

Politics and Educational Inputs Administration in Nigeria: Implications for the Education Stakeholders

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Abstract

It is clear that the realization and attainment of educational goals and objectives largely depend on the extent to which government policies can give educational inputs adequate attention needed. Proper educational inputs will no doubt bring about a conducive learning environment that is safe for students and teachers as well as enhances the quality of instruction which will, in turn, promote effective teaching and learning process. No doubt, Nigeria is facing many challenges in the education sector, which are majorly attributed to the political interplay regarding the administration of educational inputs. This political interplay influences the politics in the administration of the fund, students' enrollment, availability and utilization of school plants, and the number of educational facilities and equipment needed for effective teaching-learning processes. Observation has shown that Nigerian educational inputs are not properly managed due to political inclinations with different ideologies and policies. Hence educational inputs lack the proper administration. Because of this, teaching and learning processes are unconducive for both teachers and students. Therefore, this study examined the monumental political challenges, among other challenges confronting the administration of educational inputs in Nigeria. The study used primary and secondary data to gather information for the study. It was revealed that funding, corruption, and cultural and manpower problems, among others, were the political challenges confronting the administration of educational inputs in Nigeria. The study concluded that government should create enabling environment void of any political coloration by making realistic and achievable policies for schools to thrive.

Keywords: administration, challenges, education stakeholders, educational inputs, politics

Introduction

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 human and non-human resources. Human resources have to do with quality teachers' recruitment, student enrolment and community involvement.

Non-human resources, learning infrastructures or school plants 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); material 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 the classroom itself, such as notes; and vehicles); and material resources (such as supplies, such (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 students and teachers use in their daily activities to promote and achieve school goals. Therefore, the goals and objectives of education cannot be achieved without putting in place these educational inputs. With this, students may learn with ease and achieve good academic performance.

Ololube et al. (2013) described educational inputs comprising the site, the equipment, the buildings, and all the essential

structures, semi-permanent, permanent, and nonpermanent, as well as laboratory equipment, machines, blackboard/chalkboard/whiteboard needed for effective teaching and learning.

The educational inputs may be categorized into buildings like classrooms, libraries, laboratories, offices, workshops, and hostels. For example, transit involves cars, bicycles, and buses; the library includes books, Information and Communication Technology and facilities which are instructional aids, recreation, games and sport. In contrast, those unstructured ones are lawns, fences, landscaping, and other environmental conditions that make the school's environment look more attractive for effective teaching and learning processes.

Furthermore, Yusuf et al. (2013) defined educational inputs as the space interpretation of the school curriculum and co-curriculum. The school system also operates with some physical structures such as water supply sources, electricity supply, etc., which are required for the smooth running of the schools. These support items for running schools are generally referred to as the school plant. It will be impossible for the school curriculum and co-curriculum activities to be implemented if the available physical facilities for teaching and learning are inadequate. The absence of educational inputs makes teaching ineffective and hampers desired learning outcomes. The importance of adequate educational inputs in education teaching and learning cannot be over-emphasized.

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The provision, availability, functionality, adequacy and relevance of educational inputs influence efficiency and promote a high level of productivity in the school. Therefore, the quality of available educational inputs is one of the major indicators for measuring how standard and quality educational activities are in schools. Availability and adequacy of educational inputs such as school plants are the bedrock of quality teaching and learning in schools. The school plant is among the major requirements for a school to be certified for operation. The plant makes the school an environment for learning.

Effective administration of educational inputs is crucial to keep every facility or restore part of the site buildings and contents to an acceptable standard. Educational inputs administration is crucial to retain their value, maintain the original status, possibly keep them in good condition for use, and prevent future wastage of those facilities. The administration of educational inputs is necessary for corrective, preventive and preservative purposes. The administration of educational inputs aid the expansion of the educational program to accommodate and increase students' enrollment in the school system. Also, the administration of educational inputs aids in a conducive learning environment for effective teaching and learning processes. Furthermore, the administration of educational inputs seems necessary for promoting the integrity of the school on the world stage (Asiabaka, 2008).

The administration of educational inputs is very vital in the provision of quality education and achievement of educational objectives by satisfying the needs (physical, social, emotional and psychological needs) of the staff and students. Physical and social needs are met through adequate sanitary facilities, safe structures, a balanced visual and thermal environment, and sufficient shelter space for work and play. In contrast, emotional and psychological needs are met by creating a friendly atmosphere, pleasant surroundings and an inspiring school environment.

The importance of the administration of educational inputs to teaching and learning processes is recognized by the Federal Government of Nigeria and as such, billions of naira have been disbursed into capital expenditure during the yearly budgetary allocation and through Educational Trust Funds (ETF). With these, many buildings have been constructed in Nigeria's educational levels (primary, secondary and tertiary institutions). Yet, educational inputs are grossly inadequate for students' use, despite the huge commitment of the Federal Government to develop educational inputs, to the dismay of educational stakeholders (educational planners, administrators, community members) in Nigeria. Most school buildings and structures are constructed right from each school's inception. No proper attention is paid to the school plant administration in terms of reconstruction and proper maintenance.

