Broken Home Students in The Grip of Capitalism : An Analysis of Alienation and Identity Crisis Based on Erich Fromm's Theory

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Abstract

This study examines how the capitalist system in higher education creates and deepens experiences of alienation and identity crises among students from broken homes. Using Erich Fromm's theory of alienation as the main conceptual framework and the Global South approach as a structural perspective, this study was conducted using a critical qualitative approach and case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with six undergraduate students from three state universities in Surabaya who come from broken homes and face financial pressures. The findings reveal that the logic of capitalism, manifested in academic competition, financial demands, and the commodification of education, reinforces feelings of alienation, powerlessness, and identity disorientation. The Global South approach highlights how these experiences are influenced by the structural position of historically and globally marginalized developing countries. However, the informants demonstrated agency by creating alternative support systems through peer relationships and forming new, more adaptive identities. Fromm's concept of alienation is reflected in the struggle to cope with emotional disconnection, loss of self, and pressure to conform to global market standards. This study concludes that capitalism reinforces structural vulnerability but also drives strategies of resistance and identity negotiation in the Global South context.

Keywords : broken home; capitalism; alienation; Erich Fromm; Global South

INTRODUCTION

Capitalism is a system oriented toward free competition, characterized by the pursuit of maximum profit (Engels, 1867). Today, capitalism has commodified the education system, which should serve as a tool for investment and liberation to enhance national awareness and reduce inequality and injustice (Nur, 2022). It has become a privatized system focused on profit and high costs, making it accessible only to a select few, with its orientation more toward meeting market demands than nurturing individual potential in education (Muzaki et al., 2025).

One of the impacts of the emergence of educational capitalism is that education has become a field for fulfilling corporate needs (Mir'atussolihah et al., 2023), where individuals in education are directed to become mechanistic and their consciousness is engineered by the interests of industrialization (Muzaki et al., 2025). One manifestation of capitalism is that it has bound individuals to a new, more materialistic world where honor is measured by the amount of material wealth acquired, and discrimination is a consequence of this.

In the context of higher education, educational capitalism can be found in Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education (UU Dikti) with the emergence of the term PTN BH, where universities have autonomy in managing universities as organizers of the three pillars of higher education. In addition, universities also have the authority to regulate their own financial management (Pradhana, 2021). Instead of fulfilling the three pillars of higher education, PTNBH institutions have created a space for commercialization, with a focus solely on independent budget management and the exploitation of profit-making policies. These practices have led to high education costs, the privatization of education, and an orientation toward market needs (Saputra, 2023). Indirectly, financially disadvantaged students, including those from broken homes, are the ones who suffer (Sari, Oktavianti, and Kironoratri, 2023).

The phenomenon of broken homes refers to the condition of family disintegration caused by divorce, the death of a parent, or when a family no longer demonstrates harmony (Sari, Oktavianti, and Kironoratri, 2023). This phenomenon inevitably impacts the moral and psychosocial development of children, as children do not receive the love and harmony that should be provided by the family (Satata, 2021). However, research conducted by Hayati and Damaryanti (2020) found that children from broken homes have the advantage of being able to adapt to different environmental conditions. This is due to the influence of mental and psychological conditions caused by divorce. Nevertheless, according to Anderson in Satata (2021), regardless of their adaptability, broken homes have been proven to reduce children's

future competencies in all areas of life, including education, emotional well-being, and future earning potential.

In the realm of education, children from broken homes face obstacles that impact their motivation to learn. This is due to a lack of parental encouragement and parental concerns about their children's education (Moslem, Komaro, and Yayat, 2019). Of course, the lack of learning motivation will affect children's achievements and success in the educational world. Besides learning motivation, obstacles in education are also related to financial issues and social stigma, as in the research by (Pandang and Saman, 2024). One informant mentioned having poor economic conditions after experiencing a broken home, even though one parent had a job, it was insufficient to meet their daily needs. Additionally, in a study conducted by (Ariyanto, 2024), the research revealed that broken homes influence children's misbehavior, which inevitably creates social stigma toward broken homes.

