

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRIFOCALIZATION IN PHILIPPINE EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON QUALITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND RELEVANCE IN THE PROVINCE OF MARINDUQUE: A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Implementing trifocalization in Philippine education, encompassing curriculum development and alignment with local needs, teacher quality and teaching practices, financing educational initiatives and programs, and governance structures and mechanisms, is critical to improving educational outcomes. This study aims to assess the level of implementation of trifocalization in Marinduque and to analyze its impact on the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education as assessed by local government officials, administrators, school heads, teachers, members of the PTA, and students. Despite national efforts to enhance education through trifocalization, a more comprehensive evaluation of its effectiveness locally in Marinduque is needed. This research seeks to fill that gap by providing empirical data on the implementation and outcomes of trifocalization. This study employed a rigorous and comprehensive methodology, leaving no stone unturned in its pursuit of accurate data. It utilized a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative surveys—triangulated and refined through pretesting, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)—with qualitative data analyzed through Thematic Analysis. A total of 279 key stakeholders, including local government officials, administrators, school heads, and teachers, were surveyed. Additionally, 268 students provided their insights. The data collected were then meticulously analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the level of trifocalization implementation and its perceived impact on education. This thorough methodology ensures the reliability and validity of the study's findings. The findings of this study reveal that the level of implementation of trifocalization in Marinduque is moderate across various dimensions: curriculum development and alignment with local needs (Mean = 2.99), quality of teachers and teaching practices (Mean = 2.66), financing educational initiatives and programs (Mean = 2.59), and governance structures and mechanisms (Mean = 2.73). The overall grand mean is 2.74, indicating moderate implementation. In terms of impact, respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of education (Mean = 3.15), adequacy of curriculum (Mean = 3.23), and teaching practices (Mean = 3.13). However, the study also identified areas that require attention, such as the accessibility of educational materials (Mean = 2.23) and internet connectivity (Mean = 2.46), suggesting these as potential areas for improvement of quality, accessibility, and relevance of education in the Province of Marinduque. This research is significant to Marinduque's education system and the stakeholders who play a crucial role in its success. The findings of this study, which provide critical insights into the implementation of trifocalization, offer invaluable data for policymakers, local government officials, administrators, school heads, teachers, and students. These findings can serve as a roadmap for strategic planning and resource allocation, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of trifocalization and ultimately improve educational outcomes in the Province.

Keywords: *Trifocalization, curriculum development, teacher quality, educational financing, equitable access, Marinduque, Philippine education.*

Introduction

Tri-focalization is a policy implemented in the Philippines to improve the management, quality, and accessibility of education by creating distinct bodies for different levels of education. This policy was recommended by the Education Committee (EDCOM) during the Aquino administration and took effect in 1994/1995. It established three central agencies with specific mandates:

Department of Education (DepEd). Responsible for basic education, which includes primary and secondary education.

Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). Oversees technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Manages higher education, including colleges and universities.

Objectives of Tri-focalization

Improved Policymaking and Management. Each agency is tasked with policy formulation, planning, programming, coordination, supervision, and standard setting within its subsector.

Focused Attention. The division allows DepEd to improve basic education quality and accessibility, while TESDA and CHED focus on their specialized areas.

Resource Allocation. Aimed at more effective and efficient use of government resources by addressing specific needs and challenges within each educational subsector.

Policy and Structural Changes

Pre-Tri-focalization. The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) was the sole body responsible for all education levels, leading to over-centralization and inefficiencies.

Post-Tri-focalization. The establishment of DepEd, TESDA, and CHED aimed to decentralize management and focus on specialized needs. However, intersectoral and intrasectoral coordination issues have emerged, leading to policy implementation and resource prioritization challenges.

Impact on Quality of Education

Basic Education. Challenges like high dropout rates and subpar learning outcomes persist despite increased focus. However, there have been improvements in primary education enrollment and secondary education participation.

TVET and Higher Education. TESDA and CHED have made strides in their respective areas, but issues with program quality and alignment with future skills needs still need to be addressed.

Accessibility and Inclusiveness

Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Pre-primary Education. Enrollment growth has been noted, but access for disadvantaged children is still limited.

Technical and Higher Education. Policies to enhance access exist, but quality and relevance to labor market demands need improvement. Inclusive education initiatives for learners with disabilities and Indigenous communities are in place, yet universal quality education is not fully realized.

Coordination and Policy Coherence

Intersectoral Coordination. The lack of effective coordination among DepEd, TESDA, and CHED has led to functional overlaps and policy inconsistencies. The need for a lead agency to set budgetary priorities and ensure cohesive sectoral planning is highlighted.

