International Journal of Innovative Education Research 11(1):87-93, Jan.-Mar., 2023

© SEAHI PUBLICATIONS, 2023 www.seahipaj.org ISSN: 2354-2942

Politics Of Managing Education In The Covid-19 Pandemic In Nigeria Through Emerging Technologies And Innovations

***Opara Eucharia A., Okwai, Philip Niebari & Ugwechi-Ishiaya Joy**

Department of Educational Management,
Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
***E-mail: euchariaopara54@gmail.com Tel: 08054987054.**

ABSTRACT
This paper examined politics of managing education in the covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria through emerging technologies and innovations**.** Education is one of the most powerful tools for social reconstruction. It is a socio-cultural phenomenon that influences the aggregate development of a nation be it politics, economic and so on. Politics in a way employs the school as a tool for transmission of its operational values. Pollitics in the management of education is so strong that, it influences the policies on education funding, staff-personnel administration, provision of basic infrastructure\equipment and school-community relation. Education most especially at this covid-19 era is a highly politicalized institution with diverse ethnic, geographical and religious interests. Nevertheless, in this era of covid-19, technologies and innovations essentially brings qualitative changes in education, which is needed to increase efficiency and improve the quality and equity of learning opportunities. This situation have reformed the political views of the programmes of education in a way to teach students on the need to prevent disease while acquiring skills in ICT to be able to handle packages like Moodle, Google-Suite for Education, Google's core services, including Gmail, Docs, Hangouts, and more. Through emerging technologies and innovations, the operational system of education has changed politically and administratively via the introduction of new methods of education delivery where teachers would have to adapt to the use of internet through Flipgrid, Whatsapp, Twitter, Skype, MySpace, Yahoo Messenger to reach out to children in collaboration with their parents for the purpose of instilling knowledge, ideas through audio, sharing of photos and videos by users. In the paper, the concepts of politics, politics in education, educational management, innovations, and technology were figured out. In the paper, it was revealed that education personnel can influence political decision through ideological awareness, fund mobilization to execute education programmes, politicking to influence educational decisions and consultations. Some challenges of politics of managing education were revealed and to curb this situation, there is need to keep a steady focus on the clear mission, principles, goals, and targets of education irrespective of political interest.
Keywords: Politics, Politics in Education, Educational Management, Technology, Covid-19 Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The educational system of every nation is highly contented to political leadership operation in the nation. Nigeria, for example as a nation is a politicalized society with diverse, ethnic, geographical, religious and cultural interests which tend to influence every educational decision be it local or national. The role of politics in the management of education in Nigeria is affected by the government interference. This is because politics and school management cannot be separated. The objectives of education, the control, production, process variables, financial and accreditation system are tied inescapably to politics. Therefore, it is a mere talk to say that education is far from politics and

political interests. The fact remains that education and politics cannot work in a divergent manner but rather in either guided or absolute synergy. The policies adopted by any educational system are essentially drawn by the government in power and every government is conscious about what would be most interesting to them in their political pursuit or aspirations to ensure that its political, social and economic success is affiliated to education in the promotion of the basic interests of government. On the other hand,educators need the support of the ruling power, the public and other governmental agencies in order to carry out their functions credibly. On this note, one can boldly say that no educational system can survive without the financial support and the protection of the government in power.

In Nigeria, the educational policies of successive governments have always reflected and often betrayed the political creed and social views of each government both at state and federal levels.It is a known fact that structural facilities and human and material resources are inadequate in most educational institutions in Nigeria due to superlative political interest and creed(Ikegbusi, 2014). In views of Ogbonnayaas cited in Osuji (2011), the relationship between the school, the community and the ruling political parties are guided by policies and decision which affect the school management positively/or negatively. It has been observed that the interference of the government influences the management and policies that guide school management. This is so because, there are notable occasions where government decisions influence policies on funding, staff personnel administration, provision of basic infrastructures/equipment and school community relation.The school administrators on this note operates with political office holders giving out directives that may affect the quality of education and decision as such must be influenced positively in the best interest of improving education. Therefore, the political challenge with managing education lies in the fact that, it has a multiple link with the society and each sector of the society likes to influence the management of schools to suit their relationship within the society.

