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CULTURAL CAPITAL AND DIGITAL SKILLS OF ADULT LEARNERS IN GREECE

George Delibeys[1], Dimitris Vergidis[2], Eleni Delimpei[3i]
[1]PhD Candidate, University of Patras, Greece
[2]Professor Emeritus, University of Patras, Greece
[3]PhD Candidate, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Abstract:
This study examines the impact of cultural capital on the digital skills of adult learners in evening High Schools in Western Greece. In order to achieve this, Bourdieu's theoretical framework is employed, and the contribution of the three forms of cultural capital, namely institutionalised, objectified, and embedded, to the digital skills of adult learners is analysed. A quantitative methodology was employed, and a questionnaire was selected as the research instrument. The sample comprised 153 adult learners, and the data were analysed using SPSS. The findings indicate that adult learners with higher cultural capital demonstrate superior digital skills, particularly in information literacy, digital safety and problem-solving. It is concluded that unequal cultural capital is associated with the level of digital skills among learners, contributing to the perpetuation of inequalities.

Keywords: Bourdieu, cultural capital, digital skills, adult education, digital inequalities

1. Introduction

In order to examine the digital skills of adults attending evening High Schools in Western Greece in relation to other educational characteristics, we will employ Bourdieu's conceptual framework.

[i] Correspondence: email delibeis@sch.gr, vergidis@upatras.gr, edelimpe@gmail.com

Pierre Bourdieu introduces the concepts of *capital*, *habitus*, *field*, and *practice* as tools for analysing how social structures perpetuate social inequality and the distribution of power. Each of these concepts provides a foundation for understanding the processes through which social reality is shaped and maintained (Bourdieu, 1984; 1990).

Bourdieu (1986) defines capital as "*accumulated labour which, when appropriated by individuals or groups, enables them to acquire social power*". The accumulation of capital requires time and tends to reproduce itself, thereby enabling its holders to maintain or reinforce their social position. It manifests in three principal forms: *economic*, *cultural*, and *social* capital, which reflect the social structure and the capacity of individuals to achieve success.

As Bourdieu (1992, p. 50) states:

> "*The distribution of different forms of capital at a specific point in time reflects the structure of society, namely the constraints that exist within it and that determine how social reality functions on a constant basis and what the chances of success of human actions are.*"

The accumulation of these forms of capital reinforces the individual's position within the social space and influences their *habitus*.

The concept of *habitus* refers to the embodied dispositions and internalised attitudes that develop through the process of socialisation. This is a consequence of the individual's experiences and the capital they possess, and it determines how they perceive and react to social situations. It is a system of structures that guides individuals' perceptions, practices, and preferences, linking their position in social space to the way they react and act. The concept of *habitus* can be understood as a "practical feeling" about what to do in a particular situation, such as an athlete's feeling about the game. In other words, *habitus* connects the capital possessed by the individual to the way in which they act in the social realm (Bourdieu, 1986; 1998).

The *field* can be defined as the social context or space in which individuals and groups struggle to gain and retain capital. Each field has its own set of rules, hierarchies and forms of capital that are considered valuable. In this context, *habitus* determines how individuals interact and compete for control of resources and power (Bourdieu, 1986; 1998).

An individual's social *practice* is shaped by the interaction of three key parameters: the *field*, which represents the social environment; the *capital*, which represents the individual's resources; and the *habitus*, which determines the individual's attitudes and dispositions. The coexistence of these concepts demonstrates that social practices are not arbitrary occurrences; rather, they are the result of the interaction between social structures and individual resources and dispositions (Bourdieu, 1984).

The following section will examine the reproduction of educational and social inequalities through the lens of cultural capital and the digital divide. The third section will present the methodology employed in the research, followed by a presentation of the

research data. Subsequently, we will elaborate on the findings of our research and conclude with a synthesis of the conclusions drawn.

2. Theoretical Framework

In the initial section of this chapter, we present the theoretical framework of cultural capital in its objectified, institutionalised, and embedded forms, as conceptualised by Bourdieu. In the second part of this section, we examine the role of digital skills and competencies in exacerbating the digital divide.

