
Perceived Influence of Geopolitical Balancing on Educational Development in Bauchi State

By

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ABSTRACT

The paper focused on Perceived Politics of geo-political balancing on educational development in Bauchi state. The study adopted qualitative research design using case study method. Three specific objectives and three research questions were used to guide the study. The population consisted of 37 senior educational administrators from all the state's tertiary institutions in the three geo-political zones of Bauchi state. The study had a sample of respondents drawn from the population using purposive sampling technique. The numbers that constituted the sample size were three (3) and drawn from College of Education Azare, College for Legal and Islamic Studies Misau and College of Education Kangere within the three educational zones or Senatorial Districts of Bauchi state. Area of the study is Bauchi state. Semi-structured interview, observation and document analysis were used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using content and thematic analyses to answer the research questions of this study. The results of the study were discussed in details from interviews and triangulated with the findings made from observations and documents. Based on the findings, it was concluded that politics affects educational development geo-politically either positively or negatively. It was recommended among others that politics of geo-political balancing should be done bearing in mind rationale economic calculus for educational development. Politics of geo-political balancing should be intended to improved educational development and not the other way round. In spite of these, the politics of geo-political balancing in education has made it difficult to properly plans and administer educational policies and management which has affected the enrolments, federal character policies, control of education, curriculum development and implementation, school facilities, teaching and non-teaching personnel among others. It is hoped that the recommendations would serves as solutions towards the politics of geo-political balancing on educational development in Bauchi state.

KEYWORDS: Politics, Geo-political balancing, Educational development

INTRODUCTION

Education is a right, like the right to have food and shelter. Universal Declaration of Human Right (1999) states that, "everyone has the right for access to education. Education is not

only a right but a passport to human development as it opens doors, expands opportunities and gives freedom. Similarly, it contributes to fostering good democracy, economic growth as well as improving health and quality of standard of living. In fact the ultimate aim of education is sustainable development. Therefore, education is an inalienable right of children meaning that government and other stakeholders should protect that right and ensure improved enrolment and the quality of education being given to children. The interdependence of educational institutions and their academic freedoms are essential to the quality and integrity of all education (Nwadiani, 1999; Duverger, 2007; Patrick, 2012; Education for All (EFA), 2011).

The focus of this study is therefore on the perceived politics of geo-political balancing on educational development in Bauchi state as observed over time. However, the teachers, methods of teaching, programmes of study and classes are not the primary focus of this study. Rather, the interest was in tracing areas of politics of geo-political balancing which tend to inhibit or improve educational development in Bauchi state. The empirical focus of this study was specifically focus on access to higher education, equity in education, control of education, and politics of inequality in education. In the following paragraphs, the key variables of this study are discussed;

Geo-political balancing has evoked controversy and serious disagreements. It is not a strange phenomenon in the Nigeria public life particularly in the award of scholarships and appointment to civil service. It dates back to 1950s but become more prominent in the advent of Nigeria in 1960. Nevertheless, it negates the principles of excellence and merit. In practice, it illustrates vividly the concept of 'positive discrimination'. Positive discrimination is a device or practical approach to the problems of providing for equality of opportunity. The problems of the demand for equal opportunity in education border more on the way education runs through the administrative measures and not necessarily on the use of power. Educational facilities are scarce resources of high value. Allocation of schools to the different areas may be a matter for bitter political dispute (Okeke, 2007; Undie, 2008; Nwadiani, 2015).

