

Discourse Game of Educational Policy: Framing Competition Among Stakeholders in Policy Communication

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the central role of communication in informing the education policy with a particular interest in how different stakeholders of the education sector, that is, governments, educators, students, and the society in general use competitive framing to alter the population opinion and how they shape the processes of making of policies. The study examines how these actors are using the process of narrative construction in order to integrate educational issues with their interests which is done through a systematic literature review (SLR). The findings emphasize the fact that communication is not just a medium through which policy is passed, but it is dynamic in nature where policy is constructed through discourse. Specific focus is given to such values as equity and efficiency which tend to emerge in such framings, particularly, in those of social media-based public discourse. Social media sites enhance the power of the stakeholders to influence the mainstream discourses, hence, controlling the policy debates trend. The study sheds light on ways in which discourse framing can be used in policy communication to provide guidance to policy makers on how they can become aware of competing interests. In the end, this piece of work enhances our comprehension of the impact of strategic communication on the policy debate in education and it also emphasized the importance of inclusive and balanced discourse in the policy making process.

Keywords: Educational Policy, Discourse, Policy Communication, Stakeholders, Framing Discourse Theory.

INTRODUCTION

At its best, policy debate is a highly complex process of communication whereby various stakeholders selectively frame matters to influence how people think about policy. Education policy should be seen not as fixed decisions, but as a dynamic process shaped by ongoing discourse (Kunadt, 2025). With the changing pressure on societies to transform under the influence of technological, economic, and social changes, communication around the education policy turns more controversial, with stakeholders struggling to gain dominance of the narrative (Spillane et al., 2019).

Educational policy is not merely an ideological competition: it is communicative, fueled by the opposing values, interests and identities, promoted by using strategically chosen framing techniques. Such communicative actions determine the definition of problems and legitimacy of solutions and amplify or silence the voices of dominant stakeholders (Edler et al., 2023). Policy communication is therefore nothing passive in this sense, but rather an active dynamic strategic game in discourse where issue framing can have a decisive influence on policy interpretations, acceptance, and implementation.

The communicative framing struggle can be seen in the interaction between governments, educators, learners,

civil society organizations, and even individual actors that have interests in controlling the course of public discourse and influence the policy agenda (Luoma, 2024). These actors use various types of communication to advance their favorite frames whether via the media narratives, public statements, or social media campaigns (Sundin et al., 2018). The framing strategies are usually based on priorities that are connected with money, curriculum design, inclusion, and accountability, but the driving force of them is their ability to organize meaning and agreement.

Irrespective of the awareness of the dynamics of policies, there are still no detailed models that explore the involvement of stakeholders in the communicative rivalry and cooperation in the policy discourse (Song & Zhao, 2024). Although single actors have been analyzed to exert influence on the policy, there has been less consideration on how the actors strategically use framing as a way of competing or conforming to the larger policy discourse.

Therefore, this paper fills the above mentioned gap by examining the role of communication, especially the framing of competition, as a tactical instrument to policy-making stakeholders. Based on the discursive game theory, the research examines the strategic actions of major policy actors and evaluates their framing practices to determine how discourse, understanding of issues, and policy outcomes are hashed by them. Finally, This study underscores communication not merely as a policy tool, but as a primary site where power is exercised, consensus is negotiated, and inclusive education policy is envisioned.

Research Questions

1. How do different stakeholders (governments, educators, students, and the public) compete to shape educational policy communication through framing?
2. What are the framing strategies employed by key stakeholders in educational policy discourse?
3. How does the dynamic interaction between stakeholders impact the development and educational policy communication?
4. How do global organizations (e.g., UNESCO, OECD) influence the framing of communication policies on a global scale?

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the framing strategies used by various stakeholders in educational policy communication.
2. To explore the role of stakeholder interactions on the formation and outcomes of educational policies.
3. To examine how different stakeholders shape educational policy framing and public perception.
4. To explore the role of global organizations in shaping educational policy discourse through framing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Importance of Educational Policy Disclosure

Discourse is an essential instrument of influencing the educational policy, the public opinion, policymaking, and the way of the educational reforms (Kovačević et al., 2018). The growing expectations on education systems all across the world including the forces of globalization, technological growth, economic factors and social disparities underline the necessity to have innovative methods to frame the matter of education and plan communication strategies effectively. Educational policies are usually combined with more general political, economic, and ideological factors and, therefore, policy discourse is a battleground wherein different stakeholders struggle to gain leverage (Young & Diem, 2018). This manner in which issues are framed has significant consequences as far as the perception of the masses are concerned and the kind of policies that are eventually adopted. As an example, policies related to education could focus on market-driven reforms when education is framed as an instrument of increasing economic competitiveness, and reputation and equitable access when education is framed as a social good.

