

Influence of Politics on the Management and Development of Public Tertiary Institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of politics on the management and development of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. Four objectives and four research questions guided the study, and four hypotheses were tested. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised 6,232 academic and non-teaching members of staff in the 14 public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The sample size of 373 staff was selected using purposive, proportionate stratified, and convenience sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Politics on the Management and Development of Public Tertiary Institutions Questionnaire (IPMDPTIQ)" developed by the researcher was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was validated by experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using the Cronbach Alpha method, and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and Chi-square to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that politics has a significant influence on funding, location, staff recruitment, and appointment of Principal Officers. The study concluded that the management and development of public tertiary institutions have suffered in one way or another from political stakeholders in managing public tertiary institutions of learning. It was recommended among others that appointment of Principal Officers should be based on qualifications, experience, and merit and not on political patronage and loyalty, to bring about productivity, harmony, efficiency, effectiveness, and attainment of educational goals.

Introduction

Education in Nigeria is divided into three phases, namely primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Tertiary education is the final stage of education that handles the production of manpower for the social, economic, and technological development of a country. Tertiary education is an organized education that deals with intensive teaching, research, and the provision of community services. Tertiary institutions are a micro-section of the larger society. Tertiary institutions are an organized fraction of the whole society carved out for teaching programmes, research, and provision of community service (Ogunode, Ayeni, & Ogwuche, 2024). The tertiary institution can also be seen as a subset of the general society that is made of a collection of different people, different cultures, different

lifestyles, and different values (Ogunode & Odo, 2023). A Nigerian tertiary institution is overwhelmed with political influence or interference. Osuji (2015) noted that Nigeria is a highly politicized society with diverse, ethnic, geographical, and religious interests. Ayeni and Ezirim (2023) argued that tertiary institutions in Nigeria are no doubt established for political consideration rather than the needs of the people. The role of politics in the management and administration of educational institutions in Nigeria is affected by government interference. This is because politics and school management cannot be separated.

The objectives of education, the control, production, process variables, financial and accreditation systems are tied inescapably to politics. Hence, the reason why, access to education is expected to empower people to enable them to provide for their basic needs (Ayeni, Sani, Idris, & Uzoigwe, 2019). The concept of political influence has been well articulated by educators and social scientists like Ogunode (2020); and Elujekwute (2019), who all agreed that political influence in an educational institution aims to control the decision in terms of appointment of leaders and recruitment of staff. Globally, tertiary institutions are designed to operate autonomously. This is to prevent political influence. The presence of politics and political influence in the establishment, recruitment, and management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria appears to be affecting the management and development of the institutions. Tertiary institutions can be seen as a subset of the general society that is made of a collection of different people, different cultures, different lifestyles, and different values (Ogunode & Odo, 2023). Tertiary institutions or higher institutions cover a wider range of higher learning institutions, including the university. These higher learning institutions could be organized in different ways, commonly within a university and in separate institutions as universities and other tertiary learning institutions (Allen, 2018).

National policy on Education (Nigeria, 2013) explained tertiary education as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), African Regional institute, and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Colleges of Nursing, Colleges of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI). However, in some contexts, higher education and university are used interchangeably (Assié-Lumumba, 2005). In other words, the management of public tertiary institutions involves planning, coordinating, and evaluating human and material resources for the attainment of educational goals at that level. Educational goals could be attainable when the public tertiary institution administration plans, organizes, and coordinates academic and non-teaching staff as well as institutional facilities for the overall benefits of the institution (Ochai, 2012). And the institutional Principal Officers include the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor(s), Registrar, Bursar, and Librarian for universities, Rector, Deputy Rector(s), Registrar, Bursar, and Librarian for polytechnics, and Provost, Deputy Provost(s), Registrar, Bursar, and Librarian for colleges of education alike. Most members of society are involved in partisan politics, especially those who hold political offices. These political office holders are seen to make pronouncements on policies which may have far-reaching implications for school ownership, such as public-funded tertiary institutions and government grant-aided institutions (Ochai, 2012). Okwori (2003) observed that political office holders at the level of commissioners and even governors seem to interfere with the smooth running of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Ogun State has not yet proven to be exempt from this allegation. Ogbonnaya (2009) observes that certain decisions come from political stakeholders and, at some point, initiate policies that are for their personal, sectional, or ethnic interest alone. Political influence in management and development of tertiary institutions is explained as the act of using political power to influence decisions in the management and development of tertiary institutions (Yawe, 2015). Political influence is the attempt to gain partisan or regional advantage by influencing policies and decisions in the management of tertiary institutions. The political oversight becomes influential when politicians seek to impose pressures regarding prices, standards, and the like that are outside the procedures (Gonsalves, 2020). One of the

