Nastava i vaspitanje, 2026, *75*(2), 325-338
https://doi.org/10.5937/niv75-64857

ISSN 0547-3330
eISSN 2560-3051
Originalni naučni rad

Kućna biblioteka kao medijator odnosa između obrazovanja roditelja i postignuća učenika na PISA testiranju u Srbiji

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Apstrakt *Oslanjajući se na teoriju kulture učenja i teoriju kulturne reprodukcije, u radu se ispituje uloga broja knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci kao medijatorske varijable u odnosu između nivoa formalnog obrazovanja roditelja i postignuća učenika na PISA testiranju. Sprovedena je sekundarna analiza podataka prikupljenih u okviru PISA studije iz 2022. godine, na uzorku učenika iz Srbije (N = 620). Za ispitivanje odnosa između obrazovanja majke i oca, broja knjiga u domu ispitanika i postignuća učenika u domenima čitalačke, matematičke i naučne pismenosti, primenjena je tehnika modelovanja strukturnih jednačina zasnovana na parcijalnim najmanjim kvadratima (PLS-SEM). Rezultati pokazuju da broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci ima statistički značajan i pozitivan efekat na sva tri domena funkcionalne pismenosti, kao i da obrazovni nivo oba roditelja značajno doprinosi većoj dostupnosti ovog kulturnog resursa u porodičnom okruženju. Istovremeno, utvrđeni su značajni indirektni efekti obrazovanja roditelja na PISA postignuća učenika, što ukazuje na medijatorsku ulogu broja knjiga u domu. Uzimajući u obzir relativno niske vrednosti objašnjene varijanse, ovaj efekat ne treba tumačiti kao direktan uzročni uticaj, već se on interpretira kao indikator širih, strukturno ukorenjenih procesa kulturne i obrazovne reprodukcije. Nalazi rada doprinose razumevanju obrazovnih nejednakosti u Srbiji, ukazujući na to da broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci predstavlja vidljivi marker kulturnog kapitala koji posreduje u međugeneracijskoj transmisiji obrazovnih prednosti.*

Ključne reči: *kućna biblioteka, broj knjiga, obrazovanje roditelja, PISA postignuća, kulturni kapital.*

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Uvod

Uprkos ubrzanom razvoju informacionih tehnologija i sve većoj dominaciji digitalnih medija u svakodnevnom životu, knjiga u svom materijalnom, štampanom obliku zadržava višeslojan kulturni i društveni značaj (Phillips & Kovač, 2022; Rodger, 2018; Štrangarić, 2022). Fizičko prisustvo knjiga ne predstavlja isključivo funkcionalan izvor znanja, već i simbolički resurs koji oblikuje odnos pojedinca prema obrazovanju, kulturi i razvoju intelektualnih kapaciteta. Čak i kada nisu aktivno korišćene, knjige predstavljaju dostupan istraživački alat (da Col, 2015; Karijer i Eko, 2011) i učestvuju u konstruisanju kulturnog okruženja, signalizirajući vrednosti i norme koje se u porodici smatraju legitimnim i poželjnim.

Simbolička dimenzija knjige dobija na značaju u obrazovnom kontekstu, gde brojna empirijska istraživanja na velikim uzorcima sistemski potvrđuju pozitivnu povezanost između posedovanja knjiga u domu i akademskih postignuća učenika (Addido et al., 2025; Evans et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2014; Volodina, 2025). Sekundarne analize empirijske građe, prikupljene u okviru međunarodno komparativnih istraživanja, kao što su PISA i TIMSS, pokazuju da učenici koji odrastaju u okruženju sa većim brojem knjiga postižu bolje rezultate u različitim domenima pismenosti, uključujući čitalačku, matematičku i naučnu pismenost, dok posedovanje knjiga u elektronskom formatu nije pokazalo značajne efekte (Heppt et al., 2022). Ovi nalazi su potvrđeni u različitim nacionalnim i kulturnim kontekstima (Addido et al., 2025), uključujući i kontekst savremenog srpskog društva (Marić i sar., 2018; Radulović et al., 2020; Rodić Lukić et al, 2020; Štrangarić et al., 2017; Štrangarić i Rodić Lukić, 2024), što ukazuje na relativnu univerzalnost efekta kućne biblioteke na obrazovna postignuća.

Prisustvo knjiga u domu doprinosi formiranju kulture učenja (eng. scholarly culture) (Evans et al., 2014; Sikora et al., 2019). Kultura učenja se tokom procesa socijalizacije prenosi kroz svakodnevne prakse, navike i implicitne poruke o značaju učenja i usvajanju znanja. U takvom okruženju, deca ranije dolaze u kontakt sa pisanim jezikom, razvijaju pozitivne stavove prema čitanju i usvajaju kognitivne i metakognitivne strategije koje su kompatibilne sa zahtevima formalnog obrazovnog sistema. Čak i ukoliko se čitanje ne praktikuje intenzivno, same knjige zadržavaju simboličku vrednost koja oblikuje stavove i očekivanja u pogledu obrazovnog uspeha.

U okviru teorije društvene i kulturne reprodukcije, koju je utemeljio francuski sociolog Pjer Burdije (Pierre Bourdieu), posedovanje knjiga u okviru kućnih biblioteka posmatra se u znatno širem društvenom kontekstu u odnosu na teoriju kulture učenja. Dok se u okviru teorije učenja prilazi kućnoj biblioteci kao izolovanom indikatoru socijalizacije orijentisane prema knjigama (Sikora et al., 2019), za Burdijea posedovanje knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci predstavlja tek jedan od indikatora kulturnog kapitala u njegovom opredmećenom obliku, premda najznačajniji. Opredmećeni kulturni kapital je samo jedan od oblika kulturnog kapitala i deluje u sinergiji sa drugim oblicima – otelovljenim i institucionalizovanim. Nadalje, kulturni kapital je samo jedan od oblika kapitala koji, u međudejstvu sa drugim oblicima kapitala – ekonomskim, socijalnim i simboličkim – doprinosi održavanju i legitimisanju društvenih nejednakosti (Bourdieu, 1986).

Iz navedene teorijske perspektive, kućna biblioteka istovremeno predstavlja i materijalno dobro, ali i visoko vrednovano kulturno dobro (Thumala Olave, 2020), te se posmatra kao deo šireg sistema kulturnih praksi i životnih stilova koji su duboko klasno uslovljeni (Bourdieu, 1973; Burdije, 2012; Burdije, 2023). Značajna karakteristika kulturnog kapitala jeste njegova međugeneracijska prenosivost. U tom smislu, viši obrazovni nivo roditelja, kao indikator institucionalizovanog kulturnog kapitala, povećava verovatnoću ne samo prisustva knjiga u domu već i integracije knjiga u svakodnevne prakse kroz razgovore (Chiu & Chow, 2010), zajedničko čitanje i vrednovanje intelektualnih aktivnosti. Na taj način, knjige postaju sredstvo simboličke legitimacije, kao i deo mehanizma putem kojeg se obrazovne nejednakosti reprodukuju kroz generacije (Burdije i Paseron, 2014). Burdijeova teorija u tom smislu ocenjuje proces predškolske socijalizacije kao ključan, u kome se razvija otelovljeni kulturni kapital što rezultira time da poznavanje legitimne kulture i prisnost s njom, iako stečeni, deluju kao urođeni. Tako stečeno znanje o legitimnoj kulturi će kasnije u obrazovnom sistemu biti prepoznato i nagrađivano.

