

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION; IMPLICATION TO SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

By

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Abstract

This study examines how political ideologies impact policy formulation and implementation and management of secondary education with a specific focus on Nigeria. The concept of political ideologies and management of secondary education and its implication to sustainable national development are examined. The research explores how different ideologies have influenced educational agendas. The analysis encompasses the dynamic interplay between political shifts and corresponding changes in educational policies with regards to secondary education, shedding light on the evolving nature of the educational system. Through an examination of vital historical happenings and policy reforms, the paper identifies patterns, conflicts, and synergies between political ideologies and educational goals. It is observed that management of secondary education is not devoid of the influence of politics because education is the substructure of the superstructure which the political system represents. The paper unveils the role of politics in the management of secondary education. It also points out that politics play significant roles in the appointment of principals, recruitment, transfer of teachers, and distribution of school facilities, among others. The implication for management of secondary education is more harm than good as it often results to principals becoming mere robots in the performance of their duties, among others. The paper recommends among others that: there should be attitudinal rebranding and value reorientation among politicians and secondary education managers in Nigeria. Understanding this node is crucial for policymakers, educators, and researchers, as it provides insights into the forces shaping the educational landscape.

Keywords: political ideologies, politics, educational policies, management, secondary education.

Introduction

The relationship between political ideology and educational policies is a crucial factor in determining how future generations' secondary education will unfold within the complex fabric of a nation's growth. Collier (2017) asserts that whilst some countries are experiencing

previously unheard-of levels of affluence, others are experiencing widespread poverty. The political philosophies that each nation adheres to can be used to explain this discrepancy. Political ideologies provide a framework of values and beliefs that direct decision-making inside a government, which is vital in forming policies (Harrison et al., 2018). Leaders' perceptions of the nation, individuals, and social structures are influenced by these beliefs. The economic, educational, and international policies of a state, along with its social values, are actually reflections of the ideologies that the political actors support. If educational institutions serve as the source of a country's labour force, then competent administration is what makes them such.

On the other hand, management deals with creating strategies, plans, and policies to help organisations achieve their objectives. According to Akpakwu (2014), achieving an organization's goals entails a process that includes organising, managing, regulating, coordinating, directing, and assessing its people, material, and resource resources. On the other hand, if secondary education in Nigeria and around the world is to meet the predetermined goals, management—which is defined as a rational process by which organisational resources are integrated, coordinated, or utilised to efficiently and effectively achieve the set objectives—is crucial.

Secondary school management which constitute the head and the management team, executes the management functions of planning, organizing, leading, controlling, motivating, policy making, communicating and so on to achieve the goals of secondary school. Chibuzor (2013) notes that it is not only the school heads that execute such functions, but also teachers and students who are the main purpose for which the schools are established. This implies that any mischief done by the school management and the community in which the school is situated may affect and the effective achievement of the school's goals. Therefore, it is important for secondary schools to be effectively managed for the purpose of achieving set objectives. Secondary schools occupy a strategic place in the educational system in Nigeria, and it is the link between the primary and the University levels of education. However, management of secondary education is influenced overtly and covertly by politics.

Politics, in the broadest sense, is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live. Osuji (2011) defines politics as a struggle over values, power and scarce resources in which the aim of the conflicting interests are to gain the desired values and resources at the expense of the rivals. Politics is all-embracing; it deals with power, and power involves elements of decision making, allocating of resources, settlement of conflicts, provision of social amenities as well as the provision and management of education (Okwori and Ede, 2011). Therefore, no society can think about having an established government without politics.

The role of politics in the management of secondary education in Nigeria seems to be affected by political interference. This is because politics and school management cannot be separated. In support Osuji (2011) asserts that the objectives of education, the control, production, process variables and financial provision are tied inescapably to politics. On the other hand, Okwori et.al (2012) maintains that government commits huge funds for the education of the citizenry and since government commit huge funds to the provision of education for the masses, it is incumbent on government to assert some degree of control on educational operations. Politics of education involves a complex inter relationship among

interests groups, politicians, bureaucrat and knowledge brokers, want schools to serve particular goals and needs as they define them to suit themselves. This study therefore examines how political ideologies impact policy formulation and implementation and management of secondary education with a specific focus on Nigeria.