Intra-sectoral Coordination. There are challenges within agencies, such as DepEd continuing to operate vocational schools and state universities running laboratory schools for basic education.

Resource Allocation and Budgetary Constraints

Fiscal Constraints. The government budget for education is stretched, necessitating better resource prioritization. Despite the constitutional mandate for free basic education, more funding is needed to meet growing demands.

Quality and Quantity Trade-off. Balancing the need to expand access and improve quality within limited resources is an ongoing challenge. Manasan's work highlights the importance of strategic resource allocation in effectively addressing quantity and quality issues.

Strategic Recommendations

Enhanced Coordination. Better coordination among the three agencies, with a potential lead role for the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) in setting sector-wide budget priorities.

Policy Coherence. Clear delineation of responsibilities to avoid duplication and ensure consistent policy implementation.

Resource Prioritization. Given its foundational importance, focus on basic education while ensuring that technical and higher education aligns with national development goals and labor market needs.

EDCOM II: 28 Key Priority Areas

However, in 2023, after almost three decades of tri-focalization, legislative action led to the establishment of a Second Education Commission through R.A. No. 11899, further stressing the need for continuous improvement and innovation in the education sector. The report highlighted 28 Key Priority Areas in the Philippine Education System.

It outlines crucial focus areas and challenges in the education sector in the Philippines, which plays a vital role in the country's development. The report is structured into three main sections: Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), Basic Education, and Higher Education.

In the ECCD section, the report emphasizes the need to address challenges related to nutrition and feeding programs and the supply and demand-side factors impacting early childhood development. It underscores the importance of governance and financing to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of ECCD programs.

The Basic Education section of the report identifies critical focus areas, including improving learning resources, evaluating learning outcomes, enhancing curriculum and instruction, and addressing school infrastructure and the alternative learning system. It underlines the potential impact of strategic reforms in these areas and the significance of creating a safe and supportive home and school environment, which can significantly enhance educational outcomes.

The Higher Education section of the report sets out priorities, including increasing access to quality higher education, improving quality assurance, ensuring efficiency in public and private higher education provision, and promoting graduate education, research, and innovation. It highlights the potential benefits of these changes and emphasizes the crucial role of stakeholders in supporting these initiatives, making them feel valued and integral to improving the education sector.

Overall, the report provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges and priority areas in the education sector in the Philippines. It emphasizes the need for strategic reforms to address these issues. It highlights the need to reexamine tri-focalization as a governance structure in Philippine education.

Purpose of the Work

This study was conducted to determine the level of implementation of Trifocalization in the Province of Marinduque from the perspective of Local Government Officials, Administrators, School Heads, Parent-Teachers Association Members, Teachers and Students.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of the implementation of Trifocalization in the Province of Marinduque regarding:
 - 1.1 Curriculum development and alignment with local needs and realities?
 - 1.2 Quality of teachers and teaching practices?
 - 1.3 Financing educational initiatives and programs?
 - 1.4 Governance structures and mechanisms?
2. What is the impact of the implementation of Trifocalization in the Province of Marinduque based on the following:
 - 2.1 The Local Government Officials, Administrators, School Heads, PTA Members and Teachers?
 - 2.2 On the Students?
 - 2.3 On the SWOT Analysis?
 - 2.4 On the Strategic Education Governance Framework?

Approach in Solving the Problem of the Research

The approach can be structured as follows:

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

- Conducted an extensive literature review on trifocalization of Philippine education, which involved segmenting educational governance into three focal areas: basic education, technical-vocational education, and higher education.
- Established the theoretical framework that underpins trifocalization, incorporating relevant educational theories and models that explain its potential impacts on educational quality, accessibility, and relevance.

Contextual Analysis of Marinduque

- Conducted a detailed analysis of the current state of education in Marinduque, highlighting existing challenges and opportunities.

- Examined demographic, socio-economic, and geographical factors specific to Marinduque that may influence the implementation of trifocalization.

Policy Analysis

- Review existing policies and legislative frameworks governing education in the Philippines, particularly those relevant to trifocalization.
- Analyze the alignment of national policies with local educational needs and priorities in Marinduque.

Methodological Approach

- Adopted a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather comprehensive data.
- Used self-constructed surveys, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with key stakeholders, including educators, administrators, students, and policymakers, to collect primary data.

Impact Assessment

- Evaluated the impact of trifocalization on educational quality by examining metrics such as student performance, teacher qualifications, and school infrastructure by asking both local government officials, administrators, school heads, PTA members, teachers, and students.
- Assessed accessibility by analyzing enrollment rates, retention rates, and the availability of educational resources across different levels of education.
- Investigated relevance by exploring how well the educational programs align with the local needs and realities

Strategic Recommendations

- Proposed a model of implementation of trifocalization; enhanced coordination between and among the DepEd, TESDA, and the CHED within the Province of Marinduque and a focus on quality more than quantity by eliminating the practice of mass promotion among students and a third-party curriculum exit exam.

