

POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA: PROBLEMS, IMPLICATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

This paper examines the influence of politics on the administration of educational policies in Benue State, Nigeria with a view to looking at the problems and the way forward. A particular emphasis is laid on fund allocation, human resource management and infrastructural development. Politics remains an important determinant of educational administration because government controls policies, funding mechanism, personnel management, and the provision of infrastructure. Although political involvement can promote education through policy formulation, implementation and resource mobilization. Excessive political interference often leads to several challenges that negate the achievement of educational goals and objectives. This paper highlights the implications of these interferences on the administration of educational policies and proffer solutions and measures aimed at improving transparency, accountability due process so that educational goals and objectives could be achieved. Prominent among these solutions are that Government should increase funding for education, Recruitment and promotion of staff should be based on merit, political interference in educational administration should be minimized, and educational infrastructure should be distributed fairly.

Keywords: Politics, educational administration, Educational Policies, Policies

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a powerful instrument for national development. It equips citizens with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for societal progress (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN 2014). This is why Nnamdi, (2021) defined education as an umbrella unfolded is transmitted from generation to generation an input on the younger ones, the attitudes, abilities, skills and other good behaviours which are of positive values to the society in which they live. Education is a social service, provided world-wide with multiple objectives in mind. The objectives vary from the acquisition of skills required for a more rapid growth of the economy and the basic knowledge for the individual to function effectively in the society Adegbemile, & Aziike, (2014). This importance x-ray the need to ensure that its administration be well handled so that its objectives could be well achieved. However, the administration of education policies in Nigeria is greatly influenced by political decisions and government actions. Politics affects educational planning, funding, recruitment of personnel, policy implementation, and infrastructural development (Salihu & Obiajulu, 2025). Education is widely regarded as the foundation upon which societies build knowledge, competence, innovation, and national identity. The quality of any educational system depends not only on curriculum content and instructional practices but also on effective administration, adequate funding, and the availability of competent human resources Babalola, J. B. (2015). According

to Ugochukwu and Patricia (2024) posits that in current dispensation, education cannot be discussed without politics, given that the achievement and the implementation of educational goals and policies lie significantly on the intersection of politics, governance and other related fields. Education has been identified as a very important aspect of societal development without which the progress and development of the society will be stalled in all facets. Adesomuwo and Sotonade (2022) explains that education is a very important factor in human and societal development, and is very different from schooling as schooling provides an avenue for education to be gained while education itself provides an opportunity for people in the society to learn and develop.

United Nations Education Report (UNER, 2023) also posits that education contributes to the reduction of inequality, empowers people to live a more healthy and sustainable lives, this indicates that education is at the forefront of the United Nations campaign, and this is because of the potentials it holds for children across Africa and other parts of the world. Most importantly, education is the most powerful weapons which one can use to change the world, improve the lives of others and leaves his community and world better than it was found. It is the education of humans, both men and women that empower them; therefore, change is a product of education (Okita, 2023).

In Nigeria, educational administration exists within a political environment because government remains the major provider, regulator, and policy-maker in the education sector. Consequently, politics inevitably influences educational decisions. Ideally, political participation should ensure that education receives adequate attention, resources, and strategic planning. However, when political interests override professional considerations, educational administration becomes vulnerable to inefficiency, inequality, and institutional decline (Ndem, 2025).

However, Spiel et al (2022) argues that education has continued to be a driver of social progress and achieving of the Sustainable Development Goals given that it contributes significantly to the provision of a better quality of life for the vulnerable- this is given that it is through education that people create a means of livelihood and sustenance; education as the scholars argue has continued to create a more tolerant and dynamic society, one in which the people in it are able to maintain stability and build capacity through their educational gains and as well through education, crime is reduced by taking people off the streets and crime scene, better health is achieved while as well poverty is drastically reduced, improvement is made in the social life of the people. While the importance of education is firmly established, it is pertinent to understand that education has multi-dimensional linkage to politics given that the political arena and its players may not achieve optimum functionality without the gains of education (Shrestha et al, 2019).

Despite the clear departure of politics in other developed climes from the one in Nigeria, there is need to understand the relationship between education and politics, most especially in the Nigeria context (Ugochukwu and Patricia (2024). Smith (2020) however, argues that there is a bond between education and politics, and this relationship stems from role of education in creating political awareness among students who are potential leaders in the political arena in the future; this is in light of the fact that exposing the students to the intricacies of politics, the good and bad aspect of politics through education possibly creates a world that will be governed

by responsible leaders and through proper teaching of positive political ideologies in schools through education, a better future is likely guaranteed.

The wealth of any nation or given society could be determined by the quality of education in that land; hence, a wealthy society would establish good schools with quality educational inputs, educational inputs in these regards are classified under fund allocation, human resources allocation and infrastructure allocation (Smith (2020).

Politics determines who receives educational resources, where schools are located, who occupies administrative positions, and how educational policies are implemented. While political commitment has contributed to educational expansion, political interference has also created challenges such as unequal distribution of resources, weak accountability system and the appointment of personnel based on non-professional consideration (Nwadiani, 2016).