Pojedina istraživanja, nastala na tragu Burdieovog nasleđa, koncipiraju pristup kulturne adaptacije (Cvetičanin, 2007), naglašavajući da je socijalizacija za kulturne prakse celoživotni proces, te da ima kumulativni karakter tokom obrazovne putanje (Aschaffenburg & Mass, 1997). Kroz koncept kulturne adaptacije, nastoji se da se identifikuje značaj iskustava koja se stiču u kasnijem životnom periodu, kroz proces formalnog obrazovanja, u poslovnoj klimi i kroz adaptaciju na različita društvena okruženja.

U savremenim istraživanjima obrazovnih nejednakosti učestalo se koristi varijabla broja knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci, koja se ocenjuje ne samo kao empirijski pristupačan i relativno stabilan indikator kulturnog kapitala, već i kao proksi za širi spektar porodičnih resursa i praksi (Breznau et al., 2019; Heppt et al., 2022). Ipak, postoje određene metodološke neujednačenosti. Određeni autori upozoravaju da ovaj indikator nije lišen ograničenja, budući da može odražavati i druge, teško merljive aspekte porodičnog okruženja. Otvaraju se i pitanja koja se tiču kognitivnih sposobnosti dece da precizno procene broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci (Engzell, 2018; Eriksson et al., 2022).

Uprkos navedenim metodološkim dilemama, empirijski nalazi pokazuju da broj knjiga u domu ostaje snažan prediktor obrazovnih ishoda, uključujući lingvističke sposobnosti, matematičke veštine, ali i šire kulturne orijentacije i životne aspiracije (Brunarska & Ivlevs, 2025; Sikora et al., 2019). Ipak, u skladu sa navedenim teorijskim polazištima, važno je naglasiti da konzistentnost efekata kućne biblioteke u različitim kulturnim kontekstima ne ukazuje da broj knjiga u domu deluje kao izolovan uzročni faktor, već kao vidljivi marker dubljih, strukturno ukorenjenih nejednakosti. Dakle, umesto da se ova medijacija tumači kao direktan efekat, gde više knjiga nužno vodi boljim rezultatima, teorijski je opravdanije govoriti o strukturiranom lancu uticaja, u kojem knjige predstavljaju vidljivu tačku ukrštanja institucionalizovanog kulturnog kapitala roditelja, artikulisanog u njihovom nivou formalnog obrazovanja – sa dispozicijama učenika i zahtevima akademskog polja. Prema tome, empirijsko ispitivanje medijatorske uloge broja knjiga možemo oceniti analitički korisnim, ne zato što se time otkriva ili potvrđuje značaj knjiga, već zato što se time omogućava uvid u mehanizme kulturne i obrazovne reprodukcije.

Iz tog razloga, naše istraživanje predstavlja svojevrsnu tačku preseka teorije kulture učenja i teorije kulturne reprodukcije. Za razliku od dosadašnjih istraživanja kulturnog kapitala u našem društvu (Marić i sar, 2018; Radulović et al., 2020; Rodić Lukić et al, 2020; Štrangarić et al., 2017; Štrangarić i Rodić Lukić, 2024), gde je kućna biblioteka posmatrana kao jedan od elemenata kulturnog kapitala u opredmećenom obliku, na ovom mestu želimo posebno da istražimo značaj same kućne biblioteke u skladu sa teorijom kulture učenja. Ipak, u skladu sa teorijom kulturnog kapitala, posmatraćemo je kao medijatora između obrazovanja roditelja i akademskih postignuća. Smatramo da je upravo kroz ispitivanje medijatorske uloge moguće kritički preispitati domete teorije kulture učenja, ali istovremeno i operacionalizovati Burdijeovu tezu o transformaciji kulturnog kapitala u obrazovnu prednost u savremenom obrazovnom kontekstu.

Poseban analitički značaj kućne biblioteke ogleda se u kontekstu PISA istraživanja, budući da PISA ne meri reprodukciju školskog gradiva, već ispituje sposobnost primene znanja u novim i kompleksnim situacijama, putem razvijenih funkcionalnih kompetencija, neophodnih za aktivno učešće u savremenim društvima. Čitalačka, matematička i naučna pismenost razvijaju se u interakciji formalnog obrazovanja i šireg kulturnog okruženja, što porodični kontekst čini ključnim prostorom njihovog oblikovanja (Avvisati, 2020).

Polazeći od navedenih teorijskih i empirijskih uvida, ovo istraživanje nastoji da doprinese razumevanju mehanizama kulturne i obrazovne reprodukcije u Srbiji, ispitujući ulogu broja knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci kao posredničkog faktora u odnosu između obrazovnog statusa roditelja i PISA kompetencija učenika uzrasta od 15 godina. Broju knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci ne pristupa se kao uzročnoj varijabli u uskom smislu, već kao analitičkom alatu za razumevanje složenih procesa društvene i obrazovne reprodukcije u savremenom srpskom društvu. Doprinos ovog istraživanja ogleda se u kritičkom osvetljavanju mehanizama putem kojih se kulturni resursi prevode u merljive obrazovne ishode – procesu u kome knjige u kućnoj biblioteci imaju značajnu ulogu.

Metodologija istraživanja

Cilj istraživanja

Sekundarnom analizom empirijske građe, prikupljene u okviru PISA testiranja iz 2022. godine, nastojali smo da utvrdimo povezanost obrazovnog nivoa roditelja i broja posedovanih knjiga u okviru kućne biblioteke sa kompetencijama učenika iz Srbije.

Uzorak

Podaci su analizirani primenom tehnike strukturnog modelovanja, metodom najmanjih parcijalnih kvadrata (PLS-SEM) kojom se ispituju odnosi između skupova varijabli. Primarno istraživanje obuhvatilo je 6413 ispitanika iz Srbije. S obzirom na to da se pri primeni strukturnog modelovanja preporučuje analiza na manjem uzorku (Hair et al., 2017), formi-

ran je reprezentativni poduzorak koji je obuhvatio 620 učenika. Strukturu našeg uzorka čini 321 ženskih i 299 muških ispitanika. Uzorak je izvučen primenom slučajnog uzorkovanja, čime je obezbeđena reprezentativnost.

Instrumenti i varijable

Analizirane su varijable koje se odnose na stepen obrazovanja roditelja, broj knjiga u okviru kućne biblioteke i postignuća učenika u tri domena pismenosti. Podaci su dobijeni primenom instrumenata PISA baterije testova za učenike i PISA učeničkog upitnika.

PISA baterija testova za učenike obuhvatala je tri kognitivna testa, kojima je mereno postignuće učenika u oblasti čitalačke pismenosti, naučne pismenosti i matematičke pismenosti. Svi učenici uključeni u naš uzorak su ispunili upitnike i učestvovali u testiranju navedenih kompetencija. Postignuća iz matematičke, čitalačke i naučne pismenosti predstavljena su skaliranim vrednostima i analizirana kao zavisne varijable.

Tabela 1
Broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci (N = 620)

Broj knjiga	N	%
Nema knjiga	35	5.6
1 – 10 knjiga	87	14.0
11 – 25 knjiga	117	18.9
26 – 100 knjiga	199	32.1
101 – 200 knjiga	90	14.5
201 – 500 knjiga	57	9.2
Više od 500 knjiga	29	4.7
Bez odgovora	6	1

PISA učenički upitnik. Broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci korišćen je kao pokazatelj obrazovno-stimulativnog okruženja i analiziran kao medijator. Od ukupno 620 učenika, 614 učenika (99%) pružilo je validan odgovor na pitanje o broju knjiga kod kuće. Najveći procenat učenika (32.1%) naveo je da u njihovom domu postoji 26 – 100 knjiga, zatim je 18.9% navelo da poseduje 11 – 25 knjiga, dok se 14% izjasnilo da kod kuće ima 1 – 10 knjiga. Da nema nijednu knjigu, izjavilo je 5.6% učenika, dok je samo 4.7% navelo da ima više od 500 knjiga u svojoj kućnoj biblioteci. Raspodela odgovora ukazuje na to da većina učenika dolazi iz porodičnog okruženja sa umerenim brojem knjiga (između 11 i 100 knjiga čini 51.3% uzorka), što može ukazivati na srednji nivo dostupnosti kulturnih i obrazovnih resursa u okviru porodice.

