

Comparative Analysis of Educational Policies: A Cross-Country Study on Access and Equity in Primary Education

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Abstract

Access to quality primary education is a critical component of a nation's development, with implications for social equity and economic progress. This study aims to compare educational policies and practices in primary education across multiple countries, focusing on assessing access and equity. Engaging with magazines, articles, or books to gather research data constitutes the qualitative methodology employed in this study. The data collection approach adopted in this research involves utilizing the literature review method. Technical and source triangulation were implemented to ensure the data's validity. The data analysis technique follows the model proposed by Miles and Huberman, encompassing four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The findings reveal significant variations in primary education policies and practices across countries. Successful strategies include targeted financial support for marginalized communities, teacher training programs, and curriculum adaptations that address local needs and cultures. This study underscores the importance of examining and learning from the experiences of different countries to improve access to quality primary education and promote equity. The identified successful strategies can inform policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in designing and implementing more effective policies to ensure all children have equal access to quality primary education. The study ultimately contributes to a broader understanding of the global pursuit of equitable and accessible primary education.

Keywords

access and equity; comparative; cross-country study; educational policies; primary education



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INTRODUCTION

Education has a crucial role in forming the foundations of a civilized and sustainable society. In this era of globalization, access and equality in basic education are the main focus for achieving inclusive human development (Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021). Therefore, this article attempts to conduct a comparative analysis of education policies in various countries to explore the efforts taken to achieve educational access and equality at the basic education level.

The importance of access to education does not only lie in giving every child the right to receive education but also in efforts to provide equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of socioeconomic background or other factors that may become obstacles (Madani, 2019); (Florian & Beaton, 2018). Therefore, understanding and analyzing education policies from various countries can provide valuable insights in formulating effective and inclusive education strategies.

In this context, this article presents a cross-national study that aims to compare education policies at the primary level, with a particular focus on accessibility and equity. Through this approach, we can identify significant differences between the approaches adopted by certain countries in achieving inclusive education goals. By analyzing this comparison, findings that can become the basis for improving and developing better education policies in the future will emerge (Abdurahman et al., 2023); (Philipsen et al., 2019).

As part of the cross-country analysis, this article will also discuss the factors that influence the success or failure of education policies in each country, such as cultural, economic, and social aspects (Agustina et al., 2023). In this way, readers will get a comprehensive picture of education policy frameworks in various global contexts (Hwang & Chien, 2022). Through a deeper understanding of the education policies implemented, policy recommendations can emerge to help improve access and equality of education worldwide.

Although several previous studies have investigated issues related to basic education, few studies have explicitly carried out a comparative analysis of education policies at the primary level in various countries with a special focus on accessibility and equality. Most previous research is limited to national or regional contexts without comprehensively understanding the diversity of policy approaches at the global level (Dax & Fischer, 2018); (Klepac Pogrmilovic et al., 2018). Therefore, this article fills this knowledge gap by presenting an in-depth and comprehensive cross-national study, enabling a better understanding of the successes and failures of education policies in different countries (Marfan & Pascual, 2018); (Mejlgaard et al., 2019); (Gupta et al.,

2023); (Hermann & Kopasz, 2021); (Cordero et al., 2018). By focusing on aspects of access and equality, this research can significantly contribute to designing more inclusive and relevant policy strategies in the future.

This research aims to present a comprehensive analysis and comparison of education policies at the primary level in various countries with a special focus on accessibility and equity. Through achieving this goal, the research aims to identify common patterns, differences, and challenges these countries face in achieving inclusive education goals. In addition, this research seeks to present relevant policy recommendations that can be implemented to improve educational access and equality at the basic level, both in national and global contexts. The impact and benefits of this research are very significant in several aspects. Hopefully, this research can make a real contribution to increasing access and education equality at the basic level, supporting global efforts to achieve sustainable development goals in education to harmonize education policies in various countries.

