

Politics and Education in Nigeria: Issues and Consequences



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ABSTRACT: This study examined Politics and Education in Nigeria: Issues and Consequences. Three research questions guided the study; descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 73,400 academic staff of the public universities in South-East Nigeria. The sample comprised 1,040 academic staff of the universities. Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain Professors and Readers given that the record number of lecturers that participate in politics and management of elections. Then proportionate sampling technique was used to obtain 10% of Professors and Readers to give rise to 700 Professors and 340 Readers. Data collected were analyzed using mean. Findings of the study showed that the importance of education for those participating in Nigerian politics includes; it Increases political participation, Increases political awareness ; some of the major issues in Nigerian politics includes ; Ethnic bigotry, Religious bigotry, Corrupt Leaders and the consequences of the major issues in politics in Nigeria are failure in governance, poor economic indices, multi-dimensional poverty, insecurity, poor education outcome, unemployment and other vices. The study recommended that government should address different issues that have to do with education sector as a means of building its capacity in order to ameliorate the issue of politics in Nigeria through the means of human capacity building, widening, deepening knowledge on different political issues confronting the nation and government at all level should eschew politics in governance and face governance properly in other to salvage what is left of the nation from the major issues that has to do with politics in the country.

INTRODUCTION

In the current dispensation, one cannot discuss politics without education given that education significantly lies at 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. Adesomowo 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. The authors further defined education as a dynamic instrument of change that helps individuals to achieve their potentials and contribute to societal growth by learning, un learning and re learning; it is even more a lifelong process that is used to train the positive state of mind, skills, attitudes and intellectual abilities .

United Nations Education Report (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 weapon 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).

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).

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

Jones (2020) further argues that education and politics are intertwined, and this relationship is better situated if politics flowed from education and not education from politics; this is because education provides the platform for learning, and honing skills of students on the rudiments of politics and their civic responsibilities in a political governance system, and provides people with a productive learning phases as well. Genine (2024) posits that education provides individuals with beliefs, ideologies, political engagements and political information that possibly shape their liberal leanings; most importantly education does this through providing individual and students with access to information, critical thinking and diverse perspectives as well. In another dimension, it is pertinent to underscore that education institutions and arena have become an avenue to shape the political ideas of students, attitudes and beliefs, as well as expose students to political discourse and activism (Akrik,2019). It is through education that individuals and students are equipped with critical thinking and analytical skills that are important for evaluating political information, ideas, and views, and thus are able to make informed opinions about political concerns; in a broader context, higher level of education is related to a greater ability to discern fact from fiction, analyze complex policy issues, and engage in constructive political dialogue among peers and at the national and international stage. Thus, one of the means to bridge the gap between education and political partisanship is to promote civic education in schools and universities, and by teaching students about the foundations of democracy, the importance of civil discourse, and the value of diverse viewpoints, educators can help cultivate a more informed and engaged citizenry that make their political decision based on informed knowledge and critical analysis of the developing political issues that places the interest of the people first before personal interest.

In Nigeria, education and politics is an issue of different contexts that is laced with many diverse issues. Lawal (2021) argues that politics is having an overbearing negative effect in the Nigeria education sector and this is traced to primordial sentiments laced in ethno-religious leanings. Ikebusi,Chigbo-Okeke and Modebelu (2016) also agree that politics has somewhat bastardized Nigeria educational system and in turn the educational system has not also been effective in catalyzing the political arena, and these has enormous negative consequences on the politics of Nigeria. Lawal (2021) for instance argues that some of the issues associated with politics in Nigeria and this he contends is laced in ethnic , religious and tribal bigotry, corruption from the leaders, lack of transparency in elections and governance, different kind of electoral violence, compromised legislature and judiciary, non functional law enforcement agencies, insecurity, poor infrastructure, unequal allocation of resources, poor worker remunerations, poor citizenship education, weak institutions and others. Commenting on the implications of this on Nigeria politics, Okwokwo (2023) argues that these mentioned issues has continued to bedevil Nigeria politics from evolving to that of other parts of the world and if not properly managed will continue to exert problems and negative consequences on the country's political arena.

