

Nigeria's Quest for Sustainable Development and the Contribution of Political Science Education

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Abstract: *This review article aims to examine and clarify how political science education contributes to Nigeria's sustainable development. The research also looked at how political science as a subject came into being, its historical antecedents, as well as its shifting dimensions. Additionally, the paper discussed some instructional strategies pertinent to political science. This field studies a variety of political specialisations, including those in political theory, political philosophy, political ideology, comparative politics, public administration, international relations, conflict and conflict resolution, and organisations. To evaluate how political science education contributes to sustainable development in Nigeria, this article employed the descriptive research methodology. The study's methodology included the use of secondary sources for data collecting and the functionalist theory, adapted from sociology, as the theoretical framework and foundation for explaining how political science education in Nigeria contributes to sustainable development. The study's findings showed that political science education is crucial for establishing sustainable development in Nigeria, just like education in other fields. To hasten the realisation of sustainable development in Nigeria, the study made a few recommendations, including a national curriculum review that would make political science a required course for all disciplines, field trips, and excursions, and collaboration between ICT and political science teaching and learning.*

Keywords: *Nigeria, Political Science Education, Sustainable Development*

Background of Study

Understanding political science is essential for comprehending one's rights and obligations as a citizen as well as for comprehending international politics and legal systems (APSA, 2020). In other words, it is the systematic and analytical examination of the appropriation, management, and exercise of political power by individuals, social groups, and organizations. As a result, in a country like Nigeria, it will be a crucial tool for achieving sustainable development. Understanding the relationships between states and international organisations, as well as their interdependence, cooperation, peaceful coexistence, and mutual help, requires a thorough understanding of political science.

Public administration, international relations, comparative politics, political theory, political philosophy, and political institutions all fall under the purview of political science as a study (Kadiri, 2017).

Students who want to teach political science at the secondary level can pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree in the subject, according to Kwasau (2013). Students take courses in education, history, economics, and geography in addition to political science. Graduates are prepared for secondary teaching certification through their degree certificate.

Nigerian administration and politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political theory are often covered in political science courses taken in college and as undergraduates. In order to investigate how political science education contributes to sustainable development in Nigeria, this article employed the descriptive research approach.

Methodology of study

In order to obtain data for the study, secondary and documentary sources were used, including books, journals, articles, newspapers, internet publications, and government documents. The report and gathered data were examined using content analysis.

Theoretical Framework

The study's theoretical framework and foundation for explanations were sociology's functionalist theory. The part that each component plays in the whole is referred to as the functionalist theory or functionalist analysis. That is how it helps to fulfil the

social system's functioning requirements. Family, religious, political, and economic institutions all collaborate in a way that is tied to one another in order to maintain the continuity and growth of the society (Haralambos et al, 2013).

According to functionalists, society is a system made up of several components that work together to make it sustainable and functional. Auguste Comte (1789–1857), Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), Emile Durkheim (1858–1917), Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), and Robert K. Merton (1910–2003) all made significant contributions to the functionalist theory (Haralambos et al, 2013). The idea is pertinent inasmuch as the study seeks to shed light on the contribution political science education makes to Nigeria's quest for sustainable development.

Elucidation of Political Concepts

Politics: Aristotle, widely considered as the founder of political science, is credited with coining the term "politics," which is derived from the Greek word "polis," which means "city". Politics was the discipline that dealt with the city-state and its issues in ancient Greece, where the "city" was the state. Politics in classical Greece sought to establish a moral code for the realisation of the good life in all of its manifestations. Modern times have given the word "politics" a new definition that essentially encompasses all human endeavours, including associations, clubs, institutions, organizations, and even families (Adamu et al., 2010).

Politics may also be seen of as a universal activity that occurs in all societies, at all levels, and across all eras—past, present, and possibly even future. It also exists in the family, clubs, schools, universities, religious organisations, multinational corporations, and the workplace, therefore it is not exclusive to the state, groups, institutions, political parties, and labour unions.