Furthermore, discourse has a global impact, and international organizations, including the UNESCO and OECD, establish the standards of education and shape the educational paradigms in the international arena (Alazmi, 2024). The framing and discourse have been studied by communication scholars long enough and in different fields through theories like game theory to determine the influence of strategic communication on how the population discusses and makes decisions. When applied to the educational policy, these approaches offer useful information on how various actors can manoeuvre the policy discourse to influence the results to their benefit. The communication process and its role in educational policy discourse is not only informative about how

the framing process works but also emphasizes strategic decisions and power relationships that underlie the process of education systems shaping.

Theoretical Foundations: Framing and Discourse Theory

Framing theory, advanced by Erving Goffman (1974), is one of the theories that initially highlights the issues through the policy-making process (Goffman, 1974). Framing is the way an issue is presented or framed, which will communicate in that particular way, highlighting one side of it and reducing the other, so that it will shape how the audience perceives it. Framing is also influential in the educational policy process of identifying issues that will take priority, as well as in the way that they can be discussed and solutions that will be suggested (Adams, 2016). Framing allows different stakeholders in the educational world, including governments, teachers' unions, and private interested parties, to advance their agenda and influence the opinion of the people. As an example, making the social injustice of education an issue of social justice could help breed support for equity-based reforms, whereas communication of the problem in terms of a cost issue could breed a policy of efficiency. The framing theory is enhanced by discourse theory, which is well elaborated on by Michel Foucault (1971) and which focuses on the power relationships that influence the constitution of knowledge and communication (Foucault, 1971). Foucault considered that discourse is not a matter of indifference about power relations, and it may also regulate what counts as legitimate knowledge or truth. About educational policy, discourse theory can be utilized to explain that policy problems are not merely technical issues to be addressed but are subject to political, ideological, and economic interests.

Stakeholder Roles in Educational Policy Framing

Different stakeholders have diverse interests and priorities, and as such influence the competition on framing educational policy (Al-Thani, 2024). The major players in educational policy are usually the governments that formulate national agendas and stipulate central priorities. Governments can shape the way educational concerns are perceived and what changes are made to the system, which is being exercised with the help of framing. As an example, in the policymaking context, education reform may be positioned as a way of enhancing the national competitiveness of the economy, which results in the policymaking based on the strategy of enhancing workforce competence and standardized testing, rather than a more comprehensive and a posteriori equitable system of education. Schools, colleges, and universities are also major players when it comes to policy discourse (Hibberd, 2017). Such institutions contextualize matters of curriculum, pedagogy, academic freedom, and research preferences. They also promote policies that are connected with their institutional missions, e.g., enhancing academic distinction or increasing access to post-secondary education. The unions of the teachers also contribute to complexity in the policy rhetoric by representing the discourse of educational matters as rights of teachers and quality of teaching (Mockler & Redpath, 2022). On the other hand, unions tend to lobby policies favoring good pay, low workload, and improved working conditions as being very critical in ensuring a high-quality education system. Other key actors of educational policy of the international organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank (Souza, 2024). These entities usually tend to provide educational matters in global terms, global standards, frameworks, and benchmarks (Antoninis et al., 2023). As one example, the Education 2030 agenda by UNESCO puts education in the role of a human right, and concentrates on the need to provide inclusive and equitable education to all (Sayed et al., 2018).

Competition for Framing Power in Policy Discourse

Control over the frames in the educational policy discourse forms a critical point in the determination of the results of policy arguments. The stakeholders employ a set of measures to popularize their most desirable frames and convince the people and policymakers to accept those (Chater & Loewenstein, 2023). As an example, the media campaigns, expert opinion, or policy briefs could be utilized by governments to influence the manner in which educational issues are perceived. At the same time, there is a possibility that teachers will hold protests or exploit the goodwill of people in collective bargaining to push their agenda in the domain of education, like equality in education or the rights of teachers. In their competition of framing power, the winning team is not the one who wins the debate, but also being able to dictate the story, which will be used to lead the policy (Adams & Kreiss, 2021). The frame that appeals to a wide group in the population has higher chances of succeeding in impressing lawmakers and gaining popularity for some policies (Howe et al., 2022). Indeed, when portrayed as a strategy to make the country more competitive in the global market, educational reform endorsed by the heads of business and industry can accumulate heavy political momentum, as well (Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021). Conversely, the presentation of reforms as a countermeasure to social justice concerns or educational equality can help gain the endorsement of the community organizations, social movements, and deprived populations (Pechdin et al., 2023).