On the other hand, politics is all encompassing and represents many things to many people; however, it is literally understood to mean a set of activities that has to do with making decisions in the society, power relations, sharing of power that is based on interests and motives and ultimately that which deals with what one gets, how, when and where (Gibbons,2015). Modebadze (2010) further contends that politics is that which concerns the state and it involves different aspects of the state such as public services, law enforcements, security, administration, and provision of good leadership for the people at all times. Also, it could mean the interactions between states in a nations, or that between two nations, the activities of politicians who are the main actors in the art of politics and politicking that has to do with voting in state, regional or national elections and individual citizens engagements with these processes forms the key tents of politics (Alexander,2014). Thus, politics in broader context revolves around other issues of governance such as using the state institutions and apparatus to provide security and needs of the citizens, enforcing of laws that guide the citizens, provision of health care, education, security, employment and other social services (European Consortium for Political Research,2023).More so, in developed world especially America ,some things can't be found done in their politics due to the heavy deployment of public resources for campaigns is not feasible due to federal campaign laws that bar American politicians from the use of government resources to fund their campaigns (Roberts, 2014).During the last election campaign, former president Donald Trump, a self-declared billionaire with links to contacts with deep pockets, had less campaign cash at his disposal than Biden, who is ostensibly less endowed by virtue of being a career politician and having limited corporate involvement.

According to Steuer and Chiahiaa (2017) politics can be captured by the activities and relations going on between European Union, African Union, NATO, United Nations and Council of Europe as they all seek to control and protect some vested interests through the art of politics. For instance, it is captured by the efforts of Canadian and Russian ministers of foreign affairs to resolve their bilateral and territorial disputes in the Arctic regions, meetings convened by United Nations to discuss issue of climate change, activities of EU to draft new policies for the union and debates and votes in the United Kingdom Parliament are all part of the politics as argued by (Lepoutre,2023).In Europe, the politics and their political arena seems different from what is obtained in

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Nigeria; it is politics that is characterized by issues based campaign and policies that drove the pre election and post elections period where the politics prioritize the people above their own self interests, unlike that in Nigeria where politicians put their interests ahead of the citizens (O'Leary,2020).In other climes like America , politics is played in a very different way, for instance, politics is argued to function within a federal republic that is well constituted and the presidential system. In the American type of politics, power is shared between the Congress, the house of representatives and senate in a Bicameral mode (Newton,2023).America operates a multi party system which is the democrats and the Republican parties, and the system of voting in America is electronic which reduces election rigging, violence and other infractions to minimal level. (Wekesa,2021).

In Nigerian politics, leaders cling unto power and use different crude means to subvert the will of the populace expressed through the ballot boxes while also bribing their ways in the law courts against opponents that are seeking justice after elections. In Nigerian politics, it is established that political leaders and incumbents maneuver the political field in their own advantage by using state resources to support their campaigns that normally should be personally funded from their own purse; this is what is obtainable in Nigeria and other parts of the developing nations. Also some of those corrupt politicians make laws and policies for Educational sector. From a wider perspective, and In Africa, countries such as Nigeria, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Tanzania, incumbents had extensive money and campaign logistics at their disposal by dint of controlling the national purse.

These issues that are associated with politics in Nigeria has continued to have a negative outcome on the countries education system that serves as the production factory for politicians in the country as the inability to address some of these concerns has continued to rub off negatively on the general educational outcome of the nation. Lawal (2023) clearly argues that the issues associated with politics in Nigeria has continued to have enormous negative outcome in the education sector and it includes unequal access to education infrastructure, funding and resources, poor educational planning, poor implementation of educational policies, poor school mapping, poor educational supervision, poor student to teacher ratio, inadequate number of qualified monitoring personnel, failure of education reforms and other notable issues that is a product of politics. Mando and Guda (2020) further argues that politics has continued to impact negatively on education in the country as some people have more equal access to education than others due to nepotism and tribalism as their kinsmen is at the helm of affairs in government; the issue of placing of embargo on teachers and other human resources in the education sector as a result of economic down turn that is a result of politics is not over emphasized, while leadership of education sectors has become politicized where political connections and gains are now placed above competence and expertise.

More so, the funding of education has become an issue of politics as could be seen from incessant strike by the Academic Staff Union of Nigeria, Colleges of Education Staff Union of Nigeria, and Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics that took turn to embark on strike actions to press home on government to honor agreements and fund education in the country; all these are all result of politics as each successive government introduce new policies that serve their own political interest as against that of the country's interest.

This is as a result of politics where issues are not treated on the merit of importance but on political gains it seeks to serve. These issues are a recurring decimal in Nigeria political-education context, which is a clear departure from what is obtainable in Europe and America where education serves as the breeding ground for politics and politics on the other hand serve the interest of education. No doubt this situation is problematic and necessitates an empirical research with the view of ascertaining with empirical evidence issues and consequences of education admin politics in Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the importance of education to those participating in Nigeria politics?
2. What are the major issues in Nigeria politics?
3. What are the consequences of those issues in Nigeria politics?