Tabela 2
Stepen obrazovanja majke (N = 620)

Nivo obrazovanja	N	%
Bez osnovnog obrazovanja	1	0.2
ISCED 1 (nepotpuno osnovno obrazovanje)	2	0.3
ISCED 2 (potpuno osnovno obrazovanje)	40	6.5
ISCED 3.3 (gimnazija)	45	7.3
ISCED 3.4 (srednje stručno obrazovanje)	134	21.6
ISCED 4	44	7.1
ISCED 5 (više obrazovanje)	126	20.3
ISCED 6 (visoko obrazovanje)	109	17.6
ISCED 7 (master studije)	53	8.5
ISCED 8 (doktorske studije)	58	9.4
Bez odgovora	8	1.3

Tabela 3
Stepen obrazovanja oca (N = 620)

Nivo obrazovanja	N	%
Bez osnovnog obrazovanja	1	0.2
ISCED 1 (nepotpuno osnovno obrazovanje)	3	0.5
ISCED 2 (potpuno osnovno obrazovanje)	28	4.5
ISCED 3.3 (gimnazija)	83	13.4
ISCED 3.4 (srednje stručno obrazovanje)	134	21.6
ISCED 4	57	9.2
ISCED 5 (više obrazovanje)	116	18.7
ISCED 6 (visoko obrazovanje)	87	14
ISCED 7 (master studije)	46	7.4
ISCED 8 (doktorske studije)	52	8.4
Bez odgovora	13	2.1

Obrazovni nivo roditelja klasifikovan je prema ISCED skali i tretiran kao egzogena varijabla. Validne odgovore na pitanje o obrazovanju majke dalo je 612 učenika (98.7%). Najčešće prijavljeni nivo obrazovanja majke je ISCED 3.4 (21.6%), što odgovara završetku srednje škole sa mogućnošću prelaska na više obrazovanje. Slede ga ISCED 5 (20.3%)

i ISCED 6 (17.6%), koji označavaju više obrazovanje i visokoškolske kvalifikacije. Zbirno posmatrano, više od polovine majki (55.8%) ima obrazovanje ISCED nivoa 5 ili višeg, što ukazuje na relativno visok obrazovni status majki u uzorku. Podaci o obrazovanju oca bili su dostupni za 607 učenika (97.9%). Najzastupljeniji nivo obrazovanja je takođe ISCED 3.4 (21.6%), dok slede ISCED 5 (18.7%) i ISCED 6 (14%). Ukupno, 48.5% očeva ima obrazovanje ISCED 5 ili više, što je nešto niže u poređenju sa majkama, ali i dalje ukazuje na značajan udeo visokoobrazovanih roditelja u uzorku.

Analiza podataka

Podaci korišćeni u ovom istraživanju analizirani su primenom tehnike modelovanja strukturnih jednačina, zasnovane na parcijalnim najmanjim kvadratima (PLS-SEM), koja omogućava ispitivanje složenih odnosa između latentnih varijabli. Statistička obrada sprovedena je uz korišćenje softvera *SmartPLS4*, a analizirani model uključivao je dve egzogene latentne varijable (obrazovanje majke i obrazovanje oca), jednu medijatorsku varijablu (broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci) i tri endogene varijable (postignuća iz čitalačke, matematičke i naučne pismenosti).

Strukturni model je procenjen na osnovu standardizovanih koeficijenata putanja, pri čemu su testirane direktne i indirektne veze između varijabli. Za proveru značajnosti efekata korišćena je "bootstrap" procedura sa 5000 replikacija, čime su dobijene t-vrednosti i p-vrednosti za procenu statističke značajnosti putanja. Evaluacija kvaliteta modela vršena je na osnovu vrednosti koeficijenata determinacije (R^2), koji predstavljaju procenat objašnjene varijanse za svaku zavisnu varijablu. U skladu sa preporukama u literaturi, vrednosti R^2 od .75, .50 i .25 mogu se tumačiti kao visoke, umerene i niske (Hair et al., 2011).

Posebna pažnja posvećena je ispitivanju medijatorskih efekata broja knjiga u domaćinstvu, kako bi se utvrdilo da li i u kojoj meri obrazovni nivo roditelja utiče na obrazovna postignuća učenika posredno preko dostupnosti kulturnih i obrazovnih resursa u kućnom okruženju. Na osnovu ukupnih i specifičnih indirektnih efekata, procenjena je statistička značajnost medijacije, uz interpretaciju efekata u skladu sa savremenim standardima za PLS modeliranje. S obzirom na to da je istraživanje fokusirano na prediktivne odnose, a ne na potvrdu teorijskih modela, PLS-SEM pristup je ocenjen kao metodološki prikladan.

Rezultati

Rezultati parcijalnog najmanjeg kvadrata (PLS-SEM) strukturnog modelovanja ukazuju na statistički značajne odnose između obrazovanja roditelja, broja knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci i postignuća učenika u oblastima čitalačke, matematičke i naučne pismenosti.

Analiza direktnih efekata pokazuje da broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci ima snažan pozitivan uticaj na sve tri dimenzije pismenosti: na matematičku pismenost (β=.295, p <.001), na čitalačku pismenost (β=.302, p<.001) i na naučnu pismenost (β=.287, p <.001). Rezultati ukazuju da učenici koji imaju veći broj knjiga kod kuće ostvaruju viša postignuća na PISA testovima.

Obrazovanje roditelja ima značajan uticaj na broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci. Obrazovanje oca (FISCED) pokazuje jači efekat (β=.168, p<.001) u poređenju sa obrazovanjem majke (MISCED; β=.126, p=.004). Navedeni rezultati ukazuju da viši nivo obrazovanja roditelja doprinosi većoj dostupnosti kulturnih i obrazovnih resursa u porodičnom okruženju.

Posmatrano kroz indirektne efekte, nalazi pokazuju da broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci ima značajnu medijatorsku ulogu u odnosu između obrazovanja roditelja i obrazovnih postignuća učenika. Oba roditelja imaju statistički značajne indirektne efekte na sve tri oblasti pismenosti. Obrazovanje oca posredno utiče na matematičku pismenost (β=.050, p=.001), čitalačku pismenost (β=.051, p<.001) i naučnu pismenost (β=.048, p=.001), dok obrazovanje majke ima nešto slabije, ali takođe značajne posredne efekte: matematička (β=.037, p=.009), čitalačka (β=.038, p=.009), i naučna pismenost (β =.036, p=.009).

Vrednosti koeficijenta determinacije (R^2) ukazuju na to da model objašnjava relativno mali procenat varijanse posmatranih zavisnih varijabli: 6.6% za broj knjiga, 8.7% za matematičku pismenost, 9.1% za čitalačku i 8.3% za naučnu pismenost, što sugeriše da postoje i drugi faktori koji dodatno utiču na postignuća učenika, a koji nisu obuhvaćeni ovim modelom.

