Journal of Education
Publisher: Utami
e-ISSN: 3109-1644
Journal URL: https://journal.utami.id/index.php/JOE
DOI : 10.37676/joe
Volume 2 Number 2, Desember 2026, pp. 79-86

An Analysis of Social Class Impacts in Bitch X Rich Series

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Diterima (*Received*): [10 Oktober 2026] | **Direvisi (*Revised*):** [20 November 2026]
Disetujui (*Accepted*): [25 Oktober 2026l] |**Diterbitkan (*Published*):** [24 November 2026]
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ABSTRAK

Tujuan: Artikel ini bertujuan menganalisis representasi kelas sosial dan dampaknya dalam serial Bitch x Rich dengan menggunakan teori kelas sosial Max Weber dan konsep dampak Gorys Keraf. Metodologi penelitian: Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif melalui observasi berulang, dokumentasi adegan, pencatatan dialog, dan pengodean data berdasarkan kategori kelas atas, kelas menengah, kelas bawah, serta dampak positif dan negatif. Hasil: Temuan menunjukkan bahwa representasi kelas atas muncul paling dominan dengan 7 data (50,00%), diikuti kelas bawah dengan 5 data (35,71%), dan kelas menengah dengan 2 data (14,29%). Dampak negatif kelas sosial muncul sebanyak 8 data (80,00%), sedangkan dampak positif muncul sebanyak 2 data (20,00%). Limitasi: Penelitian ini terbatas pada representasi dalam satu serial dan tidak melibatkan respons penonton. Kontribusi: Artikel ini berkontribusi pada kajian sastra, media, dan pendidikan dengan menunjukkan bagaimana ruang sekolah fiktif merepresentasikan ketimpangan sosial, privilese, perundungan, dan eksklusi sosial.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This article analyzes the representation of social class and its impacts in the Bitch x Rich series by applying Max Weber's theory of social class and Gorys Keraf's concept of impact. Research methodology: This study employs a descriptive qualitative method through repeated observation, scene documentation, dialogue note-taking, and data coding based on upper-class, middle-class, lower-class, positive-impact, and negative-impact categories. Results: The findings show that upper-class representation appears most frequently, with 7 data points (50.00%), followed by the lower class with 5 data points (35.71%) and the middle class with 2 data points (14.29%). Negative impacts of social class appear in 8 data points (80.00%), while positive impacts appear in 2 data points (20.00%). Limitations: The study is limited to one series and does not include audience reception. Contribution: This article contributes to literary, media, and educational studies by explaining how a fictional school space represents social inequality, privilege, bullying, and social exclusion.

Keywords: Social Class; Max Weber; Impact; Gorys Keraf; Bitch x Rich Series.

INTRODUCTION

Social class remains a persistent issue in contemporary cultural production because it shapes access to resources, social recognition, and power. In school-based narratives, class difference is especially important because educational institutions are expected to provide equal opportunity while often reproducing inequality through prestige, networks, and hidden hierarchies. Bitch x Rich, a South Korean mystery school series released in 2023, dramatizes this tension through the experience of Kim Hye-In, a poor student who enters Cheongdam International High School, an elite institution dominated by wealthy families and influential students. The school setting turns class inequality into an everyday experience: transportation, fashion, school membership, social media exposure, and group loyalty become signs that determine who is respected and who is excluded.

The representation of class in the series can be read productively through Weber's view of stratification. Weber (2019) explains that social class is not limited to income or property; it is also connected to status, prestige, and the ability to exercise power within social relations. Breen (2005) extends this view by

emphasizing market position and life chances, showing that individuals who possess valued resources tend to enjoy better educational, economic, and social opportunities. In Bitch x Rich, these concepts are dramatized through elite students who use wealth and status as social weapons and through lower-class characters who experience limited opportunities, stigma, and pressure to adjust to an exclusive environment.

