях усиливающегося образовательного неравенства в постсоветских странах, включая Казахстан, семья остаётся одним из ключевых факторов, определяющих академическую траекторию ребёнка. Настоящее исследование направлено на анализ того, каким образом

семейные традиции, воспитательные установки и социально-экономическое положение родителей могут как способствовать, так и препятствовать образовательному успеху детей. Методология исследования включает смешанный подход: с одной стороны, были проведены полуструктурированные интервью с девятью родителями, представляющими разные регионы, типы населённых пунктов и социальные слои и с другой стороны анкетный опрос 132 родителей учащихся школ города Алматы, обеспечивший количественное дополнение и подтверждение выявленных закономерностей. Особое внимание уделялось культурным компонентам гендерным ролям в семье, представлениям об образовании как ценности, типам родительской мотивации и стратегий взаимодействия со школой. Результаты исследования демонстрируют, что семья может одновременно выступать как ресурс и как барьер в образовательной траектории ребёнка. Ключевыми факторами, определяющими характер этого влияния, являются: уровень дохода семьи, тип школы, культурные установки относительно роли родителей в образовании, а также внутренняя мотивация и готовность к адаптации в новых условиях. Особенно остро проявляются различия между семьями, ориентированными на долгосрочные образовательные инвестиции, и теми, чья стратегия ограничена выживанием в текущих условиях. Статья подчёркивает необходимость комплексного подхода к образовательной политике, учитывающего не только материальные ресурсы семей, но и культурные паттерны, воспитательные практики и гендерные аспекты родительской вовлечённости. Практическая значимость работы заключается в возможности использования её выводов при разработке программ родительского просвещения, школьного сопровождения, адресной поддержки для уязвимых семей и инициатив, направленных на сокращение социально-образовательного разрыва в Казахстане.

Ключевые слова: семья как ресурс и барьер, образовательное неравенство, образовательные стратегии родителей, социально-экономический статус семьи, культурный капитал, гендерные роли в образовании, родительская вовлечённость, Казахстан.

Introduction

Educational inequality remains one of the most persistent social problems in contemporary societies, particularly in countries experiencing rapid socio-economic transformation. In Kazakhstan, despite the formal commitment to equal educational opportunities, students' academic achievements and educational trajectories continue to vary considerably depending on their family background. Such disparities are associated not only with differences in parental income and educational attainment but also with family traditions, parenting practices, cultural norms, and expectations regarding education. Consequently, the family should be viewed not merely as a source of economic support but as a complex social institution that shapes children's educational opportunities through multiple mechanisms.

The significance of this issue has attracted considerable attention in international sociological research. Contemporary studies demonstrate that socio-economic status remains one of the strongest predictors of educational attainment, influencing access to high-quality schools, private tutoring, digital resources, and extracurricular activities [1], [2]. Research on family structure further suggests that children from single-parent or unstable family environments often demonstrate lower academic performance compared to their peers from stable two-parent households [3], [4]. However, scholars increasingly argue that educational outcomes cannot be explained solely by economic resources or family composition. The quality of parent-child relationships, parental involvement in education, and family expectations frequently have an equally significant impact on academic success [5], [6].

The theoretical foundation for understanding these processes is largely derived from Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, which emphasizes the role of cultural and social capital in maintaining educational inequalities across generations [7, p.71]. According to this perspective, families transmit not only economic resources but also values, behavioural patterns, educational aspirations, and cultural competencies that facilitate academic achievement. Empirical studies support this argument, demonstrating that families with similar economic resources often produce different educational outcomes because of differences in cultural capital and parental educational strategies [8-10].

Consequently, educational success should be understood as the result of interactions between economic, cultural, and social resources rather than as a direct consequence of financial status alone.

Recent studies have also highlighted the growing importance of contextual factors associated with digitalization, migration, and regional inequalities. Research indicates that disparities in school quality, access to educational resources, and digital technologies significantly influence educational opportunities [11, p.32; 12]. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed inequalities related to internet access and digital competencies, disproportionately affecting low-income, migrant, and rural families. Similarly, studies on migration suggest that educational outcomes are shaped not only by material conditions but also by parental aspirations and family strategies aimed at social mobility [13], [14]. Migrant families frequently demonstrate high educational motivation and active parental engagement, while economically vulnerable households may prioritize short-term economic survival over long-term educational investments.