Zaključno, rezultati ukazuju na postojanje značajnog mehanizma putem kojeg obrazovni nivo roditelja, posredno preko broja knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci, utiče na nivo razvijenosti funkcionalnih oblika pismenosti kod učenika u uzrastu od 15 godina.

Tabela 4

Strukturne putanje i medijatorski efekti u PLS modelu

Veza	β koeficijent	*t*-vrednost	*p*-vrednost
Direktni efekti			
BK → MP	.295	7.65	< .001
BK → ČP	.302	7.59	< .001
BK → NP	.287	7.36	< .001
OO → BK	.168	3.88	< .001
OM → BK	.126	2.86	.004
Indirektni efekti (medijacija)			
OO → MP	.050	3.48	.001
OO → ČP	.051	3.53	<.001
OO → NP	.048	3.46	.001
OM → MP	.037	2.62	.009
OM → ČP	.038	2.63	.009
OM → NP	.036	2.63	.009

Napomena. *BK* – Broj knjiga u domaćinstvu, *MP* – matematička pismenost, *ČP* – čitalačka pismenost, *NP* – naučna pismenost, *OO* – nivo obrazovanja oca, *OM* – nivo obrazovanja majke.

Diskusija

Sprovedeno empirijsko istraživanje imalo je za cilj da ispita povezanost kućne biblioteke sa obrazovnim postignućima učenika u Srbiji. Broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci postavljen je kao medijatorska varijabla u odnosu između nivoa formalnog obrazovanja roditelja i postignuća učenika na PISA testiranju.

Iako rezulati daju relativno niske vrednosti R^2, oni pokazuju da broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci ima statistički značajan i relativno ujednačen pozitivan efekat na sva tri domena pismenosti – čitalačku, matematičku i naučnu pismenost. Ovaj nalaz je u skladu sa prethodnim istraživanjima, koja ukazuju da kućna biblioteka ne predstavlja samo resurs specifičan za određenu školsku oblast, već se poima kao opšti indikator kulturnog okruženja koje podstiče razvoj kognitivnih sposobnosti, kao i akademskih veština relevantnih za različite tipove obrazovnih zadataka (Evans et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2014; Sikora, 2019). U tom smislu, rezultati potvrđuju značaj teorije kulture učenja, budući da se u okviru ove teorije opisuju mehanizmi putem kojih knjige utiču na razvoj čitalačkih navika, kao i pozitivnih stavova prema učenju i sticanju znanja na mikronivou analize.

Međutim, te mehanizme je moguće kontekstualizovati kroz Burdijeov teorijski model, jer se njime objašnjava da se kulturne prakse različitih društvenih slojeva različito vrednuju od strane obrazovnog sistema. Burdijeov koncept kulturnog kapitala doprinosi razumevanju dubinski ukorenjenih odnosa moći, zbog kojih škole prepoznaju upravo one kulturne forme karakteristične za obrazovanije slojeve kao legitimne, omogućavajući deci koja potiču iz takvih porodica da lakše konvertuju svoje kulturne resurse u školski uspeh.

S tim u vezi, daljim uvidom u rezultate istraživanja utvrđeni su značajni efekti obrazovanja oba roditelja na broj knjiga u domaćinstvu, što, u skladu sa Burdijeovom teorijom, ukazuje na snažnu povezanost između institucionalizovanog i opredmećenog oblika kulturnog kapitala (Bourdieu, 1986). Nalaz da je efekat obrazovanja oca nešto izraženiji u odnosu na obrazovanje majke može se interpretirati u svetlu generacijskih razlika u obrazovnim putanjama roditelja. Ipak, s obzirom na to da je vršena sekundarna analiza studije, u kojoj nisu prisutni direktni indikatori rodnih uloga u porodičnim obrazovnim praksama, ovaj nalaz treba tumačiti oprezno. Važno je naglasiti da su rezultati pokazali da oba roditelja imaju statistički značajne indirektne efekte na sva tri domena pismenosti, što implicira zajednički doprinos porodičnog kulturnog okruženja obrazovnim ishodima učenika. Iako su razlike u efektima koje obrazovanje roditelja ima na različite domene pismenosti veoma male, primećuje se da i obrazovanje majke i obrazovanje oca indirektno najviše utiču na čitalačku pismenost učenika.

Posebno značajan nalaz odnosi se na medijatorsku ulogu broja knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci u odnosu između nivoa formalnog obrazovanja roditelja i PISA postignuća učenika. Ovi rezultati ukazuju na to da uticaj roditeljskog obrazovanja na obrazovne ishode nije neposredan, već se ostvaruje putem posrednih mehanizama koji oblikuju svakodnevno okruženje u kome deca odrastaju. Kroz teorijsku sintezu teorije kulture učenja i teorije kulturnog kapitala, u našem istraživanju nismo posmatrali kućnu biblio-

teku ni isključivo kao jedan od indikatora kulturnog kapitala, ni kao izolovani obrazovni resurs, već kao strukturno pozicioniranu kulturnu praksu. Možemo zaključiti da njena medijatorska uloga doprinosi uvidu u način na koji se kultura učenja ukršta sa mehanizmima kulturne reprodukcije.

Iako su vrednosti R^2 relativno niske, one su u skladu sa nalazima prethodnih PISA studija i ukazuju da kućna biblioteka predstavlja jedan od relevantnih, ali ne i isključivih mehanizama koji doprinose razvoju učeničkih kompetencija. Ovakvi rezultati potvrđuju da su funkcionalne pismenosti koje PISA meri proizvod složenih i dugotrajnih procesa socijalizacije za kulturne prakse, u okviru kojih nijedan pojedinačni faktor ne može imati dominantan uzročni uticaj.

Relativno nizak procenat objašnjene varijanse ukazuje na ograničenja redukcionističkih interpretacija efekata kućne biblioteke. Umesto da se tumači kao slabost modela, ovaj nalaz je u skladu sa teorijskim okvirom kulturne reprodukcije, koji naglašava da se obrazovne nejednakosti proizvode kroz interakciju različitih oblika kapitala – kulturnog, ekonomskog, socijalnog i simboličkog – tokom dužeg vremenskog perioda. U tom smislu, iako je broj knjiga u domu analitički značajan, on predstavlja samo jedan od segmenata u okviru šire strukture oblikovane nejednakim obrazovnim šansama. Rezultati našeg istraživanja ukazuju na relevantnost ispitivanog indikatora ukoliko se on posmatra kao „vrh ledenog brega" složenih društvenih procesa. Smatramo da se upravo u tome nalazi analitička snaga varijable broja knjiga – ne u njenoj prediktivnoj moći, već u njenim mogućnostima da strukturalno skrivene mehanizme reprodukcije učini empirijski vidljivim.

Konačno, dobijeni rezultati imaju određene implikacije za interpretaciju PISA nalaza u javnom i političkom diskursu. Oni ukazuju da se obrazovne razlike merene PISA testiranjem ne mogu adekvatno objasniti niti ublažiti intervencijama usmerenim isključivo na materijalne aspekte porodičnog okruženja. Umesto toga, rezultati ovog istraživanja podstiču na razmatranje širih strukturnih uslova, u kojima se kulturni resursi stiču i vrednuju, te posreduju kroz porodične i školske prakse koje ih prevode u forme znanja prepoznate i nagrađivane u obrazovnom sistemu. Time se kućna biblioteka ne pozicionira kao jednostavan instrument politike, već kao pokazatelj dubljih mehanizama kulturne i obrazovne reprodukcije u savremenom srpskom društvu.