Methodology

- Performed statistical analysis such as percentage, frequency, and mean on quantitative data to identify trends and patterns, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data to uncover deeper insights.
- A simple structural equations model was used to analyzed the theorized relationships among variables.

Results & Discussions

I. Results for SOP 1

Table 1

The level of implementation of Trifocalization as assessed by the Local Government Officials, Administrators, School Heads and Teachers in terms of curriculum development, quality of teachers and teaching practices, financing educational initiatives and programs, and governance structures and mechanisms established under trifocalization

Indicator	4	3	2	1	Mean	VD
Curriculum Development and Alignment with Local Needs and Realities						
1. Level of Implementation of Trifocalization in Curriculum Development and Alignment with Local Needs and Realities	77	136	51	15	2.99	Moderate Implementation
Quality of Teachers and Teaching Practices						
1. Level of Implementation of Trifocalization on the Quality of Teachers and Teaching Practices	54	90	119	15	2.66	Moderate Implementation
Financing Educational Initiatives and Programs						
1. Level of Implementation of Trifocalization on the Financing of Educational Initiatives and Programs	44	97	118	20	2.59	Moderate Implementation
Governance Structures and Mechanisms						
1. Level of Implementation of Trifocalization on the Governance Structure and Mechanism established under Trifocalization in Ensuring Equitable Access to Quality Education in the Province of Marinduque	56	106	104	14	2.73	Moderate Implementation
Grand Mean					2.74	Moderate Implementation

Legend:

1.00 – 1.75	Low Implementation
1.76 – 2.49	Partial Implementation
2.50 – 3.24	Moderate Implementation
3.25 – 4.00	High Implementation

The data in Table 1 presents the assessed level of implementation of trifocalization across various aspects of the education system in Marinduque, using a four-point scale (4=High Implementation, 3=Moderate Implementation, 2=Low Implementation, 1=Very Low Implementation). The indicators evaluated include curriculum development and alignment with local needs and realities, quality of teachers and teaching practices, financing educational initiatives and programs, and governance structures and mechanisms.

Curriculum Development and Alignment with Local Needs and Realities. The implementation of trifocalization in curriculum development and its alignment with local needs and realities was a mixed bag. It received scores of 4 (77 respondents out of a total of 279), 3 (136 respondents out of a total of 279), 2 (51 respondents out of a total of 279), and 1 (15 respondents out of a total of 279). The mean score of 2.99 indicates a moderate level of implementation.

This echoes what Anderson, (2005); FitzPatrick et al., (2015); Ziebell & Clarke, (2018) underscored that curriculum alignment significantly impacts student outcomes. Optimal alignment among the prescribed, assessed, and enacted curriculum affords students suitable and ample opportunities to attain learning objectives, enhances the credibility of assessment

tasks, and heightens educational responsibility. Moreover, according to Blumberg (2000), clarity regarding learning direction emerges for students when learning goals, instructional methods, and assessment criteria remain congruent.

Quality of Teachers and Teaching Practices. The implementation of trifocalization in improving the quality of teachers and teaching practices was assessed with scores of 4 (54 respondents), 3 (90 respondents), 2 (119 respondents), and 1 (15 respondents). The resulting mean score of 2.66 suggests a moderate level of implementation.

According to Hanushek (2016) in his study "Education and the Nation's Future," this finding underscores the significance of teacher quality, which is the most verifiable element in student achievement.

Financing Educational Initiatives and Programs. The scores for financing educational initiatives and programs were 4 (44 respondents), 3 (97 respondents), 2 (118 respondents), and 1 (20 respondents). The mean score of 2.59 reflects a moderate level of implementation.

These results underscore the pivotal role of financing in quality education and training. As Paqueo et al (2023) argue, it is the cornerstone of every public good or service, including education and training. The significance of governance and finance policies in addressing complex challenges cannot be overstated, and adequate funding is a necessity for favorable learning outcomes.

Governance Structures and Mechanisms. The level of implementation of trifocalization on governance structures and mechanisms ensuring equitable access to quality education in the province scored 4 (56 respondents), 3 (106 respondents), 2 (104 respondents), and 1 (14 respondents). This indicator has a mean score of 2.73, indicating a moderate implementation level.

