

School achievement and family background in Greece: a new exploration of an omnipresent relationship

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This paper presents some of the findings that emerged out of a national survey carried out in the school year 2005–2006 in various parts of Greece. The main aim of the study was to explore the effects of various family factors on the student performance in the (national) higher education entrance examinations. From the analysis of data it becomes evident that, despite numerous attempts at educational reform in the Greek education system in the last 30 years, inequalities among students based on family background still exist. The study has shown that the educational level and occupational status of parents represent two of the major factors affecting student performance – directly or indirectly – through their influence on previous achievement. It has also documented that the interplay between economic, cultural and social capital in shaping educational and occupational ‘pathways’ is still an immensely important dimension in sociological studies of education.

Keywords: school achievement; cultural capital; Greece; higher education

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