Concept of Politics

Politics refers to the process through which decisions are made, power is exercised, and resources are allocated within a society. It involves leadership, governance, policymaking, and distribution of public resources (Nwadiani, 2016).

It is activity of settling affairs in an organized society. Politics is usually concerned with resolving conflicts, distribution of resources and power within the society. The power struggle of who gets what, when, and how, was pioneered by political scientist, who view politics as the intense competition among individuals and groups for scarce resources, status, and influence. Politics is the mechanism that determines who wins these societal struggles and how resources are distributed (Peretomode (2019)

Another widely accepted frames, view politics as the peaceful management of disagreement, instead of resorting to violence, politics utilizes debate negotiations, compromise, and diplomacy to reconcile conflicting interests and build a consensus. However, (Ofoegbu, 2020) defined politics as the authoritative allocation of values. This means politics is the process by which a society creates binding rules, laws, and policies that everyone must follow.

In Nigeria, political leaders formulate educational policies and determine how resources are allocated to the education sector (Ndem, 2025).

Concept of Educational Administration

Educational Administration has been defined by several school of thought all of which are pointing towards the same direction. Prominent amongst these is Peretomode (2019), who sees it as the planning, organization, coordination, supervision, and control of educational activities and resources to achieve educational goals. Also, Tolulope & Mainoma (2014) see educational administration as a process of mobilizing and utilizing scarce human and physical resource for the achievement of educational goals. We can therefore say that educational administration is a means of achieving the goals of education through effective and efficient manipulation of available resources. Similarly, Oyewale, (2023 define educational administration as service activity or tool through which the fundamental objective of the educational process may be more fully and efficiently realized. Education administration has its focus on procuring resources, articulating fragmented human efforts, optimizing and maximizing performance for the purpose of achieving educational goals.

It is however interesting to note that the administrators of education in Nigeria are individuals that are mostly politically appointed. They include Ministers of Education, Commissioners for Education, School Principals, Head Teachers, and Educational Boards and Agencies (Ofoegbu, 2020), which is the reason there is the inadequacy in the implementation of educational policies hence, this paper discusses politics and administration of educational policies in Benue state, Nigeria: problems, implications and way forward relationship between politics and educational administration.

Politics and educational administration are closely connected because government (most of which are political appointees) controls the education system through policy formulation and resource allocation (Babalola, 2015). Political leaders determine educational policies, budgetary allocations, teacher recruitment, construction of schools, and appointment of educational administrators (Salihi & Obiajulu, 2025).

Influence of Politics on Educational Funding

There are many areas where politics impact on educational administration. Some of these areas are highlighted and further discussed below;

1. Funding is one of the most important aspects of educational administration (Ofoegbu, 2020).
2. Political leaders introduce scholarship programs.
3. Educational projects receive budgetary support.
4. New schools are established through government intervention.

Negative Influence of Politics to Education

1. **Inadequate budgetary allocation to education** (Adebayo, Fabunmi, & Adu, 2021).
Funding remains one of the strongest determinants of educational quality. Adequate financial resources enable schools to provide infrastructure, instructional materials, teacher development, and effective learning environments.
In Nigeria, educational financing involves different levels of government, including federal, state and local authorities. However, the allocation of educational funds has often reflected political considerations rather than purely educational priorities. Adeyeme (2011) observes that financing challenges in Nigeria education are linked not only to inadequate resources but also to issues of distribution and management.
2. **Uneven Allocation Educational Resources:** One major political influence is the uneven allocation of educational resources. In some cases, areas with stronger political representation receive greater educational investment, while communities with significant educational needs remain underserved, this situation creates inequalities in access and quality of education.
3. **Political influence on implementation of educational policies and programs:**
Politics influence in education is also evident in the implementation of educational projects and policies. School construction, provision of facilities, and approval of educational programmes may sometimes be determined by political interest. Such practices can lead to abandoned projects, duplication of programmes, and inefficient utilization of resources.

4. **Funding:** According to Maduagwa (2004), funding of education in Nigeria and many other parts of the world has become problematic issue because education industry has become one of the largest industries in terms of the number of people that goes into the industry. In many parts of the world, funding of education has been subjected to politicking, because any government in power will come up with programmes and policies that will be favourable to them without considering the entire nation. Generally, Nnamdi and Nwite (2014) stated that fund for education is becoming very lean and difficult because education as an industry, unlike other sectors of the economy, does not have immediate returns on investment and most of its benefits take longer time to accrue. Although, the general benefit of education may be considered great to the society, both government and individuals try to introduce politics in decisions about education and when it comes to allocation of fund, the issue is politicized. Budgetary debates and allocation to education ministries at the state and federal levels represent politics in these decisions. Politics of education in the area of funding is concerned with ideas, statement on issues related to how to procure fund for maintenance and development of education.