Research Gap

Irrespective of the increased focus on examining the role played by discourse and framing in the sphere of education policy, there is still a research gap. There is a significant gap in the detailed work on the dynamics of the competing move toward framing power as practiced by various stakeholders, especially in the process of global education. Although the available literature has paid much attention to discussions of policies at the national level, there is a need to further explore the way in which international organizations, including UNESCO and the private sector, determine their knowledge on educational discourse by means of shaping the global agenda. In addition, as much as framing theory has been broadly used in political communication, its application in education policy is not fully explained.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

The current paper employed a qualitative research strategy, which in turn involved a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The research aimed to explore and understand the nature of competitive framing among the diverse stakeholders involved in the communication process and educational policy formulation. Since the educational policies are an issue that is shaped by various stakeholders, e.g., otherwise termed as the policymakers, educators, unions, and advocacy groups, the study aimed to acquire an in-depth knowledge of how such stakeholders interact, their issue framing decisions, as well as the effect it has on the development of education policies (Fotheringham et al., 2022). Qualitative approach proved to be critical since it leads to a deep insight into the views, drives, and tactics of approaching these various actors, especially concerned with the subject of experiences and correlations behind the dialogue on policy communication. This research is planned to be a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to re-synthesize and critically evaluate the current available body of knowledge around the topic of discourse and framing in educational policy communication. The SLR approach was suitable in synthesizing a large body of research works that analyze how various stakeholders in the education sector strategically position their policies in such a manner that they sketch their interests and dialogized worldview. It offered a method of identifying, evaluating, and aggregating relevant research that is well-structured, transparent, and reproducible, especially in establishing whether or not different framing strategies are effective, as well as gaps in the literature.

Theoretical Paradigm (Game Theory)

A theory based on Game theory, under the heading of discourse games, given a policy communication scenario, has been used as the basis of the research provided here. Game theory provides a useful framework to explain how stakeholders in educational policy development compete, cooperate, and negotiate, with outcomes depending on the actions of the involved parties (Bekius & Gomes, 2023). Both the world of educational policy and the world of educational politics can be examined as strategic games played out by each of the acting parties involved- governmental officials, educational organizations, and interest groups. What these players seek is to engage in lobbying of how policies get framed to favor interests that they may have (be it by directly negotiating, directly lobbying, or surviving their influence in media).

Search Strategy

In this section, the citation data search strategy is described in four steps of the search: Search resources, Search tools, Search procedures, and purpose of the search (Moradi & Miralmasi, 2020). This research aimed at obtaining reliable citation data on the research issue listed in the best citation databases, and as the researchers selected Scopus citation database because of the precision and completeness of the data.

Thus, in order to gather information, the authors have relied on the tool to organize and manage citation resources the Mendeley and its extension. In the scientific search procedures part, through the literature search in this field, eleven keywords were identified as the main ones: Educational Policy, History of Educational Policy, Discourse Game, Policy Communication, Stakeholders, Competition, Rhetoric, Contesting of Educational Policies, Competitive Framing Strategies, Political Rhetoric, Theory of Discursive Game. Also, considering other synonyms and the correct spelling of words, the authors used Boolean Operator, Truncation, Quotation mark, and parentheses Operators to reach related sources and applied the necessary filters to redefine the search in Web of Science. Refer to **Table 1**.

Table 1. Procedures and Criteria for Searching Reference Sources

Items	Description
Database	The Scopus Database
Search Words	“Educational Policy*” AND Discourse
Search Fields	Title, abstract and keywords
Search Command	Your query: (TITLE("Educational Policy*" AND Discourse) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"re")))
Type of Publication	Journal, Review
Timespan	2015-2025
Language	English
Database	Web of Science
Search Words	“History of Education Policy” and “Policy Communication”
Search Field	Title and keywords
Search Command	Your query : (TITLE ("History of Education Policy” and “Policy Communication”) AND PUBYEAR > 2014 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"re")))
Type of Publication	Review, Journal
Timespan	2015-2025
Language	English

Based on the information in **Table 1**, 599 documents were extracted on January 3, 2025. Then, screening and data cleaning were done in two stages. The first step was in the database, where some of the unwanted studies were removed from the analysis basket by filtering on the document type, subject area, etc., and by applying the filters, the researchers reached 240 studies. In the second step, a standard protocol should be used to screen the studies. Therefore, the update of the PRISMA protocol was used in 2020, and the data were screened based on the clauses of the protocol. Duplicate documents, wrong entries, and documents without English versions, titles, abstracts, or keywords were removed from the research sample. Considering the PRISMA protocol, after identifying and removing duplicate studies, 1 document was removed. In the phase of identifying and eliminating studies without the name of the author, no document was found. However, in the stage of identifying and removing studies that do not have abstracts and keywords, 15 documents were removed. In the elimination phase, Studies without DOI eight documents were excluded. In the stage of identifying and removing irrelevant studies, 46 documents were removed. As a result, 170 documents remained in the analysis portfolio.

