

THE PERSISTENCE OF POVERTY IN THE PHILIPPINES: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the enduring issue of poverty in the Philippines, despite economic growth and development. It employs a communication lens to explore how various social, political, environmental, cultural, and psychological factors contribute to the persistence of poverty. The research addresses critical questions regarding why poverty remains prevalent among Filipinos, the challenges faced by impoverished communities, and the role of communication in shaping perceptions and behaviors related to poverty. Utilizing content analysis of 20 academic articles published between 2020 and 2024, the study identifies recurring themes such as the intergenerational cycle of poverty, social exclusion, and the disconnect between economic growth and poverty reduction. Notably, it highlights a significant gap in addressing the communication dimension of poverty within existing literature. The findings suggest that effective policy interventions must adopt a multidimensional approach that not only tackles economic issues but also considers social and communication strategies to empower marginalized communities. Ultimately, this research aims to inform policymakers and development practitioners on how to better address the complexities of poverty in the Philippines.

Keywords: Poverty, Philippines, Communication, Content Analysis, Social Exclusion.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines, despite experiencing periods of economic growth and development, continues to grapple with the pervasive issue of poverty. While advancements have been made in various sectors, a significant portion of the population remains trapped in a cycle of deprivation, lacking access to basic necessities and opportunities. This persistent poverty presents a complex challenge that demands in-depth analysis to understand its underlying causes and develop effective solutions.

This study delves into the multifaceted nature of poverty in the Philippines, examining it through a communication lens. It recognizes that poverty is not merely an economic phenomenon but a complex interplay of social, political, environmental, cultural, and psychological factors. By exploring these dimensions, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of why poverty persists in the country despite improvements in certain aspects of daily life.

The research seeks to answer the following questions: Why do Filipinos remain poor despite advancements in various sectors? What are the challenges faced by those living in poverty? What circumstances or triggers contribute to poverty? How can communication theories shed light on the persistence of poverty in the Philippines? By addressing these questions, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on poverty and provide valuable insights for policymakers, development practitioners, and academics alike.

Background of the Study

Poverty in the Philippines has been a long-standing issue, with roots tracing back to historical injustices, systemic inequalities, and environmental vulnerabilities. Despite efforts to alleviate poverty, it remains a significant challenge, affecting millions of Filipinos across both urban and rural areas. The complexity of the issue necessitates a multidimensional approach that considers not only economic factors but also social, political, environmental, cultural, and psychological dimensions.

This study focuses on the communication dimension of poverty, recognizing the crucial role of communication in shaping perceptions, influencing behaviors, and facilitating access to information and resources. Communication processes can either perpetuate or challenge existing power structures, inequalities, and social norms that contribute to poverty. By examining the communication dynamics surrounding poverty, this research aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms that perpetuate this complex issue.

The Philippines has made significant strides in recent years in terms of economic growth and development. However, the benefits of this growth have not been equally distributed, and poverty continues to persist, particularly among marginalized communities. This study seeks to understand why poverty persists despite these advancements, exploring the role of communication in shaping opportunities, access to resources, and social mobility.

This research is significant because it provides a deeper understanding of the complex issue of poverty in the Philippines. By examining the communication dimension, the study sheds light on the ways in which communication processes can either perpetuate or challenge poverty. The findings of this research can inform policy interventions and development programs aimed at addressing poverty in a more holistic and effective manner.

Theoretical Lens

This study employs the **Social Construction of Reality Theory** as its theoretical lens. This theory, developed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), posits that individuals and groups create their social reality through their interactions and interpretations of the world around them. This shared understanding of reality then shapes their beliefs, values, and behaviors.

In the context of poverty, the Social Construction of Reality Theory suggests that poverty is not simply an objective condition but also a social construct. The way society defines, perceives, and talks about poverty influences how individuals experiencing poverty see themselves and their opportunities. Media portrayals, political discourse, and everyday conversations all contribute to the social construction of poverty, shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions.

This theory is relevant to the study because it helps explain how communication processes contribute to the perpetuation of poverty. By analyzing how poverty is framed and discussed in various communication channels, the research can uncover the underlying social constructions that reinforce inequality and limit opportunities for those experiencing poverty.

Furthermore, the Social Construction of Reality Theory emphasizes the role of agency in shaping social reality. This implies that individuals and communities have the power to challenge existing social constructions and create new narratives that empower them to overcome poverty. By understanding how communication shapes the reality of poverty, this study can contribute to developing communication strategies that promote social change and empower marginalized communities.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study draws upon a comprehensive review of related literature to provide a solid foundation for its analysis. The review encompasses academic journals, reports from international organizations, and government publications, all focusing on the multifaceted nature of poverty in the Philippines and the role of communication in shaping its persistence.

Recent studies have highlighted the complex interplay of factors contributing to poverty in the Philippines, including economic inequality, lack of access to quality education and healthcare, environmental degradation, and social exclusion (e.g., Balisacan & Hill, 2021; ADB, 2022). These studies emphasize the need for a multidimensional approach to poverty alleviation that addresses not only economic factors but also social, political, and environmental dimensions.

