

BRIDGING EDUCATIONAL GAPS: EDUCATION ACCESS POLICY FOR ALL CHILDREN

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Abstract

Education gaps are a crucial problem that impedes sustainable human resource development. The research aims to identify effective policies that can bridge educational gaps and ensure inclusive access to education for all children. The research method in this research is literature, by exploring various sources of journals and other documents. The results show that; first, there is a significant relationship between the level of investment in education and the quality of access to education; second, policies that prioritize inclusive education and learning diversity can accelerate the reduction of educational gaps; and third, the integration of technology into education has been found to be an important factor in improving the reach and affordability of education. In addition, collaboration among stakeholders including governments, business communities, non-profit organizations, and civil society groups, is needed to implement and support effective educational programmes. Finally, regular monitoring and evaluation of existing policies is key to ensuring sustained adjustment and improvement to educational practices. The findings underline the importance of a holistic and contextualized approach in an effort to reduce educational gaps.

Keywords: Education gaps, policy, all children.

Introduction

Education is one of the essential joints in human life and the development of civilization. As a process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits, education opens a window of the world to its participants, enriches the mind and prepares individuals for the challenges of the future. (Sitopu et al., 2024; Guna et al., 2024). Beyond the transfer of science, education shapes character, fosters creativity, and stimulates innovation. It is a major means of advancing individuals, improving social well-being, and promoting sustainable economic growth. (Hairiyanto et al., 2024).

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Education does not stop at providing access to schools or other formal educational institutions, but also concerns the quality of an inclusive teaching learning process that can respond to the needs and potential of each individual. (Tubagus et al., 2023). Through education, individuals have the opportunity to know themselves, explore their potential, and learn how to use that knowledge to benefit themselves and society. (Aslan & Shiong, 2023).

In an era of globalization and technological advances like today, the challenges in the world of education are also becoming more complex. (Chen, H. 2024). From the issue of gaps in access to education, the changing needs of the labour market, to the need to try to create a learning environment that supports diversity and inclusion. (Yan et al., 2024; Abulibdeh et al., 2024). Therefore, looking at education holistically and ensuring that every individual gets a quality education becomes more important than ever.

This educational introduction is aimed not only to highlight the importance of education on the individual and society scale, but also to stimulate critical thinking about how we can jointly tackle existing challenges and optimize the role of education as a major pillar in human and society development. (Jagatheesaperumal et al., 2024; Nurdiana et al., 2023; Sarmila et al., 2023). Thus, we can ensure that education has a central place in achieving the dreams and realizing the full potential of each individual.

In the midst of an age of rapid progress, education has become inseparable from the development of individual character and abilities. (Nurhayati et al., 2024). Character development is a complex and continuous process that involves the formation, development, and strengthening of the moral and social values that are essential in individuals (Simamora et al., 2024). This process becomes a strong foundation not only for individual success in the personal and professional aspects of life, but also for their contribution to the well-being of society as a whole. With good character, individuals can navigate life's challenges, make wise decisions, and act with integrity (Nurchayanti et al., 2024).

Character development plays a crucial role in forming individuals who are not only academically and professionally successful, but also have high personality and moral qualities. In the long run, this creates a foundation for a fair, empathic, and sustainable society. (Dewi et al., 2024).

Therefore, access to genuine quality education is a right of every child, without exception. (Indrawati, S. M., & Kuncoro, A. 2021; Chen, H. 2024). However, the reality is often inconsistent with that principle. Geographical difficulties, economic constraints, and a lack of educational infrastructure are some of the many obstacles that keep many children from getting a decent education. (Abulibdeh et al., 2024).

The gaps in education in Indonesia are a major issue that touches a wide range of aspects, from accessibility to the quality of education itself. (Andrin et al., 2024). An individual from the socio-economic group "Poorest" in Indonesia still has to bear no

small cost of education. The gaps in access to education are also very noticeable at the college level, where the Rate of Risk Participation (RP) in households with the lowest economic status was only 13.38 percent, while the highest household economic status reached 46.89 percent. (Shwedeh, F. 2024).

The quality and means of education also play an important role in this gap. (Haddar et al., 2023). The difference in the quality of education between villages and cities is one of the real examples of the education gap in Indonesia. The COVID-19 pandemic has widened the educational gap. (Alenezi et al., 2023). For example, research shows that education quality gaps during pandemics are not only found in some locations but are a national phenomenon. Facing 2045, education gaps are one of the major challenges to overcome in order to reach Indonesia's Golden 2045 with maximum potential. This challenge creates a deep gap, affecting not only the individual, but also future generations and society as a whole. (Ogunode et al., 2023).

Faced with the complexity of this challenge, it is important to map out concrete steps and formulate inclusive policies that can accommodate the educational needs of children from different backgrounds. (Tuhuteru et al., 2023). The concept of "Education for All" is not just an advocacy, but a call to action; it initiates the transformation of a much fairer and more equitable education system. In an effort to bridge educational gaps, governments, together with various stakeholders including educational institutions, non-profit organizations, communities, and individuals, play a key role in formulating effective strategies that promote wider access to education. (Sari, D. W., & Khoiri, Q. 2023; Sukomardojo, T. 2023; Maula et al., 2023).