Using Nigeria as a case study, this paper shall examine how the big ideas in politics, called political ideologies, impact the rules and plans for secondary education in Nigeria. This paper attempts to figure out the consequential implications of political ideologies on Nigeria's educational framework beginning from the curriculum to what happens in classrooms across Nigeria. Ideological beliefs influence the perception of government's role. A socialist ideology might advocate for a more significant state presence in the economy, while a libertarian ideology may prioritize minimal government intervention.

Political Ideology

Political ideologies can be seen as diverse belief systems that shape how individuals and societies perceive governance, societal organization, and values. In the words of Harrison et.al (2018), political ideology is a system of definite views, ideas, conceptions, and notions adhered to by the political class or political party. It is always a reflection of the system predominant at any given time and they shape the way societies envision governance and societal organization. In essence, political ideologies serve as guiding principles that inform the creation, modification, and implementation of policies across various domains, significantly impacting the direction and character of a government's decisions. In more specific terms, ideologies held by various political actors is connected to the policies they make based on the influence they exert in the making of such policies including educational policies. Cranston (2023) noted that political ideologies offer a vision of an ideal society, outlining fundamental principles and goals. For example, liberalism emphasizes individual freedoms and equality, while conservatism values tradition and stability. Here's a brief overview of some prominent ideologies:

- a. Liberalism: Emphasizes individual freedoms, human rights, democracy, and free-market capitalism. It seeks to balance personal liberty with social equality.
- b. Conservatism: Values tradition, authority, and gradual societal change. Conservatives often advocate for the preservation of established institutions and cultural norms.
- c. Socialism: Focuses on collective ownership of resources, aiming to reduce economic inequality. Socialists seek to establish cooperative forms of governance and redistribute wealth.
- d. Communism: Advocates for a classless, stateless society where the means of production are collectively owned. It envisions a system where wealth and resources are shared equally
- e. Fascism: Characterized by authoritarianism, nationalism, and a strong central government. Fascist ideologies often involve a dictatorial leader and a rejection of individual liberties in favour of the state.
- f. Anarchism: Rejects hierarchical structures, including government, in favour of voluntary cooperation and decentralized decision-making. Anarchists strive for a society without

rulers.

These ideologies are fluid and can manifest in various forms, adapting to cultural, historical, and geopolitical contexts. Additionally, many political systems incorporate elements from multiple ideologies, creating hybrid models.

A careful observation of the evolution of political parties ideology in Nigeria before independence showed that parties such as the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) founded by Sir Herbert Macaulay was not only nationalist in orientation but had a progressive and socialist ideology. The NPC (Northern People's Congress) Founded by Sir Ahmadu Bello had elite and conservative ideology while the AG (Action Group) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo had a welfarist ideology. According to Solanke (2013), what differentiates one political party from another is their ideologies on educational issues, economic policies, welfare issues etc. But in Nigeria, political parties are often defined by personalities in the party or which party is in charge at the federal level and not any specific ideology on contemporary issues. In light of this, Solanke (2013) asserts that unlike other nations like UK and US where their political ideologies is on solving unemployment, fighting crimes, reducing poverty and managing the economy, Nigeria's political space is dominated with political leaders switching parties frequently indicating that our political parties have no defined ideological beliefs or the members are merely self-serving. Obviously, this has had a significant influence and impact on the creation and most importantly the implementation of educational policies.

