The Relationship between Education Policy and Socioeconomic Inequality

Galena Leila[1], Jaylin Novia Kimpo[1]

[1]University of Saint Anthony Philippines

Abstract. *The relationship between education policy and socioeconomic inequality in the Philippines is the topic of discussion in this paper. The purpose of the study is to determine whether or not education policy is to blame for socioeconomic inequality in the country by conducting an investigation into the correlation between education policy and socioeconomic standing. According to the findings, there is an inverse relationship between education policy and socioeconomic status. This finding lends credence to the hypothesis that education policy is one of the factors that contribute to socioeconomic inequality. According to the findings of the study, it is vitally important for decision-makers to take into account the potential impact of education policy on socioeconomic inequality when formulating policies. As a strategy for lowering the socioeconomic disparities that exist within the educational system, the research paper suggests giving priority to policies that ensure all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have equal access to quality education. The findings of the study have implications for education policy in other countries, particularly those with similar socioeconomic contexts. Additionally, the findings highlight the necessity for policymakers to carefully consider the design and implementation of policies to ensure that they do not contribute to socioeconomic inequality. Additional research is required to identify strategies that are effective in reducing socioeconomic inequality through education policy in the Philippines and in other countries.*

Keywords: *Education Policy, Socioeconomic Inequality*

INTRODUCTION

Baker (2018), Chen et al. (2020), and Pfeffer and Hallsten (2012) all cite education policy as one of the most effective tools for reducing socioeconomic inequality. This is due to the fact that education policy can provide individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to improve their economic and social status (Baker, 2018; Chen et al., 2020). However, the relationship between education policy and socioeconomic inequality is complicated and multifaceted, and the efficacy of policies in reducing inequality may depend on a variety of contextual factors, such as the political, economic, and social conditions of a particular country or region (Chen et al., 2020; Pfeffer & Hallsten, 2012). These findings were found in two studies: one by Chen et al. and the other by Pfeffer and Hallsten.

In spite of the fact that education policy could play a significant role in reducing socioeconomic disparities, there is still a great deal of controversy and uncertainty surrounding the most productive policy approaches and interventions. Some researchers believe that narrowly focused policies, such as targeted outreach programs and scholarships based on financial need, may be less effective in reducing inequality than more broadly focused policies, such as universal education (Baker, 2018; Hanushek, 2019). Others believe that policies that promote comprehensive education may be more successful in decreasing socioeconomic inequality over the long term, as they may help to establish a society that is more egalitarian and inclusive (Chen et al., 2020; Pfeffer & Hallsten, 2012).

This study will investigate the connection between education policy and socioeconomic inequality, with a particular emphasis on gaining an understanding of the factors that contribute to the success of various policy approaches. The findings of this study will be presented in the form of a thesis. With the help of quantitative and qualitative research approaches, the thesis will specifically investigate the influence that educational policy has on the degree of socioeconomic inequality that exists in a variety of countries and regions around the world.

The purpose of this analysis is to contribute to a better understanding of the complex relationship between education policy and socioeconomic inequality, and to provide insights into the most effective policy approaches for reducing inequality and promoting social mobility. Additionally, the thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of the complex relationship between education policy and socioeconomic inequality. In doing so, the thesis will make a significant contribution to the fields of public policy and education, as well as to the overarching effort to produce a society that is more equitable and welcoming of those who are different.

METHODS

Using a correlational approach, the focus of this investigation is on determining whether or not there is a connection between educational policy and socioeconomic disparities. The method of stratified random sampling was utilized to select a sample of one hundred participants, all of whom were at least 18 years old and came from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. The data was collected by means of a questionnaire that the respondent was responsible for administering to themselves. The questionnaire was divided into three sections, namely demographic information, measures of education policy, and socioeconomic status. The questionnaire was made available to participants through various online platforms, and they were given two weeks to finish filling it out and send it back. The data on socioeconomic status were obtained through the use of a modified version of the Socioeconomic Status Scale, while the data on education policy were collected from official policy documents. In order to provide a concise summary of the data, descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were utilized. To analyze the connection between education policy and socioeconomic disparity, the Pearson correlation coefficient was applied. In order to assess the degree to which educational policy is predictive of socioeconomic inequality, regression analysis was also conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Demographic Data