Previous studies have discussed social inequality in several literary, cinematic, and sociological contexts. Sari and Handayani (2022) found that disaster communities experience unequal access to aid according to class position. Liu (2020), Marwati et al. (2021), and Wibowo (2024) analyzed class conflict in films such as Parasite and Snowpiercer, emphasizing how spatial separation, economic gap, and resource control create social tension. Veronica and Nurcholis (2025) examined social injustice in Robin Hood and highlighted the relationship between class conflict and the pursuit of justice. These studies confirm that class inequality often produces exclusion, domination, and conflict.

However, the existing discussion tends to focus on films, novels, or disaster communities rather than on a contemporary Korean school series that combines teenage social interaction with mystery, privilege, and institutional inequality. Studies on media representation, such as Dianiya (2020), Cinthya (2020), Putri and Nugroho (2025), and Andriani et al. (2025), show that films and series can represent social class through signs, lifestyle, conflict, and character interaction. Nevertheless, a specific analysis of Bitch x Rich using Weber's class-status-power framework together with an impact framework remains limited. This gap is significant because the series places inequality inside an educational environment, where social mobility is imagined as possible but is constrained by wealth, family background, and symbolic power.

Therefore, this article aims to analyze how social class is represented in Bitch x Rich and to explain the impacts of class difference on characters and social interactions. The novelty of the article lies in its focus on an elite school as a microcosm of social stratification and in its integration of Weberian social class theory with Keraf's concept of positive and negative impact. Through this approach, the article does not only identify class categories but also explains how class difference shapes treatment, emotional pressure, resistance, and limited opportunities within the fictional school community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Weberian class theory offers a useful framework for reading Bitch x Rich because it treats stratification as a multidimensional phenomenon. Economic class refers to access to property, wealth, income, and material resources. Status class refers to prestige, honor, reputation, and social recognition. Party or power refers to the capacity of an individual or group to influence collective action, control decisions, and shape the behavior of others. These three dimensions are interconnected. A student may be powerful not only because of personal wealth but also because the school community recognizes that student's family background, exclusive membership, and social network as superior.

Breen (2005) argues that class position is closely related to life chances. Life chances include the possibility of receiving quality education, entering beneficial networks, and achieving stable social mobility. This view is relevant to the series because Cheongdam International High School becomes a space where privilege is converted into social capital. Wealthy students enjoy better facilities, social protection, and symbolic authority, whereas students from poorer backgrounds must negotiate suspicion, humiliation, and the risk of exclusion. Manstead (2018) further explains that socioeconomic status influences thoughts, feelings, and behavior, meaning that class difference affects not only material life but also self-confidence, social perception, and emotional responses.

Class inequality in visual narratives is often represented through spatial contrast, clothing, transportation, occupation, and interpersonal treatment. Dianiya (2020) demonstrates that Parasite constructs class difference through semiotic signs, including house space and lifestyle. Liu (2020) similarly notes that Parasite portrays the rich and the poor as living in different worlds despite being connected in one society. Cinthya (2020) shows that Crazy Rich Asians represents class through wealth, family reputation, and lifestyle. These studies indicate that media texts use visible signs to make class hierarchy recognizable to viewers.

Other studies emphasize the consequences of class division. Sari and Handayani (2022) show that lower-class communities are more vulnerable because assistance and access are distributed unequally. Marwati et al. (2021) argue that unresolved class conflict in film can lead to hostility and violence. Wibowo (2024) demonstrates that class inequality in Snowpiercer produces rebellion because the lower class loses agency under elite control. Veronica and Nurcholis (2025) connect class injustice with moral resistance, while Andriani et al. (2025) and Putri and Nugroho (2025) highlight that media narratives often use character conflict to expose the unequal distribution of status and opportunity. These works provide a comparative background for understanding Bitch x Rich as a series that turns school life into a symbolic arena of class conflict.