Zaključak

Rezultati PISA studija otvaraju prostor za koncipiranje implikacija za obrazovne i kulturne politike. Nalazi našeg istraživanja doprineli su potvrdi prethodnih empirijskih istraživanja, koja ukazuju na stabilnu povezanost između broja knjiga u domu i obrazovnih postignuća. Međutim, pri formiranju preporuka za obrazovne politike, potreban je oprez pri interpretaciji rezultata. Dobijeni nalazi ne mogu biti redukovani na pojednostavljenu normativnu poruku, koja bi pretpostavljala da povećanje dostupnosti knjiga automatski vodi ka smanjenju obrazovnih nejednakosti.

PISA studije ispituju kompetencije učenika kao meru funkcionalnih oblika pismenosti, međutim, razvoj tih kompetencija je duboko ukorenjen u dugotrajnim procesima socijalizacije za kulturne prakse, te se one ne mogu značajno unaprediti kratkoročnim intervencijama usmerenim isključivo na materijalne resurse. Kada se PISA rezultati tumače kroz prizmu jednostavnih uzročnih veza između posedovanja knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci i učeničkih postignuća dovodi do depolitizacije strukturnih nejednakosti, jer fokus pomera sa društvenih uslova proizvodnje obrazovnih razlika na individualne i porodične „nedostatke". Ovo, naravno, nikako ne implicira da su intervencije usmerene na poboljšanje materijalnih uslova učenika irelevantne (Štrangarić i sar., 2017), posebno uvažavajući koncept kulturne adaptacije, u kojoj se naglašava fleksibilnost kulturnih praksi (Cvetičanin, 2007), i kumulativan karakter prisvajanja kulturnog kapitala (Aschaffenburg & Mass, 1997). Ipak, ovakve intervencije, iako potrebne, nisu dovoljne ukoliko nisu praćene širim institucionalnim i kulturnim promenama.

U tom smislu, analitička vrednost varijable broja knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci ne leži u njenom policy-potencijalu kao instrumenta intervencije, već u njenoj sposobnosti da ukaže na dublje, strukturno ukorenjene mehanizme kulturne i obrazovne reprodukcije. Umesto da se tumači kao sredstvo jednostavnog „popravljanja"obrazovnih ishoda, ova varijabla treba da bude shvaćena kao indikator nejednakih startnih pozicija koje obrazovni sistem, uključujući i sisteme eksterne evaluacije poput PISA, često potvrđuje.

Posmatrano na taj način, medijatorska uloga broja knjiga, u odnosu između obrazovnog nivoa roditelja i PISA kompetencija učenika, ne predstavlja dokaz direktnog pedagoškog efekta knjiga, već empirijsku artikulaciju mehanizma kulturne reprodukcije. Posedovanje knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci označeno je kao materijalna tačka preseka institucionalizovanog kulturnog kapitala roditelja i dispozicija dece, dok obrazovni sistem, kroz PISA merne instrumente, vrednuje upravo one kompetencije koje su u takvom okruženju najlakše razvijene.

Nalaze ovog istraživanja potrebno je tumačiti u svetlu nekoliko metodoloških ograničenja. Najpre, analiza je zasnovana na sekundarnim podacima PISA studije, što podrazumeva ograničenu kontrolu nad izborom i operacionalizacijom varijabli. Iako su korišćeni indikatori standardizovani i međunarodno validirani, oni neminovno redukuju složene društvene i kulturne procese koji se nalaze u osnovi obrazovnih nejednakosti. Zatim, broj knjiga u kućnoj biblioteci korišćen je kao proksi indikator kulturnog kapitala u njegovom opredmećenom obliku, koji, kao takav, ne definiše načine na koje se knjige koriste u svakodnevnim porodičnim praksama. S tim u vezi, oslanjanje na samoprocenu učenika može uvesti određeni stepen greške, s obzirom na to da su istraživanja pokazala da učenici sa višim postignućima preciznije procenjuju broj knjiga u domaćinstvu (Eriksson et al., 2022). Takođe, potrebno je naglasiti da utvrđene povezanosti treba tumačiti kao obrasce strukturalne uslovljenosti, a ne kao direktne uzročne mehanizme.

Naposletku, iako je uzorak reprezentativan za učenike uzrasta od 15 godina u Srbiji, rezultati se ne mogu automatski generalizovati na druge uzraste, obrazovne nivoe ili nacionalne kontekste bez dodatnih empirijskih provera.

Preporuke za dalja istraživanja podrazumevaju uključivanje varijabli koje bi obuhvatile porodične obrazovne prakse, roditeljske aspiracije i simboličke orijentacije ka obrazovanju. Od posebnog značaja bili bi longitudinalni dizajni studija, koji bi omogućili preciznije ispitivanje mehanizama kulturne i obrazovne reprodukcije, kroz konkretne životne putanje. Iako je kvantitativna metodološka orijentacija adekvatna za istraživanje na velikim uzorcima ispitanika i pogodna za primenu komparativnog pristupa, uključivanje kvalitativnih metoda omogućilo bi dubinsko razumevanje značaja posedovanja knjiga u okviru kućnih biblioteka, takođe i osvetlilo načine na koje se kulturni resursi oblikuju u forme znanja, obrazovnih orijentacija i aspiracija koje obrazovni sistem prepoznaje i vrednuje.

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Primljeno: 11.02.2026.
Korigovana verzija primljena: 06.04.2026.
Prihvaćeno za štampu: 27.04.2026.

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Studies in Teaching and Education, 2026, *75*(2), 457-470
https://doi.org/10.5937/niv75-64857

ISSN 0547-3330
eISSN 2560-3051
Original research paper

The Home Library as a Mediator of the Relationship between Parental Education and Students' Achievement on PISA Assessments in Serbia

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Abstract *Drawing on scholarly culture theory and cultural reproduction theory, this paper examines the role of the number of books in the home library as a mediating variable in the relationship between parents' level of formal education and students' achievement on the PISA assessment. A secondary analysis was conducted using data collected within the 2022 PISA study on a sample of students from Serbia (N=620). To examine the relationships between maternal and paternal education, the number of books in the respondents' homes, and students' achievement in reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was applied. The results show that the number of books in the home library has a statistically significant and positive effect on all three domains of functional literacy, and that the educational level of both parents significantly contributes to greater availability of this cultural resource in the family environment. At the same time, significant indirect effects of parental education on students' PISA achievement were identified, indicating the mediating role of the number of books in the home. Given the relatively low values of explained variance, this effect should not be interpreted as a direct causal influence, but rather as an indicator of broader, structurally embedded processes of cultural and educational reproduction. The findings contribute to a better understanding of educational inequalities in Serbia, suggesting that the number of books in the home library represents a visible marker of cultural capital that mediates the intergenerational transmission of educational advantages.*

Keywords: *home library, number of books, parental education, PISA achievement, cultural capital.*

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Introduction

Despite the accelerated development of information technologies and the increasing dominance of digital media in everyday life, the book in its material, printed form retains multilayered cultural and social significance (Phillips & Kovač, 2022; Rodger, 2018; Štrangarić, 2022). The physical presence of books does not represent exclusively a functional source of knowledge, but also a symbolic resource that shapes the individual's relationship toward education, culture, and the development of intellectual capacities. Books, even when they are not actively used, represent an available research tool (da Col, 2015; Karijer i Eko, 2011) and participate in the construction of the cultural environment, signaling values and norms that are considered legitimate and desirable in the family.

