POLITICS, ECONOMICS IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Education plays a strategic role in national development, but it cannot be separated from ongoing political and economic dynamics. This article analyzes the relevance of political change and economic conditions to the direction and quality of national education. Using an interdisciplinary approach, it discusses how political policies influence the structure of education and how economic stability or crisis impacts access to and quality of education. This analysis aims to develop a new framework that integrates political, economic, and educational variables into a single theory of education-based national development. The study's findings indicate that the success of educational development is largely determined by the positive synergy between inclusive political policies and a sustainable economy. Therefore, a new theoretical model is needed that can explain the causal and dynamic relationships between these three elements to strengthen the foundation of national development in the global era.

Keywords *: Economics, Education, Politics*

INTRODUCTION

Nation building is a historical and multidimensional process involving structural transformations across various sectors of societal life. One fundamental pillar of this process is education, as it is through it that the quality of human resources, the driving force behind a nation's civilization and progress, is developed (Kouskoura et al., 2024). However, education cannot stand alone as an autonomous entity; it is heavily influenced by the political system and the surrounding economic conditions. In this context, the relationship between politics, economics, and education is not a linear one, but rather complex and dynamic. Conceptually, politics serves as an institutional channel that directs the development agenda, including education, through regulation, decision-making, and resource allocation. Meanwhile, the economy determines the state's fiscal capacity and provides material incentives that are prerequisites for the sustainability of various development programs (Sun et al., 2024). Education, on the other hand, serves as a medium for reproducing national values, strengthening social cohesion, and developing skills relevant to market needs and technological developments (Sitorus & Tarigan, 2025).

However, in practice, the relationship between these three sectors is often strained. The dominance of short-term political interests, for example in the politicization of education policies in the lead-up to elections, can obscure the long-term orientation of human resource development (White, 2017). Similarly, recurring economic crises, such as the one in 1998, have impacted the education sector through budget cuts, reduced subsidies, and rising education costs disproportionate to public purchasing power (Theodore, 2020). This demonstrates that without stability and alignment within the political and economic systems, education risks being marginalized as a national development priority. Globalization further deepens this interconnectedness. Countries, particularly developing ones, face pressure to adapt their education systems to meet global market demands, whether in terms of curriculum, job competencies, or technological mastery (Catacutan, 2024). Unfortunately, these adjustments are not always accompanied by a strengthening of national economic foundations or political policies that are responsive to local socio-cultural realities. As a result, education becomes a kind of "arena of compromise" between global demands and national limitations, leading to disparities in education quality between regions and social groups.

This background emphasizes that efforts to build quality education are not sufficient through internal reforms in the education sector alone; they must also consider the political configuration and economic conditions as part of a comprehensive development framework (Rahimi & Oh, 2024). Previous studies tend to be fragmented: some focus on aspects of education policy, while others examine the economic impact on access to education. However, few have developed a new theoretical approach capable of comprehensively and integratively explaining the reciprocal relationships between these three sectors. The urgency of this study is particularly heightened in the contemporary context where social inequality, educational radicalization, and economic dependence on the global market pose real challenges (Hatim et al., 2025). Without a comprehensive understanding of how political and economic dynamics collaborate—or conflict—in determining the direction of national education, the resulting policies will tend to be reactive and unsustainable.

By utilizing an interdisciplinary approach—combining political science, development economics, and the sociology of education—this study is expected to make a significant contribution, both theoretically in the form of a new framework for thinking, and practically as a

foundation for formulating more resilient and equitable national development policies. The purpose of the Introduction is to stimulate the reader's interest and to provide pertinent background information necessary to understand the rest of the paper. You must summarize the problem to be addressed, give background on the subject, discuss previous research on the topic, and explain *exactly* what the paper will address, why, and how. A good thing to avoid is making your introduction into a mini review. There is a huge amount of literature out there, but as a scientist you should be able to pick out the things that are most relevant to your work and explain why. This shows an editor/reviewer/reader that you really understand your area of research and that you can get straight to the most important issues.

METHOD

This research method uses a qualitative approach because this topic emphasizes conceptual analysis and an in-depth understanding of the function of theoretical foundations in scientific work. A qualitative approach is more appropriate. This approach aims to explore the meaning, perception, and role of theoretical foundations. Furthermore, using a descriptive approach, this research can be descriptive because it aims to describe in detail the function and importance of theoretical foundations in scientific work. This type of research uses a library study. This type of research examines the concept of theoretical foundations. The appropriate type of research is a library study, where data is collected from various scientific literature, textbooks, journals, and other academic works discussing theoretical foundations (Wagstaff et al., 2021). This research uses a data analysis technique called Content Analysis. Content analysis is used to analyze the content of the collected literature. Furthermore, it can identify important themes such as the role of the theoretical foundations used in the research and their impact on the quality of scientific work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Analysis of the Relevance of Political and Economic Dynamics to Education in National Development

Education is the primary foundation for national development. Without quality and equitable education, it is impossible for a country to produce human resources capable of competing globally. However, the education system does not stand alone; it is heavily influenced by political and economic dynamics. Therefore, understanding the interrelationship between these three aspects is crucial for formulating an effective and sustainable direction for national development (Handraini & Magriasti, 2023).