reasons, according to NOUN (2012), is the domination of the university council by government-appointed officials to the detriment of minority representation of university community members, serving as another avenue of autonomy breach in Nigerian universities. The issue is that the council normally exists to protect the interests of the university, and then it should naturally follow that its membership should be dominated by university community members, but in our setting, the reverse is the case; politicians and non-stakeholders in the education industry are preferred over stakeholders. Governments' own position regarding her dominance of the Councils is that since she is the primary source of funding the system, she must control it through her political agents to ensure accountability in such areas as financial and physical resources, programme quality, student admission, and staff recruitment. It is against this background that this study investigated the influence of politics on the management and development of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the influence of Politics on the Management and Development of Public Tertiary Institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study specifically;

- i. investigated the influence of politics on the location of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.
- ii. examined the influence of politics on the funding of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.
- iii. investigated the influence of politics on the recruitment of staff of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.
- iv. examined the influence of politics on the appointment of Principal Officers of tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Research Questions

The study provides answers to the following questions:

- i. To what extent is the influence of politics on the location of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State?
- ii. To what extent is the influence of politics on the funding of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State?
- iii. To what extent is the influence of politics on the recruitment of staff of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State?
- iv. To what extent is the influence of politics on the appointment of Principal Officers of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State?

Statement of Hypotheses

The null hypotheses guided the study were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: Politics has no significant influence on the location of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Ho2: Politics has no significant influence on the funding of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Ho3: Politics has no significant influence on the recruitment of staff of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Ho4: Politics has no significant influence on the appointment of Principal Officers of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design, and the area of study was Ogun State. The population of the study comprised 6,232 academic and non-teaching staff in the 297 public secondary schools in Benue State. A sample size of 373 staff was selected for the study using Taro Yamani's formula for sample size determination. In selecting the sample, purposive, proportionate stratified, and convenience sampling techniques were used. A self-developed questionnaire titled "Influence of Politics on the management and development of public tertiary institutions questionnaire (IPMDPTIQ)", for data collection. This instrument was face validated by three experts, and the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient method was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.85. This instrument had four clusters based on the variables selected. Data for the study were collected by the researcher with the aid of two research assistants. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis, where the research questions were

answered using descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using Chi-square at a $p=0.05$ level of significance. A benchmark of 2.50 was used to answer the research questions. Items with mean scores of 2.50 and above were agreed upon, while those below 2.50 were disagreed. For the Chi-square test of hypotheses, the decision was based on P-values and Alpha values. When $P < .05$, the null hypothesis was rejected and considered “Significant Influence” and when $P > .05$, the null hypothesis was not rejected and considered “No Significant Influence”.

Presentation and Analyses of Data

Research Question One: To what extent is the influence of politics on the location of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the Influence of Politics on the Location of Public Tertiary Institutions.

SN	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	SD	Outcome
1	Politics influence the location of public tertiary institutions	115	160	58	40	2.89	1.01	Highly Agreed
2	Decision regarding location of public tertiary institutions are based on political considerations	130	165	36	42	3.02	0.94	Highly Agreed
3	Establishment of public tertiary institutions is influenced by politics	143	150	50	30	3.09	0.91	Highly Agreed
4	Political pressures play significant role in the location of public tertiary institutions	160	137	42	34	3.13	0.94	Highly Agreed
5	Change in political leadership do affect the location of public tertiary institutions	119	173	55	26	3.03	3.86	Highly Agreed
6	Political influence determine where public secondary school is sited	130	157	42	44	3.00	0.97	Highly Agreed
7	Process of deciding the location of public tertiary institutions is not transparent	118	170	49	36	2.99	0.91	Highly Agreed
8	The public is not adequately informed about factors influencing the location of public tertiary institutions	135	156	50	32	3.06	0.91	Highly Agreed
9	Location of public tertiary institutions is based on short-term political interest rather than long term planning	173	119	26	55	3.03	0.86	Highly Agreed
10	Political loyalist of ruling party in their communities influence the location of public tertiary institutions	165	105	49	54	2.86	0.99	Highly Agreed
	Cluster Mean and SD					3.05	.95	