2.1 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is not merely a matter of possessing knowledge or cultural artefacts; rather, it is also concerned with the manner in which these are deployed for the purposes of social distinction and status. The manner and form of an act or the handling of an object assume greater significance than its function. The distinctions that are most esteemed are those that clearly symbolise an individual's position within the social structure. These include, but are not limited to, clothing, language, accent and, in particular, 'manners', aesthetics and education. Such characteristics are often perceived as innate, emerging from the possession of certain attributes. Paradoxically, the very act of education itself becomes a form of these characteristics, "*transforming them into gifts and skills*" (Bourdieu, 1974, p. 60).

Bourdieu defines *cultural capital* as the aggregate of knowledge, skills and cultural practices acquired through socialisation and education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Cultural capital manifests in three primary forms, each of which plays a different role in the processes of social distinction and the reproduction of social order (Bourdieu, 1997):

a) The **embodied state**, which refers to the long-term dispositions of the mind and body, acquired through the socialisation process, which requires time and personal investment.
b) The **objectified state**, which includes cultural goods, which are material expressions of cultural knowledge.
c) The **institutionalised state**, which is linked to academic credentials that offer social recognition and value.

In the **embedded form**, cultural capital is the product of an internalisation process that necessitates a personal investment of time. The total duration of the acquisition of education can be employed as a measure of the volume of cultural capital. The education and knowledge that an individual acquires initially within the family environment, such as vocabulary, manners, aesthetics, and later in the school environment, become deeply embedded in the individual's personality. Such knowledge and skills become an integral part of one's identity and abilities, something that cannot be taken away or lost, in contrast to material possessions or titles that can be transferred or lost. This education is an enduring aspect of the individual's identity, persisting throughout their lifespan (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 114).

The **objectified form** of cultural capital is expressed in the collection of cultural objects, including works of art, books, and tools. Bourdieu (1982) characterises these as "*objects of exclusive ownership, either in material or symbolic form*", which require the investment of time, skills and abilities that "*are not distributed equally*" (Bourdieu, 1997).

The possession of educational qualifications, such as certificates of study and diplomas, represents the **institutionalised form** of cultural capital. This form of capital "*creates a strict dividing line between those who have passed the examinations and whose cultural capital is definitively guaranteed, and those who have not passed or are self-taught and must constantly prove their abilities*" (Jurt, 2012). This process ensures that individual knowledge and skills are transformed into cultural capital that is recognised and valued in the labour market (Bourdieu, 1997; 1998).

The scarcity of cultural capital is a significant factor in conferring advantages and benefits upon its owner. To illustrate, individuals who have obtained a university degree in a country with a high illiteracy rate, possess rare works of art, or have attained an excellent level of proficiency in a foreign language in an environment with limited opportunities for learning foreign languages, enjoy considerable professional advantages and greater social influence (Jurt, 2012).

In Bourdieu's view, the transmission of cultural capital represents the most insidious form of capital transmission, playing a pivotal role in perpetuating social inequalities. Bourdieu emphasises that educational institutions serve as a mechanism for perpetuating existing social stratifications. This is achieved by creating the false impression that the inculcation of knowledge and moral education of students is distinct from the maintenance of the class structure that characterises this society. The hidden mechanisms of academic processes reproduce social inequalities and class distinctions, while ostensibly offering all citizens equal opportunities for educational and social advancement. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 1998).

The three forms of cultural capital, i.e. embodied, objectified, and institutionalised, interact in a manner that serves to create and reinforce social inequalities. In this way, they confirm the crucial role of education as a mechanism for the reproduction of social structure.

2.2 Digital Skills

In the present era, the reproduction of social, educational and economic inequalities through cultural capital, as described by Bourdieu (1984), serves to reinforce the *digital divide* in society. This may be observed in three distinct ways (Rizza, 2006; 2010; 2023):

1) between those with digital access and those with limited or no access,
2) between those who know how to use digital technologies and those with little knowledge of how to use them,
3) between people who can act in the information and knowledge society and those who cannot.