Ologbenla (2015) defines politics as the process of formulating and carrying out governmental decisions or politics. Since the fundamental idea of politics is power, struggles for power are seen as political activities.

The term "politics" is further broken down into three categories: formal politics, which refers to the operation of a constitutionally established system of government, and informal politics, informal politics, and non-formal politics. Semi-formal politics refers to politics in governing bodies like neighbourhood organisations or student governments, where party politics in student governments frequently play a significant role. Forming alliances, wielding influence, and defending and advancing certain ideologies or objectives are all considered to be aspects of informal politics. This often encompasses everything that has an impact on one's everyday life (Political Science, 2020).

Political Science: Political science is a field of social science that examines political systems of government as well as political behaviour, ideas, and activities. It goes into great detail into the theory and practise of politics, which is typically thought of as deciding how power and resources are distributed. Additionally, political science is connected to and draws upon the disciplines of anthropology, economics, law, sociology, history, philosophy, geography, and psychology/psychiatry (Political Science, 2020). Political science specifically refers to the study of politics via the use of scientific techniques, as opposed to political philosophy, which is free to follow intuition.

Political Science Education: Education is the process of giving students the information, abilities, and skills they need to improve themselves and their society. Political science education is a field of study that focuses on both the teaching and learning of political science as well as the critical examination of political organisations, institutions, and actions of the State. It looks at political dynamics, a person's adjustment to the state, international laws, international relations, the idea of power, and the relationships between power in a particular society (Dauda & Garba, 2017).

Political Scientist: The term "political scientist" refers to a person who studied politics by using scientific techniques to the analysis of human behaviour, political events, public and private organisations, and disputes between men. This person has a strong interest in learning about the foundational ideas of political science and governmental institutions. A political scientist may be both an accomplished politician and a knowledgeable political scientist. Political scientists consider themselves as involved in uncovering the connections that underlie political circumstances and occurrences, and from these discoveries they seek to derive basic rules about how politics functions (Mahajan, 2000).

Politician: A politician is a member of a political party who frequently runs for office or holds one already, generally with the goal of gaining or keeping power rather than upholding political ideals. A skilled political administrator or someone attempting to rise in an organisation in ways that are widely accepted or rejected is known as a politician (Kwasau, 2013).

Statesman and demagogue politicians are the two categories of politicians, according to Okoli (2003). While a demagogue exalts political power for its own sake and for the sake of self-aggrandizement, a statesman commits all of his mental and physical efforts to the cause of the state and its inhabitants, even at the expense of his own convenience. To put it another way, a statesman is a

politician who values his nation and sees himself more as a servant than a master of the people. The demagogue, on the other hand, manipulates political power by using all of his abilities, cunning, tricks, deceit, and intrigue.

Sustainable Development: Development that is sustainable is one which satisfies existing demands without jeopardising the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own needs. Although there are many ways to interpret the idea of sustainable development, at its core it refers to a method of growth that seeks to strike a balance between various, frequently incompatible needs and an awareness of the social, economic, and environmental constraints that our society is subject to (SDC, 1999).

Kwasau (2013) considers effective management of a nation's resources and affairs to be sustainable development. This management must be open, transparent, responsible, equitable, and responsive to the demands of its citizens. It may also refer to the development of a particular country's economy, politics, society, and technology.

Review of Literature

In the history of social sciences in particular and of sciences in general, political science is one of the oldest fields. In the history of human evolution, the demand for social structure governed by precise rules was driven by the requirement for such an understanding and management of social connections, particularly when competing values, interests, and preferences lead to conflicts. This led political philosophers to reflect on a variety of socially relevant political concerns in an effort to propose effective mechanisms for regulating people's behaviour. Instead of studying the science of politics as it is understood now, the subject was founded in ancient Greek city-states as a historical and descriptive explanation of political phenomenon using the concepts of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (Adamu et al., 2010).

