



Tracing the Impact of Neoliberalism on Educational Administration Practices

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Abstract

This integrative literature review explores the historical and contemporary perspectives on the intersection between educational administration and neoliberalism. Examining seminal works by scholars such as Apple, Ball, Lipsky, Sahlberg, and Hursh, the study unveils the transformative impact of neoliberal ideologies on educational systems globally. The historical trajectory reveals a pivotal late 20th century period when neoliberal principles gained prominence, reshaping educational administration through standardized testing and the alignment of systems with market-oriented objectives. The emergence of marketization and privatization trends, as discussed by Lipsky and Ball, highlights the pervasive influence of neoliberal policies, leading to the creation of alternative educational models and blurring the lines between public and private administration. Critical to this exploration is an examination of the implications for educational equity, particularly emphasized by Sahlberg's work. The study reveals how market-driven reforms, while aiming for efficiency and choice, often contribute to the exacerbation of existing educational inequalities. Finally, the challenges and critiques faced by educational leaders, outlined by Hursh, underscore the need for a nuanced approach that balances market demands with broader educational goals. This study

contributes a comprehensive understanding of the complexities within educational administration influenced by neoliberalism, providing insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers to navigate this dynamic landscape effectively.

Keywords: Neoliberalism, Educational Administration, Marketization, Privatization

Introduction

In the realm of educational administration, the influence of neoliberal ideologies has become a subject of increasing scrutiny. Neoliberalism, characterized by an emphasis on market-driven policies, privatization, and individualization, has permeated various sectors of society, including education (Schraedley, et al., 2021).

The roots of this phenomenon can be traced back to the late 20th century when neoliberal ideologies gained prominence globally. Scholars such as Apple (2001) and Ball (2003) have highlighted the impact of neoliberal policies on education, emphasizing the shift towards market-oriented reforms and the commodification of learning. These changes have reshaped the landscape of educational administration, introducing market-driven practices and emphasizing outcomes that align with economic objectives (Seddon, 2008).

In the historical context, the implementation of neoliberal policies in education often began with restructuring initiatives and market-oriented reforms. For instance, the introduction of standardized testing, school choice, and performance-based funding can be seen as manifestations of neoliberal principles in educational administration (Burch, 2009; Lipsky, 2010). As neoliberalism gained momentum, educational institutions started to adopt management practices from the private sector, further blurring the lines between public and private administration in education (Ball, 2012).

In the contemporary landscape, the impact of neoliberalism on educational administration is evident in the emphasis on accountability, efficiency, and competition. Researchers such as Sahlberg (2011) and Hursh (2007) have documented the consequences of market-driven policies on educational equity, as well as the implications for the role of educational leaders in navigating this complex terrain.

This study aims to contribute to the existing body of literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of the historical evolution and current dynamics of the relationship between educational administration and neoliberalism. By examining both the roots of neoliberal influence and its contemporary manifestations, this research seeks to shed light on the complexities and challenges faced by educational leaders in navigating an increasingly neoliberal educational landscape.

Literature Review

The intersection of educational administration and neoliberalism has garnered significant scholarly attention in recent decades. As education systems around the world undergo transformative changes, the influence of neoliberal ideologies on educational policies and practices has become a focal point of investigation. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing body of knowledge on the historical roots and contemporary manifestations of the relationship between educational administration and neoliberalism.

Historical Perspectives

The historical trajectory of the relationship between educational administration and neoliberalism can be traced back to the late 20th century when neoliberal ideologies gained prominence on a global scale. Apple (2001) and Ball (2003) were among the early scholars who recognized the impact of neoliberalism on education. Apple (2001) argued that neoliberalism played a pivotal role in reshaping educational policies by promoting market-driven reforms, privatization, and the commodification of learning. Ball (2003) extended this argument, highlighting how neoliberal principles influenced the restructuring of educational systems to align with market-oriented objectives.

One of the key historical manifestations of neoliberal influence on educational administration is the introduction of standardized testing. As Burch (2009) notes, standardized testing became a mechanism to measure educational outcomes in quantifiable terms, aligning with neoliberal ideals of accountability and efficiency. This shift marked a departure from traditional educational practices, emphasizing a results-oriented approach that mirrors market-driven ideologies (Catacutan, et al., 2023).

