



Educational Governance: A Comparative Study of Administrative Structures and Outcomes in the Philippines and France

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Abstract: *This study examines the role of centralized educational decision-making in the Philippines and France and how the aspect of decision-making influences the implementation and outcomes of policies in these two countries. It also evaluates how a decentralized administrative system can support the accountability and autonomy of learning institutions in both countries. Through a comparison of the efficiency and effectiveness of centralization and decentralization at the educational governance level, the research will provide an understanding of the trade-offs and situational factors that influence the attainment of the intended educational goals. The qualitative research approach was applied in this study, where document analysis and secondary sources of information were used to analyze the systems of governance in the Philippines and France, as well as the systems of policy and the results of the learning. To gain an understanding of how it has happened so far, as well as what is happening now, and to grasp the issues and opportunities that both centralized and decentralized modes of education governance involve, the research was based on significant policy documents, government reports, and scholarly literature. The results show that the extreme centralization of the Philippine education system has both positive and negative consequences. The centralization model, although used to develop national standards and systems, has raised concerns about the flexibility of policies in addressing local concerns and the diverse needs of different students and communities. The French type of government, however, is more decentralized locally and has been free to be more liberal and accommodating to the needs of the local regions. However, it has also been criticized for being arbitrary and inconsiderate in its educational performance in the country. The results of the study also highlight the need for a more horizontal and contextual approach to governing the education sphere, which would enable consideration of both centralized and decentralized models of the decision-making process and ultimately lead to the desired educational outcome being achieved. The paper also identifies areas where future longitudinal research, cross-national studies, and investigations into stakeholders in educational governance and decision-making can be conducted.*

Keywords: *Educational governance, centralization, decentralization, policy implementation, educational outcomes, accountability, Philippines, France*

Introduction

The key ideas in the field of educational governance are centralization and decentralization, which bear major implications for policy delivery and performance in various nations (Brewer & Smith, 2010; Chapman & Hannaway, 2009). This cross-country paper will examine the educational systems in the Philippines and France, focusing on their administrative structures and outcomes, as well as the degree to which



decisions are centralized or decentralized (Shah & O'Neill, 2021). The Philippines and France present a good opportunity to observe case studies regarding the centralized and decentralized control of the education sector, as they have different approaches toward administration and policymaking (Chavkin, 2014; Davies and Aurini, 2016). Policymaking in schools and the improvement of educational systems are difficult to imagine without an analysis of the role such rules play in the consequences of the educational system (Kim & Choi, 2017).

In times of educational governance, the centralization of decision-making authority also entails the concentration of power and capabilities that produce authority at the national level (Anderson & Millot, 2017). This system is generally centralized and based on the traditional top-down policymaking approach, according to which national authorities prepare guidelines and standards, and all educational disciplines are required to follow them (Levin & Young, 2014). The Department of Education is considered the central authority in the Philippines responsible for shaping and implementing national education policies (Miedema, 2018). On the contrary, the French canalized system of education is as centralized as possible, with the Ministry of National Education serving as a central organization that exercises a high level of influence over the process of creating curricula, their assessment, and teachers' activities (Simmel, 2013). Due to the centralization of the concept of educational governance, consistency and coherence should be achieved in terms of the policy adoption process, as well as consistency in the implementation of decisions left to the national level (Anderson & Millot, 2017).

On the contrary, decentralization in education governance is a process through which control and decision-making are shifted to lower levels within the system (i.e., regional or local authorities, schools, or communities) (Bray et al., 2017). Decentralization provides greater freedom and flexibility in decision-making, allowing educational institutions to tailor policies and practices to their unique needs and specific contexts (Clegg et al., 2019). Most of the decentralization reforms applied in the Philippines in relation to education concern school management, where school heads have been empowered to make decisions regarding resource allocation and adapting to the curriculum (Ancess, 2014). In France, academies and regional education authorities have also been formed as part of a decentralization initiative, in which education policies and practices are monitored locally (Gunby & Medway, 2015). A reduction in centralization may also be considered a strategy to encourage innovation, responsiveness, and effectiveness in educational governance, as the process of making decisions moves closer to the delivery point and stakeholders can take more control over policy crafting (Bray et al., 2017).

Centralization versus decentralization in education governance is a multidimensional concept that affects the implementation of policies, accountability, autonomy, and ultimately, the weaker performance in delivering educational results (Meyer & Rowan, 2014). The foregoing research expectations in this present paper are that the authors will compare the administration systems and results in both Philippines and France, with the intention to point out the disadvantages and advantages of the centralized and decentralized systems that the administration employs in handling educational issues, in the two areas (Teelken, 2016). Such a comparative analysis will be applied in training policymakers, teachers, and other education stakeholders in the two

countries and other regions of the globe on the general best practices and how to utilize the governance system to oversee educational systems efficiently.