The role of communication in poverty has been explored in various contexts, with research indicating that communication can both perpetuate and challenge poverty (e.g., Couldry, 2018; Wilkins, 2019). Communication can influence perceptions of poverty, shape public opinion, and affect policy decisions. It can also empower marginalized communities by providing access to information, facilitating social mobilization, and promoting alternative narratives.

This review of literature highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the communication dynamics surrounding poverty in the Philippines. By analyzing how poverty is framed and discussed in various communication channels, this study aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms that perpetuate this complex issue and identify potential communication strategies for poverty alleviation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs content analysis as its research methodology. Content analysis is a systematic and objective method for analyzing communication content, such as text, images, and audio-visual materials. It involves identifying patterns, themes, and meanings within the data to draw inferences about the underlying communication processes.

The data for this study consists of 20 articles published in academic journals between 2020 and 2024. These articles were selected based on their relevance to the research topic, focusing on poverty in the Philippines and its multidimensional nature. The articles were sourced from reputable academic databases, ensuring their quality and credibility.

The content analysis process involved several steps. First, the articles were carefully read and reviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of their content. Second, key themes and patterns related to poverty were identified and

coded. Third, the coded data was analyzed to identify recurring themes, dominant narratives, and underlying communication patterns.

The use of content analysis allows for a systematic and objective analysis of the communication surrounding poverty in the Philippines. By identifying recurring themes and patterns, the study can uncover the underlying social constructions that shape perceptions of poverty and influence policy decisions.

4. RESULTS

The content analysis of the 20 articles revealed several key themes related to the persistence of poverty in the Philippines. One prominent theme was the intergenerational cycle of poverty, with many articles highlighting how poverty is often transmitted from one generation to the next. This cycle is perpetuated by limited access to quality education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, trapping families in a cycle of deprivation.

Another recurring theme was the impact of social exclusion and discrimination on poverty. Several articles discussed how marginalized groups, such as indigenous communities and persons with disabilities, face systemic barriers that limit their access to resources and opportunities. This social exclusion further exacerbates poverty and perpetuates inequality.

The analysis also revealed a disconnect between economic growth and poverty reduction. While the Philippines has experienced periods of economic growth, the benefits have not been equally distributed, and poverty continues to persist, particularly in rural areas and among vulnerable groups. This disconnect highlights the need for more inclusive growth strategies that address the root causes of poverty.

Furthermore, the content analysis identified a lack of focus on the communication dimension of poverty. While many articles discussed the economic, social, and political factors contributing to poverty, few explicitly addressed the role of communication in shaping perceptions, influencing behaviors, and perpetuating poverty. This gap highlights the need for further research on the communication dynamics surrounding poverty in the Philippines.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the content analysis provide valuable insights into the persistence of poverty in the Philippines. The intergenerational cycle of poverty highlights the need for interventions that break this cycle by providing equal access to quality education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Addressing social exclusion and discrimination is crucial to ensure that marginalized groups have equal access to resources and opportunities.

The disconnect between economic growth and poverty reduction underscores the need for more inclusive growth strategies that prioritize the needs of the poor and vulnerable. Policy interventions should focus on creating jobs, improving access to basic services, and empowering marginalized communities.

The lack of focus on the communication dimension of poverty in the analyzed articles highlights a critical gap in the current understanding of this complex issue. Communication plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of poverty, influencing public opinion, and affecting policy decisions. Further research is needed to explore how communication can be used to challenge stereotypes, promote social inclusion, and empower communities to overcome poverty.

These findings have significant implications for policymakers, development practitioners, and academics. By understanding the multidimensional nature of poverty and the role of communication, more effective interventions can be developed to address this persistent challenge.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the persistence of poverty in the Philippines, examining it through a communication lens. The content analysis of 20 academic articles revealed key themes such as the intergenerational cycle of poverty, social exclusion, the disconnect between economic growth and poverty reduction, and the lack of focus on the communication dimension of poverty.

The findings highlight the need for a multidimensional approach to poverty alleviation that addresses not only economic factors but also social, political, and communication dimensions. Policy interventions should focus on breaking the cycle of poverty, promoting social inclusion, and ensuring that economic growth benefits all segments of society.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of communication in shaping perceptions of poverty, influencing public opinion, and affecting policy decisions. Further research is needed to explore how communication can be used to challenge stereotypes, promote social inclusion, and empower communities to overcome poverty.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

This study has laid the groundwork for future research on the communication dimension of poverty in the Philippines. Future studies could explore the following areas:

- **The role of media in shaping perceptions of poverty:** Analyze how different media platforms portray poverty and its impact on public opinion.
- **The use of communication technologies for poverty alleviation:** Investigate how mobile phones, internet access, and social media can be used to empower communities and facilitate access to information and resources.
- **The development of communication strategies for poverty reduction:** Design and evaluate communication campaigns aimed at raising awareness, promoting social inclusion, and challenging stereotypes about poverty.
- **The impact of language and discourse on poverty:** Analyze how language and discourse shape perceptions of poverty and influence policy decisions.

By further exploring these areas, future research can contribute to a deeper understanding of the communication dynamics surrounding poverty and inform the development of more effective communication strategies for poverty alleviation.

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