From the analysis of data as presented in Table 1 above, the mean responses of respondents on the influence of politics on the location of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented in Table 1 revealed that the respondents rated ‘Highly agree’ on all the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) with mean scores ranging from 2.89 – 3.13, which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .86 1.01. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 3.05 and SD=

.95. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that politics has a strong influence on the location of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Research Question Two: To what extent is the influence of politics on the funding of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the Influence of Politics on funding of Public Tertiary institutions.

SN	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	SD	Outcome
11	Allocation of funds to public tertiary institutions is based on political considerations	168	123	42	40	3.00	0.94	Highly Agreed
12	Political factors significantly influence the funding of public tertiary institutions	115	159	54	45	2.92	0.96	Highly Agreed
13	Funds to public tertiary institutions are distributed based on political affiliations	170	119	41	43	2.98	0.93	Highly Agreed
14	The funding process in public tertiary institutions is not transparent	136	150	47	40	3.01	0.95	Highly Agreed
15	Changes in political leadership affect the funding level of public tertiary institutions	144	150	40	39	3.06	0.95	Highly Agreed
16	The public has little or no input on funding decisions for public tertiary institutions	160	117	58	38	2.94	0.93	Highly Agreed
17	Funding strategy for public tertiary institutions is political rather than long-term strategic planning	110	160	49	54	2.86	0.99	Highly Agreed
18	Institutions are barely held accountable for how they utilize funding	130	161	44	38	3.03	0.94	Highly Agreed
19	Political patronage plays a significant role in determining fund allocation to public tertiary institutions	157	130	44	42	3.00	0.97	Highly Agreed
20	The public has little or no knowledge about the sources of funds and how they are allocated to public tertiary institutions	150	136	47	40	3.01	0.95	Highly Agreed
	Cluster Mean and SD					2.99	.97	

Analysis of data as presented in Table 2 above shows the mean responses of respondents on the influence of politics on funding of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented in Table 2 revealed that the respondents rated ‘Highly agreed’ on all the items (11,12, 13,14, 15, 16, 17,18, 19, and 20) with mean scores ranging from 2.86 to 3.06, which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .93 0.99. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.99 and SD=

.97. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that politics has a strong influence on the funding of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Research Question Three: To what extent is the influence of politics on the recruitment of staff of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the Influence of Politics on the Recruitment of Staff of Public Tertiary Institutions.

SN	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	SD	Outcome
21	The recruitment process is based on political influence	112	15	60	51	2.86	0.99	Highly Agreed
22	Political factors significantly influence the recruitment of staff	108	160	51	54	2.84	0.98	Highly Agreed
23	The employment process is politically biased and is not transparent	106	170	55	42	2.91	0.93	Highly Agreed
24	Employment opportunities are distributed based on political affiliations	149	120	51	53	2.91	1.00	Highly Agreed
25	The public has no input in the employment decision	166	108	55	44	2.91	0.95	Highly Agreed
26	The hiring process barely prioritizes qualifications and experience	112	170	41	50	2.95	0.93	Highly Agreed
27	A change in political leadership significantly affects the recruitment of staff	160	108	60	45	2.83	1.00	Highly Agreed
28	Those responsible for hiring are not held accountable for their decision to be political	130	154	40	48	3.00	0.99	Highly Agreed
29	Political patronage plays a significant role in the recruitment of staff	100	168	65	40	2.88	0.95	Highly Agreed
30	The criteria for hiring members of staff are not easily accessible	120	170	43	40	2.98	0.94	Highly Agreed
	Cluster Mean and SD					2.91	.96	

Table 3 above shows the analysis of Mean responses of respondents on the influence of politics on the recruitment of staff of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented on Table 3 revealed that the respondents rated 'Highly agreed' on all the items (21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30) with Mean scores ranging from 2.83 to 3.00, which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .93 to 1.00. The cluster mean of all the items revealed was 2.91, and SD= .96. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that politics has a strong influence on the recruitment of staff of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Research Question Four: To what extent is the influence of politics on the appointment of Principal Officers of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the Influence of Politics on the Appointment of Principal Officers of Public Tertiary Institutions.