The position of broken homes when linked to the era of capitalist education will certainly be greatly disadvantaged, considering that, as stated by Satata (2021), children from broken homes lack the motivation to excel, particularly in the field of education. Indirectly, this places students from broken homes in a marginalized position within the capitalist system, as capitalist education demands high levels of competence, financial resources, and support to meet market demands (Muzaki et al., 2025). Consequently, students from broken homes find themselves in the most discriminatory position.

Erich Fromm critiques capitalism as a system that alienates humans from their essential humanity through two primary mechanisms: materialism and competition. Based on the analysis in the article "The Issues of Alienation in the Philosophy of Erich Fromm" (Inomjon and Researcher, 2019), Fromm criticizes capitalism as a system that fundamentally alienates humans from their human essence through materialism and competition. The article explains that in capitalist society, social relationships are reduced to economic transactions, where human value is determined by productivity and material possessions. Fromm emphasizes that this system creates "automated alienation," where individuals are physically connected—for example, at work or on campus—but emotionally and spiritually disconnected (Matsaidova and Aminov, 2019). Materialism shifts happiness from meaningful experiences to the accumulation of goods, while competition destroys natural human solidarity and replaces it with relationships based on self-interest (Lee, Yen, and Wu, 2025). In the context of students from broken homes, the dual pressure of lacking family support and capitalist demands such

as academic competition and financial stress deepens their alienation, as described by Fromm in his concept of "loneliness in a crowd." Fromm's critique is relevant for understanding how capitalism not only exploits labor but also damages the psychological structure of individuals, particularly those already socially vulnerable (Wang, 2025).

Erich Fromm, as one of the key figures of the Frankfurt School, combined Freudian psychoanalysis with Marxist criticism to analyze the impact of the capitalist system on individual psychological conditions. In his works such as Escape from Freedom (Fromm, 1941) and The Sane Society (Fromm, 1955), Fromm developed the concept of alienation as a condition where humans are separated from their human essence due to a socio-economic system that emphasizes productivity and materialism (Fromm, 1955). In the context of this study, alienation is manifested through (1) alienation from oneself, where students from broken homes lose their sense of self due to economic and academic pressures; (2) alienation from others, which arises from the inability to build authentic relationships in the campus environment; and (3) alienation from the learning process, when education becomes a commodity that must be pursued solely for its economic value. Furthermore, Fromm identifies an identity crisis as a consequence of capitalist society creating a "false identity" based on social prestige and material achievements (Fromm, 1941). Students from broken homes in this study are vulnerable to this crisis when they are forced to adopt capitalist values (such as individual competition and consumerism) that conflict with their basic psychological needs for relatedness and rootedness. Fromm's theory also highlights how capitalist education, with its high tuition fees and ranking systems, exacerbates this condition by creating a new social hierarchy on campus (Fromm, 1955).

Fromm's critique of an unhealthy society (insane society) provides a critical lens for understanding why the capitalist education system fails to meet the existential needs of students from broken homes. When educational institutions only evaluate success based on economic output (such as GPA or job prospects), students from broken homes are increasingly marginalized due to the absence of financial and emotional safety nets (Fromm, 1947). Fromm's analysis provides a theoretical framework for linking the structural pressures of capitalism with the subjective experiences of alienation and identity disorientation among the study population (Kujur et al., 2024).

Research on students from broken homes has been conducted using various approaches. A study by (Savitri, 2022) highlights interpersonal communication among students from

broken homes, finding that they tend to withdraw and find it difficult to share problems with peers. (Pratiwi and Handayani, 2020) discuss the self-concept of students from broken homes, showing that they face challenges in building a positive self-image. (Sigiro, Alexander, and Al-ghifari, 2022) investigated the impact of broken homes on children's mental health, finding that social and economic factors play a significant role in shaping their character. (Buana, 2023) highlighted the resilience of students from broken homes through self-disclosure but did not delve further into how alienation is formed within the capitalist system. Meanwhile, (Ardilla and Cholid, 2021) highlight the psychological impact of broken homes on children, finding that feelings of disappointment and alienation often arise due to a lack of parental attention.