METHOD

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 73,400 academic staff in Nigeria according to Data from Nigeria University Commission Website (2019). The sample comprised of 1040 academic staff of the universities. Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain Professors and readers given that the record number of lecturers that participate in politics and management of elections. Then proportionate sampling technique was used to obtain 10% of Professors and Readers to give rise to 700 Professors and 340 Readers. Data collected were analyzed using mean.To establish the reliability of the instrument, trial testing method was used on 50 academic staff of University of Ghana, which was outside the study area. The reliability was calculated using Cronbach Alpha for each of the subsections. At the end of the analysis, the scores obtained were 0.83 for issues associated with politics, Education in Nigeria and 0.81 for consequences of politics on education in Nigeria and 0.85 for consequences of issues in Nigeria politics. The results showed high reliability of the instrument. The instrument has two parts, A and B. Part A sought information on the respondents. Part B sought information required to answer the research questions. It has 1 & 2 and these were concerned with information regarding research questions one and two. Part A contains 15 items while part B also contains 9 items, making a total of 24 items. The four point response mode of strongly Agreed (SA = 4 points), Agree

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(A = 3 points), Disagree (D = 2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1 point) was adopted in the study. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researchers with the help of 20 research assistants, who were paired for each of the 10 faculties. Administration of the questionnaire was done during the first semester of 2022/2023 academic session. All copies of the questionnaire distributed were collected back because of on the spot delivery method and collection technique applied. Mean was used to analyze the data. The four point response mode used, informed the use of mean 2.50 as the cut-off point for decision. The decision rule was that mean scores of items of 2.50 and above were regarded as positives while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as negative.

RESULTS

Research Question1:

What is the importance of education to those participating in Nigeria politics?

S/N	Item	- X	Dec
1	Education leads to increase in political participation	2.88	Agreed
2	Education brings about increase in political awareness	2.90	Agreed
3	Education equips people with critical and analytical thinking on political issues	3.0	Agreed
4	Education helps citizens to avoid political erosion	2.90	Agreed
5	Education helps to reduce election violence and fraud	2.85	Agreed
6	Education helps to reduce election malpractice	2.87	Agreed
7	Education prepares people to participate in democratic processes like election	2.89	Agreed
Total		20.29/ 7	Agreed
Cluster		2.90	

Data in table 1 showed that respondents agreed to the items with a mean score above 2.5. Stated clearly, the cluster mean of 2.90 indicates that respondents agreed to the fact that the importance of education for those participating in Nigeria politics and they include Increases political participation, Increases political awareness, Equips people with critical and analytical thinking on political issues, Helps citizens to avoid political erosion, Helps to reduce election violence and fraud, Helps to reduce election malpractice, and Prepares people to participate in democratic processes like election.

Research Question2:

What are the major issues associated with politics in Nigeria?

S/N	Item	- X	Dec
1	Ethnic bigotry is a political issue in Nigeria	3.0	Agreed
2	Religious bigotry is a political issue in Nigeria	2.86	Agreed
3	corrupt leaders is a political issue .	2.88	Agreed
4	lack of transparency in elections and governance	2.80	Agreed
5	Electoral violence is an issue in Nigeria politics	3.0	Agreed

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6	Compromised legislature and judiciary	2.90	Agreed
7	Insecurity	3.0	Agreed
8	Poor Infrastructure	2.89	Agreed
9	Unequal allocation of resources	3.0	Agreed
10	Weak Institutions	2.79	Agreed
11	Poor Citizenship Education and participation	2.80	Agreed
Total		31.12/7	Agreed
Cluster		2.90	

Data in table 2 showed that respondents agreed to the items with a mean score above 2.5. Stated clearly, the cluster mean of 2.90 indicates that respondents agreed to the fact that some of the major issues in Nigeria politics include Ethnic bigotry, Religious bigotry, Leadership corruption, lack of transparency in elections and governance, different kind of electoral violence, Compromised legislature and judiciary, Insecurity, Poor Infrastructure, Unequal allocation of resources, Weak Institutions and Poor Citizenship Education and participation.

Research Question3:

What are the consequences of those issues in Nigeria politics?

S/N	Item	- X	Dec
1	it leads to Failure in Governance	2.90	Agreed
2	it brings about Poor economic Indices	2.85	Agreed
3	it brings about Multi-Dimensional Poverty	3.0	Agreed
4	it leads to Unemployment opportunities	2.90	Agreed
5	it brings about Poor Education Outcome	2.86	Agreed
6	it leads to Insecurity	3.0	Agreed
Total		17.51/6	Agreed
Cluster		2.91	

Data in table 3 showed that respondents agreed to the items with a mean score above 2.5. Stated clearly, the cluster mean of 2.91 indicates that respondents agreed to the fact that the consequences of the major issues in politics in Nigeria are failure in governance, poor economic indices, multi-dimensional poverty, insecurity, poor education outcome, unemployment and other vices.