Moreover, the notion of school choice emerged as a historical outcome of neoliberal policies. Lipsky (2010) examined how market-oriented reforms, including the promotion of charter schools and voucher systems, aimed to introduce competition into the educational landscape. The introduction of choice mechanisms sought to empower parents as consumers and schools as service providers, reflecting neoliberal principles of individualization and market responsiveness.

Marketization and Privatization in Educational Administration

The historical evolution of educational administration under neoliberalism also witnessed a trend towards the adoption of management practices from the private sector. Ball (2012) explored the blurring lines between public and private administration in education, as neoliberal reforms encouraged the application of corporate management strategies to educational institutions. This shift brought forth concepts such as performance-based funding and outcome-based evaluation, mirroring the accountability mechanisms present in the corporate world.

Seddon (2008) contributed to the historical analysis by examining the global spread of neoliberal educational policies. Seddon argued that neoliberalism not only influenced individual countries' educational systems but also created a transnational network of policies and practices. This globalization of neoliberal educational reforms further intensified the impact on educational administration, making it a pervasive force that transcended national boundaries (Groenewald, et al., 2023).

In the contemporary landscape, the influence of neoliberalism on educational administration is deeply embedded in the policies and practices that govern educational institutions. Sahlberg (2011) examined the consequences of market-driven policies on educational equity. The author argued that while neoliberal reforms often claim to increase efficiency and choice, they also exacerbate existing educational inequalities, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities. This contemporary perspective underscores the need for a critical examination of the social implications of neoliberal ideologies in educational administration.

Hursh (2007) extended the discussion to the role of educational leaders in navigating the challenges posed by neoliberalism. In the contemporary era, educational leaders find themselves at the intersection of market-driven expectations and the pursuit of educational goals. Hursh emphasized the importance of understanding the implications of neoliberal policies for educational leadership, calling for a nuanced approach that balances market demands with the broader social and educational objectives.

Impact on Educational Goals and Equity

The impact of neoliberalism on educational goals is a critical aspect of the contemporary discourse. The emphasis on accountability and efficiency, while aligned with neoliberal principles, has led to a narrowed focus on measurable outcomes, often at the expense of holistic educational development (Sahlberg, 2011). This shift raises questions about the fundamental purpose of education and the role of educational administration in fostering a well-rounded learning experience.

Furthermore, the implications of neoliberalism on educational equity have been a central concern. As neoliberal reforms introduce market-oriented mechanisms, they risk exacerbating existing educational inequalities. Apple (2001) argued that the commodification of education under neoliberalism creates a system where access to quality education becomes contingent on economic status, perpetuating social disparities.

While neoliberalism has shaped educational administration in significant ways, it has not been without its share of challenges and critiques. Some scholars argue that the emphasis on competition and individualization may undermine the collaborative nature of education (Seddon, 2008). The market-driven approach, they contend, may neglect the communal aspects of learning and diminish the social fabric within educational institutions.

Critics also highlight the potential for neoliberal policies to prioritize short-term gains over long-term educational sustainability. The focus on immediate outcomes and measurable results, driven by market forces, may neglect the investment required for comprehensive, enduring educational improvements (Ball, 2012).

This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the historical roots and contemporary perspectives on the relationship between educational administration and neoliberalism. The historical trajectory reveals the evolution of neoliberal ideologies influencing educational policies, from the introduction of standardized testing to the global spread of market-oriented reforms (Macario, et al., 2023).

In the contemporary landscape, the impact of neoliberalism on educational administration is evident in the emphasis on accountability, efficiency, and competition. Scholars like Sahlberg (2011) and Hursh (2007) have highlighted the implications for educational goals, equity, and the role of educational leaders in navigating this complex terrain.

As we delve into the intricacies of this relationship, it is crucial to approach the topic with a critical lens, recognizing both the transformative potential and the challenges posed by neoliberal ideologies in educational administration (Malbas, et al., 2023). This nuanced understanding can inform policymakers, educators, and researchers as they grapple with the

complexities of shaping educational systems that are responsive, equitable, and aligned with the broader goals of societal development.