The concept of impact is needed to explain what class difference does to characters. Keraf's concept of impact, as applied in the thesis framework, refers to influence that produces positive or negative change in social behavior and social condition. Riswan and Wibowo (2020) also define impact as a real change in behavior or attitude produced by a policy output or social condition. In this article, positive impact refers to support, empathy, motivation, resilience, and protective action, whereas negative impact refers to discrimination, bullying, cyberbullying, humiliation, social exclusion, emotional pressure, intimidation, and conflict.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative design. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the object of analysis is not numerical behavior but the meaning of scenes, dialogue, character interaction, and visual signs that represent social class. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) explain that qualitative research emphasizes interpretation and naturalistic understanding of phenomena. In this article, interpretation is directed toward the way Bitch x Rich constructs class difference and the consequences of that difference in a fictional educational setting.

The primary data source was the Bitch x Rich series. The data consisted of selected scenes, dialogues, character interactions, settings, and visual details that showed social class representation and its impacts. The unit of analysis was each scene containing relevant indicators, such as luxury transportation, branded fashion, exclusive school membership, part-time work, public transportation, simple family life, humiliation, social media attack, intimidation, and supportive action. The study identified 14 data points for social class representation and 10 data points for social class impact.

Data were collected through repeated observation and documentation. The series was watched carefully to identify scenes related to upper-class, middle-class, and lower-class representation. Relevant scenes were then documented with episode and time information. The same process was applied to identify positive and negative impacts. After the data were collected, they were grouped into analytical categories based on Weber's class framework and Keraf's impact framework. The analysis was conducted by condensing the scenes, categorizing the indicators, interpreting the social meaning of each scene, and connecting the findings with previous studies. The numerical data in the tables are used descriptively to show the tendency of representation, not to claim statistical generalization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Class Representation in Bitch x Rich

The findings show that the series represents social class through visible lifestyles and social relations. The most dominant representation is the upper class, followed by the lower class, while the middle class appears least frequently. This distribution indicates that the series intentionally emphasizes the contrast between privilege and disadvantage rather than presenting a balanced class composition. The elite school environment functions as a symbolic space where wealth and status are repeatedly displayed and where lower-class characters must confront social judgment.

Table 1. Distribution of Social Class Representation

Social Class Category	Number of Data	Percentage	Dominant Indicators
Upper class	7	50.00%	Luxury transportation, designer shopping, exclusive events, elite school recognition, Honor Club, social dominance
Middle class	2	14.29%	Neat appearance, stable lifestyle, social adaptation, respectable but non-dominant position
Lower class	5	35.71%	Part-time work, public transportation, simple household, financial struggle, vulnerability to humiliation
Total	14	100.00%	-

Upper-class representation appears in scenes involving luxury cars, luxury motorcycles, designer shopping, glamorous clothing, exclusive parties, the Honor Club, and Baek Je-Na's social dominance. These signs indicate that the upper-class students possess more than money. They also possess symbolic recognition and institutional protection. The Honor Club, for example, is not merely a student organization; it functions as a public display of prestige because it marks whose family contributes the largest financial support to the school. In Weberian terms, this scene combines economic class and status class: financial contribution is converted into honor, and honor becomes a source of power within the school community.Baek Je-Na is the clearest representation of the fusion between class, status, and

power. Her wealth gives her access to luxury and exclusivity, but her real influence is shown through the way other students obey, fear, or follow her. Her dominance reflects Weber's idea that power is the ability to impose influence in social relations. The series therefore presents upper-class privilege not as a passive condition but as an active mechanism that shapes the behavior of others. A student with high status can determine who is accepted, who is isolated, and whose reputation is damaged.

Middle-class representation is less dominant. The middle-class characters are presented through neat appearance, stable communication, and attempts to adapt to the elite school environment. They do not display excessive luxury, but they also do not experience the same level of economic pressure as lower-class characters. Their position is socially ambiguous: they can participate in the school environment, but they remain vulnerable to the pressure of maintaining image and acceptance. This supports Breen's (2005) view that class is connected to market position and life chances rather than simply to income. The middle class may possess stability, but it does not necessarily possess elite power.