These results reiterate the importance of ensuring equitable access to education, as several studies have underscored. This includes enhanced economic prospects (GGI Insights, 2023; Parveen & Awan, 2019), strengthened social cohesion (Chiong & Menzies, 2016; Khan, 2023), diminished inequalities (GGI Insights, 2023), and the cultivation of a more inclusive society (Ainscow, 2020). Chemulwo and Ali (2019) illustrate that equitable education empowers marginalized groups, leading to improved livelihoods and community advancement. Moreover, equitable education plays a pivotal role in disrupting the cycle of poverty by equipping individuals with the necessary tools to secure better employment opportunities and meaningfully contribute to society (OECD, 2019).

Overall, the grand mean score of 2.74, which denotes a moderate level of implementation of trifocalization within the education system of Marinduque, is a significant indicator. While showing some variation in specific scores, each aspect consistently falls within the moderate implementation range, suggesting that while there has been significant effort and progress, there remains room for further improvement and enhancement in these areas.

II. Results for SOP 2

A. Based on the Local Government Officials, Administrators, School Heads, PTA Members and Teachers

Based on the data in Table 1, we can deduce the following:

Curriculum Development and Alignment with Local Needs and Realities. The impact of trifocalization in Curriculum Development and Alignment with Local Needs and Realities is moderate.

Quality of Teachers and Teaching Practices. The impact of trifocalization in Quality of Teachers and Teaching Practices is moderate.

Financing Educational Initiatives and Programs. The impact of trifocalization in Financing Educational Initiatives and Programs is moderate.

Governance Structures and Mechanisms. The impact of trifocalization in Governance Structures and Mechanisms is moderate.

B. Based on the student respondents

Quality

The data in Table 2 evaluates various aspects of the educational experience at a school, focusing on student satisfaction, curriculum adequacy, teaching quality, facilities, and support services.

The Level of Satisfaction with the Quality of Education Provided by the School. Most respondents (56.72%) expressed a moderate level of satisfaction with the quality of education, while 29.48% were highly satisfied. A smaller portion of respondents are somewhat satisfied (13.06%), and a few are dissatisfied (0.75%). The mean score of 3.15 indicates an overall moderate satisfaction with the quality of education provided.

These results are not just a random observation, but it falls within the purview of what Beeby (1966) calls the first level of what is perceived as education quality, which is classroom quality. This is a significant aspect, as it focuses on measurable knowledge and learning skills, as well as intangible behaviors and attitudes such as "habits of industry ... attitudes of respect for authority and love of country". Beeby's model addressed the first quality criterion, precisely the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. This was a time when human capital theorists were developing statistical techniques to measure the economic benefits of education investments, motivating Beeby to propose a theory of educational quality that matched their statistical analysis. It was also a time when the rapid expansion of primary education provision in low-income countries was seen as a threat to quality. Each stage is described in terms of systemic, curriculum, and classroom characteristics, highlighting the context's importance as a quality determinant in subsequent key texts (Hawes & Stephens, 1990; Heneveld, 1994; UNESCO, 2005).

The Extent to which the Curriculum and Course Content Adequately Prepare Students for Future Endeavors. It's worth noting that a significant majority of respondents (51.49%) found the curriculum and course content substantially adequate for preparing them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies. This high percentage underscores the curriculum's quality. Additionally, 35.82% rate it as very adequate, 12.31% find it partially adequate, and only a mere 0.37% consider it not adequate. The mean score of 3.23 reflects an overall adequate preparation provided by the curriculum.

The respondents' sentiments align with the concept of 'relevance.' This concept underscores that quality education should harmonize with the economic goals of the learners' community, making it more beneficial and applicable. This view supports the idea that quality education is based on broader social criteria. These latter two criteria for quality education are now referred to as relevance (Hawes & Stephens, 1990) or 'external quality' (UNESCO, 2005).

The Extent of Satisfaction with the Quality of Teaching and Instruction. A significant majority (58.58%) are satisfied with the quality of teaching and instruction, while 27.99% rate it as highly satisfied. A smaller group found it somewhat satisfied (11.94%), and a minimal percentage rated it dissatisfied (1.49%). The mean score of 3.13 indicated general satisfaction with the teaching quality.

These results are significant, as they align with what Day (2004) defines as the personal attributes of a "good teacher," like a passion for teaching, which are central to teacher quality. It also resonates with what Towers and Maguire (2022) consider synonymous with being a "good" teacher.

The Level of Adequacy and Accessibility of Facilities and Infrastructure. Key findings on the adequacy and accessibility of facilities and infrastructure: The ratings provided by the respondents carry significant weight. A majority (59.33%) considered the facilities and infrastructure substantially adequate, with a commendable 17.91% rating them as very adequate. However, a portion found them partially adequate (19.78%), and a small fraction found them not adequate (3.00%). The mean score of 2.92, which suggests that the facilities and infrastructure are substantially adequate but could benefit from improvements, further validates these findings.