DISCUSSIONS

From the analysis and interpretation of data, it was found that:

The importance of education for those participating in Nigeria politics include Increases political participation, Increases political awareness; the study of Ekuri et al (2018) is consistent with the first two findings in that it found that education aids the people in increasing political awareness and political participations. It helps to equips people with critical and analytical thinking on political issues, helps citizens to avoid political erosion; the study of Li (2023) similarly found that education helps people to make informed political decisions that affects them during and after elections, and as well help them think critically in embarking on their different political decisions. It was also found the education in politics helps to reduce election violence and fraud, helps to reduce election malpractice, and Prepares people to participate in democratic processes like election; similar study such as that of Larreguy and Marshall (2013) similarly found that education helps Nigeria citizens from anti democratic participations rather encourages people to participate in a civilized political process.

Some of the major issues in Nigeria politics include Ethnic bigotry, Religious bigotry, Leadership corruption; the study of Okoi and Iwara (2021) domiciled in Nigeria agree from its findings that ethnic and religious bigotry and slant continue to be a major concern in Nigeria political arena and elections and leaders take advantage of this during elections. Lack of transparency in elections and governance, different kind of electoral violence,; Similarly, Yagboyaju (2011) in a related study found that lack of transparency and electoral violence has continuously become a serious threat to Nigeria growing democracy and the study also found that Nigeria weakened institutions is a serious cause for concern in this regard. The study also found that compromised legislature and judiciary

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constitute an issue for Nigeria politics; an empirical findings of Ugole (2024) found that in the just concluded Nigeria general elections, that compromised judiciary constitutes the major challenges of political and democratic progress in the country, Also, the study found insecurity and Poor Infrastructure as major issues of Nigeria politics; a study of Ameh and Ibebunjo (2023) identified poor state security and poor infrastructural development as the major issues of Nigeria politics. Unequal allocation of resources, weak Institutions and Poor Citizenship Education were similarly found as issues in Nigeria politics; the study of Chukwuemeka et al (2012) in Nigeria also agree with this findings in that they found that Nigeria weak institutions are major causes of issues in Nigeria politics; another study by Yagboyaju (2011), found poor citizenship participation in political governance as that which draws back the politics of Nigeria.

The consequences of the major issues in politics in Nigeria are failure in governance, poor economic indices; Studies of Akide (2024) similarly found that failure in governance as a result of politics is a major consequence of major issues in Nigeria politics, and the study found a correlation with failure in Governance with poor education, poverty and insecurity. The study further found multi-dimensional poverty, insecurity as consequences of politics in Nigeria; Onyido (2019) also found and in agreement with this present study that failure in leadership at all levels is the outcome of the nature of politics played in Nigeria and this affects the education, health and social aspects of the citizens life. Finally the study uncovered poor education outcome, unemployment and other vices as consequences of major issues in Nigeria politics; the study of Larreguy (2013) agree that poor education and increased unemployment are found to be a product of poor politicking in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between education and politics is one that can never be over emphasized given that education is the driver of politics and stands at a critical point in the advancement of politics. Yet, in a developing nation like Nigeria with a checkered political history as a result of different tribe, religion and ethnicity which has continued to be a tool in fostering religious issues in the country. In the light of the above, it is pertinent to conclude that despite the continuous role of education for persons that are participating in the political arena of the country, it is still confronted by major issues such as ethnic and religious bigotry and slant that continue to be a major concern in Nigeria political arena and during elections, leaders take advantage of this, also lack of transparency in elections and governance, different kind of electoral violence, Compromised legislature and judiciary that evidently has negative consequences in the present political dispensation are all part of the major issues which education for political participators has not been able to catalyze.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government at all level eschew politics in governance and face governance properly in other to salvage what is left of the nation from the major issues that has to do with politics in the country.
2. Government address different issues that have to do with education sector as a means of building its capacity to confront the issue of politics in Nigeria through the means of human capacity building, widening and deepening knowledge on different political issues confronting the nation.
3. Political scholars are exposed to the consequences of issues in politics to have a different orientation about the country politics; this is for them to start adjusting to make better political decisions for the betterment of the nation.
4. Government institutions are rejuvenated to act on events that has to do with man made instigated political issues such as election violence, looting, insecurity, thuggery, corruption and insecurity as that is part of the ways to sanitize the political arena of the nation.

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