Lower-class representation appears through Kim Hye-In's part-time work, use of public transportation, simple family life, and vulnerability to public humiliation. Her body and daily routine mark the difference between survival and privilege. While upper-class students are associated with leisure, luxury, and exclusive spaces, Kim Hye-In is associated with work, mobility limitations, and emotional pressure. This contrast confirms Manstead's (2018) argument that socioeconomic status affects feelings and behavior: class difference influences not only material access but also self-presentation, anxiety, and social confidence.

Impacts of Social Class

The second research focus concerns the impacts produced by class difference. The findings show that negative impacts appear more frequently than positive impacts. This tendency is consistent with the dominant conflict structure of the series, which presents elite school life as a competitive environment where status is used to exclude and control others.

Table 2. Distribution of Social Class Impacts

Impact Category	Number of Data	Percentage	Main Forms
Positive impact	2	20.00%	Protection, empathy, friendship, trust, support across class boundaries
Negative impact	8	80.00%	Protest, cyberbullying, discrimination, humiliation, revenge, intimidation, group exclusion
Total	10	100.00%	-

Positive impacts are represented through Seo Do-Eon's support for Kim Hye-In. In one scene, he stays with her in class so that other students cannot bother her. In another scene, he helps her enter a room that is normally accessible only to Diamond 6 members. These actions are important because they show that privilege can be used protectively rather than oppressively. The series suggests that cross-class empathy can reduce isolation and create temporary safety in an unequal environment. Although these positive impacts are fewer, they reveal the possibility of ethical agency within a hierarchical system.

Negative impacts appear in more varied and intense forms. The protest against elite-exclusive schooling at the beginning of the series shows that class inequality is not only an individual problem but also a public issue. The school becomes a symbol of institutional privilege because it is perceived as serving wealthy families and reproducing unequal opportunity. This finding is parallel with Sari and Handayani's (2022) argument that unequal access creates public dissatisfaction and social vulnerability. In Bitch x Rich, the protest visualizes society's criticism toward an educational system that appears to favor the upper class.

Cyberbullying is another central negative impact. When students gossip about Kim Hye-In in a group chat and accuse her of pretending to be rich, social media becomes a tool of class surveillance. The attack is not only about personal dishonesty; it is also about punishing a lower-class student for crossing symbolic class boundaries. This finding supports Dianiya's (2020) argument that media narratives use signs and social interaction to reveal class hierarchy. In the series, digital communication intensifies humiliation because it spreads judgment quickly and turns class background into public spectacle.

Bullying and humiliation also appear when Kim Hye-In is surrounded, mocked, and treated as someone who does not belong to the elite school environment. The scene in which Baek Je-Na pours a drink on Kim Hye-In at an exclusive party is especially significant. The party represents upper-class social life, while the act of staining her dress symbolically marks her as an outsider. This moment illustrates the relationship between class exclusion and bodily humiliation. The lower-class character is not only verbally insulted; her physical appearance is publicly damaged to confirm her inferior position.

The impact of class inequality is also shown through revenge and intimidation. Kim Hye-In's act of revenge against Kim Na-Yeon indicates that repeated humiliation can produce aggressive responses. Similarly, Kim Hae-In's threat against Baek Je-Na shows that social conflict can move beyond economic difference into struggles over secrets, control, and survival. These scenes correspond with Marwati et al. (2021) and Wibowo (2024), who argue that unresolved class conflict can generate hostility, rebellion, and violence. In Bitch x Rich, the school is not a neutral educational space; it becomes a field of competition where students learn to manipulate, threaten, and defend themselves.

