

Educational Governance as a Panacea to Conflict Resolution for Achievement of Sustainable Economic Development in Rivers State.

PETER Louis A., Ph.D

Department of Educational Management,
University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Abstract

The study examined educational governance as a panacea to conflict resolution for sustainable economic development in Rivers state. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised all the lecturers and Heads of Department (HODs) in University of Port Harcourt. A sample of 198 lecturers and 17 heads of department were selected in 4 faculties making a total of 215 respondents. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire titled "Educational Governance a panacea for Conflict Resolution and Economic Development Questionnaire" (EGCREDQ). Means, standard deviation statistics were used to analyzed the research questions, while z- test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The researcher adopted Crombach Alpha statistics to get the coefficient reliability of 0.85. The findings of the study revealed among others that; lack of continuity in the existing educational policies restrain the implementation of educational policies, mismanagement of appropriated funds delimit educational policy implementation for conflict resolution in Rivers state. Recommendations made among others were that, Policy makers should continue with the existing educational policies, rather than neglecting the existing policies and educational managers should be intentional in appropriation of education funds.

Keywords: Educational Governance, Conflict Resolution, Economic Development.

Introduction

Education is a formidable tool for the citizens' social - economic advancement and their political survival for the optimal realization of their aspirations and potentialities. Education is more than just schooling, in the sense that one can be educated without passing through the formal school system. Hence, it helps the citizens to live their desired life. Education could be seen as continuous process which the society establishes to assist its members to understand the heritage of the past and to participate productively (Osokoya, 2014). From the foregoing, it is glaring that every modern and productive society needs guideline on how to participate productively in the society. This guideline boils down to educational policy, which entails the determination of major objectives, the selection of methods of achieving these objectives and the continuous adaptation of existing policies. These objectives would be achievable through educational governance which serves as the engine room for policy formulation and implementation. However, research revealed that educational system has been distorted by ineffective implementation of policies, which could be as a result of lack of political will by the policy makers, lack of continuity of educational programmes and corruption among others. The forgoing are hindrances to economic development, thereby promote conflict in educational system. In recent time, educational stakeholders, parents in particular complained about; the conflict of population and infrastructural facilities in educational sector, conflict of poor policy implementation, conflict of curricular policies and implementation, and conflict of poor educational funding in Rivers state. What could be the reason? Could it be that there is no wider participation of stakeholders in educational governance or the formulation and implementation of the policies that is faulty? If education truly remains the key for empowering the citizens and a tool for conflict resolution and economic development, then the existence of conflict in Nigeria educational system calls for effective governance especially with regards to policies formulation and implementation.

Governance in this context entails the formulation and implementation of educational policies in order to achieve educational objectives. The objective of educational governance is to facilitate educational policies in order to meet the needs of the people for achievement of sustainable economic

development. Furthermore, governance also enhances human capital development, economic growth, poverty reduction and improved educational quality (Peter, 2019). Superlatively, with sound education, an individual will be able to enhance life with stronger values that is in conformation with global culture of peace, and at the same time develop skills and vocations that will be source of livelihood beneficiary to such individual and the society at large (Attah, 2014). Suffice it to say that educational input is the life wire of humanity and economic development, therefore it is basically entrenched in the policy frame work which specifies the objectives of education for sustainable economic development. Educational governance is a process whereby formulated policies are based on articulated educational interest, needs, issues and to resolve educational conflict for dynamic and desirable goals achievement. It is a process by which educational policies are considered, adopted and the means for conferring upon the administration or other executive agencies. Furthermore, education governance ensures good practices, educational training and efficient management of resources (Peter, 2019). Hence the authority is to execute educational policies in response to the societal needs and conditions. These changes in political, economic and social sphere might necessitate achievement of sustainable economic development in Rivers State.

