

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND NATIONAL ECONOMY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper is on Political Ideology and National Economy in Vocational Education for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria. The researcher looked into what politics is all about and political ideology. Definitions of national economy and vocational education were given. The role of vocational education in sustainability of nation development were outlined. The impact of political ideology and its effect were discussed. It was concluded that vocational education graduates should be job creator and not job seeker. Some suggestions were made which includes; government should invest in Human Capital Development to Increase funding for education and healthcare to build a healthy and skilled workforce. Should diversify the Economy to reduce dependence on oil by investing in other sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, and ICT to favor vocational education for national economic development.

Keynotes: *political ideology, national economy, vocational education and sustainable national development.*

Introduction:

Education is very important in our society today. Education is the bedrock to development processes in any country in this world, without education the world would have been in serious darkness of ignorant. Education brings knowledge, understanding thereby molding the character of the individual who is educated. Abiodun in Abi, (2023), opined that education in Nigeria is an instrument “par excellence” for effecting national development. It has witnessed active participation by non-government agencies, communities, and individuals as well as government interventions. It is therefore desirable for the nation to spell out in clear and unequivocal terms the philosophy and objectives that underline its investment in education. This, perhaps, informed and led to the various editions of the National Policy on Education which seek to fulfil that noble role. stated that formal education occurs within a structured institutional framework, while informal education can be given anywhere not necessarily within the coffer of the classroom. It does not follow any specific structure it happened whenever without any clear objectives as predetermined goals. Vocational education is an education when received enables one to gain skills that will help the individual to be self-reliance. Effective acquisition of vocational skills will inculcate entrepreneurial skills that will help the youth to be self-employed, this will in turn bring national development.

Today, the Nigerian youth who went through formal education such as the university, polytechnic and Colleges of Education in vocational education is seen roaming the streets seeking for jobs that they cannot fixed into due to the syndrome of getting a certificate not the knowledge and skills in their fields of specialization. A graduate today in our contemporary

society cannot manipulate the relevant skills that they supposed to acquire while in schools due to the present political dispensation. The political class which are presently leading Nigeria do not believe in having knowledge or skill to get into the office of Nigerian government. The issue is do you have the certificate? The syndrome of having a certificate and not the knowledge has brought a great damage into the present Nigerian economy. (Abi 2023).

Concept of Politics:

Politics means the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in a group or other forms of power relations among individuals. Cambridge dictionary in Abi (2023) defined politics as activities of the government members of law-making organization, or people who try to influence the way a country is governed. Politics is the coming together of like mind individuals who wish to form a political party for the purpose of taking power in a community or country. On the hand it can also be viewed as the act of a fight for power to rule others

Alapiki in Akpokighe, and Ejovi, (2020), Assert that democracy entails policies in the way of discussions, debates, negotiations, consensus or compromises over how best to organize the states, nations or nation-states for the common wellbeing of the citizens at large. The essence of politics is the citizens' interactions and interfacing over state or national issues with a view to finding common grounds, common understanding, over the state issues or problems. Such state problems fundamentally concern the basic functions of government in guaranteeing public safety of life and property, maintenance of law and order, ensuring citizens' freedom, and the guarantee of justice to all the citizens under the law without exception. In democracies party politics is very essential for necessary definition of national or state issues and for shaping and sharpening them as to facilitate the citizens' understanding of the national issues and problems. This, in effect, amounts to individual party's prospective methodological approach and or perspective in solving the national or state problems when voted to power. In party politics, various parties contest for the opportunity to be in power for the sake of solving national or state issues or problems, and for any party to fly with the electorate or win the majority votes of the electorate as to gain the mandate to be in charge of the state affairs, it has to convince the electorate it has a veritable blue print. To convince the electorate, therefore, demands a clear demonstration of the party's aims or intentions and objectives and how they can achieve the desired result of good governance. Hence, party ideology is a systematic articulation and outlining of how to achieve the self-avowed political goals if given the political mandate. Party ideology also includes the political party strategy for capturing the targeted majority votes of the electorate which will empower the party to take charge or the control of affairs.