This introduction aims to highlight the urgency and importance of collective movements in reconstructing existing barriers, while paving the way for every child to pursue his dream through education. Through collaboration and innovation, we can design a future of education that is non-discriminatory, where every child, without exception, gets equal opportunities to learn, develop, and ultimately, contribute to the development of a more civilized society. It is our joint step in ensuring that education is no longer a luxury, but a strong foundation for progress and equality.

Research Method

The method of literary research is an approach in research that involves the collection, identification, organization, and analysis of data from various literary sources relevant to a research topic or problem (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014; Richardson, 2018). This research is usually carried out using descriptive analytical methods, in which researchers collect existing data to then be identified, structured, and analyzed to draw conclusions or build a broader understanding related to a research problem. The flow of research in the study of literature can be illustrated in a flow chart that gives a general overview of the stages undertaken during the research process. (Antin et al., 2015; Marshall et al., 2013).

In addition, there are various methods that can be done in conducting a literary study, one of which is keyword search. This method allows researchers to search for other research references from various reliable sources using relevant keywords, which can then produce a variety of literature related to the research topic. The use of more than one method in the collection of literary data can help in expanding the scope of research and improving the validity of findings. (Punch, 2013; Adhabi & Anozie, 2017; Champe & Kleist, 2003; Tharenou et al., 2007).

Result and Discussion

The Theory of the Right to Education

Education is a complex process that focuses on teaching, learning, and training to develop a person's knowledge, skills, values, morality, beliefs, and habits (Aslan & Pong, 2023). The educational process is often organized and structured, involving educators (teachers, lecturers, or trainers) and learners (students or pupils) in both formal and non-formal contexts. Education can take place in a variety of settings, from school, university, to informal situations such as at home or through life experiences. (Astuti et al., 2023).

Education is an extortion to society without exception. But there's still injustice. There's still a gap. The gaps in education are one of the major problems in Indonesia. (Muszynska, J., & Wedrowska, E. 2023). These gaps are often linked to economic and geographical backgrounds. For example, a study suggests that people from the poorest economic category in Indonesia still have to bear a fairly high cost of education. In addition, there is also a gap in the quality of education between rural and urban areas. Then, Discrimination, Infrastructure, Curriculum and Policy (Blanden et al., 2023).

Therefore, in order that there should be no inequality, there must be justice for all groups of people without any knowledge of the strata of society. (Li, J., & Jha, G. 2024). Justice in education includes equal and equitable access for all individuals to quality education, without discrimination based on socio-economic background, race, ethnicity, gender, or physical and mental condition. It reflects the basic principle that education is the right of every person to be guaranteed by the state and society. (Karakose et al., 2023).

1) Access: Ensure equal opportunities for all individuals to access education, including adequate educational infrastructure and facilities regardless of geographical location. 3) Quality: Provide consistently quality education to all learners, including relevant curricula and innovative teaching methods. 4) Financing: Ensure funding for fair and adequate education, so that no student is left behind for economic reasons. 5) Recognition: Respect and celebrate diversity in education, including recognition of different cultures, languages, and student identities (Boyadjieva et al., 2024; Gandolfi, H. E., & Mills, M. 2023; Widjaja & Aslan, 2022; Widjaja et al., 2022).

Achieving justice in education requires efforts from all sides, including governments, educational institutions, teachers, parents, and society. It involves changing educational policies to ensure a more equitable allocation of resources, developing inclusive curricula, training teachers to address learning differences, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of the success of initiatives aimed at improving access and equality in education. (Biesta et al., 2022).

By adhering to the principle of justice in education, societies can move towards achieving the goal of sustainable education, where every individual has the opportunity to develop their full potential and contribute actively to society.

Education is the right of all nations without exception. The right to education is one of the fundamental human rights universally recognized (Aslan, 2022). This right is affirmed in various legal instruments and international declarations. One of the most important is article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, which states that everyone has the right to education. Education must be fully aimed at the development of human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. (Suntian et al., 2023).

Important aspects of the right to education include; 1) Availability. Education must be available to all, without discrimination. This includes adequate school availability, learning facilities, and adequate teaching staff. 2) Accessibility. All children, without exception, must have access to education. This accessibility includes non-discriminatory access and economic affordability, as well as access for children with special needs. 3) Acceptance. Education must be relevant, quality, and responsive to the needs of students and communities. Curricula should be relevant to local social, economic, and cultural needs, taking into account the principles of universality and non-discrimination. 4) Adaptability. Education must be flexible and adaptable to the changing needs and situations of students and communities. 5) Quality. Education must not only be available and accessible, but must also be of high quality. This includes the quality of facilities, teaching staff, learning materials and teaching methods (Vargas, J. F., & Rozo, S. V. 2024; (Ndayisenga, J., & Sindayigaya, I. 2024).

The government has a primary obligation to guarantee the right to education. This includes policy implementation, resource allocation, and the development of a legal framework that ensures education for all citizens without discrimination. Education is also seen as an important empowerment tool, providing individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to participate fully in society and the economy. (Hakim, L. 2016).