SN	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	SD	Outcome
31	Appointment of Vice Chancellors and alike is attached to political loyalty	147	118	67	41	2.85	1.06	Highly Agreed
32	Politics significantly influences the appointment of Vice Chancellors alike	170	102	33	68	2.91	0.90	Highly Agreed
33	Appointment of Vice Chancellors alike is transparent and free from political bias	165	111	50	47	2.94	0.91	Highly Agreed
34	Leadership appointment in public tertiary institution is not equitably carried out	179	100	44	50	2.88	0.95	Highly Agreed
35	Politics is prioritized over qualifications and experience in appointment process	102	170	70	30	2.91	0.90	Highly Agreed
36	Public has no meaningful role and knowledge in the leadership appointment process	120	156	61	36	2.97	0.93	Highly Agreed
37	Change in political leadership affect the appointment of institutional Heads	130	165	37	41	3.04	0.94	Highly Agreed
38	Those responsible for leadership appointment process are not ensuring a fair process free from political bias	114	160	53	46	2.93	0.96	Highly Agreed
39	Political patronage play significant role in the appointment of institutional Heads	130	149	48	46	3.00	0.97	Highly Agreed
40	Criteria for appointing Vice Chancellor are seemingly made publicly accessible	100	145	67	61	2.97	1.01	Highly Agreed
	Cluster Mean and SD					2.93	.95	

Data in Table 4 above shows the analysis of Mean responses of respondents on the influence of politics on the appointment of Principal Officers of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented in Table 4 revealed that the respondents rated 'Highly agree' on all the items (31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40) with Mean scores ranging from 2.85 to 3.04, which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .90 1.06. The cluster Mean of all the items revealed was 2.93, and SD = .95. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that politics has a strong influence on the appointment of Principal Officers of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Politics has no significant influence on location of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Table 5: Chi Square Test of Significance of the Influence of Politics on Location of Public Tertiary Institutions

Variables	N	Df	X ² cal	P-Val	Alpha Val	Remarks
Politics						
	373	21	84.62	.000	.05	Ho1 rejected
Location						

Table 5 above shows the Chi-square calculated value of 84.62, Degree of Freedom df = 21, and a P-value = 0.00, which is less than the Alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result indicates that the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that politics has a significant influence on the location of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Hypothesis Two: Politics has no significant influence on the funding of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test of Significance of the Influence of Politics on Funding of Public Tertiary Institutions

Variables	N	Df	X ² cal	P-Val	Alpha Val	Remarks
Politics						
	373	21	128.1	.000	.05	Ho2 rejected
Funding						

Table 6 shows the Chi-square calculated value of 128.1, Degree of Freedom df = 21, and a P-value = 0.00, which is less than the Alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that politics has a significant influence on the funding of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Hypothesis Three: Politics has no significant influence on the recruitment of staff of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Table 7: Chi Square Test of Significance of the Influence of Politics on Recruitment of Staff of Public Tertiary Institutions

Variables	N	Df	X ² cal	P-Val	Alpha Val	Remarks
Politics						
	373	27	71.02	.000	.05	Ho3 rejected
Recruitment of staff						

Table 7 above shows the Chi-square calculated value of 71.02, Degree of Freedom df = 27, and a P-value = 0.00, which is less than the Alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, and the null hypothesis was hereby

rejected. This implies that politics has a significant influence on the recruitment of staff of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Hypothesis Four: Politics has no significant influence on the appointment of Principal Officers of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Table 8: Chi-Square Test of Significance of the Influence of Politics on the Appointment of Principal Officers of Public Tertiary Institutions

Variables	N	Df	X ² cal	P-Val	Alpha Val	Remarks
Politics						
	37327	74.22	.000	.05	Ho4 rejected	

Appointment of Principal Officers

Table 8 as shown above indicate the Chi-square calculated value of 74.22, Degree of Freedom df = 27 and a P-value=0.00 which is less than the Alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that, politics has significant influence on the appointment of Principal Officers of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Discussion of Findings