The symbolic dimension of the book gains importance in the educational context, where numerous empirical studies on large samples systematically confirm the positive connection between possessing books in the home and students' academic achievement (Addido et al., 2025; Evans et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2014; Volodina, 2025). Secondary analyses of the empirical material collected within international comparative studies, such as PISA and TIMSS, show that students who grow up in an environment with a greater number of books achieve better results in different domains of literacy, including reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy, while possessing books in electronic format has not shown significant effects (Heppt et al., 2022). These findings have been confirmed in different national and cultural contexts (Addido et al., 2025), including the context of contemporary Serbian society (Marić i sar., 2018; Radulović et al., 2020; Rodić Lukić et al., 2020; Štrangarić i sar., 2017; Štrangarić i Rodić Lukić, 2024), which indicates the relative universality of the effect of a home library on educational achievement.

The presence of books in the home contributes to the formation of a scholarly culture (Evans et al., 2014; Sikora et al., 2019). Scholarly culture is transmitted during the process of socialization through everyday practices, habits, and implicit messages about the importance of learning and the acquisition of knowledge. In such environment, children come into contact with written language earlier, develop positive attitudes toward reading, and adopt cognitive and metacognitive strategies that are compatible with the demands of the formal educational system. Even if reading is not practiced intensively, the books themselves retain symbolic value that shapes attitudes and expectations regarding educational success.

Within the theory of social and cultural reproduction, established by a French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, possession of books within home libraries is observed in a significantly broader social context compared to the theory of scholarly culture. While the theory of scholarly culture observes home library as an isolated indicator of socialization oriented toward books (Sikora et al., 2019), for Bourdieu, the possession of books in a home library represents the most significant, but nevertheless only one of the indicators of cultural capital in its objectified form. Objectified cultural capital is only one of the forms of cultural capital and acts in synergy with other forms – embodied and institutionalized. Furthermore, cultural capital is only one of the forms of capital which, in interaction with other forms of capital – economic, social, and symbolic – contributes to the reproduction and legitimization of social inequalities (Bourdieu, 1986).

From the stated theoretical perspectives, the home library simultaneously represents both a material good and a highly valued cultural good (Thumala Olave, 2020), and is observed as part of a broader system of cultural practices and lifestyles that are deeply class-conditioned (Bourdieu, 1973; Burdije, 2012; Burdije, 2023). A significant characteristic of cultural capital is its' intergenerational transferability. In that sense, a higher educational level of parents, as an indicator of institutionalized cultural capital, increases the probability not only that books will be present in the home, but also that they will be integrated into everyday practices through conversations (Chiu & Chow, 2010), shared reading, and the valuation of intellectual activities. In that way, books become a means of symbolic legitimization and part of the mechanism through which educational inequalities are reproduced through generations (Burdije & Paseron, 2014). In that sense, Bourdieu's theory evaluates the process of preschool socialization as a crucial point, in which embodied cultural capital develops, resulting in the fact that knowledge of and familiarity with legitimate culture, although acquired, both appear as hereditary. Knowledge of legitimate culture acquired in that way will later be recognized and rewarded in the educational system.

Certain studies created following Bourdieu's legacy conceptualize the approach of cultural adaptation (Cvetičanin, 2007), emphasizing that socialization for cultural practices is a lifelong process and that it has a cumulative character during the educational trajectory (Aschaffenburg & Mass, 1997). Through the concept of cultural adaptation, an attempt is made to identify the significance of experiences acquired in a later life period, through the process of formal education, in workplace climate, and through adaptation to different social environments.

In contemporary research of educational inequalities, the variable of the number of books in a home library is frequently used and it is evaluated not only as an empirically accessible and relatively stable indicator of cultural capital, but also as a proxy for a broader spectrum of family resources and practices (Breznau et al., 2019; Heppt et al., 2022). Nevertheless, there are some methodological inconsistencies. Certain authors warn that this indicator is not free of limitations, since it may reflect other, difficult-to-measure aspects of the family environment as well. Questions are also opened concerning the cognitive abilities of children to precisely estimate the number of books in a home library (Engzell, 2018; Eriksson et al., 2022).

Despite the stated methodological dilemmas, the empirical findings show that the number of books in a home remains a strong predictor of educational outcomes, including linguistic abilities, mathematical skills, but also broader cultural orientations and life aspirations (Brunarska & Ivlevs, 2025; Sikora et al., 2019). Nevertheless, in accordance with the stated theoretical starting points, it is important to emphasize that the consistency of the effects of a home library in different cultural contexts does not indicate that the number of books in a home acts as an isolated causal factor, but rather as a visible marker of deeper, structurally rooted inequalities. Therefore, instead of interpreting this mediation as a direct effect, where more books necessarily lead to better results, it is theoretically more justified to speak about a structured chain of influences, in which books represent a visible point of intersection of the institutionalized cultural capital of parents – articulated

in their level of formal education – with the dispositions of students and the demands of the academic field. Accordingly, the empirical examination of the mediating role of the number of books can be evaluated as analytically useful, not because the significance of books is thereby discovered or confirmed, but because it thereby enables the insight into the mechanisms of cultural and educational reproduction.

For that reason, our research represents a kind of intersection point of the theory of scholarly culture and the theory of cultural reproduction. Unlike previous research of cultural capital in our society (Marić i sar., 2018; Radulović et al., 2020; Rodić Lukić et al., 2020; Štrangarić i sar., 2017; Štrangarić i Rodić Lukić, 2024), where a home library was observed as one of the elements of cultural capital in objectified form, at this point we specifically want to investigate the significance of the home library itself in accordance with the theory of scholarly culture. Nevertheless, in accordance with the theory of cultural capital, we will observe it as a mediator between parents' education and academic achievement. We consider that, precisely through the examination of the mediating role, it is possible to critically reexamine the reach of the theory of scholarly culture and at the same time to operationalize Bourdieu's thesis on the transformation of cultural capital into educational advantage in the contemporary educational context.

The special analytical significance of the home library is reflected in the context of PISA research, since PISA does not measure the reproduction of school material, but examines the ability of applying knowledge in new and complex situations through developed functional competencies that are necessary for the active participation in contemporary societies. Reading literacy, mathematical literacy, and scientific literacy develop in the interaction of formal education and the broader cultural environment, which makes the family context a key space of their shaping (Avvisati, 2020).

Starting from the stated theoretical and empirical insights, this research seeks to contribute to the understanding of the mechanisms of cultural and educational reproduction in Serbia, by examining the role of the number of books in the home library as a mediating factor in the relationship between the educational status of parents and the PISA competencies of students aged 15 years. The number of books in a home library is not approached as a causal variable in the narrow sense, but as an analytical tool for understanding complex processes of social and educational reproduction in contemporary Serbian society. The contribution of this research is reflected in the critical elucidation of the mechanisms through which cultural resources are translated into measurable educational outcomes – the process in which books within the home library have a significant role.

Methodology

Research Aim

By a secondary analysis of empirical material collected within the 2022 PISA assessment, we sought to determine the connection of the educational level of parents and the number of possessed books within the home library with the competencies of students from Serbia.

Sample

The data were analyzed by applying the structural modeling technique, using the partial least squares method (PLS-SEM), by which relationships between sets of variables are examined. The primary research included 6413 respondents from Serbia. Considering that , in the application of structural modeling, analysis on a smaller sample is recommended (Hair et al., 2017), a representative subsample which included 620 students was formed. The structure of our sample consists of 321 female and 299 male respondents. The sample was drawn by applying random sampling, whereby representativeness was ensured.

Instruments and Variables

Variables relating to the level of parents' education, the number of books within the home library, and student achievement in three literacy domains were analyzed. The data were obtained by applying the instruments of the PISA battery of tests for students and the PISA student questionnaire.