Political ideology is therefore very essential for political campaigns in communicating the uniqueness of each contending political party; its understanding of the state or national issues; and its intentions on how best to solve such issues so as to enable the electorates assess each contending party against others with a view to ascertaining the party with most authentic programmes of action for national progress and development. (Adepoju, 2019).

Political Ideology and Vocational Education

Political ideology refers to a set of beliefs and principles that guide a political party or leader's approach to governance, including education. In Nigeria, successive governments have implemented educational policies influenced by their ideological leanings. For instance, during

the military regimes, vocational education received less attention due to centralized governance and a preference for elite academic education. In contrast, the democratic era has witnessed more inclusive educational policies, such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, which incorporates vocational elements Alapiki in Akpokighe, and Ejovi, (2020), Some administrations have emphasized privatization and entrepreneurship in line with capitalist ideologies, leading to the promotion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for economic empowerment. However, policy inconsistency and political instability often disrupt vocational education reforms, limiting their impact (Basil, and Tamunosiki, 2019).

The political ideology of our political leaders today has destroyed the minds of our youths who are the future leaders to believe that education or skill does not matter to make one a leader. This is why the economy of Nigeria will continue to fall leading to unstable economy. UNICEP in (Basil, and Tamunosiki, 2019). stated that one in three children is out of school in Nigeria, with 10.2 million children in primary school and 8.1 million in junior secondary school (JSS) not attending school. Additionally, 12.4 million children have never attended school and 5.9 million left school prematurely. The report shows that Nigeria's out of school population represent 15% of the global total, a staging figure worsened by growing of insecurity, banditry, extreme multidimensional poverty and illiteracy in African's most populous country. The only solution to this country's predicament is to lay more emphasis on vocational skills technologically to enhance sustainable national development.

Okolocha, and Baba, (2016). Stated that vocational education is a practical approach to education that equips individuals with the skills needed for employment and self-reliance. In Nigeria, vocational education has the potential to address youth unemployment, foster entrepreneurship, and drive sustainable development. However, its effectiveness is largely influenced by political ideologies and economic realities. Political leaders often align educational policies with their ideological beliefs, which may either advance or hinder vocational education. Likewise, fluctuations in the national economy affect funding, infrastructure, and the quality of vocational programs. Political ideology refers to a set of beliefs and principles that guide a political party or leader's approach to governance, including education. In Nigeria, successive governments have implemented educational policies influenced by their ideological leanings. For instance, during the military regimes, vocational education received less attention due to centralized governance and a preference for elite academic education. In contrast, the democratic era has witnessed more inclusive educational policies, such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, which incorporates vocational elements (Adebambo, 2007). Some administrations have emphasized privatization and entrepreneurship in line with capitalist ideologies, leading to the promotion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for economic empowerment. However, policy inconsistency and political instability often disrupt vocational education reforms, limiting their impact, (Okwelle, and Okeke, 2021).

Ideology:

Ideology is said to be a set of opinions or beliefs of group or an individual. Akpokighe, and Ejovi, (2020), stated that ideology is the manner or content of thinking characteristics of individual, group or culture. It assert that, it is the integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a sociopolitical program. Every country has their own ways in which they organize

their political structures. They have their political structures with different ideologies. This is the fourth Republic, and each of these leaders had their own ideologies in ruling Nigeria. The political ideology of each of these leaders has its advantages and disadvantages.

Policies of fourth Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The policies that have been implemented since 1999 to 2024 as listed by Akpokighe, and Ejovi, (2020), are as follows:

President Olusegun Obasanjo (GCFR) (1999 – 2007)

1. **Economic Reforms:** Introduced the National Economic Empowerment and development strategy (WENDS) to promote economic growth.
2. **Anti-corruption:** Established the Economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC) to combat corruption.
3. **Political Reforms:** Introduced the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct free and fair elections.
4. **Infrastructure Development:** Invested in road construction, power generation and telecommunications.
5. **Education:** Introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program to improve access to education.

President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (GCFR) (2010 – 2015).