Politics in Education and Management of Secondary Education

Politics, in the broadest sense, politics is a multifaceted and dynamic field encompassing the activities, processes, and structures through which societies make collective decisions, allocate resources, and exercise power. It involves the interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions within a given political system (Downes et.al, 2016). In education, politics is the intricate interplay of political forces, ideologies, and decision-making processes that shape educational policies, practices, and outcomes within a given society. It involves the influence of governmental bodies, policymakers, interest groups, and other stakeholders in determining the direction and priorities of the education system. As highlighted by Baker et.al (2016), the politics of education encompasses the power dynamics and struggles that occur at various levels, from local school boards to national ministries, impacting issues such as curriculum development, resource allocation, and the overall structure of educational institutions.

The politics of education is characterized by the negotiation of competing interests and values, as different actors seek to shape the educational agenda to align with their perspectives and goals. Francisca et.al (2019) emphasize that political ideologies play a significant role in framing educational debates and shaping policies. Whether influenced by conservative or liberal values, the politics of education reflects the broader societal values and political landscape, influencing decisions related to issues like school funding, standardized testing, and the role of private versus public education. Positive and negative political influences play a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of education. On the positive side, political commitment to education can lead to increased funding, policy support, and strategic initiatives that enhance the overall quality of education. For example, research by Olayinka (2018) suggests that effective education policies, driven by positive political will, can contribute to improved

student outcomes and economic growth.

Positive political engagement can also result in the development of inclusive educational policies, addressing issues of access and equity, and promoting innovative teaching methods. Politics has a substantial impact on the funding of secondary schools, directly influencing the resources allocated to educational institutions. The allocation of funds to secondary education is often a result of political decisions made within the broader context of government budgets and priorities. Political ideologies, party affiliations, and policy preferences can significantly shape the financial support that secondary schools receive. For instance, a study by Baker et.al (2016) emphasizes the role of political party control at the state level in determining per-pupil spending in education, illustrating the influence of political dynamics on resource allocation. According to Igbozuruike et al. (2021), the significant challenge facing the education sector in Nigeria since 20 years ago is Inadequate funding.

This does not meet up with the suggested benchmark for Funding of the education sector by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This may be related to negative politics, which can have detrimental effects on funding and teacher quality in secondary schools, creating a challenging environment for educational institutions. Political decisions driven by partisanship, corruption, or instability can result in inconsistent and insufficient funding for secondary education. Such fluctuations in funding levels can impede the implementation of effective teaching strategies, hinder the acquisition of modern educational resources, and limit the overall quality of the learning environment. The truth remains that education in Nigeria has been experiencing loss of facilities, uncompleted projects, deterioration of equipment and plants as a result of financial crises facing the system. When all these pressures do not meet with increasing revenues, the results are obvious, diminished quality and output (i.e., teaching, scholarship and services, diminished working and living condition for teachers, staff and students alike) and less increase in efficiency and productivity and (Yawe et al., 2015). Also, in many public institutions of learning, students are found standing outside the classrooms receiving lesson as their population has outstripped and outnumbered the classroom space that are available. The implication of all these is that output from this education investment process cannot actually achieve the aims and goals that were set for it.

Political considerations can also impact the distribution of qualified teachers among secondary schools. In some cases, political influence may lead to disparities in teacher quality between urban and rural schools or among schools in different socio-economic areas. This uneven distribution can result from policies related to teacher placement, resource allocation, or incentives for teachers to work in specific regions. Research by Singh et al. (2019) suggests that political decisions, such as the implementation of teacher accountability measures, can have a significant impact on teacher effectiveness. Policies related to teacher evaluations, performance incentives, and professional developments are often shaped by political dynamics and can influence the overall quality of teaching in secondary schools.