Discussion

The findings indicate that Bitch x Rich constructs social class as a system of visible signs and invisible power. Visible signs include cars, motorcycles, boutiques, formal dresses, school facilities, and public buses. Invisible power includes prestige, reputation, group loyalty, and the ability to influence the treatment of other students. This dual representation is consistent with Weber's (2019) theory, which explains that class, status, and power operate together in social stratification. The series does not reduce inequality to income; rather, it shows how economic privilege becomes social prestige and how prestige becomes the ability to dominate.The dominance of upper-class representation, which accounts for 50.00% of the social class data, reveals the narrative function of privilege. Upper-class characters are repeatedly placed in visually attractive and institutionally protected spaces. Their privilege is normalized through luxury and exclusivity. However, the series also exposes the moral problem behind this normalization: wealth becomes a standard of worth, and students who do not fit that standard are treated as inferior. This pattern is similar to Liu's (2020) reading of Parasite, where the rich and the poor inhabit connected but separated worlds. In Bitch x Rich, the separation is not a basement or a train carriage but the social hierarchy inside a school.The lower class, represented in 35.71% of the social class data, functions as the narrative counterpoint to elite privilege. Kim Hye-In's experience demonstrates how limited economic resources produce limited life chances. Her part-time work, use of public transportation, and simple home environment are not merely background details; they are class indicators that explain why she feels pressure to be recognized in a wealthy school. Breen's (2005) concept of life chances helps clarify this condition. Students from elite families begin the school experience with networks, protection, and symbolic capital, whereas lower-class students must constantly prove their legitimacy.The small number of middle-class representations suggests that the series is structured around polarization. The middle class exists, but it does not occupy the main conflict. Instead, the narrative focuses on the sharp contrast between those who command institutional and social power and those who are vulnerable to exclusion. This differs from some class narratives that present the middle class as the central mediator. In Bitch x Rich, the middle class is overshadowed by the conflict between elite dominance and lower-class survival.

The impact data strengthen this interpretation. Negative impacts account for 80.00% of the impact findings, showing that class difference in the series produces more harm than benefit. The most visible consequences are discrimination, cyberbullying, humiliation, social exclusion, and intimidation. These impacts are not isolated personal conflicts; they are produced by a school culture that rewards wealth and protects status. This supports Wibowo's (2024) observation that concentrated privilege can strip lower-class groups of agency and intensify rebellion. It also aligns with Veronica and Nurcholis (2025), who associate class conflict with injustice and the need for resistance.

At the same time, the positive-impact scenes complicate the narrative. Seo Do-Eon's support for Kim Hye-In shows that social class does not mechanically determine all behavior. Individuals with higher status may reproduce inequality, but they may also challenge it through empathy and protective action. This nuance is important because it prevents the analysis from reducing all upper-status characters to oppressors. The series therefore offers a limited but meaningful possibility of cross-class solidarity. Nevertheless, because positive impacts appear only twice, the narrative emphasizes that individual kindness cannot fully solve structural inequality.The educational setting gives the series additional significance. Schools are often imagined as institutions of meritocracy, where effort and talent should matter more than family background. Bitch x Rich challenges this ideal by showing that school can also reproduce inequality through exclusive membership, peer surveillance, and status-based treatment. This finding contributes to educational studies by showing that fictional media can reveal anxieties about fairness, access, and hidden privilege in schooling. The series invites viewers to question whether elite education creates opportunity for all students or reinforces class boundaries for those who already possess social advantage.The logical novelty of this study is the interpretation of Bitch x Rich as a class narrative in which teenage social life becomes a mechanism for reproducing social stratification. The series does not simply show rich and poor students; it shows how class difference affects friendship, fear, ambition, reputation, and emotional survival. By combining Weber's theory with an impact framework, the analysis demonstrates that class is both a category of representation and a force that produces concrete social effects.

Implications for Literary and Educational Studies

The findings also imply that Bitch x Rich can be positioned as a literary and media text that helps students discuss social criticism through popular culture. Although the series is produced as entertainment, its school setting enables viewers to recognize how inequality is reproduced through everyday practices, such as peer grouping, selective friendship, public labeling, and online shaming. In this sense, the series is useful for classroom discussion because it connects abstract sociological concepts with concrete narrative situations that are easy for students to observe and debate.