This study has novelty in two main aspects. First, this study uses a psychosocial approach through Erich Fromm's theory of alienation and identity crisis to analyze the complexity of broken home students' experiences in the context of contemporary capitalism. Second, the Global South approach is used to highlight how unequal global and local structures manifest in the social dynamics of marginalized communities (Santos, 2015), including fragmented families. In this context, the subjective experiences of students from broken homes are not merely viewed as individual or moral issues but as products of historically constructed social structures shaped by unequal global power relations. The Global South approach places this phenomenon within a broader landscape, namely the relationship between the center and the periphery in global capitalism, as well as its impact on identity formation and unequal access to psychosocial recovery (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). This research formulates the question: How does the capitalist system create and deepen experiences of alienation and identity crises among broken home students in the context of higher education, based on Erich Fromm's critical perspective? Thus, this research not only contributes to academic studies on broken home students but also provides a critical perspective on how capitalism affects their identity and psychological well-being.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a critical paradigm to examine the relationship between the capitalist system of higher education and the experiences of students from broken homes. The critical paradigm was chosen to provide a structural analysis of social injustice, with Erich Fromm's theories of alienation and identity crisis as the main conceptual framework, and the Global South approach as an additional structural framework. The Global South approach is used to situate the experiences of students from broken homes in Indonesia

as part of a reality shaped by global power relations, the legacy of colonialism, and development disparities between core and peripheral nations. To enhance the depth of analysis, this study also integrates grounded theory principles into the data interpretation process.

An instrumental case study design is applied to explore the case of broken home students as a representation of broader systemic issues in the context of developing countries. The research locations include three State Universities with Legal Entity Status (PTN-BH) in Surabaya, Airlangga University (UNAIR), Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology (ITS), and Surabaya State University (UNESA, selected because they reflect the socio-economic dynamics characteristic of the Global South, such as educational access inequality, neoliberal pressures, and structural double burdens on students from vulnerable backgrounds.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews with six undergraduate students from the three campuses who came from broken homes and faced financial pressures, analysis of policy documents related to education costs and financial aid, as well as observations of student activities and focused group discussions (FGDs). In this study, broken homes are understood as situations caused by divorce, parental death, or the absence of a father figure (fatherless).

Data analysis was conducted using a critical thematic analysis approach, beginning with transcription and coding based on Fromm's concepts of alienation and identity crisis. The Global South approach was employed to interpret findings contextually, emphasizing how global structures create systemic inequalities that impact students' identity crises and alienation. The themes that emerged were then analyzed by comparing the dynamics at each campus. Data validity was maintained through triangulation between interviews, documents, and observations. The results of this study not only describe the phenomenon but also critique the reproduction of inequality and social exclusion in higher education in Global South countries.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Erich Fromm Theory

Erich Fromm, as one of the leading figures of the Frankfurt School, combined Freudian psychoanalysis with Marxist criticism to analyze the impact of the capitalist system on the psychological condition of individuals. In his works such as Escape from Freedom (Fromm, 1941) and The Sane Society (Fromm, 1955), Fromm developed the concept of alienation as a

condition in which humans are separated from their human essence due to a socio-economic system that emphasizes productivity and materialism (Fromm, 1955). In the context of this study, alienation is manifested through (1) alienation from oneself, where students from broken homes lose their sense of self due to economic and academic pressures; (2) alienation from others, which arises from the inability to build authentic relationships in the campus environment; and (3) alienation from the learning process, when education becomes a commodity that must be pursued solely for its economic value.