These issues are particularly relevant in Kazakhstan, where traditional family structures characterized by strong intergenerational ties coexist with modern parenting practices and changing gender roles. In many households, mothers continue to bear primary responsibility for children's education, whereas fathers often remain less involved in everyday educational activities [5], [6]. At the same time, processes of modernization, urbanization, internal migration, and increasing social differentiation have transformed family practices and educational expectations. As a result, contemporary Kazakhstani families combine traditional and modern approaches to child-rearing, creating diverse patterns of educational support and socialization.

Despite the growing body of international and national research, important gaps remain in the existing literature. Previous studies have generally examined socio-economic status, family structure, cultural capital, parental involvement, and migration separately [15, p. 330]. Limited attention has been devoted to understanding how these factors interact simultaneously within the family environment, particularly in post-Soviet societies such as Kazakhstan. Consequently, there remains a lack of integrative research that considers family traditions, socio-economic conditions, and parental practices within a single analytical framework.

This study addresses this gap by examining the family as both a resource and a potential barrier to educational success. The research hypothesis suggests that family influence on educational outcomes is mediated by cultural and parental practices, whereby families possessing higher levels of cultural capital and active parental involvement are more likely to promote academic achievement, even under relatively constrained socio-economic conditions. Conversely, rigid traditional norms, limited parental participation, and restricted cultural resources may increase the likelihood of educational disadvantage.

The aim of the study is to analyse how family traditions and parents' socio-economic status influence students' educational outcomes in Kazakhstan. By exploring the interaction between structural and cultural factors, the research contributes to broader debates on educational inequality and social reproduction while providing evidence relevant for educational and social policy. The scientific novelty of the study lies in its integrated examination of economic and cultural capital and their combined influence on parental strategies and children's educational trajectories. Through the combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence, the research seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which family factors shape educational opportunities and inequalities in contemporary Kazakhstan.

Research methodology

This study used a qualitative data collection method through semi-structured interviews. The use of a mixed-methods design is justified by the need to capture both subjective meanings and measurable patterns of parental behavior. While qualitative interviews allow for an in-depth understanding of family values and educational strategies, the quantitative survey provides generalizable insights and enables statistical verification of observed trends. The goal was to examine how family traditions, values, and socioeconomic status influence parents' educational attitudes and

practices. This approach allowed for the documentation of individual interpretations and meanings that participants assign to their parenting strategies. It also provided insight into how these meanings connect to their wider social and cultural context. A total of nine parents took part in the study. They lived in both urban and rural areas and came from different socio-economic backgrounds. The sampling strategy was purposeful and focused on maximum variation. Selection criteria included type of settlement (urban or rural), socio-economic status, presence or absence of migration experience, and the types of educational institutions their children attended. Among the nine respondents:

1. Three participants live in rural areas. All of them share similar socio-economic conditions characterized by limited financial resources. Their children attend district-level public schools.

2. Six respondents are urban residents. Among them, two families are internal migrants who relocated from rural areas to major cities in pursuit of better educational opportunities for their children. Despite financial constraints, these families actively invest in their children's educational trajectories. The remaining four families are long-term urban residents, representing relatively stable family structures. Their levels of economic well-being and approaches to education vary.

From the perspective of social stratification:

1. Three families were categorized as belonging to the «upper class» based on a combination of indicators, including income level, parental education, and enrollment of children in private schools offering advanced curricula.

2. Two families fall into the middle class, characterized by stable incomes and pragmatic approaches to educational decision-making.

3. Four families were classified as below middle class; while they prioritize basic education, they face challenges in meeting their children's educational needs.

The interviews took place between February and March 2025, both in person and partially online through Zoom. Each interview lasted from 45 to 70 minutes. We discussed family expectations, educational strategies, approaches to discipline, understandings of success, and views on the role of education in a child's future. The analysis used inductive reasoning and involved thematic coding. The coding process involved the identification of recurring themes related to educational motivation, perceived barriers, and family support strategies. These themes were then grouped into broader analytical categories reflecting the dual role of the family as a resource and a barrier. Initial transcription of the interviews helped identify key themes related to viewing education as a resource, existing barriers in educational paths, and the symbolic meaning of traditional family roles. A partial list of interview questions covering the main themes is shown in figure 1.