Notwithstanding, the covid-19 pandemic and its consequential impacts have created new cultures, innovations and technologies. These technologies are imperative in addressing new problems posed by the pandemic as well as existing problems that have not been adequately addressed by existing solutions. Therefore, education at this time should serve both as a compendium on innovations and emerging technologies to be utilized in addressing the pandemic as well as to serve as guidance on the short-term, medium-term and long-term strategies essential to mitigating the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic in our societies.A number of decisions need to be taken and resources made available to use to resolve the present challenges rocking educational establishments and teachers. This is true of curricular adjustments and prioritization and the contextualization needed to ensure that the contents are relevant to the current emergency situation, based on consensus among all relevant stakeholders. Equally important, these adjustments must prioritize without bias political interest the competencies and values that have come to the fore in the current situation, namely solidarity, self-directed learning, care for one and others, social-emotional skills, health and resilience, among others which comes under the influence of political maneuvering (Molina, 2020).

Political interest should be well managed in education to attract quality use of emerging innovations and technological tools, platforms and devices such as videoconferencing tools and e-learning platforms to aid continued education online.Skillful management of education as a result of the reformation of education occasion by covid-19 through emerging technologies (ETs) and innovations is changing all facets of educational processes ranging from; the nature of classrooms, quality of content, methodologies, mode of students' engagement, to creativity and evaluation. This is evident in the evolution of tablet computing, mobile applications, cloud computing, virtual technology, Artificial Intelligence, and many more that are making teaching and learning more interesting and productive (Edeh, Sharma, Nwafor, Fyneface, Sen and Edeh, 2020). All these can be harmonized to work if political interest is fairly exhibited by both government and school management at this technological and innovation era in education to drive the system to digital success. Therefore, politics in the management of education should be directed in such a manner to inculcate technologies to enable teachers and students gain access to practical knowledge in the current workplace practices which requires individuals to have the ability to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) with efficiency and confidence.

Emerging Technology and Innovation

Different technology platforms and applications can politically emerge on this note to help educators to improve the quality of education. Emerging technology and innovation according to Winston & Strawn (2023) is the term commonly referred to technologies that are currently developing, or that are expected to be available within the next five to ten years, and are usually reserved for technologies that are creating, or are expected to create significant social or economic effects.Technological tools such as CCTV cameras, biometric and technology have proven very useful towards the conduct of examinations and mitigation of examination malpractices (Edeh, et al., 2020). Educators now use different mobile platforms to communicate and interact with their students, and also to receive feedbacks from them on assignments and other learning tasks. Video Conferencing tools such as Google Meet, ZOOM, GoToMeeting and Bluejeans are largely used by educators to facilitate remote teaching during the recent Coronavirus pandemic lockdown due to the harmonization that emanated from political interests. Also, emerging educational technologies inspire countless conferences, workshops, white papers and think pieces every year, and it is changing the way students and educators work and interact. So without doubt, emerging technologies and innovations that is well guided and directed by collaborative political interests would facilitate online education, research and use of flexible methodologies to impact teaching, learning, or creative inquiry on learners, in order to groom them to be self-dependent in the creation of job opportunities even after school. They provide opportunities for individuals to improve their skills and job performances and introduces flexibility to teaching and learning process, and takes teaching and learning beyond the physical classrooms (Onyema, 2019).

Thus, the use of chalk board with chalks makes the teacher and the method to be referred to as Talk-Board Teacher and Chalk-Talk- Method. Bay Atlantic University (2022) in Opara (2023) noted that virtual classroom's, augmented reality (AR), videos, different models and other technology tools cannot make the class more interesting, but they can also develop more inclusive practices that foster cooperation and intellectual curousity while also allowing teachers to collect data on students performance. These equally help in social-distance observances. Other emerging technologies and innovations that can be provided through political reformation in managing education in these COVID-19 pandemic Nigeria are networked and non-networked computers, projected and non-projected gadgets, visual, audio, audio-visual electronic materials, computer-based-science laboratories, network connected libraries, slides, film-strides, overhead projectors, interactive white boards, comouter-based multimedia games. Adding to emerging educational technologies, Heick (2013) noted these are Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, 3D Printing, Robotics, Adaptive Learning Algorithms, Asynchronous Learning and Microlearning (and associated microcredentials), live streaming (school to school, school to expert, remote teaching and learning etc via slzoom, for example), Artificial Intelligence, Social learning (obviously closely related 5o synchronous and asychron9us learning), learning games and simulations. Others are high-resolution video, slow motion video, professional-level audio and video editing software, block-chain, haptic feedback, recommendation-engine based personalized learning.