Inclusion Criteria and Exclusion Criteria

The literature review presented involves a literature search on articles devoted to the process of communication of educational policy and the impact of conflicting parties in shaping the policy. Peer-reviewed articles that have been published within the period of 2015-2025, including only those in the English language, were taken into consideration. In the review, studies that directly touch on the role of discourse, framing and communication strategies in shaping education policies were put on first priority. Qualified works were case studies, theoretical research or empirical research that investigated the role of communication, discourse framing or competing participants in the policy outcomes in the field of education.

The study was selected using exclusion criteria to exclude studies that are not directly related to policy communication or educational policy. Articles devoted to irrelevant policy spheres, the ones that are not devoted to discourse or framing strategies, and the ones that changed to other domains outside educational policy communication will be filtered out. The unpublished dissertations, reports, and grey literature were not in the review. Moreover, only articles published before 2015 or written in other languages other than English were excluded unless they are very relevant and have English version.

PRISMA Framework

As per the recommendation under a best practice in systematic reviews, the study applied the checklist of PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). The model rendered the process of the review transparent, systematic, and repeatable. The PRISMA were used to select, analyze, and identify the appropriate literature in a systematic way with the least bias and at the same time make sure that the review is

complete. The PRISMA guidelines were provide a proper procedure of data extraction and analysis such that, consistency and clarity of final reporting of findings will be achievable. Data aimed at conducting this systematic literature review (SLR) were collected by using the peer-reviewed academic journals, conferences proceedings, and other reliable academic databases, such as Google Scholar, Web of Science, and JSTOR. The period covered by the literature search was between 2015-2025 and the study was aimed at analyzing the framing and discourse strategies used by various stakeholders in the development of educational policies. The data gathered consisted of research papers, case studies, and theoretical articles that offer an understanding of how stakeholders compete and how to effectively communicate the policies in education. A total of 312 studies were found. Once we eliminated duplicates ($n = 42$), we looked at the titles and abstracts of the 270 remaining papers. As a result, 190 articles were left out because they did not fit the criteria, leaving 80 full-text articles for the next review step. 44 papers were removed from the list since they missed the focus on motivation or did not match the criteria. In the end, 16 reliable studies were chosen for the final assessment.

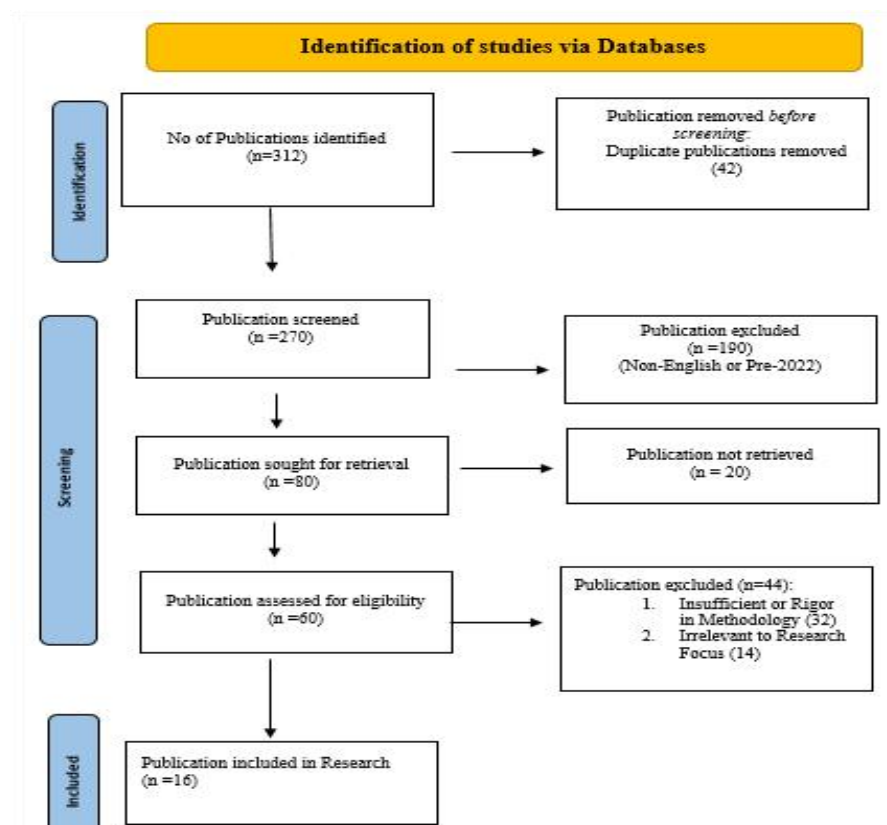


Figure 1. The PRISMA Framework for the Selection of Studies for Analysis

Ethical Considerations

The source of ethics in research was founded on the use of published academic sources to obtain data in this study. Each of the studies adopted was referenced in its entirety and sufficient credit given to the authors of the original study. The review ensured that the literature and findings were ethical based on the research standards provided and the findings presented in a way that did not violate the intellectual property of the original authors. The research did not involve human subjects directly because only secondary information that were found in open sources was used. Ethics was also upheld in the manuscript concerning the manner in which findings could be reported especially when a competing interest was revealed in the dimension of policy making in education. The research would aim at giving balanced dimensions, and no bias was applied in interpreting the literature.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Major considerations informing the interaction between stakeholders in the field of educational policy communication have been noted in this review as sources of power inherent in different actors, the ideological