Political decisions regarding education governance structures and accountability mechanisms

can indirectly influence teacher quality in secondary schools. Policies that establish frameworks for teacher evaluation, promotion, and professional growth are often politically driven. These policies can impact the incentives and conditions that contribute to attracting and retaining high-quality teachers within the secondary education system. The influence of political connections over professional qualifications may result in the appointment of less qualified individuals to teaching positions, adversely affecting the overall quality of education. A study by Olayinka (2018) emphasizes the importance of transparent and meritocratic systems in ensuring teacher quality, as political interference can undermine the credibility of educational institutions. Igbozuruike et al. (2021) observed that political interference and corruption can compromise the integrity of education systems, affecting resource distribution, teacher recruitment, and overall educational quality. Negative politics may also result in ideological shifts that marginalize certain subjects or groups within the education system, impacting the curriculum and limiting the breadth of educational opportunities available to students.

Implication of Politics on Management of Secondary Education

From the discussion of politics and management of secondary education, it is evident that politics has implication on the management of schools. Nwabueze, et al., (2016) highlighted the following as implication of Politics on management of secondary education.

Politics make administrators of secondary schools mere robots in the dispensing of their job, since there is no synergy between the government and the administrators. They begin to put up lackadaisical attitude towards their job, this implies that principals will negate their duties of effective which will affect the school tone (Olorunsola et al, 2018).

In line with the nonchalant attitude of the principal over issues which leads to poor administration, the teachers now no longer go to school early and are not regular. Some chose to go to school only the days that they have class to teach and at the worst scenario. Aside the nonchalant attitude of principals some teachers have personal affiliation with other politicians in power and therefore believe that their jobs are secured no matter their behaviour, this pose challenges to effective management of secondary education.

Teachers are no longer interested in performing their jobs but the students are interested in passing their West African Examination. They achieve it by all means. Some pay the teachers to write the examinations for them. The worst of it is that a reasonable number of the principals are into this business. It now serves as one of their sources of income. Before the examination time, they have already told the students the amount to pay. Students who fail to pay the agreed amount stay in separate halls in order to write the examinations. Supervisors are not left out in this business. Certificates with good grades are now sold to those who can afford it. Merit now has no place in secondary education. So one can only imagine the quality of secondary school students produced in Nigeria.

The idea of principals and teachers helping the students to pass examination these days has polarized the students. The students no longer read, in the hope that during the examination help must come either from within or they hire people outside. This eventually leads to poor performances when external supervisors refuse to compromise. The unfortunate thing is that most of these young school leavers with good results cannot defend their results. They may

have a credit or an alpha in literature yet cannot tell story of any of the text they read. All these seem to relate to politics. Politics interfere either in the appointment of principals or supervisors (invigilators) who oversee the schools and conduct of examinations.

Overview of Educational Policies in Nigeria

The principles guiding education in Nigeria can be divided into two phases namely; the colonial and post-independence period. Before the establishment of colonial government in Nigeria, both the southern and northern part of the country had informal education which was geared towards developing and preparing people to fit into the society in terms of morals, cultural values and character (Fafunwa, 2004). Then the coming of the Christian missionaries to the southern part of Nigeria brought western education, with the aim of teaching the recipients to read and write in English language and train adequate manpower for civil service and the industrial revolution.

According to Sulaiman (2012), the British government introduced education ordinance in 1882, decentralizing educational administration in Nigeria. By this policy, the three regions in Nigeria were empowered to develop their education policies. This brought a major mile stone in the education sector because it was the first legislation on education covering all the regions in Nigeria.

Again, in 1950's the colonial government introduced the universal primary education system, to provide free primary school education to children from age six to twelve years and reducing high level of illiteracy in Nigeria. Though the policy had a general apathy in the Muslim dominated northern part of the country, there was significant gains in the western and eastern regions, and this created education gap between the south and the northern region.