A controversial and complex issue is the political decision-making criteria and approaches regarding learning priorities and how to make adjustments to suit new technologies and innovations. This is an aspect to be tackled through harmonization of political interests by education managers and politicians. The alternative to select curricular content that are more relevant, which are prioritized over others is a debate that must be politically undertaken. Curriculum adaptation, flexibility and contextualization should address elements such as the prioritization of learning objectives and content that enable a better understanding of and response to the current pandemic crisis, incorporating aspects related to care and health, critical and reflective thinking with regard to information and news, understanding social and economic trends in association with product driving technologies and innovations and also encouraging behaviour that is empathetic, tolerant and non-discriminative, among other things. Remember, political office holders in one way or the other may have marred the opportunities for continuing to teach remotely due to the fact that, their policy and programmes in some situation has given room for unequal distribution of technological equipment, application and appliances between different territories and segments of society in each state of the country.

For these reasons, a balance must be sought between identifying core competencies, which will be necessary in order to continue learning, and deepening the comprehensive and humanistic character of education, without giving in to pressure to strengthen only instrumental learning via political will. Likewise, when adjusting curricula and developing pedagogical resources, the needs of groups with specific requirements should be considered. For example, adjustments must be made and the necessary support provided for students with disabilities or who live in various conditions and situations that make it difficult for them to continue their studies. The linguistic and cultural diversity of migrant populations and indigenous communities must also be addressed. Likewise, a gender perspective must be incorporated in order to make visible and eradicate situations of gender inequality or violence that could be worsening under lockdown when taking political decisions on education (Trucco& Palma, 2020).

Concept of Politics

Politics is regarded as activities that involve getting and using power in public life, and being able to influence decisions that affect a people, organizations, institutions and nations. On this note, politics could be the agreement or disagreement of people that brought in politics on a particular course of action. The business of politics therefore, involves both the laying down of general principles and their application to concrete problems. The scope of politics is the temporal wellbeing of the community as a whole.On this note, Banks as cited in Onyemechi(2018) defines politics as both a study and skill as to how power is exercised, and by whom (and for whom benefits) through the administration of public power to manage people's affairs.

Concept of Politics in Education

Politics in the context of education is a situation where political consideration is given preference rather than due process in which case the running of a school is influenced by the wishes of those in power rather than by established guidelines. Okekeas cited in Onyemechi(2018) 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 business of politics in education, therefore, involves both the laying down of general principles, policies, instruments, structures, standards and their application to address concrete situations and conditions for the governance of education.Politics is all-embracing; it deals with power and power involves elements of decision making, allocating of resources, settlement of conflicts, provision of social amenities as well as the provision and management of education. This clearly suggest that politics is an instrument for finding solutions to social, economic, scientific, technological and educational problems of a nation.

Concept of Management

Management could be seen as a way of guiding, leading and controlling the efforts of a group of people towards the realization of their common goals and objectives. Hence, management is the use of materials and non-materials resources in an organization to achieve stated goals.Igbinedion, (2018) sees management as an organizational process that includes strategic planning, setting objectives, managing resources, deploying the human and financial assets needed to achieve objectives and measuring results. It is the process by which a cooperative group directs actions towards a common goal. It is the process of harnessing the human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives in the system.

Concept of Educational Management

Educational management is the process of planning and formulation of educational policies or programme with a view to achieving educational goals. In this context management is the use of materials and non-materials resources in an organization to achieve stated goals. Peretomode cited in Onyemechi (2018) categorically stated that, educational management is the application of the process of planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and evaluating human and material resources in an organization for the achievement of common goals. Therefore,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.