The Influence of Politics on Education

Politics plays a crucial role in determining the direction of education policy. Changes in government, the ruling party's political ideology, and the dynamics of political parties have direct implications for the form, content, and implementation of education policy. In a democratic system, education should be used as a tool for community empowerment. However, in practice, education is often used as a political instrument to build the government's image, absorb funds, and maintain power through ideological control of the curriculum. For example, curriculum changes or national examination systems that are frequently changed without thorough evaluation

demonstrate inconsistent education policies influenced by political pressure. As a result, teachers and students become the objects of policy experimentation without a clear direction. Political stability and continuity are key requirements for progressive and long-term educational development (Handraini & Magriasti, 2023; Ugwu, 2025).

The Influence of Economics on Education

Economically, education is highly dependent on a country's fiscal capacity. The education budget determines how much a country can afford to build schools, pay teachers, provide facilities, and ensure equitable access to education for all levels of society. Countries with strong economies have a greater opportunity to optimally finance education. However, problems arise when economic growth is uneven or an economic crisis occurs. In such circumstances, the education sector often falls victim to budget cuts. Economic inequality also leads to differences in the quality of education between developed and underdeveloped regions, or between public and private schools. Children from poor families tend to have limited access to education, thus reinforcing the cycle of poverty. Furthermore, education also impacts the economy. Quality education produces a productive, innovative workforce that is adaptable to changes in the global labor market. Therefore, investment in education should be seen as a long-term economic development strategy (Habibi & Zabardast, 2020).

The Relationship between Politics and Economics in Education

Politics and economics do not exist in isolation in influencing education, but are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. A government with a political commitment to education will encourage adequate budget allocation and champion more inclusive access to education. Conversely, if political interests dominate, education will become a tool for the reproduction of power rather than a tool for human development. For example, in a corrupt political system, education budget allocations often leak and fall short of their targets. Conversely, if economic growth isn't maintained with social justice, education will be dominated by elite groups. This means that the quality of education will be largely determined by the relationship between political interests and economic forces that shape public policy (Valero & Van Reenen, 2019).

This analysis shows that education cannot be separated from political and economic dynamics. All three form a systemic whole in national development. Therefore, the sectoral approach to development needs to be abandoned and replaced by an integrative, interdisciplinary approach that focuses on equitable distribution of results.

Developing Thoughts to Build a New Theoretical Framework: Integration of Politics, Economics, and Education in National Development

Nation building is the result of a dynamic interaction between stable politics, a productive economy, and transformative education, where these three elements influence each other in a systemic and simultaneous reciprocal relationship. Each sector cannot be separated, because change or progress in one area will encourage development in others, creating a mutually supportive cycle of progress. Stable politics provides a supportive legal and policy framework, while a strong economy provides resources for quality education, which in turn produces human resources that can contribute to economic growth and political development (Haloho et al., 2024).

Existing Theoretical Context:

For a long time, development studies often considered politics, economics, and education as separate entities. For example, economic development theory focused more on human capital

theory, which views education as a tool for increasing economic productivity. In contrast, political theory emphasized the role of state policies in creating social structures that support development. However, these theories rarely integrate the three factors into a coherent framework that explains how their interactions influence development. This raises the need to develop new theories that not only consider the role of education in economic development but also take into account the political impact on access to and quality of education, as well as how education itself can play a role in shaping economic and political patterns (Nilsen & Bernhardsson, 2019).

Integrating Politics, Economics, and Education in One Systemic Framework

a. Politics as a Policy Maker and Driver of Innovation

Politics functions as a policy maker, creating and formulating rules for education. Through inclusive education policies, politics can introduce curricula that are more relevant to labor market needs and prepare a generation that is more critical in addressing social issues. In this theory, politics functions not only as a policymaker focused on the distribution of education budgets, but also as an agent of change that supports policies that encourage innovation in education. Within this framework, education is not only a product of policy, but also a tool that enables society to actively participate in the process of change. Therefore, education must be designed to develop political and social skills that enable individuals to play a role in shaping and changing state policy.