The digital divide is not merely a question of access to technologies; it also concerns the fundamental abilities required to use them effectively. These skills, which

are collectively referred to as 21st-century skills, are of paramount importance for inclusion in the digital age.

Inequalities assume a novel form when the absence of *21st-century skills and competencies* constrains access to educational and professional prospects. Information literacy, communication and social responsibility are essential competencies for young people in order to work effectively in a constantly evolving professional environment and to participate in the social and democratic processes of their society as active citizens of the 21st century (Ananiadou & Claro, 21st Century Skills and Competences for New Millenium Learners in OECD countries, 2009).

Despite the recognition by OECD[ii] countries of the importance of 21st-century skills, the integration of such skills in education is confronted with a number of challenges. These include the lack of a clear definition and theoretical framework, as well as a lack of consensus regarding the most effective methods for developing, teaching and assessing these skills (Foster, 2023).

The European Council (2024) has emphasised that 21st-century skills are not solely a prerequisite for professional success; rather, they constitute an integral component of a holistic approach to lifelong learning. The European Council identifies digital competences as one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning. Such skills include the ability to use digital technologies with confidence, responsibility and critical thinking, thereby enabling citizens to engage actively in learning, work and society. This entails a comprehension of security, intellectual property, and legal matters, in addition to the generation and administration of digital content. In order to engage with digital technologies in an ethical, safe, and responsible manner, it is necessary to adopt a certain approach (European Council, 2019).

In order to enhance digital competencies, the European Council has adopted the Digital Competence Framework (DigComp), which outlines the essential skills required for participation in the information society. The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens is a pan-European tool that delineates the principal domains of digital competence. The latest iteration, DigComp 2.2, responds to the increased demands of digital literacy and encompasses knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the following areas: information literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, digital security, and problem-solving. (Digital Competence Framework for Citizens, 2024).

In particular, the term "*information literacy*" can be defined as an individual's capacity to identify, locate, assess, and utilise information in an appropriate and effective manner, irrespective of its format. The term "*communication and collaboration*" denotes the capacity of individuals to interact, communicate and collaborate through the utilisation of digital technologies. The term "*digital content creation*" denotes the capacity to produce and edit digital content, as well as to enhance and integrate information. The term "*digital security*" is used to describe the ability to protect digital devices, content, personal data, and privacy in digital environments. Finally, the term "*problem-solving*" is the capacity to

[ii] OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

discern and address digital issues through the utilisation of digital instruments (Vuorikari, Kluzer, & Punie, 2022).

The European Commission's 2023 report on digital literacy in Europe's schools indicates that the majority of countries begin teaching digital literacy at the primary level, employing a variety of pedagogical approaches. Nevertheless, the assessment of digital literacy through national examinations remains uncommon, and the majority of countries lack clearly defined requirements for the development of digital plans within the educational system. This has a significantly detrimental impact on the effective development of digital ecosystems in education, the promotion of equity in educational and professional opportunities, as well as the reduction of the digital divide (European Commission Eurydice, 2023).

It is important to note that an individual's digital competences accumulate and are gradually internalised over time, contingent on the degree of digital engagement. In combination with digital access, these competences define an individual's digital capital. Digital capital facilitates the development and utilisation of digital knowledge for the purpose of transforming it into economic, social, and cultural capital. Those with elevated digital capital enjoy a considerable advantage, as they are better positioned to leverage digital technologies for enhanced professional and personal development. This includes opportunities such as securing employment, pursuing training, and expanding one's social network. From this perspective, the digital capital of individuals, and more importantly, the digital divide, serves to exacerbate educational and social inequalities (Ragnedda & Ruiu, 2020; Δεληµπέης & Βεργίδης, 2022).

3. Methods

In order to investigate the contribution of cultural capital to the digital skills of adult learners in the evening General and Vocational High Schools of Western Greece, a field survey was selected as the research method. The data collection instrument employed was a self-administered questionnaire comprising closed-ended questions, some of which were Likert-type four-point scales and others multiple choice. The data were derived from a larger survey of which the available sample comprised 153 adult learners. It should be noted that the sample was not selected by random sampling, and therefore the findings of the survey cannot be generalised to the wider population.