Methodology

This study employs an integrative literature review methodology to comprehensively examine the historical and contemporary perspectives on the relationship between educational administration and neoliberalism. The integrative literature review approach allows for the synthesis of diverse research findings and the integration of insights from various studies, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the subject matter (Torraco, 2005).

Search Strategy

The process of data collection involved a systematic search of relevant literature using electronic databases such as PubMed, ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. A combination of keywords, including "educational administration," "neoliberalism," "historical perspectives," and "contemporary manifestations," was employed to ensure a thorough exploration of the research landscape. Additionally, manual searches of key journals and reference lists of selected articles were conducted to identify additional pertinent sources.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for the literature review encompassed scholarly articles, books, and reports published in peer-reviewed journals between 2000 and 2023. The temporal range was selected to capture the most recent developments while ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the historical roots of the relationship between educational administration and neoliberalism. Non-English language publications and studies with a primary focus on regions outside the scope of this research were excluded.

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Upon identifying relevant literature, a systematic process of data extraction was employed. Key information, including publication details, research methods, major findings, and theoretical frameworks, was recorded for each selected source. The extracted data were then organized thematically, allowing for the identification of patterns, trends, and recurring themes across the literature.

Quality Assessment

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the literature included in the review, a quality assessment was conducted. The methodological rigor of each study was evaluated, considering factors such as research design, sample size, and data analysis methods. This critical appraisal helped in weighing the evidence and determining the trustworthiness of the findings presented in the selected literature.

Data Synthesis and Integration

The synthesis of data involved a qualitative analysis of the literature, emphasizing the integration of findings from various studies to construct a coherent narrative. The process

included identifying commonalities and differences in the historical and contemporary perspectives on the relationship between educational administration and neoliberalism. The synthesis aimed to generate new insights, highlight gaps in the existing literature, and offer a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

Ethical Consideration

As this study is based on a review of existing literature, ethical considerations primarily revolved around ensuring the accurate representation of authors' work and giving proper credit through citation. Care was taken to avoid misinterpretation or misrepresentation of research findings, and the ethical standards of academic integrity were upheld throughout the research process.

Findings and Discussion

Historical Evolution of Neoliberal Influence:

The historical evolution of neoliberal influence on educational administration unfolds as a crucial narrative within the scholarly literature. Pioneering researchers like Apple (2001) and Ball (2003) pinpoint the late 20th century as a pivotal era in which neoliberal ideologies ascended to global prominence. Their work illuminates historical manifestations that marked a paradigmatic shift in educational administration, encapsulating the introduction of standardized testing and the fundamental reshaping of educational systems to harmonize with market-oriented objectives (Ondog, et al., 2023).

Apple's (2001) scholarship delves into the multifaceted dimensions of neoliberal impact on education, emphasizing how these ideologies permeated educational policies and practices globally. As neoliberal principles gained traction, educational systems underwent a metamorphosis with standardized testing emerging as a tangible expression of accountability and efficiency. Ball (2003) supplements this by underscoring the transformative nature of the late 20th century, where neoliberal ideologies influenced the very foundations of educational institutions, signaling a departure from traditional paradigms.

The introduction of standardized testing stands out as a hallmark of neoliberal influence on educational administration. This shift, as identified by these scholars, was not merely an isolated policy change but a manifestation of broader ideological underpinnings. Standardized testing became a quantifiable means to measure educational outcomes, aligning with neoliberal ideals of accountability and efficiency (Kilag, et al., 2023). This historical trajectory underscores the profound impact of neoliberalism on shaping the operational frameworks of educational institutions globally.

The reshaping of educational systems is another significant aspect illuminated by the literature. The works of Apple (2001) and Ball (2003) shed light on the intricate process through which neoliberal ideologies prompted a redefinition of educational objectives to align with market-oriented principles. This transformation extended beyond isolated policy changes, manifesting as a paradigm shift in the principles guiding educational administration. The historical lens offered by these scholars facilitates a deep understanding of the roots of neoliberal influence, setting the stage for a comprehensive exploration of its contemporary manifestations.

The historical evolution of neoliberal influence on educational administration, as evidenced by Apple (2001) and Ball (2003), serves as a foundational narrative. The late 20th century emerges as a critical juncture, marking the ascendancy of neoliberal ideologies and the subsequent reshaping of educational systems globally. Standardized testing becomes emblematic of this shift, encapsulating broader principles of accountability and efficiency. This historical backdrop establishes a robust foundation for delving into contemporary perspectives, unraveling the complex interplay between neoliberalism and educational administration.