In hypothesis one, the result revealed that there is a significant influence of politics on the location of public tertiary institutions. This means that there are several ways politics influence the location of public tertiary institutions, which include immortalization of national heroes using instruments of learning, location of schools based on political considerations, and political godfatherism influencing the location of public tertiary institutions against educational goals and needs. This is in agreement with the work of Giner (2020) who opined that unchecked political influence has spurred the unplanned proliferation of tertiary institutions, aggravated resource constraints, and created disparities in educational quality. This interference also disrupts strategic planning and location decisions for these institutions, hindering long-term educational goals and equitable access to quality education. Ogunode & Omenuko (2021) equally observed that Nigerian politicians, both at the legislative and executive arms of government, are always influencing the siting of universities in their states, local governments, and towns. Strategic planning on university distribution is always altered to favour politicians in power because educational planners are influenced to site Universities in their communities, as Nigerian politicians have taken the establishment of universities as constituent projects.

In hypothesis two, the result showed a significant influence of politics and funding of public tertiary institutions. This implies that politics has a significant negative influence on the funding of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State. Instead of respective government ministries, departments, and agencies to disburse funds in accordance with appropriate fiscal order and budgetary policies, they tend to be handcuffed by the politics exemplified by the politicians at the helm of affairs. This supports the work of Ekpiken et al. (2015) that based on the huge funds committed by the government in the provision of educational institutions for the citizenry; it became incumbent on it to assert some degree of control on educational operations in the areas of policies and implementation of its programmes, especially in higher education. Also, Marcus (2001) posited that the politicization of university governance in New York and elsewhere raises important questions about the extent to which governors and other elected officials might be using their powers of appointment and budget to control public university governing boards.

In hypothesis three, the result indicated that there is a significant influence of politics on the recruitment of staff of public tertiary institutions. This indicates that political consideration significantly determined the recruitment of staff

as politicians use employment to reward faithful members of the ruling party. This aligns with the work of Ogunode, 2024 who reported that due to political influence in the tertiary institutions management in Nigeria, it is unfortunate that most staff employed are politically influence and they are less qualified, and that the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) recently alleged that Vice-chancellors (VCs) of Nigerian Universities connived with state governors, traditional rulers and other politicians to hijack staff employment without due process in the varsities. Marcus (2005) corroborated this opinion that, in recent years, governors have emerged as visible, active policymakers with significant influence on university education, especially in the area of staff employment, appointment, and promotions. For instance, in December 2020, according to Nwodm (2021), the authorities of the Rivers State University conducted a recruitment exercise for academic and non-academic positions in the institution. A total of 125 non-academic staff and 148 academic staff positions were filled at various levels in the various departments and faculties in the institution.

In hypothesis four, the result revealed that there is a significant influence between politics and the appointment of Principal Officers of public tertiary institutions. This implies that the appointment of Principal Officers in Ogun State is assumed to have an element of some political undertones. The state governor uses his authority and influence to appoint people of a certain political background to positions. In Ogun State, most appointments are given to political loyalists at the expense of qualified career administrators. Mclendon (2003) equally reported that the politicization of the appointment of members of governing councils and heads of higher education by increasingly activist governors has caused state higher education coordinating boards and system governance structures to take direction from governors rather than from professional educators, again raising questions of exactly what sort of balance should exist between politicians and their state's public higher education.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of politics on the management and development of public tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study revealed the influence of politics on the management and administration of public tertiary institutions, such as the location of public tertiary institutions, which is always seen as constituency projects with the proliferation of tertiary institutions and alteration of planning, and against the needs and goals of education, funding of public tertiary institutions, which is always haphazard, recruitment of unqualified personnel, poor governance and ineffective leadership. Based on these discoveries, this study concluded by suggesting that the federal and state governments should grant full autonomy to all tertiary institutions to allow the institutions to operate independently.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should grant full autonomy to all tertiary institutions to prevent political influence in the appointment of principal officers.
2. Tertiary institutions' regulatory agencies should be mandated to develop a national plan on the establishment and locations to prevent politics in the location and siting of institutions across the country.
3. The government should allow full implementation in all tertiary institutions to empower the institutions to follow the recruitment policy and recruit into the various institutions.
4. Political actors and gladiators should desist from negatively influencing educational institutions to engineer even development in the educational sector.

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