In contemporary Nigeria and in this era of democratic governance, politics is one of the most popular terms freely used in everyday interaction among the people (Undie, 2007). Interestingly, it is the most abused, misused and misinterpreted. Its meaning is very fluid. For this reason, virtually everything in Nigeria is politicized including education (Akangbou, 1985; Nwadiani, 2015). Politics is the authoritative allocation of values (tangible and intangible) in a manner acceptable to various interest groups aimed at improving the wellbeing of the society. In other words, politics is an activity directed at who gets what, why, how and when within a group or among groups of people and the limits of resources available or anticipated (Ngwu, 2014; Nwadiani, 2015). Therefore, any government in power pounces on education promising support and control. It is a vote catching weapon with unrealistic promises. Because education is a public good, governments across time in Nigeria see it as a gift to the people rather than an outgrowth from their needs and values (Okebukoa, 2002; Chinelo, 2011; Nwadiani, 2015). To the general public, education has become too important not to be left solely for educators. Conflict and politics are both in separate twins which have permitted the governance of education in a state. The increased demand for education focused public and political attention on a national policy for education (Macukoww & Witkowski, 2002; Yusuf, 2009; Igbuzor, 2010).

Although, researches related to politics of education in Nigeria tend to focus on perceived impact of politics on the management of secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria; influence of the state primary education board in Imo state, Nigeria; politics in the management of secondary schools in Nigeria; politics in the administration of secondary schools in Anambra state, Nigeria; politics of western-type of education in Bendel state, Nigeria. However, there is no research completed and focused on perceived politics of geo-political balancing and educational development in Bauchi state. In other words, no research focused on the influence of politics geo-political interference in educational development in Bauchi state. This study therefore aims to unpack the perceived politics of geo-political balancing and its influences on educational development in Bauchi state.

Over the years, politics of geo-political balancing has been interfering with educational development in Bauchi state. It has been noted in the literature that, politics of geo-political balancing is the topmost factor behind the destruction of educational development in a state (Robin, 2010). According to Osuji (2011), politics of geo-political balancing in the context of Nigerian educational system is a situation where political consideration is given preference rather than due process in which case, the running of education is influenced by the wishes of those in power and authority rather than by established guidelines. Therefore, it may be necessary to find out the areas in which politics of geo-political balancing tends to improve educational development in Bauchi state. Preliminary investigation shows that educational development in Bauchi State has not kept pace with societal expectations; this is, as a result of political interference in educational opportunities, increasing lack of or inadequate access to tertiary education, political appointments in violation of merit and checking unbridled corruption in the affairs of educational sector, problems of student's retention, equity, and unequal representation within the Nigerian federal, state and employability problems associated with educational opportunities, performance and enrolment of students (Habila, 2016). Politics of geo-political balancing in educational system also interferes with laid down educational planning models in Bauchi State.

The educational industry of the state has been greatly influenced by some political forces that determined what should be done in the educational sector in Bauchi state (Habila, 2016). This and many more are the problems emanating from politics of geo-political balancing and which in turn affects higher educational development in Bauchi state. These observations have no empirical backing so far. Hence, the focus of this study is to explore the perceived politics of geo-political balancing on educational development by the key stakeholders in the administration of higher institutions in Bauchi state.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the perceived politics of geo-political balancing on educational development in Bauchi state. Specifically, the study was sought to examine the perception of higher educational administrators on the influence of politics of geo-political balancing on educational development in Bauchi state. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives;

- i. To find out the perception of higher educational administrators on politics of geo-political balancing and its influence to educational development in Bauchi state.
- ii. To find out the perception of higher educational administrators on politics of geo-political balancing as a factor to be considered in establishing higher institutions in Bauchi state.
- iii. To find out the perception of higher educational administrators on politics of geo-political balancing and its influences to the development of higher education in Bauchi state.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives identified above, the following research questions were to guide the study;

- i. How does the politics of geo-political balancing as perceived by higher educational administrators influenced educational development in Bauchi state?
- ii. How does the politics of geo-political balancing as perceived by higher educational administrators as a factor to be considered in establishing higher institutions in Bauchi state?
- iii. How does the politics of geo-political balancing as perceived by higher educational administrators influenced the development of higher education in Bauchi state?

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research method was purely employed for this study using case study design. Qualitative research is a method of inquiry employed in many different academic disciplines, including in the social sciences, education and natural sciences (Ogunbameru, 2010). Qualitative methods examine the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, when, or who (Awotunde & Ugodulunwa, 2004).