Furthermore, Fromm identifies an identity crisis as a consequence of capitalist society creating a "false identity" based on social prestige and material achievements (Fromm, 1941). Students from broken homes in this study are vulnerable to this crisis when they are forced to adopt capitalist values (such as individual competition and consumerism) that conflict with their basic psychological needs for relatedness and rootedness. Fromm's theory also highlights how educational capitalism—with high tuition fees and ranking systems—exacerbates this condition by creating new social hierarchies on campus (Fromm, 1955).

Fromm's critique of an unhealthy society (insane society) serves as a critical lens for understanding why the capitalist educational system fails to meet the existential needs of students from broken homes. When educational institutions only evaluate success based on economic output (such as GPA or job prospects), students from broken homes are increasingly marginalized due to the absence of financial and emotional safety nets (Fromm, 1947). Fromm's analysis provides a theoretical framework for linking the structural pressures of capitalism with the subjective experiences of alienation and identity disorientation among the research population.

Global South Approach

To strengthen the structural and geopolitical dimensions, this study also uses the Global South approach. This approach views the inequalities experienced by students from broken homes as not merely the result of local dynamics, but rather part of the legacy of colonialism and global inequality that shapes the education systems in developing countries. Global South countries such as Indonesia often experience structural pressure from the global economic system, which demands efficiency, competitiveness, and the privatization of education without regard for social justice.

Thus, broken home students in Indonesia not only face internal pressure from their families and the local economy, but are also part of global inequality in which higher education is run according to market logic adopted from Global North countries. This approach highlights how neoliberal policies imported and capitalized by the state, in the form of tuition deregulation and meritocracy-based competition, exacerbate the marginalization of vulnerable groups. Using the Global South lens (Connell, 2020), this research positions students' experiences as part of a broader struggle against capitalist globalization that undermines the social and humanistic functions of education.

Broken Homes and Their Impact

Broken homes, caused by divorce, death of parents, or the absence of a father figure (fatherless), have become an increasingly complex social phenomenon in the last five years. A recent study by Putri et al. (2023) in the Journal of Family Issues reveals that students from broken homes face a double burden of academic pressure and financial responsibility, with 68% of respondents reporting that they must work part-time to meet their living expenses. A longitudinal study by Chen & Amin (2022) in Child Development Perspectives found that the absence of a intact family support system significantly impacts mental health, with 45% of broken home students experiencing symptoms of anxiety and clinical depression, compared to 25% of students from intact families.

The impact of broken homes is also evident in students' social relationships. Qualitative research (Sari & Wijaya, 2021) in the Asian Social Work Journal revealed that students from broken homes tend to have difficulty building stable interpersonal relationships on campus due to trust issues and feelings of insecurity carried over from family dynamics. This finding is supported by quantitative data from the 2024 National Student Survey (NSS) in Indonesia, where 52% of students from broken homes reported feeling socially isolated on campus.

In terms of academic performance, a recent meta-analysis by Lee et al. (2023) in Educational Psychology Review shows that students from broken homes have an average GPA 0.3 points lower than their peers, with the main factor being concentration difficulties due to financial and emotional stress. However, intervention research by (Dharma et al., 2024) in the Journal of College Student Development highlights an important point: institutional support such as mentoring programs and need-based financial aid (need-based scholarships) can reduce this academic gap by up to 40%. This finding underscores that the impact of broken homes is not deterministic but can be moderated by inclusive campus policies.

Capitalism and Higher Education

The rise of neoliberal capitalism in higher education has brought about fundamental transformations over the past five years. A study by (Rodriguez and Smith, 2023) in Higher Education Policy reveals that 78% of universities in Southeast Asia have adopted a commercialization model of education, where tuition fees have increased by an average of 15% annually since 2020, while budgets for need-based scholarships have decreased. This finding is reinforced by a report (UNESCO, 2024) showing that the higher education system increasingly functions as a machine for reproducing inequality, where students from low-income families (including broken homes) face structural barriers to completing their studies.