Objectives

This study compares the implications of central decision-making and decentralized administrative systems on the management of educational systems in the Philippines and France, regarding their effectiveness in policy implementation, accountability, autonomy, and overall effectiveness in achieving educational outcomes.

1. To have an insight into the interconnection between centralized decision-making in Philippine and French educational governance and policy implementation, and results.
2. To examine the use of decentralised systems of administration in enhancing accountability and independence of schools in the two nations.
3. To determine the efficiency and effectiveness of centralization and decentralization in the educational control in education within the Philippines and France, which is focused on the achievement of the desired results in the field of education.

Methodology

A qualitative case study design is used in this paper, and this is implemented along with the analysis of documents, the combination of which allowed to investigate the variants between the centralization of all key decisions and the decentralization of administrations in the Philippines and France in regards to how they manage the educational system (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The qualitative case study method was preferable since it enabled the study of the phenomenon of governance of education in the two countries at a depth that reflected their complexity and the contextual factors influencing them (Yin, 2018).

During his data collection process, the researcher conducted a thorough search of government policies and publications related to the education governance systems in the Philippines and France, as well as scholarly and secondary sources (Bowen, 2009). The review of the materials enabled this study to gain extensive knowledge about the structure, decision-making process, accountability frameworks, and delivery strategies of centralized and decentralized systems in the administration of education in various countries.

By answering the first goal, the scholars developed their literature review on policy documents, implementation guidelines, and educational outcomes to examine the impact of centralized decision-making on the implementation of policy and educational outcomes in both the Philippines and France (Patton, 2015). This allowed for the systematic analysis of the advantages, drawbacks, and general performance of centralized systems of governance in each nation.

The second accomplishment involved examining documents that define the decentralization of administrative structures, such as laws, regulations, and reviews of autonomy and accountability within schools in the Philippines and France (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This assisted in achieving the impact of a decentralized organizational structure on decision-making, resource allocation, and performance rates in schools and other learning institutions.

Answering the third research question, the researchers collated documents on the two forms of governance in the Philippines and France, including centralized and



decentralized, to compare their efficiency, effectiveness, and provision of the intended benefits of education (Miles et al., 2014). It is in such a comparative study that the relative merits and shortcomings of the two models of governance can be discerned, as well as the way they affect the performance of education in general.

To ensure the results could be applied in real life and placed within a broader theoretical and empirical framework of educational governance, the academic literature pertinent to this paper was comprehensively examined, including peer-reviewed journal articles, as well as books and reports (Bowen, 2009).

Results and Discussions

1. The interconnection between centralized decision-making in Philippine and French educational governance and policy implementation, and results

Examples of issues surrounding centralized decision-making in educational governance, as well as implications and explanations of policies that possess the power to effect decisions, have been revealed in cases such as the Philippines and France.

This is not an isolated scenario in the Philippines, as a study has found that the highly centralized educational system, which has led to extreme control over the policymaking and implementation process, is executed by a single entity—the Department of Education (DepEd). This system has yielded both positive and negative results. It should be noted that a centralized structure allowed DepEd to develop uniform national standards, curricula, and assessment systems, which provided equity and achieved a specific stimulus in defining the educational level of the entire country (Bautista et al., 2015). Nevertheless, top-down approaches could also be viewed as one of the culprits of the issues related to the shift to new policies in the communal reality and the diverse needs of different students and communities (Esposito et al., 2019).

In the course of the document study, the centralized decision-making process was identified as one of the reasons why the implementation of policies occurs at a much slower pace because the DepEd could not relay messages sufficiently with local and regional offices of the education offices where the implementation of policies is to be done (Ocampo, 2017). In turn, this has caused a misalignment in the approach to educational policies, a gap between national and local objectives, and realities (Reyes, 2020).

According to the comparison, the French system is less centralized in terms of its governance structure; the writing unit of policy is the Ministry of National Education (MEN), and identified academies are located in the regions to implement the policy (Pons, 2017). As the results of the document analysis indicate, decentralization has made the system more flexible and responsive, allowing educational policies to be adapted to the diverse conditions and situations in various areas and communities (Barrere, 2013).

Yet, the researchers have also pointed out that the French method of decentralization has resulted in the issue of deriving uniformity and equality in the results of education in the country. The existence of regional academies has led to an imbalance in the educational provision and academic performance of learning institutions, as educational management and production in certain parts of the country are more effective than in others (Mons, 2007). Moreover, the issue of the accountability mechanism and the adequate contribution of the MEN in the aspects of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of its policies also emerged in the context of the analysis of the documents (Pons & van Zanten, 2007).