From a literary perspective, the character construction in the series shows that class identity is developed through repeated contrast. Kim Hye-In is not defined only by poverty; she is constructed through the tension between ambition, shame, survival, and resistance. Baek Je-Na is not defined only by wealth; she is constructed through the relationship between privilege, fear, dominance, and the need to maintain authority. This pattern makes class a dynamic narrative force rather than a static background. The characters' decisions are shaped by the pressure to protect or challenge their social position.

From an educational perspective, the series raises questions about whether elite schooling actually functions as a space of mobility or as a mechanism that filters and protects privilege. The existence of exclusive clubs, reputation-based hierarchy, and peer surveillance suggests that access to an elite school does not automatically guarantee equality. A lower-class student may enter the same institution physically, but the social rules of the institution may continue to mark that student as different. This finding is relevant for discussions of hidden curriculum, school culture, and equal opportunity.

The analysis further shows that bullying in the series is not merely an individual moral failure. It is connected to structural inequality because the students who bully or exclude others often rely on group status, family reputation, and institutional silence. Cyberbullying, sarcasm, public humiliation, and collective avoidance become methods of enforcing class boundaries. Therefore, anti-bullying education should not only focus on individual behavior but also address the social values that make some students feel entitled to judge and control others based on wealth or background.

The limited appearance of positive impact is also meaningful. Seo Do-Eon's protective actions show that empathy can interrupt the cycle of exclusion, but the small number of such scenes indicates that individual kindness remains fragile when the surrounding culture continues to reward prestige and dominance. This implies that inclusive education requires more than personal sympathy. It requires institutional awareness, fair rules, and a school culture that refuses to convert economic difference into social ranking.

Overall, the series encourages a critical reading of popular media as a reflection of contemporary anxieties about inequality. It shows that class is not only experienced in employment, housing, or consumption, but also in youth culture and educational life. The contribution of this article therefore lies in explaining how a school drama can expose the mechanisms through which privilege becomes normalized and how lower-class characters negotiate the emotional and social consequences of that normalization.

For media literacy, the series provides a clear example of how popular dramas may normalize or criticize hierarchy at the same time. Luxurious images may attract viewers, but the narrative conflict reveals that such luxury is connected with exclusion and emotional harm. Classroom activities can invite students to separate aesthetic pleasure from social critique so that the series is not consumed only as glamorous entertainment but also as a text that questions the cost of privilege.

For future literary analysis, the data also suggest the importance of reading class together with digital culture. In the series, social media amplifies class judgment and transforms private background into public shame. This aspect shows that contemporary class inequality is not only performed in physical spaces such as classrooms, parties, and school corridors; it also circulates through digital platforms where reputation can be attacked instantly and collectively.

For educational policy discussion, the representation of Cheongdam International High School encourages reflection on the ethical responsibility of schools. A school that accepts students from different backgrounds must also build mechanisms that protect dignity, prevent status-based bullying, and ensure that scholarship or transfer students are not treated as symbolic outsiders. Thus, the social criticism in the series has practical relevance beyond literary interpretation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This article concludes that Bitch x Rich represents social class through a combination of economic signs, status recognition, and power relations. Upper-class characters are portrayed through luxury, exclusivity, institutional recognition, and social dominance. Lower-class characters are represented through financial struggle, part-time work, limited facilities, and vulnerability to social humiliation. Middle-class representation appears less frequently and functions mainly as a transitional position between privilege and disadvantage. Based on the findings, upper-class representation is the most dominant with 7 data

points (50.00%), followed by lower-class representation with 5 data points (35.71%) and middle-class representation with 2 data points (14.29%).

The impacts of social class in the series are predominantly negative. Negative impacts appear in 8 data points (80.00%) and include discrimination, cyberbullying, bullying, humiliation, revenge, intimidation, and social exclusion. Positive impacts appear in only 2 data points (20.00%) and are shown through empathy, protection, and support across class boundaries. These findings show that class difference in the series affects not only economic condition but also opportunities, emotional security, reputation, and social interaction. The study is limited to one series and does not examine audience reception or compare the representation with other Korean school dramas. Future research may expand the analysis by comparing Bitch x Rich with other series or by applying theories of gender, identity, symbolic violence, or audience reception to understand how viewers interpret class inequality. Practically, the series may be used in literature, media, and education courses to discuss privilege, social justice, bullying, and equal opportunity in school environments.