Concept of COVID-19 Pandemic

In times past, so many diseases have in one way or the other have affected academic programmes and policies made concerning education. One of such is Corona Virus. Citing World Health Organization WHO (2023), Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infections disease caused by the SARS-coV-2 virus. Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, some will become seriously ill and require medical attention. Anyone can get sick with COVID-19 and become seriously I'll or die at any age The Best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the disease and how the virus spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by staying at least 1 metre apart ffrom others, wearing a properly fitted mask, and washing your hands orvising an acoholic-based rub frequently, Get vaccine when it's your turn and follow local guidance (practice respiratory etquette, for example by coughing into flexed elbow, and to stay home and self-isolate until you recover if feel unwell). The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, and sing or breathe.Thus, students should be taught, reinformed regularly about the pandemic, symptoms, adverse effects and preventive measures.

Things to look out for when Taking Political Decision on Education during Pandemic Crisis

(i) Equity and inclusion: focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized population groups — including indigenous peoples, Afro descendants, refugees and migrants, the most socioeconomically disadvantaged populations and persons with disabilities— and on sexual and gender diversity.

(ii) Quality and relevance: focus on improving the content of curricula (in relation to health and wellbeing, in particular) and on specialized support for teachers, ensuring appropriate contractual and working conditions, teacher training for distance learning and the return to school, and socio-emotional support in order to work with students and their families.

(iii) Education system: preparedness of the education system to respond to crises, (i.e. resilience at all levels) by using sophisticated teaching-learning gadgets and highly improved medical preventve or curative technologies.

(iv) Interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral approaches: planning and implementation focused not only on education, but also on health, nutrition and social protection.

(v) Partnerships: cooperation and collaboration between different sectors and actors to achieve an integrated system focused on students and education staff.

(vi) There must be adequate resources for budget allocation and distribution.

(vii**)** Informing students all about COVID-19 and Strick adherence to all the prevention roles while using emerging educational technologies and innovations.

Challenges of Politics of Managing Education

1. The use of emerging technologies by educators are hindered by poor infrastructures such as; poor electricity, network issues, unavailability and accessibility issues, poor funding and resistance due to negative political interest in the management of education.

2. Confusion over Legality: There is still much confusion amongst education planners, political office holders and employers about the legality of local hire ordinances, leaving many jurisdictions reticent to pass or enforce legislation that could potentially lead to a lawsuit.

3. Political maneuvering: Political maneuvering in relation to the pandemic, from misinformation and economic measures to policies of social distancing, quarantining and isolation; the use and misuse of large-scale data in giving education reports, statistics and visualizations are hindrances to address education issue urgently.

4. Political office holders have in one way or the other marred the opportunities for continuing to teach remotely due to the fact that the policy and programmes in some situations have given room for unequal distribution of technological equipment, applications and appliances between different territories and segments of society in each state of the country.

5. Unauthenticated data to plan current educational programmes:One of the most difficult challenges that educational planners face is the issues of inaccurate statistical deficiencies and inaccurate data. Reliable data to make informed decision to plan and formulate policies for

the educational development at this period of covid-19 is seriously challenging asaccess to reliable and complete information on education in Nigeria has proved difficult (Ogunode, Wama&Dilmurod, 2020).