Furthermore, education governance enhances quality education, which is a prerequisite for economic growth and conflict resolution. Education governance is agreed upon the ways in which the educational system should be operated. It is the formulation and implementation of educational policies to ensure that direction is given to every action taken in educational system. In other words, governance could be regarded as an expression for legitimizing authority and decision making in educational system. These decisions determined the allocation and utilization of educational resources by the government in power through the policy makers, who implement the decisions by providing quality and accessible educational system. These actions are to resolve educational conflict for the achievement of sustainable economic development. By implication, the above concept calls for wider participation of stakeholders in educational governance, due to; increasing universal questioning on educational system, the conflict of curricular policies and implementation, the conflict of poor educational funding, conflict of population infrastructural facilities, conflict of credible leadership, the protest and rebellion by some members of the educational community among others.

In the word of Banks in Peter, (2019), conflict resolution is an outcome in which the issues in an existing conflict are satisfactorily dealt with through a solution that is mutually accepted to the parties. Nevertheless, this study focuses on educational conflict which includes; conflict of curricular policies and implementation, conflict of poor educational funding, conflict of population and infrastructural facilities and conflict of credible leadership among others. Nevertheless, conflict can be define as the inability of people in a set role to agree on any issue connected with the objective of the organisation. (Fajana, in Deomma, 2016). Furthermore Babalola, (2006) defined conflict as all form of disagreements, resistance, opposition which arise when individuals disagree with policies or procedures in their organization. Conflict resolution otherwise known as reconciliation, is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution (Vangile, 2013).

Umo, (2014) observed the followings among others as conflicts in educational sector;

1. Conflict of curricular policies and implementation

The National policy on education is replete with prescriptions on the curricular context and orientation for primary, secondary and tertiary education under the 6-3-3-4 system (Umo, 2014). Study revealed that there is a gap between conflict of curricular policies and implementation on science, vocational and technical education. This led to insufficient specialist, laboratories for practical among others.

2. Conflict of education funding: Funding remains a nagging issue in Nigerian educational system.

3. **Conflict of population and infrastructural facilities:** The uncertainty about the real population figures is a problem. This affects the policy planners especially in the area of resource allocation.
4. **Conflict of Credible Leadership:** The major crisis of leadership and education governance is the high incidence of corruption which cut across both public and private sectors.

Economic development is a structural transformation of a society from a primitive stage to a well modernized nation. This transformation begins from which the low socio-economic activities of a country that is from a crude form to a modernize form needs to be sustained. Sustainable development is defined as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Eigbiremolen,2014). Meeting the needs of the society is topmost in the agenda of sustainable development agenda. The overall goal of sustainable development is the long-term stability of the economy and environment (Emas, 2015). This implies that sustainable development at a minimum must not endanger the natural systems that support life on earth: the atmosphere, the waters, the soils, and the living beings. Therefore, economic development is to sustain increase in both real per-capita income, quantity and quality of social and economic amenities in the state without compromising the development of future generation. The main purpose of economic development is to raise the standard of living and the general well-being of the people in an economy. Economic development is a process whereby the real per capita income of a country increases over a long period of time, subject to the stipulations that the number of people below an absolute poverty line does not increase and that the distribution of income does not become more unequal (Nieier in Jhingan,2011).Economic development is the dream of every country including Nigeria even amidst economic challenges. It is imperative for a country to sustain her development. Erhun (2015) opined that economic development is considered by the Nigerian government to be its central task, which has led to vested interest and unparalleled enthusiasm for growing the Nigerian economy. Erhun further stated that economic sustainability forms an important component of sustainable development. Hence the relevant of educational governance for the achievement of economic development are as follows;

1. The implementation of educational policy decision to effective allocation and utilization of educational resources, leads to investment in human knowledge and acquisition of technical skills for the invention of different types of goods especially capital goods which makes productive activities possible for the achievement of sustainable economic development.
2. The formulated educational policies which are based on articulated educational interest promote quality education which reduces unemployment by increasing the quality and quantity of skilled labour. This leads to rising (labour) productivity thereby increasing the output base on per unit of input for the achievement of sustainable economic development.
3. The effective implementation of educational policies in response to changing societal need, enhances an innovative society. The new ideas of doing things through effective execution of educational governance leads to rising real standard of living of the people thereby reducing poverty and increase per capita income of the citizens for the achievement of sustainable economic development.
4. The provision of quality and accessible educational system through educational governance formulation and implementation makes available infrastructural facilities and improvement in the health system. This enhances the basic needs of the citizens for the achievement of sustainable economic development.
5. The wider participation and involvement of stakeholders in educational governance formulation and implementation leads to accountability in educational resources which reduces educational wastages and increase illiteracy.