In the late 19th century, university departments and chairs with the name of political science were established, marking the beginning of political science as a field. Despite the fact that the term "political scientist" is generally reserved for individuals who get a PhD in the topic, it is now equally applicable to those who hold a master's degree in it. This came about as a result of the efforts of several academics who highlighted cutting-edge approaches to scientific investigation. What the proponents of the scientific study of politics refer to as the "Behavioural Revolution" also influenced the shift in emphasis from conventional to scientific approaches of political analysis. The growth of political science research employing scientific techniques and methodologies, as well as an emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach, were key components of behaviourism (Political Science, 2020).

When World War II broke out, political scientists began to reconsider the idea that the Legislature, the Executive, the agencies, and the Courts did not exist by themselves and did not function apart from one another or from the other political entities in society. Political scientists in America and Europe started new fields of research by looking at companies, religious institutions, interest groups, trade unions, and political parties. Political scientists also paid close attention to ideologies due to their involvement in the establishment of the Ultra-Right and Ultra-Left political organisations and movements (Ologbenla, 2015).

One of the key organisations in the formation of contemporary political science is Chicago University. Post behaviourism, which tries to close the gap between theories and the political relevance of the discipline to mankind, was developed as a result of this. One of the top researchers in contemporary political science was David Easton (an American political scientist of Canadian descent. He taught political science at the University of Chicago and was alive from 1947 to 1997) (Adamu et al., 2010).

Political science, like all social sciences, struggles to monitor human actors who can only be partially seen and who, unlike other topics like non-human animals in biology or inanimate things like in physics, are capable of making conscious decisions. Despite the difficulties, modern political science has advanced by using a diversity of theories and methodologies to comprehend politics. This methodological pluralism is a distinguishing characteristic of modern political science.

Teaching Strategies for Political Science

Following are some effective strategies for teaching and studying political science, according to Olutade (2009) and Kwasau (2013):

- **Teacher-Centred Methods:** The lecture approach, storytelling method, repetition and drill method, review method, note-taking method, controlled question and answer method, etc. are among the teacher-centred teaching strategies for political science. There isn't just one effective way to teach political science. Depending on their intended usage. Teachers/lecturers are free to employ any one of them, as well as to mix two or more, to successfully impart a single lesson.

- **Learner-Centred Methods:** The inquiry technique, discovery method, problem-solving method, springboard method, case study method, role-playing method, small group discussion method, homework, supervised study, and field work are some of the learner-centred ways of teaching political science. Kwasau (2013) went on to say that a kid learns best when the focus is on them. He or she should read, talk about, look, listen, analyse, write, and ponder. The action is placed where it belongs using student-centred strategies. The student is the centre of attention, not the instructor or the textbook. According to Daughtrey (1974), student-centred strategies foster a much more conducive learning environment than teacher-centred ones.

Political Science Education in Nigeria

More than 90 public and private institutions in Nigeria offer a political science major along with other courses at the degree level. Political science as a field of study is combined with other disciplines in universities, such as public administration and international relations, political science and conflict resolution, political science and diplomacy, political science/international law and diplomacy, political science and international studies, political science and defence studies (UTME, 2018). Additionally, political science is taught and learned at the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) level, where it is merged and studied as a single major with eighteen (18) distinct courses in more than one hundred (100) institutions of education and polytechnics in Nigeria.

Importance of Political Science Education in Nigeria

Given the critical role that political science may play in attaining sustainable development in Nigeria, political science education and expertise have become vital in modern society for the following reasons:

- First, because political science is a field that is highly helpful in shaping and developing a good, effective, and efficient citizenry, it plays a crucial role in attaining sustainable development. One of political science's objectives is the teaching of citizenship. Good governance requires informed citizens who are aware of their rights, obligations, and duties to their government. If people don't know their rights and responsibilities, the government either takes advantage of them or becomes immobile as a result. Therefore, effective citizenship education is crucial for sustainable development and good governance. This is the same message that political science aims to impart to all citizens of a certain state. Political science education would significantly aid in understanding the dynamics and nature of Nigerian government and politics in the twenty-first century, it is vital to mention. This is crucial for Nigeria to achieve sustained development.
- Harmony, stability, and peace will exist when citizens are aware of their rights, obligations, and duties and uphold them. Adopting contemporary political science methodologies would be crucial for comprehending political difficulties in Nigeria, such as the sociocultural and religious diversity of our society. A prerequisite for successful governance and sustained development is political stability.
- Sustainable development is impossible in any nation with poor governance. Successful administration is a prerequisite for good government. Implementing and carrying out government plans and initiatives effectively and efficiently is a key component of good administration. Political science's subfield of public administration focuses on the mobilisation and use of people, resources, organisations, laws, and regulations to carry out governmental goals. Through its subfields of public administration, political science education cultivates competent administrators who, in turn, assure effective management of government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). The Nigerian government's attempts to achieve sustainable development will greatly benefit from this.
- The study of political science in Nigeria will help young people and students develop the writing, communication, analytical, and data-handling abilities that are essential to a liberal education. This kind of education would provide Nigerians the skills to analyse national problems critically, which will eventually support the government's attempts to achieve sustainable development.
- Nigerian youths may find studying political science to be a wonderful chance because the subject provides students with a variety of administrative and diplomatic abilities that may allow them to shift professions and pursue many careers. Because graduates of political science can pursue careers in business, law consulting, journalism and communications, polling and campaign management, international and nongovernmental organisations officials, political science education is excellent in preparing for flexibility in employment. This will greatly advance sustainable development in Nigeria.
- At the senior high school level, political science or the government are both taught. For the purpose of earning the Senior Secondary School Certificate, it is one of the examination subjects. The Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations in several topics, including government, are administered by both the National Examination Council (NECO) and the West African Examination Council (WAEC). Political science courses are included in the handbook of minimum requirements published by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Commission for

Colleges of Education (NCCE). With the support of educational policies and initiatives, this will undoubtedly contribute to national sustainable development.

- In order to train future primary and secondary school teachers, it is crucial to know that political science education is taught at the NCE and B.Sc. Ed or B. Ed in Political Science Education levels in Nigerian colleges of education and universities. It aids in the pupils' intellectual growth and trains them in logical analysis in steps. For instance, the course's objective at this level is to prepare competent government instructors. The dissemination and instruction of Nigeria's basic values and attitudes for sustainable development would be significantly aided by these inspirational educators.

Conclusion

To achieve sustainable development, political science education is essential. This is for the straightforward reason that learning about political science broadens one's intellectual horizons and enhances the mind. In the long run, this civic education would extend students' perceptions of and opportunities for involvement in local, state, and federal affairs while encouraging the expansion of global cooperation and coexistence, which is crucial to Nigeria's sustainable development. People who specialise in different areas of political science do study to uncover previously unidentified principles underlying political events and significantly advance the field of knowledge. Political science education significantly adds to the body of knowledge from ancient to modern times, if the goal of human life is to advance knowledge.

The paper explores and emphasises the necessity of integrating political science education in promoting sustainable development efforts, as it is the best tool for comprehending Nigeria's ethno-religious, socio-cultural, economic, and political diversity. Finally, the key contributions of political science education to achieving sustainable development in Nigeria are so crucial.

Recommendations

- This essay suggests that all disciplines should be required to take a political science course since it promotes collaboration, flexibility, and tolerance. Political science is a fundamental course in various Nigerian universities and institutions of education. Without cooperation and adaptation, society cannot advance or national development be accomplished. Anarchy develops when tolerance is absent. The ethics of tolerance and coexistence are taught in politics.
- The promotion of political science education at both universities and colleges of education also requires the engagement of the government. This might be accomplished by providing appropriate funds to the institutions so they can offer a supportive environment for the teaching and learning of the course, stimulating research projects to foster students' enthusiasm and tenacity for the successful achievement of the desired aims.
- Governmental and non-governmental entities should both assist the teaching and learning of political science by supplying additional textbooks and other study resources.
- Government of Nigeria should support e-learning at all levels for the teaching and learning of political science.
- Finally, field excursions and projects should be encouraged in political science teaching and learning since they would help Nigerians' understanding of the subject become more concrete.

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