The data were processed with the statistical software SPSS 29.0.2, and the data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The latter approach was employed with a view to evaluating the individual indicators related to the forms of cultural capital and digital skills.

The Kruskal-Wallis criterion (*KW*) was employed for the non-parametric analysis of variance of the data, while the non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficient was utilised to estimate the correlation between the ordinal scale variables (Παναγιωτακόπουλος & Σαρρής, 2017, pp. 216-223).

The mean was interpreted in accordance with the methodology proposed by Pornel *et al.* (2011):

Table 1: Interpretation of the mean

Mean	Value
1.00 – 1.49	Very low
1.50 – 2.49	Low
2.50 – 3.49	High
3.50 – 4.00	Very high

4. Results

This section presents the findings on the objectified, institutionalised, and embedded form of cultural capital, as well as the results on the digital skills of the adult learners in the sample.

4.1 Objectified cultural capital

In order to examine the objectified form of adult learners' cultural capital, respondents were requested to indicate the number of present books they have at home (see Table 2). The largest percentage of adult learners (49.7%) have up to 25 books at home. As the number of books increases, the percentage of learners with that number of books decreases. Specifically, 28.1% of learners have between 26 and 100 books, and 22.2% have more than 101 books.

Table 1: Number of present books at home of adult learners (N=153)

Number of books at home	Percentage
Up to 25 books	49.7% (n_1=76)
Between 26 and 100 books	28.1% (n_3=43)
More than 101 books	22.2% (n_4=34)

The results indicate that respondents tend to possess a relatively limited number of books. This finding may be indicative of their socioeconomic status and the extent of their objectified cultural capital.

4.2 Institutionalised cultural capital

The institutionalised form of cultural capital can be measured by the educational qualifications an individual has obtained. Consequently, respondents were asked to indicate their highest qualification prior to enrolling in the evening High School (see Table 3). The majority of respondents have obtained a Lower Secondary School Diploma, which is equivalent to a day or evening Lower Secondary School (49.7%) or a Second Chance School qualification (22.2%). 17% have completed secondary education (High School), while a much smaller percentage (11.1%) have higher secondary education qualifications.

Table 3: Higher education qualification for adult learners (N=153)

Higher education qualification	Percentage
Lower Secondary School Diploma	49.7% (n_1=76)
Second Chance School Diploma	22.2% (n_2=34)
High School Diploma	17.0% (n_3=26)
Post-Secondary Education or Higher Studies	11.1% (n_4=17)

The findings indicate a low level of institutionalised cultural capital among adult learners with compulsory education, i.e. Lower Secondary or Second Chance School Diploma, which may reflect limited opportunities for educational and social advancement.

4.3 Embedded Cultural Capital

Three sets of questions were created to assess the embedded form of adult learners' cultural capital:

a) The first set included *cultural and educational activities*, specifically how much adult learners enjoyed reading literary books, attending theatre performances, visiting museums and archaeological sites, learning foreign languages or doing crafts.
b) The second group included adult learners' *social activities*, i.e. how much they enjoyed going to concerts, going out with friends, tourism and excursions.
c) The third group concerned *leisure activities*, namely how much adult learners enjoyed listening to general music or popular songs, going to the cinema, watching TV series, TV programmes, films, football or general sports matches.

To construct the indicators, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was examined for each set of questions, which showed that the level of reliability for cultural and educational activities as well as social activities is high ($\alpha > 0.8$), while for leisure activities, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient showed an acceptable level of reliability ($\alpha > 0.7$) (Κυριαζή, 2011; Παναγιωτακόπουλος & Σαρρής, 2017).

The index of *cultural and educational activities* of adult learners was found to be **high** ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 0.728$). This means that adult learners show a high interest in reading literary books, visiting museums or archaeological sites, attending theatre performances, making handicrafts or learning foreign languages.

The *social activities* index of adult learners is **high** ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.742$). This means that adult learners have a high preference for attending concerts, travelling and leisure trips, as well as meeting and hanging out with their friends.