However, there are different types of qualitative research designs such as case study, focus group or group discussion, interview, observation, storytelling, ethnography, narrative, phenomenology, action research studies, historical studies and grounded theory among others (Jennifer, 2002). In this study, case study approach was employed.

In consideration of the nature of the research and the research questions, the semi structured interview, observation and documents were adopted for the study. The methods were deemed appropriate as it involved the collection of extensive and cross-sectional data for the purpose of investigating and interpreting an existing situation under study (Sambo, 2004; Enaohwo & Eferakaya, 2007; Auwal, 2010; Aderonunmu & Ehiamekalor, 2014).

This study focus on Bauchi state of Nigeria, Bauchi state is located in the North-eastern geo-political zone of Nigeria. The study was conducted in higher institutions. The population consisted of 49 senior educational administrators from all state tertiary institutions in the three geo-political zones of Bauchi state. The study had a sample of respondents drawn from the population using purposive sampling technique. The numbers that constituted the sample size were three (3) participants/interviewees. The sample was agreed with the idea of Guetterman (2015) and Cresswell (2013). These authors maintained that in case study approach, the sample size is no more than four to five cases/participants for in-depth of the case phenomenon. And this

was also agreed with the idea of Nastasi (2015), rules of thumb based on approach and data collection method. According to this author, a researcher can use only one participant/interviewee in qualitative case study approach for in-depth of the case phenomenon. The researcher chose the three participants/interviewees/respondents because they will give detailed and greater insights into areas of politics of geo-political balancing that influenced educational development in Bauchi state. These three participants comprised the final cases for the study.

The researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique for the selection of sample that appears to him as being the one that would provide much in-depth data to answer research questions for the study. Due to the area covered in this study, interview protocol, observation and documentation were used for data collection. The instruments used for collection of data for the study was developed by the researcher. The instruments (interview, observation and documentation) were made to collect data for the study. The core data for the study was collected through interviews. Therefore, before the interview was administered, it was given to trained researchers for observation and vetting. It was scrutinized by two experts in the field of measurement and evaluation to ensure its suitability and otherwise, after they made the necessary corrections and offered suggestions in the questions that were used in the final interview, then it was administered to the respondents.

Data Collection was taken in three phases: phase one was data collection through interview; phase two data collection through observation; and phase three data collection through documents. The researcher adapts to used voice mini recorder/smart phone (itel 1556 plus) to interviewed the respondents and also used observational note as method of data collection for observation and literature as method of data collection for documents. Data collected were analysed using content and thematic analyses to answer the research questions of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following tables describe the result of the research findings for the study. These findings were related to the research questions that initially guided the study. Data analysed were used to identify and described the level of perceived politics of geo-political balancing on educational development in Bauchi state. Data were obtained from administered interview protocol, observation and document analysis. Furthermore, it describes how the data collected for this study were analysed in two stages and discusses how the data were interpreted. **Table 1** presents the summary of participant A responses according to the construct that form the basis of the research questions for the study.

Table 1: Summary of participant A response on the research questions of the study

Constructs	Commentary
Geo-political balancing	It brings about a lot of achievements in the state and caused the neighbouring states like Gombe, Adamawa and Plateau are coming here to study.

Looking at the construct, participant A opined that geo-political balancing was highly satisfied in relation to development of education in Bauchi state. However, there are mixed opinions in relation to development of education in Bauchi state.

Drawing from this analysis, participant A indicated satisfactory perception on the construct: geo-political balancing. This is evident in the utterances as indicated in Table 1. Furthermore, on the construct: geo-political balancing, participant A indicated mixed opinions on the construct: geo-political balancing. This is evident in the utterances as indicated in Table 1. **Table 2** presents the summary of participant B responses according to the construct that form the basis of the research questions for the study.

Table 2: Summary of participant B response on the research questions of the study

Constructs	Commentary
Geo-political balancing	Actually, the influence of geo-political balancing is prominent (wide spread) and all geo-political zones in Bauchi state have institutions that will cater for their educational needs.