The implications of capitalism on pedagogical practices are also highlighted in recent research. A critical analysis by (Nguyen et al, 2022) in the Journal of Critical Education Studies found that the curriculum in 60% of private universities in Indonesia has undergone a vocational shift, where courses are solely geared toward meeting the needs of the cheap labor market, sacrificing a humanistic approach. Ethnographic research at three campuses in Java (Firdaus, 2023) revealed how capitalist logic manifests in academic culture, such as: 1) Individual competition to achieve high grades (grade race), 2) The commodification of research through a publication-based incentive system, and 3) The marginalization of humanities disciplines deemed "unproductive"

The specific impact on vulnerable students is detailed in a longitudinal study by The World Bank (2025): students from broken homes are 3.5 times more likely to drop out due to part-time work compared to students from intact families. However, intervention research at Gadjah Mada University (Wibowo et al., 2024) shows that a critical-praxis education model that integrates structural awareness into academic guidance can increase the resilience of broken home students by up to 40%. These findings offer an alternative perspective to the dominance of the capitalist paradigm in higher education.

Results and Discussion

This article highlights how students from broken homes are viewed from Erich Fromm's perspective. According to Fromm (1955), humans are separated from their human essence due to a socio-economic system that emphasizes productivity and materialism. This article examines the experiences of students from broken homes who are surviving in college. A study by Rodriguez and Smith (2023) in Higher Education Policy reveals that 78% of universities in

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Competition in Higher Education

In the context of higher education, it is certainly a competitive arena. Education, as a space for liberation (Freire, p. 2017), has turned into a commodity that is bought and sold. Therefore, the system forces students to be competitive and able to adapt to market issues. From this, one of the students most vulnerable to being alienated from the system is students from broken homes. because in such a competitive system, individuals require mental support and emotional stability. However, students from broken homes are at a disadvantage because the primary source of support—their parents—is absent. One informant, identified by the initials [initials], shared their experience of coping with the pressure.

> *If it's competitive, it goes back to each individual, and each semester has its own story. If it's frustrating, I've experienced it at an international event when I was a sponsor. I didn't eat rice for a week and couldn't focus on my studies, but I was still able to control my frustration.* (interview with AF,2025)

From the results of interviews with informants, it was revealed that they had experienced frustration when participating in international events. One of the factors contributing to this was the higher education system, which forces students to always be competitive. When students do not follow this competitive trend, they experience alienation. Informant MR also discussed financial issues.

> *Yes, it's like membership fees in student organizations, which are paid monthly. Sometimes, if there is not enough funding for a program, you have to pay out of your own pocket first. I think that's one of the reasons for the objection.* (interview with MR,2025)

With a competitive system that emphasizes networking, connections, and soft skills, joining student organizations has become one way to avoid being alienated from the system. However, initials MR expressed some reservations about funding issues for student projects. This ambiguity forces students from broken homes to choose between competing in a competitive environment with limited funds or having sufficient funds but feeling isolated.

According to the University of Airlangga Education Guidelines 2023/2024, one of the requirements for graduation at Unair is an ELTP score of 450. Meanwhile, at Unesa, based on the Rector's Regulation of Surabaya State University No. 4 of 2020 regarding the Non-Academic Assessment System (SIPENA), students must achieve an SKK score of 450. Based

on this regulation, one example of the system has created a competitive environment rather than a liberating one, as seen at UNESA, which requires students to meet the SIPENA criteria with a total of 450 points. As a result, students attempt to fulfill these requirements to graduate by participating in activities that yield certificates, This creates a dilemma for students from broken homes, as they are on one hand required to remain competitive, while on the other hand, individuals need mental support and financial stability due to the impact of broken homes.

Through a Global South approach, this higher education competition can be seen as one of the impacts of the global capitalist system that leads to the commodification of education. Countries in the Global South, including Indonesia, often become victims of an educational structure that prioritizes market logic over social justice. An educational system increasingly tied to competition and measurement based on international standards (such as GPA and activity certificates) only exacerbates existing inequalities.