The *leisure* index of adult learners is **low** ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 0.583$). This means that adult learners participate to a low extent in leisure activities such as listening to music in general or folk songs in particular, going to the cinema, watching TV series, programmes or films, and watching football or other sports.

In summary, adult learners have **high rates** of *cultural*, *educational and social* activities and **low rates** of *leisure* activities. Adult learners seem to focus on activities that

contribute to the acquisition of identifiable skills and knowledge that enhance their social position. Their choice to spend time on cultural and social activities rather than leisure activities can be interpreted as a strategy to accumulate cultural capital that is recognised by society.

4.4 Digital Skills

The assessment of adult learners' *digital skills* was based on the European framework for digital competence for citizens, "DigComp 2.2" (Vuorikari, Kluzer, & Punie, 2022). The framework consists of five modules: information literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, digital security and problem-solving. The sample respondents answered 21 closed-ended questions using a Likert-type scale with values: 1 = 'not at all', 2 = 'a little', 3 = 'a lot' and 4 = 'very much'.

In order to create the indices, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was examined for each of the five groups of questions. It was found that the values of all indicators are acceptable ($\alpha > 0.7$) or high ($\alpha > 0.8$). In particular, the level of reliability for information literacy and digital security is acceptable, while the level of reliability for communication and collaboration, digital content creation and problem-solving is high (Κυριαζή, 2011; Παναγιωτακόπουλος & Σαρρής, 2017).

4.4.1 Index of Information Literacy

During the data analysis, the *information literacy* index of the adult learners was rated as **low** ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.929$). This indicates that the adult learners in the sample scored low in assessing the reliability of digital information, filtering digital content, and using digital storage services.

4.4.2 Index of Communication and Collaboration

Similarly, the *communication and collaboration* index of the adult learners in the sample was rated as **low** ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 0.835$). This indicates that adult learners show low levels of using a wide range of digital tools, information sharing technologies or online services as citizens, fostering collaborative processes, developing strategies to deal with cyberbullying and knowing how to manage digital information practices collected on the internet.

4.4.3 Index of Digital Content Creation

The *digital content creation* index of the adult learners in the sample was also rated as **low** ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.833$). This means that the adult learners scored low in producing complex digital content, integrating different forms of content, being able to use copyrighted digital content and programming an application.

4.4.4 Index of Digital Security

The *digital security* index of the adult learners in the sample was rated as **low** (*M* = 2.27, *SD* = 0.839). This means that adult learners have little knowledge about security programmes, privacy policies, developing strategies to limit the use of digital technologies, and using them with respect for the environment.

4.4.5 Index of Problem-solving

The *problem-solving* index of the adult learners in the sample was rated as **low** (*M* = 2.31, *SD* = 0.882). This means that adult learners have little knowledge about solving technical problems via the Internet, setting up digital technologies for personal needs or creative use, and often enriching their digital knowledge.

The results showed that adult learners performed poorly in all areas of digital literacy, with the digital content creation index being the lowest (M = 2.06, SD = 0.833), suggesting limited skills in creating complex digital content or programming an application. Analysis of the data suggests that adult learners have difficulty using advanced digital technologies, which may have a negative impact on their ability to participate fully in the information society.

5. Discussion

In order to assess the contribution of cultural capital to adult learners' digital skills, we examined the correlations between all forms of cultural capital, the objectified, institutionalised, and embedded forms, with indicators of digital skills, namely information literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, security and problem-solving.

5.1 Objectified Cultural Capital and Digital Skills

For the objectified form of cultural capital, we found that there is a statistically significant correlation:

- between the digital security index and the number of books at home, $KW(153) = 10.18$; $p < .05$ and
- between the problem-solving index and the number of books at home, $KW(153) = 6.59$; $p < .05$.

The data were then analysed using the Mann-Whitney's U test for two independent samples. It was found that individuals with 26 to 100 books at home (28.1%) had a higher safety index or a higher problem-solving index than those with up to 25 books at home (49.7%), although the effect size was small.

