

IMPACT OF POLITICS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the impact of politics on the management of public secondary schools in Enugu State. The design of the study was a descriptive survey. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was 311 made up of 65 principals and 246 teachers in the secondary schools in Enugu South L. G. A. There was no sampling because the population was manageable. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean with standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Some findings of the study include; the fact that misappropriation of funds disrupt peace in schools, favoritism in the disbursement of funds leads to conflict in schools, funds meant for the payment of teachers salaries and allowances are often misappropriated and this result in industrial dispute. Among the recommendations includes the fact that schools should be organising workshops, public seminars and enlightenment programmes in their schools and community to educate people on the negative impact of politics and the way out.

Introduction

The interference of politics in the educational sector is not new in Nigeria. The fact is that, during the era of British Colonialism in 1891-1951, the planning, administration and management of education was under the influence of political arrangements by the then

leaders. The same political influence and procedures have continued till date in the education sector especially in public schools.

However, it is a known fact that, the impact of politics in the management of secondary schools in Nigeria is affected by the government interference. This is because politics and school management cannot be separated. It has to be

noted as well that, the objectives of education, the control, production, financial and accreditation system are tied under politics.

The word politics has been defined by different authors depending on their perceptions. However, Ogbonnaya (2009) sees it as a subject concerned with attracting, securing and maintaining the well being of a community, state or nation. Okeke (2007) sees it as a device intended for finding solutions to social, economic, political and educational problems by political means. Uchendu (2009) on the other hand sees politics as the science and act of securing and advancing the temporal welfare of a community organized as a state. The business of politics, therefore, involves both the laying down of general principles and their application to concrete problems. These definitions imply that politics is concerned with attracting, securing and maintains the well being of a community. The definitions also suggest that politics is an instrument for finding solutions to social, economic, scientific, technological and educational problems of a nation. For Nigerian politicians, these facts are well known and that is why they make education the center of their political campaign for political positions. In regards to that, politics has been perceived by Okeke (2007) as a game played by all stakeholders for the continued growth, development, change and innovation in education.

Education has long been accepted as a veritable instrument par excellence for effecting family, community and national development. The importance of education in any nation cannot be overemphasized. Education is an instrument per excellence for national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Thus, it is a prerequisite for all round development, be it technologically, socioeconomically and environmental

advancements. This is because; it is a reliable means of transmission of people's culture from one generation to another. The state of education in Nigeria calls for the urgent attention of educationist and policy makers to ensure sustainable development and attainment of national transformation. There are three levels of education in Nigeria, namely; tertiary education, secondary education and the primary education. In the course of this article, the researcher laid emphasis on the secondary level of education which is also known as secondary school.

Secondary school is that level of education after the primary education. It is the link between the primary and the tertiary levels of education. The essence of secondary school is to prepare its recipients for useful living within the society and for higher education. It has two segments in Nigeria, junior and senior levels. The relevance of secondary school in Nigeria made the Federal Government to state the broad aims of secondary school in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013). However, Ekundayo (2010) saw secondary schools as not living up to its original expectation based on the fact that there are a lot of issues that have bedeviled their management especially political interferences.

The establishment of most secondary schools in Enugu State arose out of increase political awareness of the citizens of the state. It is for this reason that Okeke (2007) stated emphatically that politics plays an important role in decision making, control and governance of secondary schools. Furthermore, Okeke pointed out that politics in education can be looked at as a process of control, decision making, implementation, management, governance and a method by which resources are allocated to different ethnic groups to achieve their aims. The role of politics is heightened in view of the fact that an educational system has political goals and these goals are

essential to justify the existence of the system if there is accurate management. Management is an important aspect of every organization. Ogbonnaya (2009) defined management as the co-ordination of the resources of an organization through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling all energies aimed at recording achievement of the organizational goals. Also, management is a way of guiding, leading and controlling the efforts of a group of people towards the realization of their common goals and objectives. Hence, in this context management is the use of materials and nonmaterials resources in an organization to achieve stated goals. In this present study, secondary schools are organized place with rules and regulation guiding the activities of what is going on in order to achieve the desired goals of education. Therefore, the importance of secondary school management is for effective utilization of material and non-material resources to achieve predetermined goals. However, planning, organizing, controlling, directing, staffing, leading, supervising, decision making, coordinating, reporting, evaluating, programming and budgeting are the functions of the school management put together to achieve the goals of education.