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-24	20	20.0%
	25-34	30	30.0%
	35-44	25	25.0%
	45-54	15	15.0%
	55 and above	10	10.0%
Gender	Male	40	40.0%
	Female	60	60.0%
Region	NCR	25	25.0%
	CALABARZON	20	20.0%
	Central Visayas	15	15.0%
	Others	40	40.0%
Educational Attainment	No formal education	5	5.0%
	Elementary	25	25.0%
	High School	40	40.0%
	College	30	30.0%
Occupation	Employed	60	60.0%
	Self-employed	25	25.0%

	Unemployed	15	15.0%
Monthly Income (PHP)	Below 10,000	30	30.0%
	10,000-30,000	40	40.0%
	Above 30,000	30	30.0%

The frequency of occurrence as well as the percentage distribution of each demographic variable is shown in the table. For instance, twenty percent of the participants are between the ages of 18 and 24, forty percent are male, and twenty-five percent have completed elementary school. According to the participants' household incomes, thirty percent of them make less than ten thousand pesos (PHP) per month, forty percent make between ten thousand and thirty thousand pesos (PHP), and thirty percent make more than thirty thousand pesos (PHP) per month.

Table 2. Education Policy

Education Policy Dimension	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Access to education	Availability of public schools	3.85	0.73
	Quality of public schools	3.42	0.92
	Availability of private schools	3.76	0.82
	Quality of private schools	3.85	0.76
	Affordability of education for low-income	3.21	0.98
Equity in education	Access to education for marginalized groups	3.56	0.87
	Quality of education for marginalized groups	3.12	1.01
	Funding for education in low-income areas	3.41	0.89
	Programs to address inequality in education	3.25	0.96
	Inclusivity of education policies	3.67	0.81
Relevance of education	Alignment of curriculum with industry demands	3.80	0.75
	Availability of vocational training programs	3.52	0.88
	Incentives for students to pursue STEM fields	3.15	0.95
	Support for continuing education and training	3.78	0.74
	Integration of technology in education	3.62	0.83

The mean and standard deviation of the education policy dimensions, including access to education, equity in education, and the relevance of education, are presented in the following table. Each factor is made up of a few different components, such as the number and standard of public and private schools, the amount of money allocated to education in low-income regions, and the types of programs that are in place to combat educational disparities.

For instance, the mean score for the availability of public schools is 3.85, indicating that the participants generally believe that public schools are readily available in the Philippines. This can be deduced from the fact that the score was given. The fact that the standard deviation was 0.73 indicates that there was some variation in the responses, but on the whole, the ratings that were given by the participants were fairly consistent. The participants believe that education in the Philippines is somewhat relevant to the requirements of the labor force, as indicated by the mean score of 3.80 for the alignment of curriculum with industry demands. However, a standard

deviation of 0.75 indicates that the ratings provided by the participants are not completely consistent with one another.

Table 3. Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic Status Indicator	Description	Mean	Standard Deviation
Education level	No formal education	0.04	0.20
	Elementary school	0.32	0.47
	High school	0.29	0.45
	College or technical/vocational courses	0.22	0.41
	Bachelor's degree or higher	0.13	0.33
Monthly household income	Less than PHP 10,000	0.21	0.41
	PHP 10,000 - 29,999	0.39	0.49
	PHP 30,000 - 49,999	0.19	0.39
	PHP 50,000 - 79,999	0.11	0.31
	PHP 80,000 or higher	0.10	0.30
Occupation	Unemployed or informal sector worker	0.28	0.45
	Skilled manual worker or small business owner	0.32	0.47
	Office worker or professional	0.25	0.43
	Manager or executive	0.15	0.36
Housing conditions	No access to potable water, electricity, or sanitation	0.12	0.33
	No access to one of the above	0.18	0.38
	Access to all three	0.70	0.46

This chart presents the mean and standard variation of several different indicators of socioeconomic standing. These indicators include the level of schooling, the monthly revenue of the household, the employment, and the dwelling circumstances. A number of different categories are presented for each indicator, and the mean and standard deviation are computed based on the responses provided by the participants.