The PISA battery of tests for students included three cognitive tests, by which student achievement in the field of reading literacy, scientific literacy, and mathematical literacy was measured. All students included in our sample completed the questionnaires and participated in the assessment of the stated competencies. Achievement in mathematical, reading, and scientific literacy was presented by scaled values and analyzed as dependent variables.

Table 1
Number of Books in the Home Library (N = 620)

Number of books	N	%
No books	35	5.6
1 – 10 books	87	14.0
11 – 25 books	117	18.9
26 – 100 books	199	32.1
101 – 200 books	90	14.5
201 – 500 books	57	9.2
More than 500 books	29	4.7
No response	6	1

PISA student questionnaire. The number of books in a home library was used as an indicator of an educationally stimulating environment and analyzed as a mediator. Out of a total of 620 students, 614 students (99%) provided a valid answer to the question about the number of books at home. The largest percentage of students (32.1%) stated that there were 26 – 100 books in their home, then 18.9% stated that they possessed 11 – 25 books, while 14% declared that they had 1 – 10 books at home. Not possessing a single book was stated by 5.6% of students, while only 4.7% stated that they had more than

500 books in their home library. The distribution of answers indicates that most students come from a family environment with a moderate number of books (between 11 and 100 books makes up 51.3% of the sample), which may indicate a medium level of availability of cultural and educational resources within the family.

Table 2
Mother's Level of Education (N = 620)

Level of education	N	%
Without primary education	1	.2
ISCED 1 (incomplete primary education)	2	.3
ISCED 2 (complete primary education)	40	6.5
ISCED 3.3 (gymnasium)	45	7.3
ISCED 3.4 (secondary vocational education)	134	21.6
ISCED 4	44	7.1
ISCED 5 (higher education)	126	20.3
ISCED 6 (high education)	109	17.6
ISCED 7 (master studies)	53	8.5
ISCED 8 (doctoral studies)	58	9.4
No response	8	1.3

Table 3
Father's Level of Education (N = 620)

Level of education	*N*	%
Without primary education	1	.2
ISCED 1 (incomplete primary education)	3	.5
ISCED 2 (complete primary education)	28	4.5
ISCED 3.3 (gymnasium)	83	13.4
ISCED 3.4 (secondary vocational education)	134	21.6
ISCED 4	57	9.2
ISCED 5 (higher education)	116	18.7
ISCED 6 (high education)	87	14
ISCED 7 (master studies)	46	7.4
ISCED 8 (doctoral studies)	52	8.4
No response	13	2.1

The educational level of parents was classified according to the ISCED scale and treated as an exogenous variable. Valid answers to the question about mother's education were given by 612 students (98.7%). The most frequently reported level of mother's education is ISCED 3.4 (21.6%), which corresponds to the completion of secondary school with the possibility of transition to higher education. It is followed by ISCED 5 (20.3%) and ISCED 6 (17.6%), which denote post-secondary education and university qualifications. Observed cumulatively, more than half of mothers (55.8%) have education at ISCED level 5 or higher, which indicates a relatively high educational status of mothers in the sample. The data on father's education were available for 607 students (97.9%). The most represented level of education is also ISCED 3.4 (21.6%), followed by ISCED 5 (18.7%) and ISCED 6 (14%). In total, 48.5% of fathers have education at ISCED 5 or higher, which is somewhat lower in comparison to mothers, but still indicates a significant share of highly educated parents in the sample.

Data Analysis

The data used in this research were analyzed by applying the partial least squares structural equation modeling technique (PLS-SEM), which enables the examination of complex relationships between latent variables. Statistical processing was conducted using SmartPLS4 software, and the analyzed model included two exogenous latent variables (mother's education and father's education), one mediating variable (the number of books in the home library), and three endogenous variables (achievement in reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy).

The structural model was estimated on the basis of standardized path coefficients, whereby direct and indirect relationships between variables were tested. For testing the significance of effects, a *bootstrap* procedure with 5000 replications was used, whereby t-values and p-values were obtained for the assessment of the statistical significance of paths. Evaluation of model quality was performed on the basis of the values of coefficients of determination (R^2), which represent the percentage of explained variance for each dependent variable. In accordance with the recommendations in the literature, R^2 values of .75, .50, and .25 can be interpreted as high, moderate, and low (Hair et al., 2011).

Special attention was devoted to the examination of the mediating effects of the number of books in the household, in order to determine whether and to what extent the educational level of parents affects students' educational achievement indirectly through the availability of cultural and educational resources in the home environment. On the basis of total and specific indirect effects, the statistical significance of mediation was estimated, with the interpretation of effects in accordance with contemporary standards for PLS modeling. Considering that the research is focused on predictive relationships, and not on the confirmation of theoretical models, the PLS-SEM approach was evaluated as methodologically appropriate.

Results

The results of partial least squares (PLS-SEM) structural modeling indicate statistically significant relationships between parents' education, the number of books in the home library, and student achievement in the fields of reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy.

The analysis of direct effects shows that the number of books in the home library has a strong positive influence on all three dimensions of literacy: on mathematical literacy (β=.295, p<.001), on reading literacy (β=.302, p<.001), and on scientific literacy (β=.287, p<.001). The results indicate that students who have a greater number of books at home achieve higher results on PISA tests.

Parents' education has a significant influence on the number of books in the home library. Father's education (FISCED) shows a stronger effect (β=.168, p<.001) in comparison with mother's education (MISCED; β=.126, p=.004). The stated results indicate that a higher level of parents' education contributes to greater availability of cultural and educational resources in the family environment.

Table 4
Structural Paths and Mediating Effects in the PLS Model

Relationship	β coefficient	*t*-value	*p*-value
Direct Effects			
NB → ML	.295	7.65	< .001
NB → RL	.302	7.59	< .001
NB → SL	.287	7.36	< .001
FE → NB	.168	3.88	< .001
ME → NB	.126	2.86	.004
Indirect Effects (Mediation)			
FE → ML	.050	3.48	.001
FE → RL	.051	3.53	<.001
FE → SL	.048	3.46	.001
ME → ML	.037	2.62	.009
ME → RL	.038	2.63	.009
ME → SL	.036	2.63	.009

Note. NB – Number of Books in the Household, *ML* – mathematical literacy, *RL* – reading literacy, *SL* – scientific literacy, *FE* – father's education level, *ME* – mother's education level.

Observed through indirect effects, the findings show that the number of books in a home library has a significant mediating role in the relationship between parents' education and students' educational achievement. Both parents have statistically significant

indirect effects on all three literacy domains. Father's education indirectly affects mathematical literacy (β=.050, p=.001), reading literacy (β=.051, p<.001), and scientific literacy (β=.048, p=.001), while mother's education has somewhat weaker, but also significant indirect effects: mathematical literacy (β=.037, p=.009), reading literacy (β=.038, p=.009), and scientific literacy (β=.036, p=.009).

The values of the coefficient of determination (R^2) indicate that the model explains a relatively small percentage of the variance of the observed dependent variables: 6.6% for the number of books, 8.7% for mathematical literacy, 9.1% for reading literacy, and 8.3% for scientific literacy, which suggests that there are other factors that additionally influence student achievement and which are not included in this model.

In conclusion, the results indicate the existence of a significant mechanism through which the educational level of parents, indirectly through the number of books in the home library, influences the level of development of functional forms of literacy among students aged 15 years.

Discussion

The conducted empirical research had the aim of examining the connection of the home library with the educational achievement of students in Serbia. The number of books in the home library was set as a mediating variable in the relationship between the level of parents' formal education and student achievement on the PISA assessment.