The problem with school management lies in the fact that secondary schools management has a multiple link with the society and each sector of the society likes to influence the management of secondary school to suit their relationship within the society, these include Federal government, State government, Local government, parent teachers association, organizations, religious bodies and philanthropic (Babalola, 2013). However, interference of both the government and other agencies affects the smooth running of the school programme in areas like funding and provision of basic infrastructures.

Funding is the act of providing financial resources, usually in the form of money, or other values such as effort or time, to finance a need, programme, and project, usually by an organisation, community or government. Funding is a critical issue in the Nigerian educational system. Funding as observed by Ogbonnaya (2009) is concerned with procuring, expending, accounting and maintaining the financial resources of an educational institution efficiently to achieve educational objectives. The achievements of educational goals depends on adequate financial support of the government, organizations, individual and even communities, because adequate financial supply and maintenance makes the school to reach its glory and ensure adequate personnel to work in an organization. In order to achieve the stated objectives of school management, there is the need for provision of basic infrastructure. Basic infrastructure refers to the school site, buildings, play grounds, equipment and other material resources provided in the school for effective teaching and learning operations (Mgbodile, 2003). The activities of the schools are evaluated and expressed through the quality of facilities in the school e.g. the quality of teachers, building, playground, computers and so on. This is done because education is necessary condition for progress, eradication of ignorance, superstition and poverty in the community and society at large. However, one may describe the impact of politics on the management of secondary schools as positive when proper decisions are taken in the distribution of resources, appointment of principals, board of governors, members of board, allocation of funds to schools, appointment of staff personnel, good relation of school community and proper welfare of students. The impact of politics is perceived as negative where there is discrimination,

favourism and bias in the appointment of principals, promotion of teachers, selection of board of governors, appointment of board of governors, allocation of funds and lack of freedom on the parts of the principals, teachers, school-community relation member of board of governors and board of members to express their opinions on matters affecting them.

Therefore, government interference in secondary school management to a large extent has influence the management in different ways. It is observed that in areas of employment within education sector, politics to a large extent determines who is to be taken and who is not to be employed. Eze (2012) observed that in the distribution of infrastructural facilities to schools, the issue of politics also is paramount. The issue of politics in transfers of teachers and principals is alarming to the extent that one is made to stay in an urban area if he/she has a God-father. Also, because of politics on the control, management and governance of school management the issue of funding, provision of basic infrastructures has made various agencies to have interest in school management, therefore the stated rules and regulation guiding the school management is been influence by politics. Therefore, this study intends to determine the impact of politics on the management of secondary schools in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

The management of public secondary schools has been influenced by political undertone. The decisions that can be taken ordinarily by the school management are being influenced by the political bigwigs to suit their interests. Secondary schools have a great link with their host societies; hence each segment of society tries to interfere with the management of secondary schools to

suit their roles in the society. It is also noted that, politics influences funding and the provision of basic infrastructure. Political influences have positive and negative impact on teaching and learning in schools. In the society, it seems that the management of secondary schools is a fertile ground for politicking and politicians influence the management of secondary education while the principals, teachers, school board members and board of governors of each school obey them to a fault.

It has been impossible for principals and teachers to stand their grounds to make demands for their salaries, allowances, promotions, car loans and conducive teaching environment. They embark on strike actions that often yield nothing worthwhile. Teachers, board of governors of schools, secondary school management boards, staff and principals observe that politics influence secondary school management in areas such as in transfer of teachers, promotion of principals, fund allocation, distribution of facilities, upgrading of schools and conduct of examinations. Hence, the problem of this study is what are the impacts of politics on the management of secondary schools in Enugu State?