No	Question	Primary Objective
1	How do you understand the role of the family in a child's education? What responsibilities do you consider important for parents?	To assess parents' basic perceptions of the family's role in the child's educational trajectory.
2	What family traditions or values do you consider important in raising children?	To identify key elements of the family's educational culture.
3	How do you motivate your children to study? Do you use encouragement, control, or lead by example?	To explore strategies of motivation and discipline used within the family.
4	To what extent is your children's education a priority for your family? Why?	To understand the importance of education in the family's value system.
5	Do you have experience with supplementary education (e.g., tutors, extracurricular activities)? How do you make such decisions?	To assess the family's investment in the child's educational capital.
6	Have you faced any challenges in supporting your children's learning? What kind (time-related, financial, motivational)?	To explore barriers families face in supporting their children's education.
7	In your opinion, how does a family's social status affect a child's academic success?	To evaluate perceptions of the link between socio-economic status and educational outcomes.
8	If you have more than one child, does your educational approach differ between them? Why?	To investigate intra-family differences in educational strategies.
9	How do you perceive your interaction with the school and teachers? Do they treat you as a partner?	To assess the level and nature of family-school engagement.
10	What do you think could strengthen parental support in the educational process?	To gather suggestions for enhancing the family's role in ensuring educational success.

Figure 1 – Interview Questions

Note: Created by the authors

The study also conducted a survey of parents to obtain information on the degree of involvement of parents in the education of their children and what tactics they use in the process of teaching their children. This survey was conducted in March 2025 among parents of students of Almaty schools, where both public and private schools were included. As a result, through the parent networks and through the school administration, 132 parents participated in the study, all of them agreed to participate, moreover, all ethical norms of the study were observed. The main selection criteria for respondents were gender, age of parents and type of school. The results of the study were then processed with SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics and comparisons were used to obtain the main results of the study, which helped us to identify differences in parental involvement depending on socio-economic and institutional factors. The Pearson's chi-square (χ^2) criterion to assess the relationship between categorical variables, including gender of parents, level of education, income level and parental involvement in children's education. The chi-square test was applied to examine the statistical significance of relationships between socio-demographic variables and levels of parental involvement, allowing for the identification of structural patterns in educational behavior. Standard thresholds were also used to measure statistical significance. Overall, the socio-demographic structure of the sample suggests a predominance of middle-income and relatively stable households, which should be taken into account when interpreting the results, as it may limit the representation of more vulnerable population groups.

Limitations of the study. Despite the advantages of a mixed-methods study, this study has several limitations. First, a quantitative survey was conducted among parents living in Almaty and its surroundings, which limits the generalizability of the results to other regions of Kazakhstan, particularly remote rural areas. Moreover, the quality component is based on a limited number of interviews and reflects parents' subjective perceptions.

Results

The analysis of interviews with Kazakhstani parents indicates a strong link between a family's socioeconomic status and parents' involvement in their children's education. This finding aligns with earlier research [4], [9], [10], which highlights that educational inequality often stems from family capital, as well as economic, cultural, and social factors. Parents from high-income families usually show a high level of academic involvement. This pattern can be explained by higher-income families' ability to convert economic capital into educational advantages, aligning with Bourdieu's concept of capital transformation. They can enroll their children in private schools and provide access to tutors, online learning tools, extracurricular activities, and educational trips. In this case, families have higher academic standards for children and they emphasize long-term planning of their educational path to achieve better outcomes. In middle-income families, parents are typically more practical and reactive in their approach to education. They help with homework, engage in discussions, and attend parent-teacher meetings. However, they often have limited resources for extra investments.