6. Corruption in the Institutions:Even when there is synergy amongst education managers in relation to political actors in managing education, corruption still surface as a factor frustrating effective administration of education.
7. Dearth of Implementation of policies. Many policies look great on paper to be implemented to help education cope with current education programmes no matter the anomalies inflicted by covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, administrators and political actors struggle with implementation and enforcement of these programmes because of political interests and personal gains.
8. Non-provision of modern educational technologies and inadequate training and development of teachers with technical skills.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Ministerial appointments on academic matters should be strictly on merit and experiences on areas of specialization; this will help to achieve the goals and objectives of education as the appointee is well grounded on the field of educational management and administration.
2. There is need for education authorities to address the various issues that hinder the integration of emerging technologies in education in order to enable educators and students to maximize the benefits offered by educational technologies.
3. Governments should develop smart innovation strategies for education with the right policy mix to give meaning and purpose to innovation, including creating an innovation-friendly culture through their political means.
4. Politicians should allow the education authorities to select leaders of schools with a stated standard; this will give chance for experts and qualified leaders to take leadership positions in schools
5. Appointment of competent individuals to head educational institutions should be ensured, increase the funding for education, provide adequate infrastructural facilities (including modern teaching-learning technologies at all educationak levels, fight institutional corruption, provide adequate security and generate reliable and creditable data for planning education (Ogunode, Wama & Dilmurod, 2020).
6. Adapting current educational plan but sticking to key goals and principles operating the system: No matter the political maneuver that might play out in the educational system,there is need to keep a steady focus on the clear mission, principles, goals, and targets of education.
7. Education should always be treated as a social service irrespective of the ideological position of political party in power so that educational programmes could attract competent ideals devoid of politicization.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, it is very clear that education, most especially at this covid-19 era is a highly politicalized institution with diverse ethnic, geographical and religious interests. Therefore, the role of politics in the management of education is affected by government interference. This is because politics and school management cannot be separated. Nevertheless, the policies adopted by any educational system are essentially drawn by the government in power and every government is conscious about what would be most interesting to them in their political pursuit or aspirations to ensure that its political, social and economic success is affiliated to education in the promotion of the basic interests of government.On the other hand, educators need the support of the ruling power, the public and other governmental agencies in order to carry out their functions credibly. This support during pandemic era should focus in the provision of emerging technological innovations, so as to help prevent the reoccurring of COVID-19emergen this note, one can boldly say, that no educational system can survive without the financial support and the protection of the government in power.

REFERENCES

Edeh, M.O., Sharma A., Nwafor, C.E., Fyneface, A.G., Sen S. &Edeh, E.C. (2020). Impact of emerging technologies on the job performance of educators in selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. *The Journal of Computer Science and Its Applications, 27* (1), 52-62.

Heick, T. (2013). Examples of emerging educational technologies. Teach thought Staff. https://www.teachthought.com>em

Igbinedion, J.O.N. (2018). Educational management: definition, concepts and scope. In C.A. Hoh, C.P. Enueme, J.O.N. Igbinedion& T.C. Ezuegboh (Eds.). *Comprehensive text in educational administration, planning and supervision*, pp. 1-22. Enugu. Chembus Communication Venture Limited.

Ikegbusi, H. (2014*). Leadership in educational sector and government interest*. University Press, Ibadan. https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JTE/v10n1/pdf/petrina.pdf.

Molina, M. (2020). *Educación: la brecha digital profundizalasdesigualdades en la pandemia", Página* https://www.pagina12.com.ar/266370-educacion-la-brecha-digital-profundiza-las-desigualdadesen.

Ogunode, N. J., Wama, p. &Dilmurod, A. (2020). Educational administration in Nigerian: Challenges and the ways forward. *European Journal of Molecular &Clinical Medicine, 7*(3), 470-484.

Onyema, E.M. (2019). Integration of Emerging Technologies in Teaching and Learning Process in Nigeria: The challenges. *Central Asian Journal of Mathematical Theory and Computer Sciences, 1*(1), 35-39.

Onyemechi, O, M. (2018). *Perceived influence of political indices on the implementation of educational policies in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.* Unpublished Dissertation, Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt.

Opara, E.A. (2023). Interest in entrepreneurial subjects predictors of entrepreneurial performance among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Osuji, C. N. (2011). *Perceived impact of politics on the management of secondary school in South-Eastern Nigeria.*Ph.D Theses submitted to the Department of Educational Foundation, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Trucco, D. and A. Palma (Eds.) (2020). *Childhood and adolescence in the digital age: a comparative report of the Kids Online surveys on Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay.*Project Documents (LC/TS.2020/18/ Rev.1), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45905/1/S2000509_en.pdf.

W.H.O. (2023) . Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). https://www.who.int/health-topucs/cc

Winston & Strawn (2023). What is the definition of emerging technology? https:/)www.winston.com/en/legal.gi.