Nevertheless, even though administration of educational inputs is essential for achieving diverse educational objectives at various stages. It is still worrisome that the majority of schools, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, where the cities and towns within it, have not been given the adequate attention it deserves. Amanchukwu and Ololube (2015) state that one of the most serious problems with the Nigerian educational system is the inappropriate administration of educational inputs.

For instance, in this 21st century, students in public institutions, usually at primary and secondary schools, still sit on floors to receive educational instruction. They receive instruction in classrooms that are similar to what could be described as death traps due to their poor and weak construction. Most of these schools are near highways or main roads, marketplaces, industries, rail lines, or airports. This ignorance of location often prevents students from paying rapt attention to what is taught in the classroom. These ugly situations have been attracting the attention of a stake in the education sector in Nigeria.

No doubt, Nigeria is facing many challenges in the education sector, which are attributed majorly to the political interplay when it comes to the administration of educational inputs. This political interplay influences the politics in the administration of the fund, students' enrollment, availability, adequacy and optimal utilization of educational facilities and equipment needed for effective teaching and learning processes (Adamu, 2019; Enwezor, 2021; Yakubu & Sowunmi, 2017). It was observed that despite the Federal Government's efforts and commitment to improving the quality and

raising the standard of Nigerian education, the administration of educational inputs is yet to be attended to as expected.

For example, most of the public school buildings in both the primary and secondary schools, as observed in every region of Nigeria, are at varying levels of dilapidation and destruction. Many existing buildings are without roofs and ceilings and there are inadequate spaces in each classroom to accommodate the continuous student population explosion. In addition, most of the school's facilities had been looted by thieves, destroyed by students, and vandalised. Many school windows now lack louvre blades due to frequent burglary, and the main school entrance lacks a fence and a gate due to delinquent activity, and each classroom entrance lacks doors due to hoodlum activity..

Nigerian educational inputs seem not properly managed due to political inclinations with different ideologies and policies. These differences may have led to no availability of custodian and janitorial services. The security unit was usually saddled with the responsibilities of maintaining certain cleaning standards and guiding against theft, vandalism and trespass into the school compound. Hence, educational inputs lack proper administration. In view of this, teaching and learning processes are now uncondusive for both teachers and pupils. Against this backdrop, this study tends to examine the political challenges confronting the administration of educational inputs in Nigeria.

Methodology

To make robust findings, both the primary (Researcher's observations and experiences) and secondary (Research work/studies/Reports/Web Articles, Newspapers, etc.) data were utilized to gather information for the study. Relevant studies from 2008 to 2022 have been included in the review. Google Scholar, Academia.edu, Research gate and the Institute Library is the primary source of secondary data collection. Twenty-four valuable studies were selected after all filtration.

Politics Inputs and Educational Administration in Nigeria

The following are the monumental political challenges, among other observed challenges, confronting the administration of educational inputs in Nigeria.

Inadequate educational funding. Like every other sector of Nigeria's economy, the education sector competes for budgetary allocation year in and year out. This is because the financial resources at the government's disposal are very limited and cannot meet the financial needs of each sector of the economy at once (Lawal & Oyewale, 2020; Lawal et al., 2020). However, the frivolous way and manner in which the Nigerian government, both at the federal and state level, always responded to the financial needs of education, judging from the budgetary allocation to this sector over the years (2016-2022), indicates without doubt, that education is not given top priority as expected.

For instance, in the 2016 and 2017 budgets, the budgetary allocation to the education sector in Nigeria had a total allocation representing 7.9% and 7.4% of the total budget, respectively. However, the education sector's total allocation was slightly less than the previous year's in 2018 and 2019, representing 7.04% and 7.05% of the total budget, respectively. Furthermore, in the budgets for the years 2020 and 2021, the education sector's budget representation was even lower, with a total allocation that represented 6.7% and 5.6% of the total budget, respectively (Lawal & Oyewale, 2020; Lawal et al., 2020; Olufemi, 2020).

Year in and year out, from the selected period, over 92% of the budgetary allocation was allotted to recurrent expenditures like salaries across various ministries, departments and agencies. However, from the balance of less than 8%, all the educational inputs at public institutions (universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and secondary and primary schools) were run. This circumstance corroborates the findings of Amanchukwu and Ololube (2015), who reported that it would be extremely difficult to procure all the required educational inputs for all levels of education with this meager financial allocation.