stance of the actors, access to resources, and the application of language as a contrivance in the discourse. These findings revealed that policy framing lies between the institutional arrangements as well as between the interactions of the stakeholders where the conflict of interest influences the final policy decisions. The review identifies a significant problem of framing towards shaping the opinion and policy agenda of the population, whereby interested parties use the art of strategic narration to advance their own interests within the complex policy debate.

Selected Studies for Analysis

The review was conducted on sixteen studies (see **Table 1** in the original paper) as guided by PRISMA. The studies were chosen due to the methodological sophistication of the study and their relevance to the theme of discourse competition and framing in planning education policy through the prism of the strategies that stakeholders employ in influencing educational strategies.

Table 2. SLR Studies for Analysis

Citation	Aim or Title	Findings	Codes
(Serrano-Velarde, 2015)	Framing strategy in EU higher education policy.	Demonstrates how EU policy uses rhetorical frames that make practical action feasible. Concerns itself with strategic linguistics.	Policy framing, EU, higher education
(Anshori et al., 2022)	To analyze how different media outlets frame public communication policies and how these frames influence public perception.	The study reveals that media use distinct framing strategies (e.g., episodic vs. thematic framing) to align with institutional agendas, shaping public understanding and acceptance of policy decisions.	Media framing. Public policy communication
(Sun & Tang, 2025)	The evolutionary game theory aims at government control of education popular opinion.	Are representations of feedbacks of Institutions in social; reviews regimes of stability.	Game theory, opinion dynamics, education policy.
(Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016)	Re-conceptualizing policy frames and framing.	On the same note, the application of static framing has been criticized in comparison to dynamic framing of the practice in political environments by the proponents.	Framing theory, interpretive policy, discourse
(Mochizuki et al., 2018)	Use of games to support deliberation on nexus policies.	Games serve as an instrument of the inclusive stakeholder dialogue on the complicated resource policy.	Stakeholder games, nexus policy, deliberation.
(Kaldewey, 2018)	Discourse of grand challenges in science policy.	Discusses how the so-called grand challenges affect the remodeling of science identities and strategies.	Science policy, identity work, discourse
(Harvey, 2019)	Diversity and higher education in the gaming industry.	Examines how disadvantaged groups break the pathway and company barriers to gain experience in the game work training.	Diversity, game industry, higher education
(Sam, 2019)	Foucauldian discourse in educational policy via social media.	Public discussion and education reforms take place on the basis of social media discourses.	Discourse analysis, Foucauldian, education policy

Citation	Aim or Title	Findings	Codes
(Wilcox et al., 2024)	To examine how principals' communication during COVID-19 influenced educators' job satisfaction.	Principals who maintained job satisfaction used diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing, communicated collaboratively, managed uncertainty, and responded to staff concerns.	Diagnostic, Prognostic, Motivational frames; Collaborative communication; Uncertainty framing; Responsiveness
(Garrett Delavan et al., 2023)	Choice discourse in dual language education.	Market Signifiers Policy signifiers of a bilingual program are criticized on the basis of logic of exclusivity or scarcity.	Choice discourse, bilingualism, education policy
(Menzies, 2024)	The policy of English education as the populism epistemic challenge.	Looks at a conflict between the expertise and the populist knowledge in policy rhetoric	Populism, epistemic communities, policy
(Innes & Booher, 2015)	The planning praxis of the theory in rhetoric.	Appeals to the convergence of the disjointed theories of planning based on communicative practices.	Planning theory, discourse, integration
(Smith, 2020)	To analyze how educators publicly framed and responded to Donald Trump's anti-democratic rhetoric in their classrooms and discourse	Teachers were driven by legal, co-conspiracy and ethical reasons; they predicted the impact of Trump to be unparalleled, threatening to the democracy.	Legality, complicity, morality, communication
(Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2018)	Memes as digital discursive games.	Memes as evolutionary, rule-like communication that can manipulate the language usage of the participants on the web.	Memes, digital discourse, media games
(Verger et al., 2018)	Introduction to global education policy dynamics.	Outlines what are the new international agendas of global education development and the players.	Global policy, education, development
(Angus, 2015)	Neoliberal school choice and imagined futures.	In the critical reviews, Blasts school choice as epos of inequalities which is individualist.	Neoliberalism, school choice, education futures

The themes have been advanced through probes into the strategic use of framing in college education, the role of stockholders in policy debates, the power and identity of stakeholders in policy-making for educational provisions, and engagement through playing games to participate in policy-making.