International organizations, NGOs, and civil society play a role in advancing the right to education through advocacy, public education, and the provision of technical and financial assistance to educational projects. Through cooperation between the various stakeholders, the ultimate goal is to Education for All and the goals of

sustainable development related to education that are globally recognised. (Herdiansah, A. G. 2016).

Educational gaps

Education gaps can refer to differences in access or quality of education received by different groups in society. It's often seen between urban and rural areas, interclass socio-economic, and intergender. (Hendriarto et al., 2021). These gaps may include aspects such as facilities, human resources (HRM), and management that play an important role in the learning process and potentially create obstacles to the dissemination of education in a country. (Agasisti, T., & Maragkou, K. 2023; Suroso et al., 2021).

In addition, socio-economic, geographical, and cultural factors are significant in influencing access to education in various regions and communities. First, the socio-economic factors. The social and economic conditions of the family play an important role in access to education. Families with low socio-economic status may find it difficult to provide adequate education due to financial constraints on school costs, transportation, or teaching materials. This factor leads to disparities in accessibility of education among societies with different economic backgrounds. (Skedsmo, G., & Huber, S. G. 2023).

Second, the geographical factor. Geographical location also contributes to differences in educational experience. Remote or rural areas often have less access to educational facilities than urban areas. (Marta, E. M., & Michelle, C. 2023).

Third, cultural factors. Cultural factors often influence perceptions and priorities of education in society. A particular culture may place a higher value on education of a particular gender or have a certain view of the type of education that is most appropriate or prestigious. Moreover, the presence of stereotypes and cultural prejudices against a particular group can affect the motivation and opportunities available to them in accessing education. (Navarro-Ibarra et al., 2023).

These issues highlight the importance of coordinated efforts between governments, educational institutions, and the public to address disparities in access to education through inclusive and equitable policies that take into account socio-economic, geographical, and cultural factors.

Education Access Policy and Initiative

Policy can be defined as a set of plans, rules, guidelines, and practices designed by governmental entities or educational institutions to specific goals within the educational system. Education policies cover a wide range of aspects such as curricula, evaluation standards, qualifications for teachers, access and equality in education, school infrastructure, and education funding (Eden et al., 2024). Education policies are often formulated and implemented by governments through ministries or education

departments, with the participation and feedback of stakeholders, including teachers and parents, and civil society organizations. The ultimate goal is to improve the quality and effectiveness of education for all. (Eden et al., 2024).

On national and international education policies, some of the important issues that are emerging include climate change that is found in only 40% of the national education laws and 45% of the education sector plans or strategies. On the other hand, education is also influenced by the global education reform movement with a focus on student learning outcomes and school performance. (Jerome, V. B., & Aruldass, S. 2023).

Education policy in Indonesia is also shaped through the concept of Free Learning Free Campus (MBKM) which includes the opening of new study programmes, the accreditation system of colleges, state colleges of law bodies, and the right to study. By 2023, Indonesian education policy directions include optimizing education participation rates. So, in policy-making, there needs to be an initiative in the field of education. (Jerome, V. B., & Aruldass, S. 2023).

The Education Access Initiative basically refers to a series of efforts to ensure that every individual, especially from disadvantaged and marginalized groups, has equal access to quality education. It covers a range of strategies and programmes aimed at overcoming barriers to access and participation in education, including scholarships, financial assistance programmes, improvement of educational infrastructure in rural and border areas, and innovation in teaching and learning to encourage student inclusion and retention. (Amiel, M., & Yemini, M. 2023).

These programmes can be managed and funded by governments, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, or through partnerships between various stakeholders. Its primary objective is to ensure that every individual, regardless of their socio-economic background or geographical location, has an equal opportunity to obtain a quality and meaningful education.

Conclusion

Bridging Education Gaps: The Education Access Policy for All Children emphasizes the importance of inclusive and innovative policies to address disparities in education. To this, several steps needed include: 1) Increased Investment: Greater investment in education, especially in the development of infrastructure in remote areas, the training of qualified teachers, and learning resources that are accessible to all children. 2) Subsidy and Assistance Programmes: Provision of financial assistance programmes such as scholarships, free school supplies, or school fees subsidies for low-income families. 3) Inclusive Rules: Developing and implementing policies that take care of children from all backgrounds, including those with special needs, ethnic minorities, and girls. 4) Contextual approach: Design policies that understand and respond to the unique needs of each community, ensuring that educational interventions fit the local social and cultural context. 5) Innovation in Education: Adopting new educational

technologies and learning methods to improve access to education and quality of teaching, ensuring that education remains relevant to the needs of the labour market. 6) Inter-sectoral cooperation: involving various stakeholders such as the government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and the public in joint efforts to improve access to education. 7) Monitoring and Evaluation: Ensure that there is a robust system to monitor and evaluate education access programmes so that they can be continuously improved according to results and feedback. 8) Political commitment: It requires the courage and political commitment of leaders to prioritize education and implement the promised policies.

All of these points lead to a broader vision for achieving Education for All and sustainable development goals that ensure inclusive and quality education and enhance lifelong learning opportunities for all.

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