«...we'd be happy to hire tutors, but for now we're trying to manage on our own. I help my son with math myself; sometimes the older son helps the younger one actually, that works really well. Funny thing is, the older one explains things better than we do...» (Father, 40 years old, Konaev, middle income)

Low-income families, especially in rural areas and among recent urban migrants, are most vulnerable and have limited access to educational resources such as digital tools, tutoring and extracurricular activities. At the same time, this finding highlights that economic disadvantage does not eliminate educational motivation but rather limits the available tools for its realization. Financial constraints and low level of education are factors that affect the support of children's education, in this case they do not have the opportunity to invest in children's education. But still many parents are highly motivated and try to compensate through available means such as free cups or free school programs, which indicates the potential for educational growth, which could be further enhanced by targeted

government and school support. The next aspect is how traditions and gender roles also affect parents' participation, as in our country traditional family structures often place the primary responsibility for education on mothers and in this case fathers, are generally considered to be the main source of financial support for their children, which limits their role in children's lives. However, some families are moving towards more flexible forms of education and this shift involves joint decision-making on education and cooperation, indicating a gradual departure from traditional roles.

«My husband and I both graduated from university, so we understand how important education is. We try to be involved together. He helps with the sciences I honestly don't understand them at all...» (Mother, 36 years old, Almaty, originally from Pavlodar).

The interviews also revealed statements showing the use of authoritarian parenting strategies in some Kazakhstani families. These strategies often involve significant parental control, a focus on obedience, and strict adherence to school and family demands. In these cases, children's motivation may come from fear of punishment rather than from a true understanding of the value of education. However, traditional norms do not always act as barriers. In families with a strong kinship or religious identity, educational motivation may be deeply rooted in their value system. In these contexts, respect for knowledge, teachers, and learning as a path to self-realization is actively encouraged and culturally accepted.

«In our family, everyone is educated. My grandfather's brother is an academic, and my father is an engineer. I also completed my master's degree abroad, and I explain to my son that education is our path, our foundation...» (Mother, 38 years old, Almaty)

In families where educational strategies are passed down across generations, children are more likely to have stable academic motivation, clear educational goals, and a positive view of school as a respected institution. The cultural context affects both parenting style and the extent of family involvement in their child's education. At the same time, the data indicate that many parental strategies are shaped by parents' social and cultural backgrounds and their individual life paths. These findings emphasize the need for more thoughtful, culturally aware teaching methods in schools, along with social support that considers families' specific values.

Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study involved 132 parents living in Almaty and its suburbs. The gender distribution shows a majority of women at 68.2%, while men make up 31.8% of the sample. Most respondents are in the 35 to 44 age group at 42.4%. Those aged 25 to 34 represent 31.1%, and individuals aged 45 to 54 account for 15.9%. The remaining age groups each have less than 10% of participants. In terms of location, most parents live in Almaty city at 83.3%, while the suburbs make up 16.7% of the sample. The highest number of respondents comes from the Nauryzbay district at 18.2% and the Bostandyk district at 16.7%. This is followed by Medeu at 14.4% and Alatau at 11.4%. Data on marital status indicates that most participants are legally married at 68.2%. Divorced individuals stand at 12.9%, unmarried at 14.4%, and widowed participants at 4.5%. Regarding family structure, households with one or two children are the most common at 62.1%. Families with three to four children make up 27.3%, while larger families with more than four children account for 10.6%. When it comes to education, 69.7% of respondents have higher education degrees (bachelor's level), 14.4% have postgraduate qualifications, and 15.9% hold secondary vocational education. The ethnic makeup is mainly Kazakh at 68.9%, followed by Russian at 17.4%, with other ethnic groups represented in smaller numbers. The distribution of parents based on monthly income shows that most respondents belong to the middle-income group. The largest share of participants, 33.3%, reported a monthly income between 300,001 and 400,000 KZT. A significant portion, 26.5%, said their income was between 400,001 and 500,000 KZT. Meanwhile, 13.6% of respondents reported incomes between 500,001 and 1,000,000 KZT. This means that 73.4% of respondents earn between 300,001 and

1,000,000 KZT, indicating that a stable socio-economic group dominates the sample. Households earning more than 1,000,000 KZT per month made up 11.4% of the sample, showing the presence of high-income participants. Only 10 respondents, or 7.6%, reported a low income level of up to 200,000 KZT, while just 2.3% recorded an extremely low income of up to 100,001 KZT. These findings imply that most parents have a stable income that allows for a standard or above-average quality of life. This reflects the specific socio-economic profile of the studied population and the living conditions in Almaty and its suburbs.

The degree of involvement of parents in educational activities was further examined with emphasis on gender differences and how the results show differences between the roles of parents (see Fig. 2).