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to ascertain the impact of politics on the management of secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

- i. extent to which school management perceive the impact of politics on the funding of Secondary school management in Enugu State; and
- ii. the extent to which school management perceive the impact of politics on the provision of

basic infrastructure in Secondary school management in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. to what extent does school management perceive the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management in Enugu State?
- ii. to what extent does school management perceive the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in secondary school management in Enugu State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at $P < 0.05$;

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent they perceived the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management in Enugu State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent they perceived the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in secondary school management in Enugu State.

Research Method

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The study covered the secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. Enugu state is one of the 36 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The population of the study was all the 65 principals and 246 teachers in the local government. There was no sampling because the population was manageable. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher made structured questionnaire titled "Impact of Politics on the Management of Secondary Schools

Questionnaire (IPMSSQ)". It was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, ESUT. The instrument comprised 10 questionnaire items divided in clusters according to the two research questions. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate, at the end of which a reliability index of 0.77 was obtained. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to all the teachers by the researcher. Mean with standard deviation was use to analyse data related to the research questions. The criterion mean of 2.50 was gotten by summing up the weighted options ($4+3+2+1=10$) and dividing it by total number of response options (4) as follows; $10/4=2.50$. The t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The decision rule for the hypothesis were that, hypothesis was not rejected when the tcalculated value is less than the critical table value, but rejected when the t-calculated value is greater than the critical table value.

Research Question 1: to what extent does school management perceive the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean response scores of Principals and Teachers on the extent management perceives the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management

S/ N	ITEMS	PRINCIPALS			TEACHERS		
		\bar{X}	SD	Dec.	\bar{X}	SD	Dec.
1	Funds are not release on time for the principals to carry out their duties leading to poor maintenance of school.	2.90	1.11	HE	2.84	1.12	GE
2	Principals who are not in the good book of politicians or/ are against the party in power do not receive enough subventions from the school board and this affects smooth running of the school.	2.83	0.88	HE	2.91	0.98	HE
3	Funds meant for the payment of teachers salaries and allowances are often misappropriated by politicians and in most case this result to industrial dispute among teachers leading to strike.	2.97	0.95	HE	2.90	0.87	HE
4	Favouritism in the disbursement of funds by government leads to conflict in schools.	2.63	0.84	HE	2.82	1.15	HE
5	Government officers (those working in the board) appointed as principals usually adopt carefree attitude in management of funds leading to underdevelopment of schools.	2.80	0.88	HE	2.81	0.89	HE
Cluster mean		2.87	0.93	HE	2.86	1.00	HE

The results presented on Table 1 show that the responses of the respondents were all to a high extent. The principal's mean ranged from 2.63 to 2.97 while that of teachers ranged from 2.81 to 2.91. In addition, they were cluster means of 2.87 and 2.86 for Principals and Teachers and standard deviations of 0.93 and 1.00 respectively.

These imply that the respondents responded to a high extent that, politics has a great impact in the funding of secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Question 2: to what extent does school management perceive the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in secondary school management in Enugu State?

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the

Table 2: Mean response scores of Principals and Teachers on the extent management perceives the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in secondary school management

S/N	ITEMS	PRINCIPALS			TEACHERS		
		\bar{X}	SD	Dec.	\bar{X}	SD	Dec.
6	Contractors sometimes supply dilapidated equipment because they are protected by (the powers that be) government and this discourages staff from putting in their best.	2.84	1.13	HE	2.54	1.02	HE
7	There is uneven distribution of facilities due to the interest of party in power leading to learning environment.	3.11	0.93	HE	2.91	0.98	HE
8	Some schools are sited because of political interest leading to unequal distribution of	3.20	0.93	HE	2.92	0.97	HE
9	Government bias in the provision of sports equipment in schools leads to differences in of athletes.	3.13	0.94	HE	2.78	1.10	HE
10	Some school equipment are diverted to personal use by prominent members of the school community leading to scarcity of equipment in the affected schools.	2.90	0.93	HE	2.86	1.09	HE
Cluster mean		3.04	0.97	HE	2.80	1.03	HE

mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent they perceived the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management in Enugu State.