These results agree with UNESCO's concept of an input indicator, which critically evaluates the deployment and use of resources for learning. This comprehensive approach includes monitoring financial, material, and human resource delivery at all system levels. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the challenges that may arise and ensure that these inputs are available where needed.

The Assessment of the Availability and Effectiveness of Support Services. Over half of the respondents (51.87%) considered the support services as substantially adequate, while 28.73% rated them as very adequate. A smaller portion of respondents (16.79%) found them partially adequate, and a mere 2.61% rated them as not adequate. The mean score of 3.07 further solidifies the notion that the support services are not just adequate, but indeed effective.

Significantly, the results support and validate UNESCO's definition of "input" in defining education quality.

On the whole, the data paints a positive picture of various aspects of the educational experience, with most indicators falling within the range of satisfaction and adequacy. However, the findings also shed light on areas that hold potential for further enhancement, particularly in facilities and support services, sparking hope and motivation for future improvements.

Table 2

Impact of trifocalization in Philippine education as assessed by the respondents in terms of quality of education

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Level of Satisfaction with the Quality of Education provided by the school				
Satisfied	152	56.72	3.15	Satisfied
Highly Satisfied	79	29.48		
Somewhat Satisfied	35	13.06		
Dissatisfied	2	0.75		
Total	268	100.00		
2. Extent felt that the curriculum and course content in the program of study adequately prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for future academic and professional endeavors				
Substantially Adequate	138	51.49	3.23	Substantially Adequate
Very Adequate	96	35.82		
Partially Adequate	33	12.31		
Not Adequate	1	0.37		
Total	268	100.00		

3. Extent of satisfaction with the quality of teaching and instruction provided by faculty members in the program of study, including their expertise, engagement, and ability to facilitate learning effectively					
Satisfied	157	58.58	3.13	Satisfied	
Highly Satisfied	75	27.99			
Somewhat Satisfied	32	11.94			
Dissatisfied	4	1.49			
Total	268	100.00			
4. Level of Adequacy and Accessibility of the facilities and infrastructure provided by the institution, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and recreational areas, to support academic and extracurricular activities					
Substantially Adequate	159	59.33	2.92	Substantially Adequate	
Partially Adequate	53	19.78			
Very Adequate	48	17.91			
Not Adequate	8	3.00			
Total	268	100.00			
5. Assessment of the availability and effectiveness of support services, such as tutoring, academic advising, and career counselling, in enhancing the overall quality of education and student success within the institution					
Substantially Adequate	139	51.87	3.07	Substantially Adequate	
Very Adequate	77	28.73			
Partially adequate	45	16.79			
Not adequate	7	2.61			
Total	268	100.00			

Legend

1.00 – 1.75	Dissatisfied	Not Adequate
1.76 – 2.49	Somewhat Satisfied	Partially Adequate
2.50 – 3.24	Satisfied	Substantially Adequate
3.25 – 4.00	Highly Satisfied	Very Adequate

Accessibility

The data in Table 3 presents an evaluation of various aspects related to the cost of education, accessibility of educational materials, internet connectivity, barriers to accessing education, and gender-based discrimination within a school environment.

The Level of Reasonability of the Cost of Education Given the Quality of Education Received. The majority of respondents (43.66%) viewed the cost of education as a fair trade-off for the quality of education they received. This significant portion (30.97%) considered it a very reasonable investment. A smaller group (20.15%) still found it reasonable, while a mere 5.22% deemed it unreasonable. The average score of 3.00 suggested an overall perception that the cost of education was reasonable, providing reassurance and confidence in the value of education.

These observations can be contextualized in what Maligalig et al. (2010), Dolan (1991), De Dios (1995), and LaRocque (2004) described as the high regard Filipino parents have over education as one of the most significant legacies they can bestow upon their children. They

believe a better education creates opportunities to secure a prosperous future and ultimately lift them out of poverty. Consequently, they will make significant sacrifices to ensure their children attend school. However, due to the severely limited resources of low-income families, education often takes lesser priority, thereby diminishing their chances of escaping poverty. This underscores the need for policymakers and educators to address the affordability of education, particularly for low-income families, to ensure equal access to quality education.

The Rate of the Accessibility of Educational Materials. While the majority of respondents (57.84%) rated the accessibility of educational materials as substantially accessible, with 25.00% rating it as very accessible, it is crucial to note that some respondents (14.93%) found it partially accessible, and a small percentage (2.24%) considered it inaccessible. The mean score of 2.23 reflected a fair level of accessibility, indicating a clear need for improvement. This should motivate us to take action and strive for better accessibility.