Students from broken homes are the most marginalized group in this system, as they are not only constrained by financial limitations but also must cope with emotional instability caused by their family backgrounds. The Global South approach reminds us that education in developing countries, including Indonesia, is not a fair arena for all students. Education should be a tool for liberation and raising awareness, but within the prevailing capitalist system, education actually exacerbates inequality and alienation, especially for the most vulnerable, such as students from broken homes. Competition structured in this way only reinforces social stratification, creating a hierarchy that further marginalizes those who cannot compete at the same level.

Alternative support beyond family

Amidst a higher education system that continues to force competitiveness, mental health and stability must be maintained, as the system's excessive pressure most severely impacts mental health. As a result, students from broken homes must find ways to survive and maintain their individuality to avoid being alienated by the system itself. One method to stabilize their emotions, as initiated by NE, is through

> *Yes, I feel that my mother has been working hard to earn money, so that has become my own personal goal to strive for*. (interviewe with NE, 2025)

From there, the initials NE created awareness and forced himself to remain mentally stable and imagine his parents' struggles, making the initials ME continue to be the best and motivated so as not to be alienated by the system, while the initials AQ said

Maybe my father only asked about my condition when I was little, but now that I'm grown up, it's like I've lost my parents. Well, I just talk to my friends about it, but they're not very supportive either, and my friends are the ones who support each other. (interview with AQ,2025)

One informant said that although he still felt his father's attention when he was a child, when he grew up he felt like he had lost his parental figure. In dealing with this emotional situation, he tended to rely on his friends as a place to talk and support each other. He described himself as a "bodo amat" person, an expression that reflects a coping mechanism to avoid emotional downturns. On the other hand, the presence of supportive friends serves as a significant form of alternative social support.

This phenomenon shows how students from broken homes strive to form new support systems outside their immediate families. When emotional support from family is no longer fully present, friendship groups become a safe space that allows them to endure the pressures of competitive higher education. This peer support is not only an emotional refuge but also a foundation for building psychological resilience and a more stable new identity.

In this context, the "couldn't care less" attitude demonstrated by the informants is not a sign of indifference but a form of self-defense mechanism to maintain mental stability. It is also an adaptive strategy to remain socially functional in an academic environment that demands high productivity. By leveraging social support from friends, the informants successfully minimize the alienation that may arise from their incomplete family backgrounds.

The Global South approach highlights the structural inequalities faced by students from broken homes, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia, where higher education systems are increasingly oriented toward a capitalist logic that prioritizes competition and market-based measurement. In such systems, students from vulnerable families often lack equal access to the emotional, financial, and social support needed to survive. This social inequality is more pronounced in Global South countries, where resources to support students are inadequate.

Students from broken homes in highly competitive educational environments are often marginalized by structural inequalities, such as high tuition fees, lack of family support, and limited access to student welfare programs. This leads them to seek alternative support outside their immediate families, particularly through peers who can provide a space for mutual support. This is not merely about personal isolation but reflects how the education system in the Global South exacerbates existing disparities, prompting individuals to create new social networks as a response to the injustices within the education system.

In this context, social support through peers becomes a form of social resistance that demonstrates individual resilience in the face of a larger crisis: the structural inequality faced by students in developing countries. The Global South approach invites us to view this phenomenon not merely as an individual issue of broken-home students but as part of the socio-economic inequality plaguing marginalized nations within the global capitalist system.

The Creation of New Identities by Broken-Home Students

Through various survival strategies to avoid being marginalized by the existing system, the creation of new identities by these students—despite their status as broken-home students—individual students create a new identity for themselves to keep up with the pressure and avoid being alienated from their fellow students. Initials RJ does not want to waste his opportunity to study because of this. Initials RJ has the principle of making a difference after becoming a student.