1. **Economic Reforms:** Introduced the Nigerian content development monitor Board to promote local content.
2. **Power Sector Reforms:** Unbundled the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) to improve electricity supply.
3. **Education:** Introduced the Almajiri education programme to address out-of-school children.
4. **Health Care:** Launched the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) to improve access to health care.
5. **Infrastructure Development:** Invest in road construction, airports and seaports.

President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR) (2015 – 2023):

1. **Anti-Corruption:** Continued EFCC's efforts, prosecuting high-profile corruption cases.
2. **Security:** Launched military operations against Boko Haram and other security threats.
3. **Economic Diversification:** Focus on agriculture, mining and manufacturing to reduce oil dependence.
4. **Infrastructure Development:** Invested on road construction, rail networks, and power generation.
5. **Social Welfare:** Introduced the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) to support vulnerable populations.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (2023 to date).

1. **Economic Growth:** Focused on promoting private sector investment and entrepreneurship.
2. **Security:** Prioritized national security, particularly in areas of terrorism and banditry.
3. **Infrastructure Development:** Plans to invest in transportation network, energy, and digital infrastructure.
4. **Education:** Aims to improve access to quality education particularly underserved areas.
5. **Health Care:** Promises to strengthen the health care system, focus on primary health care.

All the above policies are aimed to improve the lives of the Nigerian citizens through the provision of good health care, steady electricity power supply, good roads, quality education, employment opportunities, guarantee of security and many more, but what are the improvement today rather inflation is increasing every day. According to inflation reports National Bureau of statistics in (Okwelle, and Okeke, (2021), inflation stands at 29.90% as against 14.50% in the last regime, what is the solution as the poverty rate is at the highest rate? The solution will be to diversify policies by investing more on vocational education which will increase self-reliance to reduce unemployment and abject poverty from Nigeria.

UNESCO in adepoju (2019) sees vocational education as an educational process which involves, in addition to general education, it is the study of technology and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of the economy and social life. European Union (2021) sees vocational education as an education that prepares people for work and develops citizens' skill to remain employable and response to the needs of the economy; Wikipedia contributors (2024) stated that vocational education is education that prepare people for a skill craft as an artisan, trade as a trade person or work as a technician. It also stated that vocational education can also be seen as that type of education given to an individual to prepare that individual to be gainfully employed or self-employed with requisite skills.

According to Attah and Chiejile (2024) sustainable development on the other hand, is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. National development means sustainable economic development. It is the process in which the exploitation of natural resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development and institutional change and reforms are all in coordination and harmony and enhance both the current and future potential for meeting human needs.

John, (2023) opined that "national development" is an improvement of a country in all areas including the political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and material spheres. The capacity of a nation to enhance its citizen's standard of living is indicator of the national level of development

John (2023) outlined component that make up Nation development as follows:

1. Improvement of conditions in rural areas
2. Increase the amount of food produced through Agriculture.
3. Broadening the understanding of economics

4. Manage population increase in highly populated areas
5. Elimination of all forms of poverty.

Therefore, for any country to be able to have sustainable national development, the youths must be well empowered to be able to cater for their daily needs, which will be the ability to acquire skills that are viable enough through vocational studies.

According to Ibene in Attah and Ochiejile (2014). Vocational technical education is an educational programme that prepares students mainly for occupations requiring manipulative skills or non-technical occupations in such fields as Agriculture. Business Education, Home-Economic, Painting, decorating and others, organized to secure confidence and experience by the individual students.

Role of Vocational Education for Sustainable National Development:

Nigeria's national policy on education (2023), emphasized vocational education as a crucial component of human development, focusing on qualitative technological advancement to produce skills and self-reliant craftsmen, technicians and technologists. The aim of the policy is to see that basic tools for further educational advancement are provided to enhance educational development that prepares the individual for trade and vocational skills for economic development.