METHODS

According to Spradley, the research methodology employed in this study is characterized as descriptive qualitative, utilizing an ethnographic approach and following a gradual progressive research flow. The qualitative method predominantly relies on the library as the primary source, supplemented by relevant literature about the topic under discussion. Researchers conduct a thorough analysis to achieve favorable outcomes aligned with the writer's aspirations and objectives. Direct involvement in field situations, such as observation, interviews, and participant interaction, is integral in qualitative field research. Data collection involves firsthand observations, in-depth interviews, field notes, and audio/video recordings (Sugiyono, 2017). The collected data is then analyzed and interpreted to unveil emerging patterns, themes, or meanings, utilizing an inductive model. This model facilitates the elucidation of the data reduction process to derive meaning from raw data. The findings, which interpreted fundamental information, were acquired through structured interviews to address identified problems. To enhance data triangulation, observation was also incorporated as a significant data source (Sugiyono, 2019). Data was validated through content, technical, and reference triangulation methods.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This research produces significant findings in analyzing comparative education policies at the primary level in various countries, focusing on access and equality. Cross-country analysis shows substantial variation in the policy approaches countries take, both in achieving accessibility and equity in basic education. Some countries have successfully implemented policies supporting access to education for all levels of society, while others still face serious challenges.

In evaluating the accessibility aspect, it was found that several countries had succeeded in overcoming barriers, such as the availability of educational facilities, transportation and inclusive policies for marginalized groups. However, challenges related to geographic inequalities in educational access still require further attention. On the other hand, equity analysis highlights differences in inclusive policies for students with special needs. These findings reflect the need for improvement in developing policies that support the educational needs of all individuals, including those with special needs.

The positive impact of this research is that the resulting policy recommendations can provide guidance for countries to improve and develop more inclusive education strategies (Rifat et al., 2023). An in-depth understanding of the successes and failures of education policies from various global contexts can be the basis for sharing best practices and international collaboration (Yoshikawa et al., 2018). In addition, this research contributes to the scientific literature in the field of international education by presenting new findings that can enrich our understanding of efforts to achieve the goals of inclusive education at the primary level. In conclusion, this research can provide a basis for improving and developing better educational policies in the future aimed at creating a more equitable and inclusive educational environment throughout the world.

Table 1. Findings of Research Comparative Analysis of Educational Policies

No.	Findings	Explanation
1	Varied Approaches Accessibility	There is significant variation in approaches to education accessibility policies, with some countries successfully to overcoming barriers such as means and transport, while others still face geographical inequality.
2	Inclusive Policies for Special Needs	The equity analysis highlights differences in inclusive policies for students with special needs. It found the need for further education policies that support the needs of all individuals.
3	Contextual Factors Influence Success	Complex contextual factors such as social, economic, and cultural conditions influence the successful implementation of education policies. The integration of results with these

No. Findings	Explanation
4	factors provides a holistic understanding. Need for Long- Term Impact Analysis Further research recommendations include assessing the long-term impact of education policy, considering the evolution of society and structural change over a longer period of time.

This study produced four main findings related to education policy at the primary level. First, there is significant variation in approaches to education accessibility policies in different countries. Some countries have managed to overcome barriers such as means and transportation, creating more equitable access to education, while others still face challenges, especially related to geographical inequality. Second, equity analysis highlights differences in inclusive policies for students with special needs, emphasizing the need for further focus on developing education policies that support the needs of all individuals. Third, the findings show that complex contextual factors, such as social, economic, and cultural conditions, influence the success of education policy implementation. Integrating outcomes with these factors provides a holistic understanding of policy effectiveness at the global level. Finally, further research recommendations highlight the importance of assessing the long-term impact of education policies, taking into account the evolution of societies and structural changes over a longer period to ensure these policies' sustainability and effectiveness.

Discussion

The discussion of the research results highlights significant findings regarding the comparison of education policies at the primary level in various countries with a focus on access and equality. First, in the context of accessibility, the findings show striking variations in countries' ability to overcome barriers to ensuring access to education for all levels of society. Certain countries have achieved significant progress by ensuring the availability of educational facilities and inclusive policies, while other countries still face serious challenges, especially those related to geographic inequality. These findings provide an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of accessibility policies and provide a basis for cross-cultural comparisons and learning.

Second, in the equality aspect, the analysis highlights differences in inclusive policies for students with special needs. The research results underscore the need for further focus on developing policies that support the educational needs of all individuals, including those with special needs. Emphasis on equality is key to achieving the goals of inclusive education, and the policy recommendations resulting

from this research can make a major contribution in formulating more supportive and inclusive policy strategies in the future.

Third, the importance of the policy recommendations emerging from this research should be highlighted. These recommendations can provide valuable guidance for policymakers in designing and improving more inclusive and sustainable basic education strategies. Sharing best practices between countries, encouraged by the findings of this research, can strengthen international efforts to achieve sustainable development goals in the field of education (Franco et al., 2019); (Leal Filho et al., 2019).