Politics plays a crucial role in providing direction and legitimacy for national development, including in the education sector. As a key pillar of development, politics is responsible for formulating policies that determine a country's long-term direction. The political function in this context includes providing a legal framework that supports development, both through legislation governing the education sector and policies that foster social and economic stability. The success of politics in maintaining institutional stability significantly impacts the sustainability of development. Education, as an integral part of development, is heavily influenced by existing political policies. Regulations issued by the government, such as education laws and regional regulations, have a direct impact on the education system. The national curriculum, which serves as a guideline for education across the country, is also governed by existing political policies. Furthermore, the decentralized education system, which grants regional governments authority to manage the education sector, is also a result of deep-rooted political policies (Omidi et al., 2020).

However, the impact of politics on education is not always positive. When politics is not inclusive or only benefits certain groups, the resulting education policies tend to be unfair and exacerbate inequality in access to education. For example, in a political system that tends to be elitist, education policies that prioritize regions or groups that are more politically, economically, and socially powerful can neglect the needs of more marginalized regions or groups. This will exacerbate educational inequality, both in terms of quality, access, and opportunities to develop potential equally across all levels of society. Conversely, inclusive and pro-people politics can create more equitable education policies, provide equal access, and strengthen the quality of education in all regions. Thus, the direction and nature of politics significantly determine the outcomes of the existing education system.

b. Economics as a Supporter of Structure and Social Justice

The economy is the primary foundation for any education policy. The availability of economic resources determines the extent to which a country can build equitable and high-quality education infrastructure. For example, a strong economy enables a country to provide adequate educational facilities, pay teachers fairly, and provide broader access to education for all. However, economic inequality can lead to inequities in the quality of education. Economic inequality

between developed and underdeveloped regions, or between different socioeconomic groups, hinders equitable access to education. Therefore, this theory proposes that economic policies focused on social equity can be integrated with educational policies to create equal opportunities in education.

The economic pillar plays a crucial role in supporting national development, particularly in the education sector. The primary function of the economy in this context is to provide the financial resources necessary to fund various development programs, including education. Without strong economic support, a country will struggle to finance educational infrastructure, hire qualified educators, and provide adequate facilities for students. Furthermore, the economy provides a labor market that absorbs graduates and creates an incentive structure that encourages various parties to invest in the education sector. Education is greatly influenced by a country's economic capacity, particularly its ability to allocate an adequate education budget. A country with a strong economy is better able to ensure equitable budget distribution to create equal access to education across all regions, both in urban and rural areas. A country's ability to allocate this education budget also influences the quality and quantity of education available to the public, such as improving teacher quality, providing better facilities, and developing a curriculum that is more relevant to current needs. Furthermore, the demands of the workforce also influence education, particularly regarding the skills and competencies required to enter the labor market. Education that is relevant and responsive to changing economic needs can produce human resources (HR) ready to contribute maximally to the economic sector. As economies grow and develop, there is a push to innovate in education to produce a workforce that is not only skilled but also able to adapt to technological developments and global trends (Gorski & Dalton, 2020).

A strong economy results in greater innovation and investment in the education sector. With sufficient funding, the government and private sector can collaborate to improve the quality of education through the provision of technology, curriculum enhancements, and the development of more modern learning systems. Furthermore, a thriving economy encourages research and development in the education sector, leading to more effective and efficient policies and learning methods. Conversely, when the economy stagnates or declines, the education sector is often the first to experience budget cuts, ultimately impacting the overall quality and access to education.

c. Education as an Agent of Social and Economic Transformation

Education plays a key role in driving change in society. Current theories often emphasize the importance of education in preparing individuals for the labor market. However, within this theoretical framework, education also functions as an agent of broader social transformation. Education must be able to shape individuals who are not only technically skilled but also possess the ability to understand and address social and economic challenges. Quality education can develop creativity, adaptability, and critical thinking, which are necessary to face the challenges of globalization and social change. Thus, education is a key pillar in building a nation's social and economic resilience. The pillar of education plays a crucial role in national development, with its function extending beyond simply transferring knowledge. Education is a tool for producing quality human resources (HR), capable not only of meeting labor market needs but also of acting as agents of social and economic change. The primary function of education is to produce individuals who are not only skilled but also possess a deep understanding of the political and economic dynamics around them, as well as an active role in nation building.

As a long-term foundation for national development, education focuses not only on mastering technical skills but also on developing strong character and social awareness. The

educational process must include learning about the values of democracy, social justice, and active political participation. Well-educated individuals will have the skills to understand and contribute to the political process, whether in elections, public policy, or decision-making that affects the lives of the wider community. Furthermore, education also equips them with the ability to recognize and respond more critically to economic issues, including challenges related to social injustice and wealth distribution. The impact of critical and inclusive education is profound in strengthening political participation and economic productivity. Education that instills democratic values and critical thinking skills will produce a generation that is active in the political process, both at the local and national levels. An educated society tends to be better able to access information effectively, assess public policies objectively, and play a role in creating more inclusive and equitable policies.