Statement of the Problem

The educational stakeholders, parents are worried about the dearth state of educational sector in River state which could be as a result of ; conflict of population and infrastructural facilities, conflict of poor policies implementation, conflict of curricular policies and implementation, conflict of poor educational funding among others. This has eventually led to unemployment, poverty and conflict in the state. Now, what could be the reason? Could it be that there is no wider participation of stakeholders in educational governance or is it the formulation and implementation of the educational policies that is faulty? Furthermore, study revealed that there is a gap that exists between policy formulation and implementation. This provoke enquiry to identify factors that constrain the effective implementation of educational policies, and its implications on conflict resolution for the achievement of sustainable economic development in River state.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated educational governance as a panacea for conflict resolution for the achievement of sustainable economic development in Rivers state.

1. To investigate the constraints of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state.
2. To examine the implications of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study.

1. What are the constraints of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state?
2. What are the implications of educational governance implementation on conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state?

Null Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance;

Ho1: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of heads of department and lecturers on the constraints of educational governance implementation on conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state.

Ho2: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of heads of department and lecturers on the implications of educational governance implementation on conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for this study. The population of the study was all the lecturers and Heads of Department (HODs) in University of Port Harcourt. A sample of 198 lecturers and 17 heads of department were selected from 4 faculties, making a total of 215 respondents. Purposive sampling technique was adopted. The instrument of the study was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Education Governance a panacea for Conflict Resolution and Economic Development Questionnaire" (EGCREDQ). Cronbach Alpha method was used in determining the reliability co-efficient of the instrument which gave a reliability value of 0.85. A total of 215 copies of the questionnaire were administered. The respondents were asked to indicate on a four point modified likert type scale, the level by their agreement or disagreements with the questionnaires items. The data collected were analysed using mean, rank order and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. If the null hypothesis is greater than the 0.05, the null hypothesis will be accepted but if the null hypothesis is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis will be rejected. The

criterion mean is 2.50. If the mean score is greater than 2.50, is accepted. But if the mean score is less than 2.50, is rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the constraints of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers State

Table 1: Mean responses of Heads of department and lecturers on the constraints of education policy implementation for conflict resolution and economic development in River state.

S/N	Statements	HOD \bar{X}_1	Lecturers \bar{X}_2	Rank Order	Decision
1.	Lack of continuity in the existing educational policies restrain implementation of the policy.	3.71	3.29	2 nd	Agreed
2.	Mismanagement of appropriated funds delimit educational policy implementation.	3.41	3.60	1 st	Agreed
3.	Insufficient funds slow down implementation of educational policies.	3.71	2.81	4 th	Agreed
4.	Inadequate infrastructural facilities are ban for educational policy implementation.	3.47	3.06	3 rd	Agreed
5.	Constrain of credible leadership slow down implementation of educational policies.	3.53	2.97	5 th	Agreed
	Criterion $\bar{X} = 2.50$	3.57	3.15		Agreed

Table 1 indicated that items 1, 2, 4, 5, had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, and thus were agreed as constrains of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and economic growth in Rivers state. Thus, educational governance implementation is constraints by lack of continuity in the existing educational policies, mismanagement of appropriated funds, insufficient funds, inadequate infrastructural facilities and lack of credible leadership.

Research Question 2: What are the implications of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and economic development.

Table 2: Mean responses of HODs and lecturers on the implications of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state.

S/N	Statements	HOD \bar{X}_1	Lecturers \bar{X}_2	Rank Order	Decision
6.	Educational governance implementation Provides more practical curriculum that will be relevant to the needs of the labour market.	3.59	2.67	3 rd	Agreed
7.	Educational governance implementation promotes staff development programme.	1.71	1.89	4 th	Disagreed
8.	Educational governance implementation ensures that adequate instructional facilities are provided.	3.29	3.33	2 nd	Agreed
9.	It improves international interactions through research.	2.83	3.42	3 rd	Agreed
10.	Educational governance implementation sustains more demand for education.	3.29	3.43	1 st	Agreed
	Criterion $\bar{X} = 2.50$	2.94	2.95		Agreed

Table 2 showed that items 6, 8, 9 and 10, had weighted mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and thus, were agreed as implications of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state. On the contrary, item 7 had weighted mean score below the criterion mean of 2.50, therefore disagreed as the implications of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and sustainable economic development in Rivers state.