Suggestion

For Future Researchers

Future researchers are encouraged to explore social class issues in “Bitch x Rich” using different theories or approaches in order to obtain broader and more detailed findings. Researchers may also compare this drama with other films or dramas that discuss social inequality, power relations, or elite social environments to understand how social class is represented in different cultural contexts.

Use of Additional Theories

This research mainly uses Weber’s social class theory and Keraf’s impact theory. Future studies are recommended to combine additional theories, such as identity theory, gender theory, or discrimination theory, to provide a deeper analysis of the characters’ behavior, psychological conditions, and social relationships.

For Viewers

Viewers are expected to understand that “Bitch x Rich” is not only a form of entertainment, but also a reflection of social realities related to inequality, power, and social status. Through the series, viewers can become more aware of the impacts of social class differences on individuals’ lives, opportunities, and social interactions within society.

The reported prominence of upper-class representation supports an interpretation of the elite school as more than a neutral background. Wealth, family reputation, and institutional influence shape the possibilities available to different characters. Within a Weberian perspective, these elements may be considered in relation to class position, status recognition, and the capacity to affect other people’s decisions. The analytical value of separating these dimensions is that a character may have material resources while also exercising symbolic or interpersonal authority. The series can therefore be read as dramatizing several interrelated forms of inequality.

The negative impacts identified in the study point toward exclusionary consequences of class difference in the narrative. Unequal treatment may emerge through social interaction, reputation, or access to desirable opportunities rather than through explicit financial transactions alone. This suggests that the effects of stratification are represented at both institutional and personal levels. However, the evidence is drawn from selected scenes in a fictional series. It should therefore be interpreted as a study of media representation, not as a direct measurement of inequality among students in real schools.

The smaller number of positive impacts provides an opportunity for qualitative interpretation even though the category is less frequent. Counting occurrences helps establish which pattern appears more often, but the significance of an individual scene may depend on its narrative placement and consequences for characters. A scene showing resistance to unequal treatment, for instance, can contribute substantially to the story despite being less common. Combining counts with scene-level interpretation thus prevents the analysis from reducing the series to a simple balance of positive and negative events.

The fictional school setting gives the theme a distinctive educational dimension. Schools are commonly associated with learning, opportunity, and merit, while the narrative introduces hierarchies shaped by family resources and social position. The tension between these two expectations offers a useful basis for discussing how access and recognition operate within institutions. Still, fictional representation should not be treated as proof that all schools reproduce the same social relations. The contribution of the analysis lies in explaining the meanings constructed by the series and the questions these meanings raise for audiences.

Future research could extend the analysis by comparing several school-themed series or by investigating audience interpretations of particular scenes. Such designs would help distinguish recurring representational conventions from features specific to Bitch x Rich. Audience research could also examine whether viewers interpret the same class-related action as criticism, normalization, or dramatic

entertainment. The present study makes a narrower contribution by applying a structured framework to textual evidence. Maintaining this boundary strengthens the coherence between its methods, results, and conclusions.

TRANSPARENCY AND ETHICS STATEMENT

1. **CRediT Author Contributions: FNA:** conceptualization, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, and writing – original draft. **AP:** supervision, validation, and writing – review and editing. **DAP:** supervision, validation, and writing – review and editing. All authors approved the final manuscript.
2. **Funding:** This research received no external funding.
3. **Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.
4. **Ethics and Participant Consent:** This study analyzed publicly available digital content and did not involve intervention or collection of personal data from human participants; therefore, participant consent was not applicable.
5. **Generative Artificial Intelligence Statement:** Generative AI was used to assist with manuscript restructuring and English-language editing based on the source thesis. The authors remain responsible for verifying all scientific content, data, interpretations, and citations.

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