Following Nigeria's independence, educational policies were designed to address various aspects of the education system and promote national consciousness and self-reliance (Okparaugo, 2021). From this time, the country has undergone several policy changes to enhance the quality of education. Key policies include:

The 2004 National Policy on Education (NPE) emphasized the importance of equal educational opportunities, relevance of the curriculum, and the integration of technology. In order to achieve the aims of this policy the federal government was empowered by this policy to control and finance education in Nigeria which was a departure from colonial government policy of sharing cost of education between the proprietary bodies, the local communities and the parents. The final revised edition of the national policy on education was in 2013, which was based on dynamic model of formulating education policies and adapting to changes. Some key features of NPE are:

- It was geared towards developing self-reliance and self-sufficient individuals who will meet the country's developmental needs
- It had a broad curriculum that gave equal learning opportunity to every child irrespective of their sex, ability and background.
- It also prescribes an inclusive education to take care of children with special needs, itinerant pupils through Qur'anic education programme as well as programme for out of school children.
- It made education in Nigeria government's responsibility empowering them to centralized

control and funding.

Following a revision of the UPE, the Universal Basic Education policy was enacted which proposed a 9-3-4 education system comprising of six years primary school education and 3 years Junior secondary school after which the candidate is allowed to sit for junior secondary school certificate (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). One major provisions of the policy was the provision of free and compulsory education for the first nine years of a child's schooling. It was also designed to allow students to continue careers through apprenticeship and vocational training after their junior secondary school (Olaniyan and Obadara 2008).

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is a government agency established in 2011. Its primary purpose is to provide intervention funds to public tertiary institutions including universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, to enhance their infrastructure, research capabilities, and academic development. TETFund is funded through a two percent (2%) education tax imposed on the assessable profit of all registered companies in Nigeria (Tertiary Education Trust Fund, 2023). The tax is collected by the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and remitted to TETFund for allocation. This policy ensures that funds are allocated based on a formula that considers the level of enrolment and academic staff population in beneficiary institutions.

Policy Implementation and Challenges

Analysis would reveal that Nigeria cannot be said to be lacking in policy creation. The main challenge, however, is in the area of policy implementation and continuation. This is the point where aspirations are turned to reality, but it sounds, as in the Nigerian case, a marvellous situation where lofty policies have either been churned out without remarkable execution or abandoned at the process of implementation, and this calls for a thorough examination. Okoroma (2006) attributed the cause of the malfunctions in the educational system in Nigeria to a lack of potent policy implementation. Okoroma considers it to be fundamentally a result of a lack of political will, endemic corruption and lack of continuity. Dissecting Okoroma's findings, of course, will reveal that these factors, as he rightly pointed out, are among the fundamental issues bedevilling the Nigerian educational system.

However, it is worth asking how long these problems will persist and be corrected. Also, the lack of adequate human and material resources contributes to the problems, and these problems often breed the implementation gap which refers to the gulf between stated policy and actualisation of the objectives. From the flow of challenges highlighted so far, it is equally important to note that another albatross to the development in educational policies in the country stems from selecting policies to implement, most of which need more ideological significance. This issue still has its roots, mainly in the political space within the country.

The selection of policies could be traced to the government or other educational sector stakeholders to cherry-pick policies deemed appropriate to favour a class or section of people within the country. For example, establishing the Almajiri schools in the North drives home the point. Failure in policy implementation leads to a systematic failure, which is the present situation in Nigeria. It is conceived that creating policies is often not a problem in many developing nations; however, these policies cannot produce tangible results (Bolaji et al, 2015). In the words of Bolaji et al. (2015), "Achieving the desired goal of any public intention is the hallmark of policy realisation.

The Interplay between Political Ideologies and Educational Policies

The relationship between education and politics is bidirectional because both factors mutually reinforce each other. The political system provides needed funding and policies for the educational sector while the educational sector in turn produces trained personnel and citizens that participates in the political system (Fabunmi, 2005). Education is a vital platform for the transmission and sharing of political ideologies. Educational institutions through classroom discussions, curriculum and teaching materials shape the political beliefs, values and orientation of the students. Also, the content and delivery of education can be influenced by the prevailing political ideology, reflecting the dominant political narratives of a society. On the other hand, political decisions and policies has a great impact on educational systems given that government bodies and policymakers decides resources allocation, standard of curriculum, training of teachers and other reforms. Similarly, education plays an important role in preparing individuals for active citizenship and political participation. Civic education, social studies and political science courses can provide knowledge about processes, rights and responsibilities. This knowledge can in turn foster critical thinking, informed decision making and political engagement among citizens