Null Hypotheses Testing

The following hypotheses were tested to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of heads of department and lecturers on the constraints of educational governance implementation on conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state.

Table 3: Summary of z-test analysis on the difference between the mean rating of HODs and lecturers on the constraints of educational governance implementation on conflict resolution and the achievement of economic development in Rivers state.

Subjects	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Heads of Department	17	3.57	0.01				Significant
Lecturers	198	3.15	1.08	213	2.10	1.96	

The data shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 213 degree of freedom, the calculated z. Value of 2.10 is greater than the z. critical value of 1.96. Hence, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings and the respondents.

Table 4: Summary of z-test analysis on the difference between the mean rating of HODs and lecturers on the implication of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state.

Students	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Heads of Department	17	2.94	0.99				Not Significant
Lecturers	198	2.95	1.01	213	0.04	1.96	

The data in Table 4 shows that the calculated z-value of 0.04 is less than the critical z- value of 1.96, confirming that there is no significance difference between the ratings of the respondents.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings in Table 1 is in line with (Ukpong, 2017) who reiterated that frequent change in political leadership affects the formulation and implementation of education governance. Furthermore, the ineffectiveness of education governance in the country has led to a situation where there is a constant paucity of funds for research. The federal Ministry of Education through the National Universities Commission is not living up to obligation of effective funding of the activities in universities and by providing research grants to the faculties. To buttress this point, Umo, (2003) Observed that one of the most significant aspect of educational governance is transparency and accountability. Umo further stated that credible, decent and competent leaders is significant for effective policy implementation.

Findings from results as presented in table 2 revealed the implications of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers state. These findings are in line with Ebong, (2006) who reiterated that implication of educational policy implementation enhances manpower development which is necessary in order to resuscitate a nation's economy from its depressed state, thereby increase productivity and economic development. Ebong went further to state that implementation of educational policies and programme could limit wastage by providing quality academic facilities to sustain the geometric increment in student population. Furthermore Okeke, (2007) opined that policy implementation enhances the social demand for education which is the sum total of population demand for education at a given place and time under the prevailing cultural, political and economic circumstances.

Findings of the result of tested hypothesis as presented in Table 3 revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean ratings of HODs and lecturers on the constrains of educational governance implementation for conflict resolution for sustainable and economic development in Rivers. This finding agrees with Okoroma, (2006) who blamed the distortions in the educational system on the ineffective implementation engendered primarily by lack of political will, lack of continuity of programmes and corruption. Okoroma stated that the situation has hindered national development and until urgent action is taken to review Nigerians' educational system, its national aspirations may continue to be compromised.

Findings of the result of tested hypothesis as presented in Table 4 revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of HODs and lecturers on the implications of educational governance, implementation for conflict resolution and economic development in Rivers. The reason for no significant difference could be that the HODs and lecturers do not have a divergent but the same veins on the implementation of educational policy implemented in Rivers state. These findings agree with Ukeje in Okoroma, (2006) who opined that through planning, policy formulation and implementation will succeed, he further stated that planning precedes implementation of education policy.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, the discussion of the findings and the implication of policy implementation through educational governance, It is concluded that implementation of educational governance is a tool for conflict resolution and achievement of sustainable economic development by providing more practical curriculum that will be relevant to the need of labour market and providing high quality academic facilities. Effective implementation of educational governance through good governance also sustain more demand for education in Rivers state. A number of recommendations have been given in the course of this study.

Recommendations

In view of these findings, it is recommended that:

1. Policy makers should continue with the existing educational policies, rather than neglecting the existing policies.
2. Educational managers should be efficient in appropriation of educational funds.

3. Government should increase budget appropriation for education both in national and state budget. These will enhance funding of programme and projects.
4. Adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided by the government for efficient delivery.

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