The results presented on Table 2 above show that the responses were of a high extent that, there is an impact of politics on the management of secondary school management relating to the provision of basic infrastructure. The principal's mean ranged from 2.84 to 3.20 while that of the teachers ranged from 2.54 to 2.92. In addition, they were cluster means of 3.04 and 2.80 for Principals and Teachers respectively with standard deviations of 0.97 and 1.03 respectively. These imply that politics has an impact in the provision of basic infrastructure in the public secondary school management in Enugu State.

Table 3: t-test of significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on the extent they perceived the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	65	2.87	0.93	309	0.08	1.96	Not rejected
Teachers	246	2.86	1.00				

Table 4: t-test of significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on the extent they perceived the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in secondary school management

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	65	3.04	0.97	309	0.63	1.96	Not rejected
Teachers	246	2.80	1.03				

Table 3 above presents the independent t-test analysis of the mean difference in the response opinions of principals and teachers on the extent they perceive the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management in Enugu State. The result showed that the calculated t-value (0.08) was less than the critical value (1.96). The null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there was no significant difference between the responses of the Principals and that of the teachers on the extent they perceive the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management in Enugu State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of principals and teachers on the

extent they perceived the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in secondary school management in Enugu State.

Table 4 above presents the independent t-test analysis of the mean difference in the response opinions of principals and teachers on the extent they perceive the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in secondary schools in Enugu State. The result showed that the calculated t-value (0.63) was less than the critical value (1.96). The null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there was no significant difference between the responses of the Principals and that of the teachers on the extent they perceive the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in

secondary school management in Enugu State.

Summary of Findings

From the results of the findings, it was found out that:

i. there is a positive response of Principals and Teachers on the extent they perceive the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management in Enugu State. However, their responses were to a high extent;

ii. There is a positive response of Principals and Teachers on the extent they perceive the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in secondary school management in Enugu State. However,

Their responses were to a high extent;

iii. There was no significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on how they perceive the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management.

However, the null hypothesis was not rejected;

iv. There was no significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on how they perceive the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in secondary school management. However, the null hypothesis was not rejected;

Discussion of Findings

The findings in research question one, table 1 revealed that there is a high extent politics has impacted the management of secondary schools relating to funding in

Enugu State. School management perceived to a high extent the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school in that misappropriation of funds by principals disrupts peace in the school, principals who are not on the good book of politicians or those against the party in power do not receive enough impress from the school board and there is favouritism in the disbursement of fund leads to conflict in schools. The findings of this study are in line with the statement of Mgbodile (2006) who reported that improper disbursement leads to conflicts as well as inadequate funds to take care of purchases in the school. The results of this study show that politics is impactful in the funding of secondary schools in Enugu State. However, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on how they perceive the impact of politics on the funding of secondary school management. However, the null hypothesis was not rejected;

The findings of research question 2, on table 2 show that, the principals and teachers perceived the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructures in secondary schools to a high extent in that, quota system in the provision of computer denies some schools of such equipment, government interest determines where secondary schools are sited and there is uneven distribution of facilities to the interest of the party in power. The findings of this present study support Ogbonnaya (2009) who stated that politics influences the provision of base infrastructures in schools.

Ogbonnaya reported that there is quota system in the provision of computer equipment that government determines where schools are cited. However, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of Principals and Teachers on how they perceive the impact of politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in secondary school management. However, the null hypothesis was not rejected;

Conclusion

Education is very important in every nation of the world but it is usually influenced in various ways and politics is one of the ways. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived impact of politics on the management of secondary schools in Enugu State. This complexity is necessitated by a lot of factors ranging from funding and the provision of basic infrastructure. In order to enhance effective school administration and management, the government, communities, corporate organizations and individuals should assist in making secondary schools conducive for teaching and learning rather than having negative influences in the management of the school activities.

Recommendations of the study

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Government in the Enugu State should ensure that there is no favouritism in the disbursement of funds in secondary schools and the appointment of finance officers should not be based on politics, this politics is bound to adversely affect the provision of management of funds in secondary schools.

2. The state government should avoid quota system in the provision of facilities in schools. This is because these leads to differentials in the quality and quantity of schools.

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