It is important to note that these results reflect the respondents' views and align with the Education 2030 Framework for Action No. 22. This framework emphasizes that expanding accessibility needs to be coupled with efforts to enhance the standard and applicability of education and learning.

The Description of the Connectivity of Internet Connections in School. Most respondents (41.04%) rated the internet connectivity as good, while 33.21% rated it as fair. A smaller portion (15.67%) found it poor, and a few (10.07%) rated it as excellent. The mean score of 2.46 suggested that internet connectivity is generally considered fair, with significant room for improvement.

These results underscore the Education 2030 Framework, Goal No. 4.a., which provides that by 2030, in pursuit of quality and accessible education, develop and improve educational infrastructure that caters to children, individuals with disabilities, and diverse gender identities. The aim is to create secure, nonviolent, all-encompassing, and efficient learning spaces for everyone. The research findings on internet connectivity highlight the need to include digital infrastructure as a crucial component of this goal, as it is a key enabler of quality and accessible education in the digital age.

The Identification of Barriers to Accessing Education. Financial challenges were the most prevalent regarding barriers to education, with a staggering 63.43% of respondents citing this as a significant issue. Personal challenges, such as health or family circumstances, were the second most common barrier (26.87%), followed by technological challenges (7.84%). A small number of respondents (1.12%) faced all the mentioned barriers, while a negligible percentage cited either financial and technological challenges (0.37%) or no barriers at all (0.37%). This data underscores the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to address the multifaceted nature of these barriers to education.

These results align with the Education 2030 Framework Action No. 38, which highlights the need to increase opportunities for access to higher levels of education, particularly in least-developed countries.

A significant majority (85.45%) of respondents reported that gender-based discrimination or bias affects access to education within the academic environment, impacting areas such as admissions, scholarship opportunities, and academic resources. A smaller portion (14.55%) indicated no such effect.

The results underscore what Education 2030 Framework Action No. 45 which provides the promotion of tertiary education and university as well as adult learning, education and training opportunities for young people and adults of all ages and socio-cultural background so as to enable them to continue to improve and adapt their skills, with particular attention to gender equality including the elimination of gender-based barriers, and to vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities.

The data presented is of utmost importance: it showed that education costs are generally reasonable and educational materials are relatively accessible. However, it also highlighted areas that need attention, such as internet connectivity and financial challenges. Moreover, it highlighted the significant issue of gender-based discrimination affecting access within the academic environment. These insights should engage us all in the pursuit of enhancing educational experience and equity, recognizing the crucial role each of us plays in this process.

Table 3

Impact of trifocalization in Philippine education as assessed by the respondents in terms of accessibility

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Level of Reasonability of the Cost of Education given the Quality of the Education received				
Reasonable	117	43.66	3.00	Reasonable
Very Reasonable	83	30.97		
Somewhat Reasonable	54	20.15		
Unreasonable	14	5.22		
Total	268	100.00		
2. Rate of the Accessibility of Educational Materials in School, including textbooks, online resources, and learning platforms, in meeting the needs of students with diverse learning styles, abilities, and preferences				
Substantially Accessible	155	57.84	2.23	Partially Accessible
Very Accessible	67	25.00		
Partially Accessible	40	14.93		
Inaccessible	6	2.24		
Total	268	100.00		
3. Description of the Connectivity of Internet Connections in School				
Good	110	41.04	2.46	Fair
Fair	89	33.21		
Poor	42	15.67		
Excellent	27	10.07		
Total	268	100.00		
4. Identification of Barriers to Accessing Education	Frequency	Percentage	Rank	
Financial Challenges	170	63.43	1	
Personal Challenge	72	26.87	2	
Technological Challenges	21	7.84	3	
All of the Above	3	1.12	4	
Financial & Technological	1	0.37	5.5	
None	1	0.37	5.5	
Total	268	100.00		
5. Gender-Based Discrimination or Bias Affecting Access to Education within the Academic Environment, such as unequal treatment in admissions, scholarship opportunities, or access to academic resources				
With Effect	229	85.45	1	
No Effect	39	14.55	2	
Total	268	100.00		

Legend

1.00 – 1.75	Unreasonable	Poor	Inaccessible
1.76 – 2.49	Somewhat Reasonable	Fair	Partially Accessible
2.50 – 3.24	Reasonable	Good	Substantially Accessible
3.25 – 4.00	Very Reasonable	Excellent	Very Accessible

Relevance

The data on Table 4, collected through a self-constructed survey, evaluates student perceptions of various aspects of their academic programs, including curriculum relevance, alignment with workforce demands, experiential learning opportunities, and career support services.