Impact of Politics on Educational Outcomes

There is a relationship between politics and education; like the two are inseparable. Omoregie et al. (2013) address this by saying that “they are both necessary for the functioning of the social system of the society”. One of the ways through which politics impacts education is exhibited through the manifesto, candidates presented for elections and in a bit of a way, the policies developed and issued by the government in power. This led to Olayinka (2018) positing that “political party influences planning, administration and management of the educational sector in power.” Further, going by the words of Olayinka (2018), “implementation of educational policies operate within the political framework of the community”. Therefore, political administrators, primarily represented by the government in power, set the direction of educational policies.

In more definite terms, politics bears an overarching influence on educational outcomes. It is, however, key to note that political ideologies formed by political parties or governments draw a lasting impact on the educational structure obtainable in a country; Nigeria is no different. Lack of political ideology has been considered as one of the contributing factors worsening the educational system (Erezi, 2019). This point’s weight was solidly captured in a statement once made by a former deputy governor of Ekiti State, Modupe Adeola Adelabu, when she said, “Education has been established as the foundation of ideology in any society. Its efficiency is felt in a society where the politics have an ideology, where Nigeria is lacking, thus suffering our educational system” (Erezi, 2019).

Recommendations

With the troubleshooting of the challenges, it is necessary to draw out specific recommendations that would steer the educational sector on a better path, translate to better outcomes for the educational sector, and have a holistic effect on Nigeria. First, policy adjustments must be taken into consideration by the government. Static policies must be addressed, and practical and tangible policies that can effect positive change in the educational system must be introduced. Second, there should be a focus on leadership and less impact of

politics on the educational sector. Politics of allotting sensitive offices like education should not be politicized but rather should be awarded to technocrats from the field to reposition Nigeria's educational system. Third, priority must be placed on the welfare of teachers and other essential actors within the educational system. Lastly, it is also necessary that all stakeholders in the sector should have all hands on deck to ensure continuous research development to foster better outcomes and not rely solely on the government. Similarly, bureaucratic bottlenecks need to be reduced. Keiser (2011) admitted that "bureaucratic alignment in policy realization positively or negatively affects policy decisions." The institutional framework for the educational sector needs to be strengthened.

Conclusion

Politics and education are inseparable. Stakeholders including the government, politicians, community, members of the school board, school board of governors and the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) interfere in the management of secondary education in Nigeria. It is observed in this paper that these actors interfere in policy making, appointment of principals, school board members, recruitment and transfer of teachers, allocation of school facilities and funding of secondary education. At times these are associated with political factors such as tribalism, ethnic, religious and favouritism posing some implications on management of secondary education. The overwhelming and undue influence from the politicians stultifies the educational managers within the school setting. Secondary education in Nigeria cannot be standardized until adequate measures are put in place to enhance the interference of politics in the management of secondary education.

It is evident that how leaders think about running the country can really affect how schools work in terms of the policies guiding and fuelling it and Nigeria is not an exception. As Nigeria navigates its socio-political currents, this paper had the aim of unravelling the intricate interplay between ideological underpinnings and the educational landscape, shedding light on the consequential implications for the nation's educational framework. Given all the challenges highlighted in examining the Nigerian educational terrain and prevalent challenges, mainly in policy implementation, it is essential that education, being a veritable tool for effecting meaningful change, should be left to be managed by specialized experts or technocrats to address the current and inherent flaws in the system. In another breath, it is equally important to reiterate that the government needs to reduce political influence on the educational sector. It would inevitably lead to a new dimension in Nigeria's educational process. Therefore, practical policy establishment and implementation should be streamlined to usher in Nigeria's birth of a new political and educational history.

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