Table 3. Key Themes

Themes	Description
Theme 1: Framing strategies in policy communication	Investigates how stakeholders in higher education apply certain framing tools, including problem definition, value emphasis and causal interpretation, to creatively shape public knowledge and prevail in policy discussions. Points out framing as a communicative action which is linked to persuasion and narrative control.
Theme 2: Role of media and digital discourse in shaping communication of policy.	the communicative authority of social media and digital discourse ecologies in inflating, misrepresenting, or re-writing policy discourses. Focuses on the ways communicators use platform logics, visibility relationships and audience targeting to acquire discursive dominance and strengthen certain agendas.
Theme 3: Stakeholder identity	explores the process of constructing and conveying identities of stakeholders (e.g.,

Themes	Description
and communication power dynamics.	policymakers, educators, students) in the discursive, and the ways these identities are used to create rhetorical power and discursive credibility. Concentrates on power imbalance in communication, conflict framing, in the struggle as a storyteller.
Theme 4: Games and simulations as communication tools.	Analyzes how interactive communication models (simulations, role-plays, and policy games) can be used as discursive experimentation, negotiation and strategic framing tools between stakeholders. Emphasize their contribution towards the modeling of real-world deliberation communication and scenario-based persuasion.

Theme 1: Framing Strategies in Policy Communication

Framing is an essential communicative tool by which stakeholders create sense, define how the population understands and how policy discourse is shaped. Reframing in the context of higher education, framing is not just a policy promotion mechanism, but it is a conscious practice of discourse that defines the definition of the problem, the persons in charge, and the legitimate solutions. Serrano-Velarde (2015) demonstrates the application of the European Union higher education discourse by the author to the framing concept in order to coordinate various stakeholders by using strategic language decisions to resonate around common values and aims. This communicative congruence changes the abstract concept to a workable agreement by controlling interpretive frames and shaping the perceptions of the audience.

Framing is more than a static rhetoric as it works in an interactive and changing setting of communication. (Anshori et al., 2022). emphasize the use of policy games and simulations as communication laboratories, as they enable stakeholders to take part in reflexive framing, so it is possible to test narrative strategies, expect counter-frames, and adapt messaging based on the reaction of other stakeholders. This highlights the role of framing as a discourse, discourse is developed by means of interaction and response.

The communicative dynamism of framing is further reinforced by Sun and Tang (2025), who use the evolutionary game theory to model the education governance. Their approach focuses on the fact that decision framing is not predetermined, it is constantly changed in the moment according to the changing popular mood, rhetorical rivalry, and the communicative gameplay between participants. Frames are constantly challenged, edited and reenacted, based on audience response and discourse alliances.

According to Van Hulst and Yanow (2016), it is important to realize that framing is a process that is fluid, performative, and negotiated, rather than a fixed or top-down act of communication. In this perspective, policy communication is a discourse game, where actors fight strategically in the meaning-making, positioning and re-framing of political context, media visibility and relational power. Stakeholders do not just talk about policy; they talk to win- mobilizing frames that entitle their interests at the expense of other counter-storytelling.

Theme 2: Role of Media and Digital Discourse in Shaping Communication of Policy

The digital media platforms especially the social media have turned policy communication into a decentralized and interactive field of discourse. These platforms should be viewed not as instruments of information dissemination, but as places of participatory communication, in which various stakeholders participate in making meaning, narrativization and identity performances. The authors of Mochizuki et al (2018) support that the social media provides an open space to debate, just like the policy games, and thus, the stakeholders can co-construct discourse and test frames and respond in real-time.

Kaldewey (2018) points out that identity construction, which previously enabled institutional modes of expression, has become so inherent in digital discourse that online actors use online platforms to express legitimacy, challenge hegemonic frames, and shape perceptions. The social media turns into a discursive battlefield, and the power there is wielded by the visibility of narratives and the repetition of a rhetoric.

Harvey (2019) also compares the gaming industry discourse to the educational communication process and observes that the discourse is framed to reflect access, equity, and direction through amplification and silencing, respectively. Basing his argument on the discourse theory proposed by Foucault (2019), Sam (2019) views social media as a power negotiating space, in which knowledge and legitimacy is formed. Therefore, digital discourse does not stand on the sidelines, but it is the core of the way educational debates are framed, articulated and argued out.