The Relevance of Curriculum and Academic Programs to Academic and Career Goals. The majority of respondents (56.72%) expressed high satisfaction with the curriculum and programs, finding them highly relevant to their academic and career goals. A significant portion (23.51%) even rated them as exceptional. A smaller group (19.03%) perceived them as moderately relevant, while only a negligible 1.12% found them of low relevance. The mean score of 3.03 further confirms the high overall relevance of the curriculum and programs.

The data presented is in direct alignment with the Education 2030 Framework of Action No. 43, which advocates for a robust, well-regulated tertiary education system. This system should be bolstered by technology, open educational resources, and distance education, all of which can enhance access, equity, quality, and relevance. This alignment underscores the importance of bridging the disparity between the curriculum offered at higher education institutions, such as colleges and universities, and the skill sets required by economies and societies.

The Alignment of Learning Experiences with Workforce Demands. Most respondents (60.07%) perceived a good alignment between their learning experiences and the demands of the modern workforce, with 25.00% rated this alignment as excellent. Some respondents (13.43%) saw it as partially aligned, and a small percentage (1.49%) found it poorly aligned. The mean score of 3.06 reflected an excellent overall alignment.

The data resonates with Education 2030 Framework of Action No. 82, which provides that stakeholder engagement can play an essential role in aligning learning experience with workforce demand by helping education and skills training planners understand labor market trends and skills needs. Thus, stakeholders can facilitate the school-to-work transition and contribute innovative approaches to addressing education challenges.

The Satisfaction with Experiential Learning Opportunities. Overall, the data reveals a significant contribution of internships, co-op programs, and other experiential learning opportunities to workforce preparation. Many respondents (46.64%) reported this, with 22.76% rating these opportunities as offering exceptional contributions. Some respondents (23.51%) saw them as providing some contribution, while a smaller group (7.46%) felt they offered minimal contribution. The mean score of 2.85 further confirms the significant overall contribution.

The results not only underscore the importance of related learning experiences but also align closely with the principles of the Education 2030 Framework for Action No. 50, Indicative Strategy. This strategy promotes the development of different forms of work-based and classroom-based training and learning where appropriate.

The Satisfaction with Career Support and Resources. Over half of the respondents (54.85%) expressed their satisfaction with the support and resources for career planning, job

search assistance, and professional development. This high satisfaction rate, coupled with the fact that 30.97% were highly satisfied, is a testament to the effectiveness of the career support services. Some respondents (10.07%) were somewhat satisfied, and a small percentage (4.10%) were dissatisfied. The mean score of 3.13 suggested that students were satisfied with the career support services offered.

The results align with the Education 2030 Framework for Action No. 50, Indicative Strategy, which emphasizes the promotion and development of different forms of work-based and classroom-based training and learning where appropriate. This underscores the importance of career support and resources, as outlined in the framework.

The data revealed that students generally found their academic programs relevant to their goals, well-aligned with workforce demands, and supported by significant experiential learning opportunities. This is a positive sign, but it also highlights the need to further enhance these aspects. While there was reasonable satisfaction with career support services, the findings indicate a clear need for improvement to increase overall satisfaction.

Table 4

Impact of trifocalization in Philippine education as assessed by the respondents in terms of relevance

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Relevance of curriculum and academic programs offered by the institution to academic and career goals				
High Relevance	152	56.72	3.03	High Relevance
Exceptional Relevance	63	23.51		
Moderate Relevance	51	19.03		
Low Relevance	3	1.12		
Total	268	100.00		
2. Alignment of learning experiences and practical applications provided within the program of study and the demands and expectations of the modern workforce				
Good Alignment	161	60.07	3.06	Good Alignment
Excellent Alignment	67	25.00		
Partial Alignment	36	13.43		
Poor Alignment	4	1.49		
Total	268	100.00		
3. Level of contribution of the internships, co-op programs, or other experiential learning opportunities related to the field of study in preparation for the world of work				
Significant Contribution	125	46.64	2.85	Significant Contribution
Exceptional Contribution	61	22.76		
Some Contribution	63	23.51		
Minimal Contribution	20	7.46		
Total	268	100.00		
4. Level of satisfaction with the support and resources provided by the institution for career planning, job search assistance, and professional development opportunities to help in transitioning successfully from academia to the world of work				
Satisfied	147	54.85	3.13	Satisfied
Highly Satisfied	83	30.97		
Somewhat Satisfied	27	10.07		
Dissatisfied	11	4.10		

Total	268	100.00
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Legend

1.00 – 1.75	Low Relevance	Poor Alignment	Minimal Contribution	Dissatisfied
1.76 – 2.49	Moderate Relevance	Partial Alignment	Some Contribution	Somewhat Satisfied
2.50 – 3.24	High Relevance	Good Alignment	Significant Contribution	Satisfied
3.25 – 4.00	Exceptional Relevance	Excellent Alignment	Exceptional Contribution	Highly Satisfied