The National Policy on Education expressly stated that Government will provides financial resources for schools (FRN, 2014). Looking at the government budgetary allocation to education over the years, spanning through successive government will show an abysmal trend. An allocation which is a far cry from the United Nations recommendation of 25 percent. Many schools are operating under dilapidated conditions. Educational administrators cannot beat their chest of their ability to pay workers adequately and on time too.

5. Diversion of educational funds.

Another issue the politicians (the government) are fond of doing is misappropriation or diversion of funds meant for educational purpose. It is a common phenomenon to see government equate education funds to that of any other sector of the economy in which fund meant for education are frequently diverted for other purposes.

6. Unequal distribution of resources.

Also worthy of mention is the unequal distribution of educational resources. Politicians are often known to site educational resources in area of interest to them instead of areas of need. It is not new to see educational institutions sited in a locality that is of more value to the governor or president than to the people. Political interests sometimes determine funding priorities.

The result is insufficient teaching materials, poor facilities, and reduced educational quality (Oyewale, 2023).

Influence of Politics on Human Resource Management

Another area of interest to educational administrators is that of human resource management. Human resources include teachers, principals, lecturers, and other educational staff (Peretomode, 2019). While it is unarguably true that government (political leaders) has tried in the creation of employment opportunities, Promotion of national unity through inclusive recruitment, establishment of teacher development programs, the presence of Political patronage in recruitment is also observable (Nwagwu, 2018), Appointment of unqualified personnel and favoritism in promotions, reduce morale among qualified staff. These practices can negatively affect educational performance and service delivery (Ofoegbu, 2020).

Influence of Politics on Educational Infrastructure

Educational infrastructure includes classrooms, laboratories, libraries, hostels, and administrative buildings (FRN, 2014). The provision of these items in the educational institutions is no doubt a positive sign of good educational delivery. While it could be said that political leaders (government) have made recognizable efforts in the construction of new schools, provision of educational facilities, and expansion of access to education, it could also be said that politics has led to unequal distribution of educational projects of projects by new, administrations, and concentration of projects in politically favored areas, among others (Adebayo et al., 2021). This often creates disparities in educational development across different regions (Oyewale, 2023). Infrastructure allocation, learning infrastructures comprise an educational system's operational input resource. These resources include equipment and facilities (such as offices, buildings, furniture, laboratories, playing fields, information and communication technology and vehicles); materials resources (such as school records like the scheme of work, diary, register, lesson plan and notes; instructional materials like maps and charts, blackboards and materials for classroom itself, such as notes and vehicles) (Adeleke & Oyundoyin, 2019; Anayo, 2021; Lawal et al , 2020; Ntawiha 2016; Wang, 2015). On the other hand, non-human resources serve as complementary resources that achieve school goals. Therefore, the goals and objectives of education cannot be achieved without putting in place these educational inputs, to enable these students learn with ease and achieve good academic performance,

Influence of Politics on Educational Policy

Government formulates educational policies to guide the sector. This is noticeable in the establishment of Universal Basic Education (UBE), Teacher Education Programmes, among others, National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014). The challenges often faced are frequent policy change, poor implementation, lack of continuity by successive administration, policy inconsistency among others, which affects long-term educational development. All of these issues influence the administration of education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

In conclusion, politics plays an important role in the administration of education in Nigeria. While political involvement can facilitate educational development through policy formulation and resource allocation, excessive political interference often undermines efficiency, professionalism, and educational quality (Salihu & Obiajulu, 2025). For Nigeria to achieve sustainable educational development, educational administration must be guided by merit, accountability, transparency, and continuity of policies rather than partisan political interests.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions above, the following suggestions are made:

1. Government should increase funding for education. In view of the inflation that has eaten deep into the fabric of every material needed for educational administration, increase in funding for educational sector is highly essential.
2. Recruitment and promotion should be based on merit. Recruitment of qualified manpower coupled with timely promotion of existing manpower is essential for work to continue without disruption.

3. Political interference in educational administration should be minimized. This is very important to take note of because political interference has been noticed in all areas of appointment, many of which did not give regards to meritocracy.
4. Educational infrastructure should be distributed fairly. The distribution of educational infrastructure should be made without considering political interest but the need of the society particularly where it is to be sited.
5. Transparency and accountability should be strengthened. The need to strengthen transparency and accountability by political gladiators cannot be over-emphasized particularly in the field of education. Education is a sector where things are supposed to be done rightly therefore, issues are to be handled normally.
6. Educational policies should be sustained regardless of changes in government. One common practice of political leaders is abandonment of projects and policies initiated by their predecessors. This does not augur well to educational policies that require a long time of gestation. Good policies and projects are supposed to be continued so that its objectives could be achieved.
7. Monitoring and evaluation systems should be improved. It is important that projects, infrastructures and other policies are not just put in place, they should be monitored and evaluated to ensure that they achieve the purpose for which they are put in place.
8. Political leaders should ensure that professional educators are made to oversee the affairs of ministry of education at both national and state levels.

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