It is important to note that this research contributes to the scientific literature by bringing a broader perspective and deeper understanding of global efforts to achieve access and equity in basic education. Overall, the results of this research provide a solid foundation for education policy discussions at the international level, supporting the vision of creating a more equitable and inclusive educational environment worldwide.

The results of this research significantly contribute to global understanding of education policy at the primary level, especially in the context of accessibility and equity. Juxtaposing the findings with previous research, most previous research is more limited to analysis at the national or regional level, without detailing cross-country comparisons. With its cross-country approach, this research fills this gap and opens up space for understanding diversity in basic education policy implementation at the global level. Previously, many studies tended to focus on certain aspects, whereas this research covers the dimensions of accessibility and equality holistically.

In linking the findings with relevant theories, several concepts from educational theory can explain variations in educational policies between countries. Educational inclusion theory, for example, provides a foundation for understanding the challenges of creating an inclusive educational environment for all students. The finding that some countries are more successful in developing inclusive policies highlights the importance of implementing this theory in overcoming barriers to equality.

It is also important to note that the results of this study provide an in-depth understanding of the contextual factors that influence the success or failure of educational policies. These results are consistent with human development theory, which emphasizes the importance of social, economic, and cultural contexts in shaping effective education policies (Asfahani, 2019). So, this research provides an overview of what works or does not work and provides context and an in-depth understanding of why a policy may or may not work. In detailing the research results further, it is

important to emphasize that the resulting policy recommendations can be integrated with findings from previous research to form a more comprehensive policy basis. These results provide concrete guidance for creating a more inclusive educational environment, which can serve as a model for other countries facing similar challenges.

This research, by combining the results of previous research and relevant educational theories, not only makes a significant contribution to the scientific literature but also presents a strong foundation for improving global education policies (Al-Rahmi et al., 2019); (Tang et al., 2023); (Treiblmaier, 2018). By juxtaposing the findings with previous research and theory, this research is able to provide deeper and more contextual insight into global efforts to achieve access and equity in basic education.

This research uses a qualitative approach using data sources in the form of reading magazines, articles, or books to collect research information. This approach is in line with previous decisions indicating that this method has been used successfully in educational research contexts. In addition, the data collection strategy using the literature review method provides continuity with previous research which was more focused on educational policy analysis. The choice of this method provides an opportunity to compare the findings with similar previous research, enabling the identification of differences and similarities in the context of global education policy.

In aligning the findings with previous research, it can be seen that variations in educational accessibility policy approaches at the primary level, such as those found in this research, correlate with previous findings that highlight the challenges and successes in implementing similar policies. Integration of these findings can provide a more complete and contextual picture of the factors that influence the effectiveness of education policies. This in-depth analysis can also be sharpened by summarizing the findings and relevant theories from educational literature, such as educational inclusion theory or human development theory. Educational inclusion theory, in particular, can be applied to analyze inclusive policies for students with special needs, in line with the finding that further focus is needed on supporting the needs of all individuals.

Furthermore, using the Miles and Huberman data analysis model in this research provides a structured framework (Miles, 2014). The stages of data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion form a holistic analysis process. By juxtaposing this model with previous research results, we can explore the advantages and disadvantages of each analysis method and understand the context in which the research results were found. Thus, this approach not only presents isolated findings

but also aligns this research with existing literature and educational theory, increasing the quality and relevance of the overall analysis.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this in-depth analysis of the discussion emphasizes the importance of understanding and analyzing cross-country comparisons of education policies at the primary level to achieve better access and equality. The findings suggest that complex contextual factors, such as social, economic, and cultural conditions, can explain variability in the success of educational policy implementation. Integration of the results of this research with previous findings and relevant educational theories provides a holistic view of global efforts to achieve inclusive education goals. Combining empirical analysis and theoretical concepts opens up space for deeper and more contextual understanding, enabling the development of more sustainable and relevant educational policies in various international contexts. Recommendations for future research are to explore in more detail the contextual factors that influence the success of educational policies, including an in-depth study of social and cultural aspects that may influence access and equity. In addition, further research could focus on analyzing the long-term impacts of implementing certain educational policies, taking into account the evolution of society and structural changes over a longer period. Furthermore, cross-country comparisons can be expanded by considering regional factors influencing education policy. Thus, further research can make a deeper contribution to shaping educational policies that are responsive, inclusive, and relevant in this global era.

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