Overall, the developments indicate that the centralized and decentralized governance EPs in the Philippines and France have their merits and demerits in terms of implementing and enacting policies and education effectively. The centralized system in the Philippines has demonstrated consistency at the national level, but it is less flexible at the local level. On the contrary, decentralization in France has improved responsiveness to local needs; however, it has also encountered issues of fairness and accountability (Bray, 2013).

2. The use of decentralised systems of administration in enhancing accountability and independence of schools in the two nations

The argument on the significance of decentralization systems of administration in the provision of accountability and independence of educational establishments in the Philippines and France came up with the following critical issues:

When applied to the case of the Philippines specifically, the high centralization of the educational system there has been identified as a prominent concern in terms of institutional autonomy and accountability. Despite some changes in recent years that have positively impacted the process and sphere of regional and local excision, the Department of Education (DepEd) still prevails in its influence on the work and effectiveness of schools (Bautista et al., 2015).

The review of the document revealed that school administrators and principals lack full autonomy in certain aspects, such as budget, staffing, and curriculum, as most decisions related to these aspects are made at the national level (Ocampo, 2017). The latter aspect of centralization has deprived individual schools of the opportunity to tailor their educational services to the local community's needs as closely as possible (Esposito et al., 2019).

In addition, the study found that the Philippine educational system's accountability system primarily revolves around compliance with policies and standards set in centralized areas, rather than school performance and the performance of individual schools (Reyes, 2020). Based on a descriptive review of policy documents, schools are commonly evaluated based on their adherence to the DecEd rather than their potential to earn and the ability to achieve the desired education outcomes (Bautista et al., 2015).

By comparison, the French system of education is, however, more decentralized, where the administrative structure is built of regional academies (academies), which play a significant role in regard to control and government of the schools. As we have witnessed in the analysis of the document, this decentralised mechanism has actually gained a surprising degree of independence between the individual schools in France (Pons, 2017).

The analysis revealed that French schools and institutions of learning held greater decision-making authority in various areas, including curriculum development, resource deployment, and personnel management (Barrere, 2013). Other benefits that such freedom has facilitated include crafting educational services based on the needs and realities of their local communities, which makes school managers and instructors more owner-oriented and responsible (Mons, 2007).

However, the government's model of decentralization in France has also been identified as an issue of accountability and vested interests throughout the entire French education system. By reviewing the documents, it became apparent that the autonomy of local academies has contributed to the existence of variances in academic performance and educational provision, as some parts of the country perform better

than others (Pons & van Zanten, 2007). The finding shows that the Philippine model has a centralized control system that does not allow autonomy and accountability in institutions of learning. In comparison, the French version seems to be more decentralized, though it has not been able to achieve equality or perform better across the entire school system. The controversial experiences highlight the trade-offs and complexity of finding a balance between centralization and decentralization in education.

3. Efficiency and effectiveness of centralization and decentralization as modes of educational governance in the Philippines and France in delivering the desired educational outcomes

The comparative study on centralization and decentralization in the management of the education system in the Philippines and France towards the attainment of the desired educational output resulted as follows:

3.1 Philippine Center Type of Governance. The degree of centralization in the Philippine education system, which provides the Department of Education (DepEd) with the opportunity to participate in formulating and implementing educational policies actively, has its advantages and drawbacks in terms of achieving the desired educational outcomes.

On a more positive note, the government-based structure enabled DepEd to implement a standardized national curriculum and assessment, and to a certain extent, it has facilitated the task of making education more equitable across the country (Bautista et al., 2015). The implications of centralized practice include the establishment and enforcement of similar educational targets and expectations, which can establish a high degree of coherence and uniformity within the education system.

Nevertheless, the rigidity of the top-down model is also linked to issues related to connecting and relating policies to the surrounding local context, as well as those of individual students and their communities (Esposito et al., 2019).

As shown in the document analysis, centralized decision-making was one of the reasons why implementing policies took a long time to be carried out, as DepEd tended to have a difficult time communicating and coordinating with regional and local education offices, which were responsible for putting policies into practice in the field (Ocampo, 2017). This, however, has contributed to the acceleration of differences in the implementation of educational policies, with administration weakening connections between national-level goals and local reality, and thus limiting the overall efficacy of the institution in achieving the desired outcomes.

3.2 French Decentralized Governance. In its turn, there is more decentralization in the French crisis, and the Ministry of National Education (MEN) is located at the centre of policy making and implementation, with students being managed by regional academies (academies). As documented in the paper, it was observed that this decentralization has enabled the country to achieve greater levels of sensitivity and adaptability, thereby easing the process of aligning education policies with the specific needs of regions and communities (Barrere, 2013).