> *But after college, I started thinking about the future, starting from now, trying to build relationships and improve my social status, which I need for my future career.* (interview with RJ, 2025)

One informant revealed that since entering college, he began to think more deeply about the future, including how to build relationships and social status, which he considered important for supporting his future career. This statement reflects an awareness of the importance of social capital as part of a strategy for dealing with the demands of the professional world. In this context, his status as a student from a broken home actually became a driving force for forming a new identity that was more adaptive to a competitive social system.

The informant's efforts to build relationships can be understood as a form of resistance against the potential alienation that could arise due to his family background. He not only tried

to survive emotionally, but also actively constructed a socially recognized self-image. This effort demonstrates how individuals from broken homes are capable of exercising agency to take an active role in shaping the direction of their lives, even within a system that often does not accommodate complex personal circumstances.

Within the framework of Erich Fromm's theory, the pursuit of relationships and social status can be understood as part of humanity's need for relatedness and self-actualization within an impersonal and oppressive system. The new identity formed is not merely a label as a "broken home student," but an active process to avoid alienation and find a place within a broader social structure. This shows that identity is not static but continuously negotiated as individuals interact with their environment.

Through a Global South approach, the creation of new identities by broken home students can be seen as a response to larger structural inequalities in the capitalist higher education system. Global South countries, including Indonesia, often face an education system increasingly constrained by market logic that demands competition and success based on achievement and social status. In this context, broken home students, who are already trapped in social and economic inequality, must face an education system that measures success not only based on academics but also on an individual's ability to compete in a world increasingly dominated by capitalist interests.

Students from broken homes in Global South countries often struggle harder to secure a place in this competitive higher education system, as they are not only constrained by family and emotional issues but also by broader economic and social inequalities. Therefore, the creation of a new identity for them is not merely a response to personal dynamics, but also a form of resistance against the larger social structures that oppress them. By creating and negotiating a more adaptive identity, they strive to gain recognition within broader social structures despite the fact that these structures tend to place them in lower and marginalized positions.

The Global South approach shows that the creation of this new identity cannot be understood merely as an individual effort to survive, but also as a form of resistance against social and educational inequalities that increasingly create a divide between those who have resources and those who do not. The identities formed by broken home students reflect individual resilience in the face of a highly structured system that is not favorable to those who are marginalized in the context of global capitalism.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that students from broken homes undergo a complex process of identity negotiation within a higher education system that is increasingly influenced by capitalist logic. The absence of emotional support from their immediate families makes these students vulnerable to feelings of alienation, both personally and socially. However, despite being trapped in social inequality, they are not entirely passive. Through an awareness of the importance of social capital, such as relationships and social status, students from broken homes actively form new identities as a form of resistance against the system that oppresses them. From Erich Fromm's perspective, this reflects humanity's effort to fulfill the need for relatedness and self-actualization, while also serving as a survival strategy within a system that tends to be impersonal and competitive.

However, from a Global South perspective, this phenomenon can also be understood as a response to the structural inequalities experienced by students in developing countries. In an increasingly capitalist higher education system, students from broken home backgrounds must face an education that prioritizes economic value and competition over liberation. Within the Global South framework, this phenomenon reflects not only individual adaptation processes but also struggles against systems shaped by global power relations that exacerbate inequality. Students from broken homes, already marginalized socially and economically, are forced to negotiate with systems that offer no space for those outside the mainstream.

The creation of new identities by students from broken homes, mediated by peer support, illustrates forms of agency and resistance against the existing system. They do not merely adapt but also challenge the social structures that push them toward alienation. Thus, while capitalism and social inequality in higher education act as sources of alienation, they also become spaces that encourage individuals to adapt, resist, and reshape their identities with greater critical and active awareness.

Through a Global South approach, this research emphasizes that the creation of these new identities is part of a broader struggle against global inequality rooted in a capitalist higher education system that tends to ignore the personal circumstances of students from vulnerable backgrounds. This process also shows that identity is not static but is always negotiated within a larger social space influenced by global forces and social inequality.

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