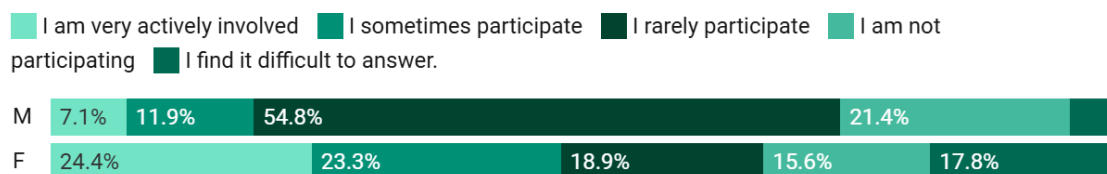


Figure 2 - Gender differences in parents' participation in the educational life of children (N=132)
Source: developed by the authors

The results show differences in how parents of different genders, behaviors and cultures participate in their children's education. Mothers are much more involved in the educational process than fathers. This result reflects the persistence of traditional gender roles in Kazakhstani society, where educational responsibility is primarily assigned to women. Almost half of women (47.7%) reported active or moderate participation, compared to only 19% of men. Most fathers reported little or no participation and the difference is significant ($\chi^2 = 22.710$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong relationship between the gender of the parents and their involvement in education. In general, there is limited control over children's performance. Only 37.8% of parents reported often controlling their children. No significant differences by sex ($\chi^2 = 3.636$, $p = 0.457$) or age were found, indicating that the level of involvement depends more on parental norms and trust in educational institutions than on socio-demographic factors. Ethnic differences also indicate distinct patterns of family responsibility for education. In Kazakh families, educational supervision is often a shared responsibility within the extended family, with grandparents playing an important role, reflecting traditional intergenerational practices. By contrast, Russian-speaking families report a partner model or a lack of a clearly defined responsible adult, suggesting greater reliance on children's autonomy or formal education. Families of other ethnic groups exhibit greater uncertainty about roles, likely due to migration, mixed family structures or economic instability.

Educational Attainment and Parental Involvement. Furthermore, the results demonstrate a clear association between the educational level of respondents and the degree of their involvement in their children's educational process (see Figure 3).

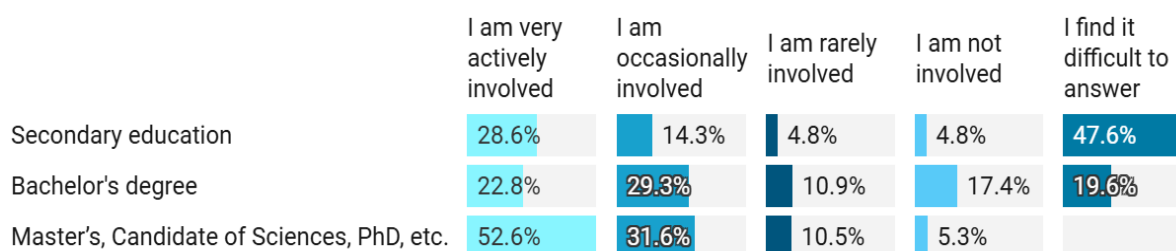


Figure 3. Level of Parental Involvement in Children's Educational Life by Educational Attainment (N=132)

Source: Developed by the authors

The level of education of parents is related to how actively they participate in the education of their children and most involved parents with higher education, more than half say that they are very active, while about a third participate only occasionally. Parents with higher education show a moderate level of involvement, combining active and episodic participation, but this group also has the highest number of parents with low or absent involvement. Respondents with secondary vocational education show an inconsistent level of involvement, and many report difficulties in assessing their own participation. Ethnic differences underline variations in parental involvement. Among the Kazakh parents, slightly more than half report active or moderate participation, and a notable number are not sure of their level of participation. Russian parents show the highest overall level of involvement: more report very active participation, and fewer experience difficulties in assessing their role, which suggests that they have a better understanding of their responsibilities in education. To examine the impact of family income on educational strategies, a correlation analysis was conducted of key forms of parental investment such as supplementary education, study abroad plans and willingness to pay for private tuition. The results show a significant relationship between household income and parents' choices about education (see Table 1).