5.2 Institutionalized Cultural Capital and Digital Skills

For the institutionalised form of cultural capital, we found that there is a statistically significant correlation:

- between the information literacy index and the level of education, $KW(153) = 11.14$; $p < .01$,

- between the communication and cooperation index and the level of education, $KW(153) = 14.36$; $p < .01$; $p < .01$,
- between the index of digital content creation and the level of education, $KW(153) = 9.9$; $p > .05$,
- between the security index and the level of education, $KW(153) = 21.61$; $p < .01$, and
- between the problem-solving index and level of education, $KW(153) = 14.02$; $p < .01$.

The analysis showed that a high level of education increases the level of digital literacy. In particular, there is statistical significance between institutionalised cultural capital and all digital indicators, namely information literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, security and problem-solving.

5.3 Embedded Cultural Capital and Digital Skills

For the embedded form of cultural capital, we first calculated Spearman's correlation coefficient rho (r_s) because the pairs of variables did not follow the normal distribution. In addition, the effect size for each of the following correlations was found to be small (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 521).

We found that there was a statistically significant correlation between

- the index of cultural and educational activities with the index of information literacy, $r_s(151) = .269$; $p < .01$,
- the index of cultural and educational activities with the index of communication and cooperation, $r_s(151) = .197$; $p < .05$,
- the index of cultural and educational activities with the index of safety, $r_s(151) = .277$; $p < .01$,
- the index of social activities with the index of information literacy, $r_s(151) = .185$; $p < .05$,
- the social activities index with the communication and cooperation index, $r_s(151) = .304$; $p < .01$,
- the social activities index with the digital content creation index, $r_s(151) = .206$; $p < .05$,
- the social activities index with the security index, $r_s(151) = .238$; $p < .01$,
- the social activities index with the problem-solving index, $r_s(151) = .204$; $p < .05$, and
- the leisure index with the safety index, $r_s(151) = .159$; $p < .05$.

Individuals who have a high index of cultural and educational activities tend to have a high index of information literacy, a high index of communication and cooperation, and a high index of safety. In particular, those who have a high index of social activities tend to have high indexes of digital skills, namely information literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, security and problem-solving. Those with a high-security index also tend to have high indicators in cultural and educational activities, social activities, and leisure activities.

In summary, the analysis revealed significant correlations between cultural capital and adult learners' digital skills (see Table 4).

Specifically, the objectified form of cultural capital, as reflected by the number of books at home, was positively related to indicators of digital literacy such as safety and problem-solving. This suggests that learners who have more books outside of school tend to be more familiar with the safe use of digital tools and technical problem-solving. In our study, the majority have a maximum of 25 books at home, so they have low object-oriented cultural capital, which suggests low digital safety and problem-solving indicators.

Table 4: Statistical significance between cultural capital and digital skills

	Information literacy index	**Communication and collaboration index**	**Digital content creation index**	**Digital security index**	**Problem-solving index**
Objectified cultural capital				X	X
Institutionalized cultural capital	X	X	X	X	X
Embedded cultural capital: cultural and educational activities index	X	X		X	
Embedded cultural capital: social activities index		X	X	X	X
Embedded cultural capital: leisure activities index				X	

The number of books at home is an indicator of academic or social success (Sieben & Lechner, 2019), it is a form of "*objectified cultural capital*" (Bourdieu, 1979; 1984; 1997). In international studies such as PISA[iii], the number of books at home is used as an indicator of socio-economic and cultural capital (OECD, 2017), or as part of an indicator of material educational resources (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Hooper, 2017). The limited number of books at home limits the opportunities for adult learners to develop digital skills.

Moreover, the institutionalised form of cultural capital, examined through the level of education, shows positive correlations with all indicators of digital literacy. Higher levels of education lead to better development of digital skills, such as the ability to use and evaluate information, develop complex digital content, and solve technical problems.

Educational attainment is the main mechanism for reproducing social inequalities (Bourdieu, 1984; 1997; Swartz, 1997). Recent research (Boeren, Cabus, & Mackie, 2023; Saar, Roosmaa, & Martma, 2023) shows that people with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in lifelong learning and thus to be trained in new (digital) technologies. On the other hand, those with lower levels of education face more barriers, such as limited access to educational opportunities, lack of resources, and access difficulties due to geographical and economic factors. The majority of people in our

[iii] PISA = Programme for International Student Assessment

survey have only completed compulsory education (Lower Secondary School or Second Chance School), which indicates a low level of digital literacy.