Economically, quality education directly contributes to increased labor productivity, both in the formal and informal sectors. Graduates with good education will have a greater ability to adapt to dynamic job market changes, innovate, and create solutions to the economic challenges facing the nation. Furthermore, education also strengthens economic ethics, which is essential for creating a transparent, honest, and fair business environment (Pavel & Isak, 2022). Overall, education serves as a transformative tool that not only develops individual skills but also plays a role in creating a more just and sustainable social and economic order. In the context of national development, quality education is a long-term investment that will yield results in human resources capable not only of competing globally but also of strengthening the social and economic structures within the country.

Table 2.1 The Relationship Between Politics, Economics, And Education

Pillar	Influence	Examples Of Influence
Politics → Economy	Fiscal policy, investment legal stability	Stable fiscal policy encourages investment, strengthening the economy.
Economy → Politics	The influence of oligarchy, the power of capital in policy making	Strong economic influence in directing political policy.
Politics → Education	Education policy, education budget	A democratic government will ensure inclusive and equitable education policies.
Economics → Education	Quality of facilities, teaching staff, technology	A strong economy provides better educational facilities and qualified teaching staff.
Education → Politics	Democratic awareness, social control	Education increases political awareness, which contributes to active participation in the democratic process.
Education → Economics	Productive workforce, innovation	Good education produces a productive and innovative workforce, which supports economic growth.

Source: (Indrawan, 2019)

Building New Theory: An Interactive Model of Politics, Economics, and Education

The proposed new theoretical framework proposes a systemic interactive model. between politics, economics, and education. This model illustrates how these three factors influence and provide feedback to each other (Andreoni & Chang, 2019).

1. Politics as Policy Initiator and Policy Stakeholder

Politics is the first factor that initiates the development cycle. The state and government play a role in establishing education policies, including budget allocation, curriculum formulation, and the provision of educational infrastructure. Inclusive and socially just politics will encourage the creation of education policies that prioritize the principles of equality and access for all levels of society.

2. Economics as a Pillar of Development and Sustainability of Education

The economy provides the necessary funding to facilitate government-established education policies. Without adequate economic support, the implementation of education policies will be hampered. Therefore, a strong and inclusive economy is crucial for a country to support sustainable educational development. Furthermore, the economy plays a role in creating jobs for education graduates, allowing for measurable educational quality in relation to the resulting economic development.

3. Education as a Builder of Human Resources and a Socio-Economic Pillar

Education acts as a key driver in the development of quality human resources (HR). Within this framework, education must be able to produce individuals who are not only ready for work but also able to adapt to social and economic changes. Quality education will lead to the creation of a highly educated, competitive society with the capacity to innovate and create solutions to socio-economic problems.

Implications for National Development Policy

The theory developed offers several important implications for national development policy (Yurui et al., 2019):

1. **Sustainable Education Policy**: Education policy must address sustainability in funding, teaching quality, and equitable access to education. Education should be a long-term investment in the nation's future, not merely a temporary response to labor market needs.
2. **Inclusive and Equitable Economic Development** Economic development must be designed with attention to existing disparities, both between regions and between social groups. Inclusive policies will ensure that education is accessible to all levels of society, thus providing equal opportunities for every individual to develop.
3. **Community Involvement in Educational Politics**: The public must be actively involved in education policymaking, through public consultation, monitoring of policy implementation, and involvement in curriculum development. This is crucial to ensure that education policies truly reflect community needs.

The development of this integrative theory demonstrates that sustainable national development requires policies that simultaneously integrate political, economic, and educational aspects. With a more holistic and systemic approach, it is hoped that education policies will not only strengthen the economic sector but also create a society that is more educated, skilled, and adaptable to social change. Thus, education becomes not only a product of economic and political policies but also an agent of transformation that can renew and shape the policies themselves.

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that education, politics, and economics are three interconnected pillars in national development, forming a dynamic system where each influences the others. Politics serves as the policymaker, determining the direction and priorities of education, including budget

allocation and curriculum design. However, when politics is dominated by power interests, education often becomes a tool for legitimization rather than a means of societal empowerment. On the other hand, the economy acts as the backbone of education funding, where economic inequality can perpetuate disparities in access and quality. Conversely, quality education produces productive, innovative, and critically thinking human resources (HR), driving economic growth and fostering more inclusive political participation. The interaction of these three aspects creates a mutually reinforcing cycle: stable and equitable politics promotes fair education policies, a strong economy provides the necessary resources to implement them, and transformative education generates HR capable of contributing to political and economic progress. Therefore, national development requires a holistic approach that integrates all three. Education policies must be designed sustainably, supported by an inclusive economy, and involve public participation to ensure relevance and equity. In this way, education is not merely a product of political and economic policies but also an agent of change that can drive social renewal, economic advancement, and better governance.

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