Theme 3: Stakeholder Identity and Communication Power Dynamics

The discursive power and stakeholder identity are of vital importance to the way actors place themselves in the communication of a policy. Instead of passive observers, stakeholders build, create, and enforce power by using language, framing and identity work strategically. The battleground is the place of communication in which

legitimacy is prone to negotiation and roles played.

In their study, (Wilcox et al., 2024) inquire about the role of media representation in making girls heard during STEM reform initiatives, revealing that, through media framing, the marginalized identity is not only amplified but that the discourse of gender equity within society is restructured. This example explains how the communication strategies might oppose the prevailing narratives and re-design the stakeholder visibility.

Garrett Delavan et al. (2023) evaluate the discursive nature of the process of bilingual education by examining how it is framed through the discourse prism of exclusionary rhetoric, showing that the policy discussion can be defined as a space of identity formation. The stakeholders are using communicative strategies to assert their moral authority like making education access appear limited, thus positioning themselves as guardians of scarce resources. This supports the status quo of power in the discourse.

Technology Menzies (2024) demonstrates that communicative framing is employed by different epistemic communities in their promotion/opposition of populist agendas, with identity related to the power of discourse. In the same vein, Innes and Booher (2015) state that the presence of fragmented and polarized discourses negatively affects an inclusive dialogue, and it is necessary to fulfill communication that cuts across identities and power disparities in policymaking discussions.

Theme 4: Games as Tools for Stakeholder Deliberation in Education

Simulations and games are slowly gaining the status of interactive forms of communication which enable the stakeholders to engage in a structured, exploratory dialogue process with regards to the debated education issues. Quite to the contrary, games create conditions of deliberative dialogue, in which games encourage actors to experiment with stories, bargain over meanings, and reinvent positions, involving dynamic engagement.

Smith (2020) highlights the communicative role of the policy simulations in the situation with the higher education in the European Union. These simulations establish discursive fields of safety whereby the stakeholders are able to discuss the issue of conflicting interests, anticipate outcomes and practice the rhetoric tools all without the possibilities of facing the pitfalls of the real world. In this case games are discursively rehearsed and experimentally narrated.

Building upon this frame of communication, Seiffert-Brockmann et al. (2018) conceptualize digital memes as components of an internet ludic discourse, in which concepts are jokingly re-written and argued over. These meme-spaces serve as metaphorical battlegrounds by displaying the ways in which the discourse on education policy is created, upset, and re-imagined using participatory media.

According to Verger et al. (2018), the global education discourse is based on the negotiations that involve power relations among stakeholders, and the games can be played to prompt reflective communication and futuristic thinking. Angus (2015) goes further to indicate that these platforms enable the stakeholders to dismantle hegemonic ideologies, including neoliberalism, by engaging in communicative role-play and alternative framing. Games are, therefore, dynamic platforms of discursive empowerment, in which identities are articulated, opposed, and co-constructed.

DISCUSSION

This paper's discussion part is about the analysis of dynamics and consequences of the competitive framing of education policies communication, with a focus on how different actors apply the concepts of discourses and framing strategies to impact the education policy formulations. The results clearly state that educational policy communication making is not driven exclusively by objective or scholarly evidence; rather, a multidimensional system of interests, values, and ideologies (including varying factors of governments, educational institutions, unions, and international bodies) plays out (Kovačević et al., 2018; Young & Diem, 2018). These stakeholders represent policy issues in such a way that they can relate to their interests, thereby making policy issue presentation part of a discourse game; how policy issues are presented matters a lot in the shaping of the opinion they convey to the masses, and the eventual implementation of the policy is the decision taken.

Among the major contributions of the study, the importance of framing to the process of creating educational policies deserves to be mentioned. Relying on the framing theory developed by Goffman (1974), the work sheds light on how some of the issues are framed more than others, which is an important aspect of the education sector. The concept of framing is well established within numerous educational spheres, such as curriculum reform, teacher evaluation, and financial distributions, in which different stakeholders frame such problems in a strategic way to support the advancement of other ideological and political interests (Serrano-Velarde, 2015). As an illustration, where education is viewed as an economic competitiveness instrument, as opposed to an instrument

of promoting social equality through education in the form of a public good, the policy directions taken are very different. The former is more probable to encourage the market-driven reforms and the latter is biased towards the equity and access policies (Alazmi, 2024).

This research also helps the study of the communication theory in that it further develops the conversation of policy communication as a game of discourse. Framing and discourse theories offer useful understanding of how the communication strategies influence dynamics of the policy debates affecting the content and direction of policy outcomes. Also, the paper brings out the transformative nature of the digital media in communication of policies. Social media and other digital resources have changed the way the stakeholders interact with each other and can communicate closer and, in many cases, more fragmented. The consequences of these changes are on power and inclusion in the policymaking process because the different stakeholders can find new ways of influencing the masses and the decisions made concerning the policy matters. The knowledge of these communication strategies is crucial to realizing the way in which the power relations are formed, and the voices of the marginalized may be either strengthened or pushed to the background of the policymaking process.