Table 1. Correlation between family income and parents' educational strategies

Educational Strategy	Spearman's ρ	p-value
Additional education (tutors, courses, clubs)	0.391**	< 0.001
Planning for child's future education abroad	0.507**	< 0.001
Willingness to pay for private school	0.265**	< 0.001
Note: $p < 0.01$ – statistically significant correlation		

Parental income is closely linked to educational strategies. It shows a strong link between household income and the planning of education abroad ($\rho = 0.507$, $p < 0.001$), followed by a moderate link with the provision of additional educational resources, such as tutoring and extracurricular activities ($\rho = 0.391$, $p < 0.001$). This confirms that socio-economic status directly shapes not only access to resources but also long-term educational planning strategies within families. There was also a weaker but still significant link with willingness to pay for private tuition ($\rho = 0.265$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that economic resources influence families' ability to invest in their children's education. The survey also highlights different values in parenting. The most frequently emphasized values were freedom of choice (37.9%) and adherence to family traditions (36.4%).

Figure 4 shows the distribution of key family values reported by respondents. The most frequently mentioned principle was freedom of choice (37.9%), followed by following family traditions (36.4%) and shows that individualistic views and the importance of cultural continuity are still present in modern family upbringing.

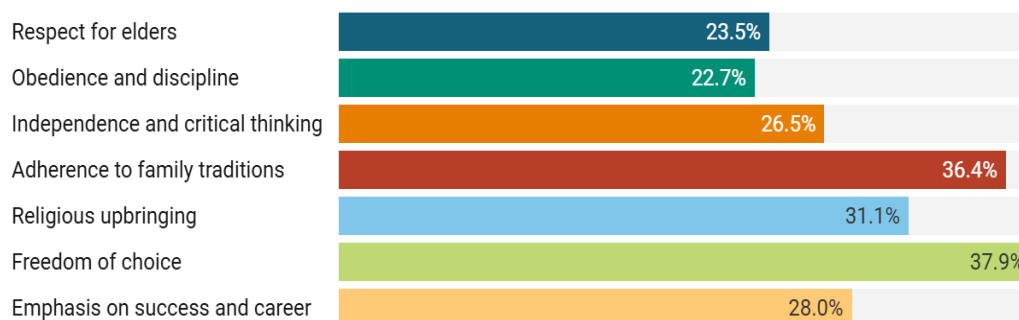


Figure 4. - Core family values according to respondents (N = 132)

Source: Developed by the authors

Religious upbringing was important to 31.1% of parents, pointing to the spiritual aspect of raising children in many families. Other significant priorities included independence and critical thinking at 26.5%, as well as a focus on achievement and career at 28.0%. These reflect a societal shift toward preparing children for a competitive environment and self-realization. More traditional values, such as respect for elders at 23.5% and obedience and discipline at 22.7%, were chosen less often. This might indicate a change in parenting styles, moving from an authoritarian model to a more collaborative and conversational approach in parent-child interactions.

Discussion

The family is a complex and multi-level institution capable of both enhancing children's educational opportunities and reproducing existing forms of social inequality. The findings of this study contribute to the theoretical understanding of how different forms of capital interact within the family context, shaping not only access to educational resources but also the ability to effectively use them. The duality of family roles is largely determined by the level of social and economic well-being, but not limited to it, as cultural attitudes, gender roles, educational models and structure of family relations significantly modify the influence of material resources. These studies allow to agree with the concept of social reproduction by P. Burdje [9], according to which economic capital is transformed into educational benefits through mechanisms of cultural and social capital. The correlations between household income, additional educational investments and international education strategies are supported by studies [1], [11] which also point to the key role of material conditions for educational mobility in transition economies. However, limited economic resources do not always imply low educational expectations or lack of involvement because parents from low-income families, especially migrants and rural residents, often demonstrate a high level of moral support and strategic motivation. This suggests that cultural capital can partially compensate for economic disadvantage, although such compensation remains structurally constrained. This is consistent with studies that highlight the compensatory role of cultural and value settings in conditions of physical deprivation [2], [11]. The real educational potential of such families is limited by a lack of knowledge, digital resources and institutional support, which corresponds to the conclusions of Kopeyeva [4].