Finally, the embedded form of cultural capital, expressed through cultural, social and leisure activities, shows positive correlations with all digital skills.

These findings suggest that learners who are actively involved in cultural activities and social networks tend to develop more integrated digital skills, thereby increasing their cultural capital.

According to Bourdieu (1984; 1986; 1990), activities that are part of cultural and educational practices, such as reading, visiting museums and exhibitions, but also social activities (such as networking and cultural events) are forms of capital that society considers 'high value' and 'recognisable' in the cultural hierarchy. These activities increase one's cultural capital and act as symbols of social distinction, as participants often develop skills and attitudes that are socially recognised and rewarded.

In contrast, according to Bourdieu (ibid), leisure activities such as watching television or typical forms of relaxation are not considered socially 'productive' or 'identifiable'. They fall into a less valued realm of cultural practices that do not significantly increase cultural capital. Leisure activities are often considered to have a lower 'cultural value' and are not related to the accumulation of knowledge or skills associated with improving digital literacy.

Activities that are considered 'high value' in the cultural hierarchy seem to enhance not only cultural capital but also the skills needed for the digital age. Recognised cultural and social engagement, as opposed to purely recreational experiences, enriches individuals with the skills needed to develop and use digital skills, thereby improving their social position through digital inclusion.

6. Conclusion

This study highlighted the importance of cultural capital in the development of adult learners' digital skills, showing that individuals with higher levels of institutionalised, embedded, and objectified cultural capital performed better in key digital skills. Specifically, learners with higher levels of education and ownership of cultural assets such as books demonstrated higher levels of security, problem-solving and digital content-creation skills.

The findings confirm Bourdieu's theoretical propositions about the reproduction of social inequalities through cultural capital, as digital skills, which are essential 21st-century competencies for participation in the digital society, appear to be strongly influenced by the level of cultural capital of individuals. The research suggests that adults with lower levels of cultural capital may have fewer opportunities to develop digital skills, widening the digital divide and exacerbating social inequalities.

The study was based on a non-random sample from the region of Western Greece, which limits the generalisability of the findings. However, the findings provide valuable evidence of the relationship between cultural capital and digital inclusion, paving the

way for future research that could explore this relationship in more representative samples and different socio-economic contexts.

In conclusion, this research confirms the critical role of cultural capital in shaping digital literacy.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

Mr George Delibeys is a Computer Science teacher in Secondary Vocational Education and a PhD candidate at the Department of Educational Sciences and Social Work of the University of Patras. He is a graduate of the Department of Computer & Information Technology Engineering of the University of Patras and holds a Master degree in "Computational Mathematics – Informatics in Education". He is also a certified adult educator and his research interests focus on the use of Information and Communication Technologies in evening High Schools and adult education.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9883-4086

Mr Dimitris Vergidis is a Greek academic and Professor Emeritus of the University of Patras. He specializes in adult education, education policy and lifelong learning strategies. He has participated in dozens of research projects, has studied Second Chance Schools in Greece, and is the author of numerous books and scholarly articles. He has also participated in European educational research, contributing to the development of educational innovation strategies. He has taught at several universities and has been a researcher in several research projects. His work focuses on the study of training needs, the strengthening of educational policies and the empowerment of adult education in Greece and Europe.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8635-3207

Ms Eleni Delimpei is a Computer Science teacher in Primary Education and a PhD candidate at the Department of Philosophy and Education of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She is a graduate of the Department of Computer Science of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and holds two Master's degrees, one in Computer Science with a specialisation in "Information and Communication Technologies in Education", and one in "Psychopedagogy of Inclusion: School for All" with a specialisation in "Psychopedagogical Components of Multiculturalism". Her research interests focus on the use of Information and Communication Technologies in social-emotional learning programmes.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-4351-3599

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