C. Based on the SWOT Analysis

Understanding of the SWOT Analysis on Philippine Education

Table 5 shows the significance of the understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities through a SWOT Analysis of the Philippine Education System in relation to the implementation of Trifocalization and its impact on the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education in the Province of Marinduque. Out of 279 responses, 41.3 percent or 115 teachers responded that it has a high significance, indicating that understanding the SWOT Analysis of the Philippine Education System in relation to Trifocalization is considered highly significant, playing a crucial role in informing strategic decisions and initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education. 29.1 percent or 81 teachers responded that it has a moderate significance, indicating that there is moderate significance attributed to understanding the SWOT Analysis of the Philippine Education System in relation to Trifocalization, with some recognition of its role in identifying challenges and opportunities but limited impact on overall improvement efforts. 25.4 percent or 71 teachers responded that it has very high significance, indicating that understanding the SWOT Analysis of the Philippine Education System in relation to Trifocalization is perceived as critically significant, serving as a foundational tool for comprehensive assessment, planning, and implementation strategies to address key issues and maximize opportunities for improving education quality, accessibility, and relevance. Lastly, 4.2 percent or 12 teachers responded that it has low significance, indicating that understanding the SWOT Analysis of the Philippine Education System in relation to Trifocalization is perceived as highly significant, with little impact on assessing or addressing the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education.

Table 5

Understanding of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of the Philippine Education System in relation to the implementation of Trifocalization and its Impact on the Quality, Accessibility, and Relevance of Education in the Province of Marinduque

Understanding of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of the Philippine Education System in relation to the implementation of Trifocalization and its Impact on the Quality, Accessibility, and Relevance of Education in the Province of Marinduque	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	VI
High Significance	115	41.3	2.88	High Significance
Moderate Significance	81	29.1		
Very High Significance	71	25.4		
Low Significance	12	4.2		
Total	279	100		

Legend

1.00 – 1.75	Low Significance
1.76 – 2.49	Moderate Significance
2.50 – 3.24	High Significance

3.25 – 4.00 *Very High Significance*

D. Based on the SEG Framework

Understanding of the Strategic Education Governance (SEG) Framework

Table 6 shows the significance of the extent of understanding of the Strategic Education Governance (SEG) Framework in the context of implementing Trifocalization in Philippine Education, and how do you perceive its impact on the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education in the Province of Marinduque. Out of 279 responses, 40.2 percent or 112 teachers responded that it has a high significance, indicating that understanding the SEG Framework in relation to Trifocalization is considered highly significant, playing a crucial role in informing strategic decision-making, policy formulation, and implementation strategies aimed at enhancing the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education. 33.5 percent or 94 teachers responded that it has moderate significance, indicating that there is moderate significance attributed to understanding the SEG Framework in relation to Trifocalization, with some recognition of its role in guiding governance structures and processes, but limited impact on overall improvement efforts in quality, accessibility, and relevance of education. 24 percent or 67 teachers responded that it has very high significance, indicating that understanding the SEG Framework in relation to Trifocalization is perceived as critically significant, serving as a foundational framework for comprehensive governance reform efforts that are essential for improving education quality, accessibility, and relevance in the Province of Marinduque. 2.2 percent or 6 teachers responded that it has low significance, indicating that understanding the SEG Framework in relation to Trifocalization is perceived as highly significant, with little impact on assessing or addressing the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education.

Table 6

Extent of the Understanding of Strategic Education Governance (SEG) Framework in the context of implementing Trifocalization in Philippine Education and how do you perceive its impact on the quality, accessibility, and relevance of Education in the Province of Marinduque

Extent of the Understanding of Strategic Education Governance (SEG) Framework in the context of implementing Trifocalization in Philippine Education and how do you perceive its impact on the quality, accessibility, and relevance of Education in the Province of Marinduque	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	VI
High Significance	112	40.2	2.86	High Significance
Moderate Significance	94	33.5		
Very High Significance	67	24		
Low Significance	6	2.2		
Total	279	100		

Legend

1.00 – 1.75	<i>Low Significance</i>
1.76 – 2.49	<i>Moderate Significance</i>
2.50 – 3.24	<i>High Significance</i>
3.25 – 4.00	<i>Very High Significance</i>

Conclusion

This research is significant to Marinduque's education system and the stakeholders who play a crucial role in its success. The findings of this study, which provide critical insights into the implementation of trifocalization, offer invaluable data for policymakers, local government officials, administrators, school heads, teachers, and students. These findings can serve as a roadmap for strategic planning and resource allocation, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of trifocalization and ultimately improve educational outcomes in the Province and beyond.

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