Aliyu (2011), outlined key objectives of national policy on education for vocational education as follows:

1. Provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and business.
2. Equip students with technical and vocational skills essential for various economic pursuits.
3. Promote self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Osaghae, in Abi, (2023), also stated that Vocational Education plays a crucial role in sustaining national development in the following ways:

1. Job creation: Vocation education equips individuals with skills for self-employment
 2. Reduction of poverty: The skills acquire help the individual to provide means of livelihood for themselves.
 3. ICT Skills: Technological knowhow of the individual held in data analysis and cyber security.
 4. Vocational education skills enhances individual capabilities and competitiveness.
 5. Vocational education in agriculture ensures sustainable food production.
 6. Skill acquisition in vocational education enhances socio-economic status and many more.
- Recent development has shown that the Federal Government has initiate a re-validation of National policy on vocational skill development. The aims of this move is to revitalize and expand vocational education to meet Nigeria's socio-economic needs of the country.

Hindrance to Vocational Education Training in Nigeria:

There are so many hindrances to vocational education today due to government policies which are pronounced but do not see the light of the day. According to Okonkwo and Oko, (2014) the following are few of the hindrances:

1. **Manpower:** The manpower which are the trainers are very few.
2. **Interest on the side of the students and parents:** Vocational education historical was look down at as an education for low learners, this notion scared both parents and students from enrolment to study the courses in tertiary institution.
3. **Equipment:** Most vocational education department in tertiary institution do not have the needed equipment to facilitate training of the student effectively. Those who have are outdated.
4. **Funding:** This has been the major problem in the training of vocational courses. Proper allocation has not being given to this section. Government lacks the political will to admit that vocational education is a proper tool to combat the present unemployment and reduction of poverty.
5. **Curriculum of vocational education:** A curriculum with practical content is very important in vocational education. Olunlaya in Okonkwo and Oko (2014) noted that one of the issues confronting the design of appropriate curriculum for vocational and Technical education is preparing students for the shift from theory to ICT paradigm in Technology practice. We need curriculum that generates graduates who are a generation of job creators than job seekers (Osuala 2004 in Okonkwo and Oko (2014).

Impact of Political Ideology on Vocational Education in Nigeria:

Okonkwo and Oko (2014). Stated that, Nigeria's vocational education has been influenced by various political ideologies in different political dispensation. Since the inception of Democratically Government in Nigeria, there had been emphasis on:

1. Entrepreneurship, business and industry, specific skills.
2. Focus on social welfare, community, development and equality.
3. Traditional skills, apprenticeships and industry relationship
4. Innovative flexible and inclusive vocational education.

All the above is intended to impact positively on the economy of the Nation but the opposite is the case as Nigeria government is always proposing to take on one project and the other but most of their proposals failed in the implementation. Government always pronounce one good project after another but the implementation that will lead to the national economic growth and for sustainable national development is always poor. The hardship Nigerians are experiencing today is due to poor implementation and management of the nation's resources. Nigeria is not a poor country but our political leaders do not have the poor masses at heart that is why, the country is experiencing unstable economy with inflation rising every day.

Conclusion:

Education particularly vocational education is the answer to the present situation in Nigeria. Vocational Education graduates should not wait for white color jobs, but step down to what they have learnt in school by being self-employed to reduce this high level of poverty in the land. All vocational and technical graduates should practice their area of specialization effectively to increase national development.

The notion of having a certificate without proper knowledge and proper acquisition of vocational skills should be discourage if this country must move higher in development. Vocational education graduates are not supposed to be seen roaming the street looking for jobs that do not exist, since every vocational education graduate is to be self-employed.

Suggestions:

Government should:

1. Invest in Human Capital Development to Increase funding for education and healthcare to build a healthy and skilled workforce.
2. Should diversify the Economy to reduce dependence on oil by investing in other sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, and ICT to favor vocational education for national economic development.
3. Strengthen Anti-Corruption measures to improve transparency and accountability in government spending and contracts in order to strengthen institutions like the EFCC and ICPC to effectively combat corruption.
4. Promote Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Provide access to low-interest loans and grants for startups and small businesses and reduce bureaucracy in business registration and operations to encourage entrepreneurship.
5. Improve Infrastructure Invest in power generation and distribution to support industrial activities also rehabilitate road networks, railways, and ports to improve transportation and logistics.
6. Equip vocational education department in tertiary institutions with modern technology equipment to enhance entrepreneurial skills in the learners

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