This form of decentralisation has been more successful in providing services according to the unique needs and demands of individual schools and local communities, utilising a sense of ownership and responsibility as proposed by school administrators and teachers (Mons, 2007). The region's high level of autonomy through

the regional academies has enabled them to tailor their learning proposals and allocate resources according to the region's needs and circumstances at a given moment.

Nonetheless, the paper has also shown that the decentralized system France has adopted has led to inconsistencies in implementing education outcomes at the national scale. The problems in the accountability models and the realization of efficient monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation process at the local level were revealed in the course of document analysis (Pons & van Zanten, 2007). It has also created disparities in the quality of education service delivery and performance, where some areas perform better than others (Pons, 2017).

Finally, centralized and decentralized education administration systems in the Philippines and France have as many merits and shortcomings as far as efficiency and effectiveness are concerned, as well as in meeting the desired educational results. The centralized policy regime in the Philippines has succeeded in establishing some uniformity at the national level, but has not fared very well in terms of sensitivity to local needs compared to the decentralized regime of France, and has miserably failed to establish equity and accountability (Bray, 2013).

These conflicting exposures present not only an argument about the trade-off character of the centralization-decentralization balance in the governance of education, but also the even-handed or contextualized manner that would provide details to achieve desired educational results through the use of the advantages of the two models of education governance.

Conclusion and Future Research

The debate on the roles of educational governance in the Philippines and France has yielded some significant lessons on the effectiveness of centralization and decentralization in the course of policy implementation, institutional autonomy and accountability, and the manner in which structural efficiency and effectiveness can lead to the realization of desired educational outcomes.

The massive centralization in the Philippine educational system, which has resulted in the Department of Education (DepEd) dictating most policies and their execution to schools and colleges nationwide, has yielded both positive and negative outcomes. On the one hand, the centralized formula has enabled the organization of national standards, curriculum, and assessment regimes, supporting equity and ensuring a certain level of educational quality on a national scale. However, the rigidity of the top-to-bottom approach has not only predetermined the issues of the adaptation of the policies to the local realities but also the consumption of the needs of students and local communities that resulted in the inconsistency in the implementation of the educational policy and the lack of connection between the priorities of the national level and the realities of the local territories.

The French system of education, by contrast, is more decentralized, with the Ministry of National Education (MEN) playing a central role in policymaking, and regional academies (académies) implementing it. This decentralization process has yielded high levels of flexibility, enabling the adjustment to local needs and the adaptation or modification of educational policies to suit the diverse contexts of different regions and communities. Nonetheless, the study also established that the decentralism used in France has also provided the opportunity where the provision of uniformity and equity in education performance around the country has not been achieved fully and that there is the fear of the accountability systems and that there is the lack of efficiency

in the ability of the MEN to actively follow up and quality check the operationalization of its policies across the various regions countrywide.

On the whole, empirical evidence suggests that the strengths and weaknesses of centralized and decentralized educational governance institutional arrangements are present in both the Philippines and France, and they dictate the trade-offs in structuring these systems. The case of two nations is evidence of the importance of a more specific and context-dependent intervention into any nation that would allow for the use of both models' potential to achieve the desired effect of the educational process without facing the shortfalls of each approach.

A major weakness of this comparative research is that, on the one hand, it is difficult to draw a direct causal relationship between the centralized or decentralized governing system and, on the other hand, the attainment of the desired educational outcomes. Educational systems are complex, multidimensional, and influenced by a large number of socio-economic, cultural, and political factors, which makes it difficult to identify exactly what role governance structures play in the system. Additionally, the research was primarily based on document analysis and secondary information, which does not capture nuances and local specifics.

More empirical studies, as well as detailed interviews and classroom observations, would be necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between governance structures and educational outcomes.

Building on the experience gained through such a comparison of analyses, the subsequent stage of research in this area can consider certain exciting perspectives. The primary concern is that a chronological work on the history of governance forms, which appears in the educational environment and its connected impacts as they emerge over time, would be of enormous help in suggesting an understanding of centralized and decentralized problems and their designed or planned changes in facing a new configuration of situations and priorities. Second, to strengthen the understanding of the range of methodologies and their consequences, it would be a good idea to expand the scope of the comparison and add more countries with alternative models of governance. Finally, the role of stakeholders, particularly teachers, parents, and the local community in general, in the conceptualization of the application and the effectiveness of centralized or decentralized education policies should also be an effective topic to research. A multi-pronged approach like this one can enhance the development of more sophisticated and evidence-based methods for organizing the governance of the educational process and the outcomes that should be achieved in the desired educational instructions.

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