Corruption and embezzlement problem. After they assume office, most of the political office holders in Nigeria, either elected,

selected, or appointed, come on board with ulterior motives. They stand to personally gain or achieve and never with the dire wish to serve the interest of the masses that elect or select them. These political office holders rather turn themselves into political jobbers and unlawfully divert public funds meant for the provision of educational facilities and maintenance of existing ones into their purses and fraudulently make use of such funds for their private use at the expense of the poor masses.

Also, there were reported cases of corrupt quality assurance officers from the Ministry of Education at every level of governance, be it in Federal, State, or Local Government Areas. Such ministries include (i) the Federal Ministry of Education (FMOE), (ii) Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), and (iii) the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and (iv) the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) who usually visit schools to ascertain the level of compliance with the required standard of educational inputs, but only go to schools to extort money at the expense of their statutory functions unattended to (Adefowora, 2022). In line was the study of Ukeame (2015); Bisong (2019); Offem et al. (2018), and Oyewale (2020), who found that various government programs have been severally criticized for lack of transparency and large-scale corruption and embezzlement, which invariably has not let government programs to be properly implemented.

Because custodian and janitorial services are essential for the maintenance of certain cleaning standards like clearing the path, cutting the lawns, athletics and football fields, and weeding of other playing grounds are missing, which invariably makes educational inputs to a dysfunctional use, corruption and embezzlement may have played a role in why thick bushes with big trees now surround most educational inputs. Some have been destroyed by flames, with no sign of reconstruction or renovation.

Cultural and ethnic problems. As of today, Nigeria is an amalgamation of different ethnic groups. As such, Nigeria has over 300 groups and each of the ethnic groups has its own unique culture, beliefs, norms, values and worldview perspective. However, the fact remains that these ethnic groups are multitudinous and distinctly pronounced in their way of life and political ideology (Onyekwere & Ubong, 2019). Therefore, the administration of educational inputs is a serious undertaking that requires the appointment of professionals who have adequate knowledge about what it takes to plan educational inputs to meet the needs of the different groups.

Manpower and technical problems. Top government functionaries and political class, in most cases, may exert their influence over whom to be appointed or promoted as school plant planners, educators, and even administrators without considering and evaluating their ability and suitability, capacity and capabilities in terms of cognate experience for the job (Ajayi & Oyewale, 2017). Meanwhile, when unqualified education planners, educators without the required knowledge, or administrators lacking the needed experience are appointed to be in charge of planning, administering or managing educational inputs, either at the national or state level. Ineffectiveness and inefficiency will certainly culminate in the school system in such a situation.

Political problems. Another monumental challenge confronting the administration of educational inputs in Nigeria is the frequent and ever-changing government structure, which often affects the smooth planning and implementation of educational inputs. Since October 1960, when Nigeria gained independence, politics and policy inconsistency by the military and democratic governance has been one of the main changes in the country's education sector. Successive governments in the country had significant policy changes to suit their administration. This made Amadi and Precious (2015) conclude that there is a lot of interference in academic freedom by the government, though sometimes such intervention is inevitable. This concerns government-owned institutions because educational input requirements frequently change as successive governments get into power.

Government policies. Government policies had become a threat; even when the government established schools, they could not afford what it took to meet up. For example, is the accreditation policy of educational inputs required for accrediting a course of

study in a department or faculty within a school most times unrealistic? When the government formulates a policy that is not achievable or too demanding, the school disregards such policy and operates with reality on the educational inputs. They can afford not minding whether or not such policy will enhance effective teaching and learning process and ultimately improve the student's academic performance.

Additionally, costs for facilities have just soared because of the economic downturn brought on by the pandemic that the country and the world are experiencing, like COVID-19, costs for facilities have just soared. This, among others, makes procurement of educational inputs unaffordable for school administrators, thereby making them resort to running the school with poor educational inputs (Oyewale, 2020; Oyewale et al., 2020).

Conclusion

A properly planned educational input will no doubt bring about a conducive safe teaching and learning environment for the teachers and students, as well as enhance the quality of instruction which will, in turn, promote effective teaching and learning processes. In conclusion, if all educational processes and policies are to go on smoothly, it is very important for the Nigerian government to take part in the administration of educational inputs by creating an enabling environment for schools to thrive by making available adequate fund, maintaining standard and also ensuring that their policies are realistic, achievable and not too demanding.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby suggested:

The government should maintain UNESCO's proposed 15-20% budgetary allocation to education to procure educational inputs.

A standard should not be compromised at the national or state level. That is, the services of professionals with adequate knowledge must be sought to plan educational inputs, especially in an environment with diverse ethnic groups. For example, the government needs to engage the services of educational planners in order to provide necessary architectural information or briefings before designing functional educational inputs that will suit the intended program/curriculum; this certainly would make teaching and learning become effective and efficient in the schools. With every sense of seriousness, corruption and embezzlement must be kicked out of the system if the intended goals and objectives would be achieved to have a functional society.

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