Further in families with a formed «educational culture» that includes respect for knowledge, interstellar academic biographies, regular intellectual practices shows the combination of long-term planning, involved behavior and career guidance strategies, and these results are correlated with Cheung's studies [8], which show that cultural practices within the family enhance economic resource effects. The main burden of accompanying the educational process falls on the mothers, while the participation of fathers is much lower and often limited to financial security and the trend is confirmed by observations from Nurekenova [7] on the gender asymmetry in parental responsibilities and is consistent with international studies that confirm that it is mothers who most often act as mediators between school and family [12]. However, a number of families show signs of moving towards a partnership model based on sharing responsibilities and joint decision-making, which correlates with conclusions [3] about the importance of supportive relationships and the role of «significant others» for children's school involvement. Also further autonomy and critical thinking highlighted by a large part of the respondents, indicates a gradual departure from authoritarian models of upbringing. At the same time, a strong orientation to family traditions and religious values is maintained, which is confirmed by the conclusions of Puzikova, S. [15] on the hybridity of modern Kazakh family cultures, combining traditional and modernizing elements. The ethnic differences in how responsibility for education is shared show that family organization varies. Kazakh families tend to involve the extended family with shared responsibility. In contrast, Russian-speaking families often follow a partnership model, but a higher percentage of them lack a responsible adult. These findings align with international studies that highlight the link between family structure, cultural norms, and educational inclusion, and they also add to research on internal migration in Kazakhstan [6], [14]. The

results indicate that families play a crucial role in shaping a child's educational path. A family's contribution is influenced not only by income but also by educational culture, gender norms, participation of the extended family [1], [5], [13] and migration and regional factors. This is in line with studies on how families affect educational outcomes. It also underscores the importance of considering Kazakhstan's cultural specifics when developing educational policies. Moreover, the results of the study provide an assessment of the proposed research hypothesis, which assumed that the influence of the family on children's educational outcomes is not limited only to socio-economic status. On the contrary, it depends on cultural capital, parental practices and gender models of participation. The results of analyses using mixed methods largely confirm this hypothesis. While material resources are important for providing access to educational opportunities, they do not automatically lead to academic success. Their effectiveness depends on how families use cultural norms, educational values and parenting strategies. Meanwhile, the results show that cultural and motivational resources can help offset limited economic resources, especially in migrant and rural families. However, this assistance remains limited by institutional and structural barriers. Thus, the hypothesis is confirmed by some contextual observations that emphasize the mediating rather than the deterministic role of the socio-economic status of the family in educational outcomes.

Conclusion

The study's findings provided a clear answer to the research question. Analyzing interview and survey data showed that the family can serve both as a strong resource and as a major barrier in a child's education. The scientific contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that the influence of the family on educational outcomes is not linear but mediated by the interaction between socio-economic conditions and cultural practices. The research also provides empirical evidence from Kazakhstan that expands existing theories of social reproduction by incorporating the role of family traditions and gender norms in shaping educational trajectories. The socio-economic status of parents is a major factor that affects children's access to quality education, including access to private schools, tutors, language schools and access to new technologies and digital resources. Subsequently, this influence is related to educational expectations and in general on the involvement of parents and their support. The logical conclusion is that families with a more stable financial situation have a more active position. However, in the first case parents are motivated to use available free aspects and provide more emotional support for their children, but due to time resources this support is not universal. The study confirmed that in most Kazakhstani families, women usually bear the responsibility for education, while men often stay away from the learning process. This situation not only perpetuates gender inequality but also restricts the family's role in the child's educational development. Meanwhile, more flexible roles observed in some families lead to better interactions with educational institutions. The influence of where families live and their migration status is also important. Internal migrants, despite lacking resources, are very involved in their children's education, using motivation and values as compensatory tools. In contrast, rural families face structural, organizational, and cultural barriers that need focused attention from educational policies. Therefore, in Kazakhstan, the family is a complex social institution. Its impact on education is shaped not only by income but also by parenting culture, gender roles, family structure, and educational goals. The family becomes a resource when financial stability aligns with a thoughtful parental approach, high expectations, and cultural backing. However, when resources are limited and parental involvement is low, particularly in light of traditional views on parental roles, the family tends to act as a barrier, reinforcing educational inequality.

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