Further, the article indicates that the stakeholder power and identity are crucial elements in the process of framing. Mockler and Redpath (2022) argue that other stakeholders such as the teachers unions, schools, along with international organizations that would like to control the educational policy compete with framing power. These actors employ various strategies which include campaigning in the media, lobbying, protests in order to push the frames they like. This engagement process with the stakeholders is likely to lead to the outcome of a policy that might be responsive to the interests of the more powerful as against the less powerful irrespective of their interests. The power of influence over policy is not the only aspect of this fight to frame; the object with which whoever can execute some component of power over the influential narratives binds how and whether policy can and should be (Adams, 2016; Adams & Kreiss, 2021).

The analysis can also be complemented with the application of the game theory to the educational policy-making which shows decision-makers as strategic games where they take action on what they can anticipate their opponents to do (Sun & Tang, 2025). The policy discourse is a dynamic process which is exposed to the changes in the political environment and the views of the general population, which compels the key stakeholders of the policy discourse to change their policies accordingly. The dynamic engagement described by Van Hulst and Yanow (2016) is one of the reasons why a person should know the process of framing as a changing and developing strategy in the political arena.

The research gap that this finding synthesis fulfilled through the course of this study is that of revealing the fact that the educational policy discussion is informed by the interests of the various stakeholders. It also makes it dynamic and competitive in framing strategies that are taken by the governments, unions, educators and international bodies. The intricacy of interactions between these stakeholders has been examined effectively and thus assists in promoting a superior insight into the manner in which educational policies are not merely decided in accordance with the academic findings, but also on the balance of power and ideological struggle. By shedding some light on the interactive aspect of the policy talk, the study provides significant clues on how a person may develop more inclusive, balanced, and effective policies, including the plurality of activities and interests.

CONCLUSION

The present paper will give an analytical report on the competitive politics in the making of the educational policy, pointing out the involvement of different stakeholders including governments, educators, unions, and international organizations. It discusses the ways in which such actors strategically employ discourse to shape the policy outcomes with reference to the theoretical visions of framing and discourse theories. As this analysis demonstrates, the manner, in which education-related problems are framed whether as approaches to creating economic competitiveness in the global market or as mechanisms of promoting social equality, has important impact on policies that are eventually formed. Using a strategic use of discourse, the paper identifies the necessity to acknowledge that educators need to address the power relations and ideological tensions that drive educational changes and encourages a more comprehensive and inclusive policy-making process that would take into account the concerns of all the stakeholders. The article also applies the elements of the game theory to the educational policymaking process and manages to describe it as a strategic game, in which actions and reaction of other stakeholders' influence what decisions others make. This approach can be used to comprehend policy discussions as dynamic and developing. The paper, in particular, brings out the revolutionary nature of social media in today policy debate as a platform that allows stakeholders to project their frames and shape the opinion of the masses. The paper speculates that additional investigation should be carried on the role of digital media and global organizations in influencing the educational policy, especially in the under-explored areas in the literature. In the

end, this paper does not fail to contribute to the knowledge of educational policy as a process of communication, where emphasis is put on policy communication functioning as a discourse game. The study presents fairness and representation in educational policies by emphasizing the need to consider other voices and perspectives in the policymaking process to make the process more inclusive and balanced.

Although this study has significant contributions, there are a number of limitations associated with this study. On the one hand, such a systematic literature review is the main basis of the research; therefore, such an approach already reduces the field of analysis to the set available literature, thus disregarding the new ways of understanding the phenomenon or the low-documented cases. Also, the paper has not employed primary research and empirical case studies, which might have been used to provide more deep-rooted information about the practical use of framing strategies in practice when creating educational policies. The fact that some geographical areas are targeted, like the EU, might not be inclusive enough to reflect globalization in a world with educational policy frameworks and framing practices. . Lastly, the use of the game theory and the digital media in the study may not capture all forms of discourse particularly the discourse that occurs outside their parameters. The study can be applied to future studies involving the expansion of the study by case studies, which would examine the workings of strategies of framing in the real-time debate of policy. It is possible to do such research which implies the specific changes in education of various nations and the effect of framing these changes to success or failure. Moreover, it would also be possible to explore the role of the digital platforms and the presence of social media in the formation of policies, and could provide some knowledge regarding how these platforms and tools change the discourse on education. It is also possible to research the increased role of non-state actors and global agencies in the creation of the educational agenda on the planet, particularly in the environment of digitalization and new technologies in education. And lastly, the interdependence between framing and equity of educational policies is worthy to be discussed so as to ensure that the voices of all people are heard appropriately when it comes to formulation of educational policies.

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