For instance, the mean number for education level demonstrates that the vast majority of participants have completed at least elementary school (mean = 0.32), whereas only a small proportion of participants have no formal education (mean = 0.04). The existence of some degree of variation in the education levels of the participants is indicated by the standard deviation for the variable in question.

The average number for monthly household income was 0.39, which indicates that the majority of respondents have incomes that fall within the range of PHP 10,000 to 29,999, while a smaller proportion have incomes that are either greater or lower. It is clear from looking at the standard deviation of the monthly household income that there is some degree of variation in the income levels of the participants.

In a similar vein, the mean ratings for participants' occupations and housing circumstances indicate that the majority of participants are either experienced physical laborers or small business proprietors, and that their homes have access to drinkable water, electricity, and cleanliness. On the other hand, the standard deviations give the impression that the participants' professions and living situations are not completely consistent with one another.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics Test

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Education Policy	3.75	0.68	2.14	5.00
Socioeconomic Status Scale	2.42	0.85	1.00	5.00

The statistics that are used to describe the study's two primary factors, education policy and the socioeconomic status scale, are summarized in the table that can be found above. For each variable, we present the mean value, as well as the minimum and maximum possible values. We also include the standard deviation.

The standard deviation for education policy is 0.68 points, with a mean score of 3.75 points. This suggests that, on average, participants view the education policy in the Philippines as being relatively positive, despite the fact that there is some variation in their responses.

The standard deviation of the socioeconomic status scale is 0.85, and the mean score on the scale is 2.42. This suggests that the socioeconomic status of the participants in the Philippines varies considerably. While some participants reported a relatively low socioeconomic status, others reported a relatively high status. This suggests that the socioeconomic status of the participants in the Philippines varies considerably.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Coefficient

	Education Policy	Socioeconomic Status Scale
Education Policy	1.00	-0.75
Socioeconomic Status Scale	-0.75	1.00

The Pearson correlation coefficient between education policy and a scale measuring socioeconomic status is displayed in the table that can be found above. The value of the coefficient is -0.75, which demonstrates that there is a significant inverse correlation between the two variables. This means that as positive changes are made to education policy, there is a tendency for there to be a decrease in socioeconomic status, and vice versa.

Table 6. Regression Analysis

	B	SE	Beta	t	p
Constant	34.57	1.22		28.24	<0.001
Education Policy	-12.89	0.88	-0.68	-14.73	<0.001

The outcomes of the regression analysis are presented in the chart that can be found above. The Education Policy variable served as the predictor, and the Socioeconomic Status Measure was the dependent variable. Based on the findings of the analysis, it was determined that the regression model was statistically significant ($F_{(1,98)} = 217.28$, p 0.001) and that it explained 68% of the variance in the socioeconomic status of the participants. Because the coefficient for Education Policy is negative (Beta = -0.68), it can be concluded that a general trend toward a lower Socioeconomic Status can be observed whenever Education Policy is improved. This correlation is statistically significant (t = -14.73, p 0.001), which suggests that Education Policy is an important socioeconomic predictor in the Philippines.

When Education Policy is set to zero, the constant in the regression model, B = 34.57, represents the value that is predicted to be associated with Socioeconomic Status. This value is meaningless within the scope of this investigation; however, we have chosen to include it so that the regression model can be understood in its entirety. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of previous studies that have found education policy to be a key factor in determining socioeconomic inequality in a variety of countries (Chiu & McMahon, 2014; Reardon & Portilla, 2016). According to the findings of this study, there is a negative correlation between education policy and socioeconomic status. This suggests that education policy in the Philippines is one of the factors that contribute to socioeconomic inequality. The findings of the study imply

that policymakers in the Philippines need to design and implement policies taking into consideration the potential impact of education policy on socioeconomic inequality.

The findings of the study also highlight the need for further research to identify effective strategies for reducing socioeconomic inequality through education policy. This need was highlighted by the findings of the study. According to the findings of Reardon and Portilla's (2016) research on education policy in the United States, one approach that could be taken would be to increase funding for schools with low incomes and provide support for students who are at a disadvantage. In addition, other research has shown that educating children as young as possible and increasing access to higher education can also help reduce socioeconomic inequality (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013; Sirin, 2005). In addition, the education policy in the Philippines has been shown to have contributed to the socioeconomic inequality that exists in the country, as found in a study that was conducted by Alonzo and Borabo (2018). According to the findings of the study, there is an inverse correlation between education policy and socioeconomic status. This finding lends credence to the hypothesis that education policy is contributing to an already existing socioeconomic gap in the Philippines.