Although the results give relatively low R^2 values, they show that the number of books in the home library has a statistically significant and relatively uniform positive effect on all three literacy domains – reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy. This finding is in accordance with previous research, which indicates that the home library does not represent only a resource specific to a certain school area, but is conceived as a general indicator of the cultural environment that encourages the development of cognitive abilities. as well as academic skills relevant for different types of educational tasks (Evans et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2014; Sikora, 2019). In that sense, the results confirm the significance of the theory of scholarly culture because this theory describes the mechanisms through which books influence the development of reading habits and positive attitudes toward learning, as well as the acquisition of knowledge at the micro level of analysis.

However, those mechanisms can be contextualized through Bourdieu's theoretical model, because it explains that the cultural practices of different social strata are differently valued by the educational system. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital contributes to the understanding of deeply rooted power relations which cause schools to recognize precisely those cultural forms that are characteristic of more educated strata as legitimate, by which schools enable children who originate from such families to convert their cultural resources into school success more easily.

In that regard, by further insight into the research results, significant effects of the education of both parents on the number of books within the home library were established, which, in accordance with Bourdieu's theory, indicates a strong connection between the institutionalized and objectified form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

The finding that the effect of father's education is somewhat more pronounced in relation to mother's education can be interpreted in the light of generational differences in the educational trajectories of parents. Nevertheless, considering that a secondary analysis of a study was performed, in which direct indicators of gender roles in family educational practices are not present, this finding should be interpreted cautiously. It is important to emphasize that the results showed that both parents have statistically significant indirect effects on all three literacy domains, which implies a joint contribution of the family cultural environment to the educational outcomes of students. Although the differences in the effects that parents' education has on different literacy domains are very small, it is noticed that both mother's education and father's education indirectly have the greatest influence on students' reading literacy.

A particularly significant finding relates to the mediating role of the number of books in the home library in the relationship between the level of parents' formal education and students' PISA achievement. These results indicate that the influence of parental education on educational outcomes is not direct, but is realized through indirect mechanisms that shape the everyday environment in which children grow up. Through the theoretical synthesis of the theory of scholarly culture and the theory of cultural capital in our research, we did not observe the home library either exclusively as one of the indicators of cultural capital, nor as an isolated educational resource, but as a structurally positioned cultural practice. We can conclude that its mediating role contributes to insight into the way in which scholarly culture intersects with the mechanisms of cultural reproduction.

Although the R^2 values are relatively low, they are in accordance with the findings of previous PISA studies and indicate that the home library represents one of the relevant, but not exclusive, mechanisms that contribute to the development of student competencies. Such results confirm that the functional literacies that PISA measures are the product of complex and long-term processes of socialization for cultural practices, within which no individual factor can have a dominant causal influence.

The relatively low percentage of explained variance indicates the limitations of reductionist interpretations of the effects of a home library. Instead of being interpreted as a weakness of the model, this finding is in accordance with the theoretical framework of cultural reproduction, which emphasizes that educational inequalities are produced through an interaction of different forms of capital – cultural, economic, social and symbolic – during a longer period of time. In that sense, the number of books in a home, although analytically significant, represents only one of the segments within a broader structure shaped by unequal educational opportunities. The results of our research indicate the relevance of the examined indicator if it is observed as the "tip of the iceberg" of complex social processes. We consider that precisely in that lies the analytical strength of the variable of the number of books – not in its predictive power, but in its possibilities to make structurally hidden mechanisms of reproduction empirically visible.

Finally, the obtained results have certain implications for the interpretation of PISA findings in public and political discourse. They indicate that educational differences measured by PISA assessment cannot be adequately explained nor mitigated by interventions directed exclusively at the material aspects of the family environment. Instead, the results

of this research encourage consideration of broader structural conditions, in which cultural resources are acquired and valued, and mediated through family and school practices that translate them into forms of knowledge recognized and rewarded in the educational system. Thereby, the home library is positioned not as a simple policy instrument, but as an indicator of deeper mechanisms of cultural and educational reproduction in contemporary Serbian society.

Conclusion

The results of PISA studies open space for the conceptualization of implications for educational and cultural policies. The findings of our research contributed to the confirmation of previous empirical research, which indicate a stable connection between the number of books at home and educational achievement. However, in forming recommendations for educational policies, caution is needed in the interpretation of the results. The obtained findings cannot be reduced to a simplified normative message, that would assume that increasing the availability of books automatically leads to the reduction of educational inequalities.

PISA studies examine student competencies as a measure of functional forms of literacy, however, the development of those competencies is deeply rooted in long-term processes of socialization for cultural practices, and they cannot be significantly improved by short-term interventions directed exclusively at material resources. The interpretation of PISA results through the prism of simple causal relationships between possession of books in the home library and student achievement leads to the depoliticization of structural inequalities, because it shifts the focus from the social conditions of the production of educational differences to individual and family "deficiencies." This, of course, in no way implies that interventions directed toward improving the material conditions of students are irrelevant (Štrangarić i sar., 2017), especially when the concept of cultural adaptation in which the flexibility of cultural practices is emphasized (Cvetičanin, 2007) and the cumulative character of the appropriation of cultural capital (Aschaffenburg & Mass, 1997) are taken into consideration. Nevertheless, such interventions, although necessary, are not sufficient if they are not accompanied by broader institutional and cultural changes.

In that sense, the analytical value of the variable of the number of books in a home library does not lie in its policy-potential as an instrument of intervention, but in its ability to indicate deeper, structurally rooted mechanisms of cultural and educational reproduction. Instead of being interpreted as a means of simple "improvement" of educational outcomes, this variable should be understood as an indicator of unequal starting positions that the educational system, including systems of external evaluation such as PISA, often confirms.

Observed in that way, the mediating role of the number of books, in the relationship between the educational level of parents and students' PISA competencies, does not represent a proof of a direct pedagogical effect of books, but an empirical articulation of the mechanism of cultural reproduction. Possession of books in a home library is marked as a material point of intersection of the institutionalized cultural capital of parents and

the dispositions of children, while the educational system, through PISA measurement instruments, values precisely those competencies that are most easily developed in a such environment.

The findings of this research need to be interpreted in the light of several methodological limitations. First, the analysis is based on secondary data from the PISA study, which implies limited control over the selection and operationalization of variables. Although standardized and internationally validated indicators were used, they inevitably reduce the complex social and cultural processes that are at the basis of educational inequalities. Further, the size of home library was used as a proxy indicator of cultural capital in its objectified form, which, as such, does not define the ways in which books are used in everyday family practices. In that regard, reliance on students' self-assessment can introduce a certain degree of error, considering that research has shown that students with higher achievement estimate the number of books in the household more precisely (Eriksson et al., 2022). Besides, it is necessary to emphasize that the established relationships should be interpreted as patterns of structural conditioning, not as direct causal mechanisms.

Finally, although the sample is representative for students aged 15 years in Serbia, the results cannot automatically be generalized to other ages, educational levels, or national contexts without additional empirical verification.

Recommendations for further research imply the inclusion of variables that would encompass family educational practices, parental aspirations, and symbolic orientations toward education. Of particular significance would be longitudinal study designs that would enable a more precise examination of the mechanisms of cultural and educational reproduction through concrete life trajectories. Although the quantitative methodological orientation is adequate for research on large samples of respondents and suitable for the application of a comparative approach, an inclusion of qualitative methods would enable a deeper understanding of the significance of possession of books within home libraries, and also elucidate the ways in which cultural resources are shaped into forms of knowledge, educational orientations, and aspirations that the educational system recognizes and values.

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Article received: 11.02.2026.
Updated version received: 06.04.2026.
Accepted for publishing: 27.04.2026.

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