Looking at the constructs, participant B opined that politics of geo-political balancing was highly satisfied in relation to development of education in Bauchi state. Moreover, politics of geo-political balancing indicate element of dissatisfaction in relation to development of education in Bauchi state. In addition, there are mixed opinion with geo-political balancing, curriculum development and facility provisions in schools/ school planning in relation to development of education in Bauchi state. Drawing from this analysis, participant B indicated satisfactory perception on the construct: geo-political balancing. This is evident in the utterances as indicated in Table 2. Furthermore, on the construct: facility provisions in schools or school planning, participant B indicated dissatisfaction perception and also participant B indicated mixed opinions on the geo-political balancing. This is evident in the utterances as indicated in Table 2. **Table 3** presents the summary of participant C responses according to the construct that form the basis of the research questions for the study.

Table 3: Summary of participant C response on the research questions of the study

Constructs	Commentary
Geo-political balancing	In terms of education, obviously it is not well banned. The distribution is not much fairly done.

Looking at the constructs, participant C opined that geo-political balancing indicate dissatisfaction in relation to development of education in Bauchi state. In addition, there are mixed opinions in relation to development of education in Bauchi state. Drawing from this analysis, participant C indicated satisfactory perception on the construct: principle of educational

planning. This is evident in the utterances as indicated in Table 2. Furthermore, on the one construct too: geo-political balancing, participant C indicated dissatisfactory perception and also participant C indicated mixed opinions on construct: educational development. This is evident in the utterances as indicated in Table 2.

Based on the summary of the constructs and level of satisfaction by the participants, the researcher identified emerging themes as the result findings of this research study.

Based on the findings from interview, suggested that;

- i. The influence of geo-political balancing is prominent (wide spread) and good practice that caused all the geo-political zones in Bauchi state have institutions that will cater for their educational needs.
- ii. It brings about a lot of achievements in the state and caused the neighboring states to come and study in Bauchi state.
- iii. Political interference has led to uncontrolled expansion of tertiary education in Bauchi state without consideration for quality education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Geo-political balancing influenced educational development in Bauchi state. This result agreed with the findings of Okeke (2007), that it is intended for balanced development and national unity and to ensure equality of educational opportunity for students irrespective of their economic and social backgrounds and seeing to it that the state educational institutions draw their clientele from all over the state. Nevertheless, it negates the principles of excellence and merit. Allocation of schools to different areas has evoked controversy and serious disagreement in Bauchi state. However, it has not taken care of the inherent social bias of the academic system which tilts in favour of children whose parents are educated. Interest groups used influence to ensure that the best educational facilities are made available for their constituencies (Enaohwo & Eferakaya, 2007; Aderonunmu & Ehiametalor, 2014; Nwadiani, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that geo-political balancing on educational development in Bauchi state should be carried out with cautions bearing in mind the unstabilized nature of the economy which makes it necessary for educational planners and administrators to prudently manage the educational resources effectively and efficiently so as to avoid unnecessary waste of resources. This is because the geo-political balancing has created high enrolments, adequate facilities, and renovated structures, among others which have contributed positively to educational development in Bauchi state. Therefore, the need for prudent management of the available resources become necessary and only way to sustains educational development at this political era of dwindling economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussions on the research questions and the interpreted data, as well as the findings of this research study, the following recommendations were made by this research study:

1. Government should consider the need and educational aspiration of the host community when planning to establish educational institutions and locate them at the central places where they would be accessible to all.
2. There is need for proper control of education to avoid wastage in education.
3. The influence of politicians in the planning and administration of education should be discouraged.
4. Educational administrators should be given a free hand to manage educational institutions properly and professionally.
5. Politics of geo-political balancing on education should be done bearing in mind rationale economic calculus for educational development.
6. Politics of geo-political balancing should be intended to improved educational development and not the other way round.

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