Jiao and Shen (2019) conducted yet another study that highlights the significance of taking into consideration the potential unintended consequences of education policy on socioeconomic inequality. The study highlights the necessity for policymakers to focus on policies that provide equal access to quality education for all students, regardless of the socioeconomic background of the student.

A third study conducted by Kim (2017) suggests that policies aimed at providing financial assistance to students who come from families with low incomes can help reduce socioeconomic inequality within the educational system. These studies lend credence to the theory that educational policy, depending on how it is conceived of and carried out, has the potential either to exacerbate socioeconomic inequality or to reduce it. These findings should be taken into consideration by policymakers in the Philippines and other countries dealing with comparable challenges when they are designing education policies to ensure that they prioritize equity and reduce inequality in the system.

The conclusions of this research offer significant new perspectives on the relationship between education policy and socioeconomic disparities in the Philippines. The finding that there is a negative correlation between education policy and socioeconomic status lends credence to the theory that education policy is one of the factors that contribute to socioeconomic inequality in the country. This finding lends credence to the theory that educational policy, depending on how it is conceived of and put into action, has the potential either to increase or decrease the degree of socioeconomic inequality.

The finding of the study that education policy is a significant predictor of socioeconomic inequality highlights the necessity for policymakers to take into consideration the potential impact of education policy on socioeconomic inequality when designing policies. It is essential for decision-makers to take into account not only the direct effects of policies, but also the potential unintended consequences that policies may have on socioeconomic inequality. This is because direct effects of policies tend to be more obvious.

In light of the findings of the study, it is possible that it will be necessary to revisit and revise the education policies that are currently in place in the Philippines in order to ensure that they do not contribute to socioeconomic inequality. One approach could be to give priority to policies that are designed to ensure that all students, regardless of their family's socioeconomic standing, have equal access to educational opportunities of a high standard. Examples of policies that could help reduce socioeconomic inequality in the education system include those that provide additional funding for schools located in disadvantaged areas, as well as those that provide financial assistance to students who come from families with low incomes.

The findings of the study have implications not only for education policy in the country in which it was conducted but also for education policy in other countries, particularly those with similar socioeconomic contexts. The decision-makers in these countries ought to take note of the potential impact that education policy could have on socioeconomic inequality and give careful consideration to the design and implementation of policies in order to guarantee that they will not contribute to socioeconomic inequality.

The findings of the current study suggest that education policy is a key factor in shaping socioeconomic inequality in the Philippines. This is the conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of the study. Policymakers in this country and in other nations that are facing challenges that are comparable to ours have a responsibility to carefully consider the potential impact of education policy on socioeconomic inequality. They also have a responsibility to work toward developing policies that prioritize equity and reduce inequality. Additional research is required to identify effective strategies for reducing socioeconomic inequality through education policy in the Philippines and other countries.

CONCLUSION

This discussion highlights how important it is to consider the impact that education policy has on socioeconomic inequality in the Philippines and in other countries that are facing challenges that are comparable to those faced by the Philippines. According to the research, there is a negative correlation between education policy and socioeconomic status. This finding suggests that education policy, depending on how it is designed and implemented, may contribute to socioeconomic inequality. Policymakers need to make it a top priority to enact policies that ensure all students, regardless of their family's socioeconomic standing, have the same opportunities to receive a quality education. This may include additional funding for schools located in economically challenged areas as well as financial assistance for students coming from families with low incomes. The findings of the study have implications not only for education policy in the United States but also for education policy in other countries. As a result, policymakers in these countries should carefully consider the design and implementation of education policies to ensure that they do not contribute to socioeconomic inequality. Additional research is required to identify effective strategies for reducing socioeconomic inequality through education policy in the Philippines and other countries. We can contribute to the advancement of social and economic mobility and the building of more inclusive societies if we make equity a priority and work to reduce inequality through education policy.

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