Marketization and Privatization Trends:

A pivotal discovery in the literature accentuates the profound impact of neoliberalism on marketization and privatization within educational administration. This insight, illuminated by scholars such as Lipsky (2010) and Ball (2012), brings to light the transformative consequences of neoliberal policies. The emergence of school choice mechanisms, charter schools, and voucher systems stands out as tangible outcomes of these policies, reshaping the educational landscape and organizational structures.

Lipsky's (2010) examination of neoliberal trends provides a comprehensive understanding of the emergence of school choice mechanisms. The literature underscores how neoliberal ideologies propelled the decentralization of educational decision-making, empowering parents as consumers in an educational marketplace. The advent of school choice reflects a departure from traditional centralized administrative structures towards a more market-driven approach, encapsulating the essence of neoliberal principles (Kilgus, et al., 2023).

Ball's (2012) scholarly contributions further enrich this finding by delving into the blurring lines between public and private administration in education. The adoption of corporate management strategies within educational institutions becomes a focal point of analysis. This phenomenon signifies a contemporary trend where market-driven practices influence the organizational structures and governance of educational entities. The infusion of corporate strategies introduces a new paradigm, with implications for decision-making processes, resource allocation, and overall administrative dynamics.

The marketization and privatization trends identified in the literature emphasize a transformative shift in the governance of educational institutions. Neoliberal policies, as elucidated by Lipsky (2010) and Ball (2012), have not only led to the establishment of alternative educational models like charter schools but have also blurred the boundaries between public and private administration. The adoption of corporate strategies signifies a departure from traditional administrative frameworks, ushering in an era where market-driven practices play a pivotal role in shaping the organizational structures and governance of educational entities.

The literature review presents a compelling finding regarding the impact of neoliberalism on marketization and privatization within educational administration. Lipsky (2010) and Ball (2012) shed light on the emergence of school choice mechanisms, charter schools, and corporate management strategies as tangible outcomes of neoliberal policies. This discovery unveils a contemporary trend where market-driven practices wield considerable influence over the organizational structures and governance of educational institutions, underscoring the transformative nature of neoliberal dynamics in education.

Implications for Educational Equity:

A central theme emerging from the literature review is the persistent focus on the implications of neoliberal policies for educational equity. Sahlberg's (2011) seminal work stands out in highlighting how market-driven reforms, despite intentions to enhance efficiency and choice, frequently contribute to the exacerbation of existing educational inequalities. The literature consistently underscores the ramifications of the commodification of education under neoliberalism, leading to a system where access to quality education becomes intricately linked to economic status, thereby perpetuating and widening social disparities (Kilag, et al., 2023).

Sahlberg's (2011) research critically examines the paradox within market-driven reforms, revealing their unintended consequences on educational equity. While neoliberal policies often advocate for increased efficiency and diversified choices, the reality, as elucidated by Sahlberg, is that these reforms disproportionately impact marginalized communities. The commodification of education accentuates disparities by linking the quality of education to economic privilege, creating a hierarchical system where accessibility becomes a privilege rather than a right.

This finding underscores the imperative for critical examination and targeted policy interventions within the realm of educational administration. The literature consistently calls attention to the need for proactive measures that counteract the unintended consequences of neoliberal policies on equity. Policy interventions, as suggested by Sahlberg's (2011) work, should focus on dismantling systemic barriers that perpetuate social disparities. This involves reevaluating the commodification of education and implementing strategies that ensure equal access to quality educational opportunities, irrespective of economic status.

The market-driven reforms, while aiming for efficiency and choice, often contribute to the widening of existing educational inequalities. This recognition necessitates a critical examination of current practices and the implementation of targeted policy interventions to address equity concerns within the realm of educational administration.

Challenges and Critiques Faced by Educational Leaders:

The literature review highlights key challenges and critiques entwined with the incorporation of neoliberal ideologies in educational administration. Hursh's (2007) insights resonate in emphasizing the intricate terrain educational leaders navigate, where market-driven expectations intersect with broader educational and social objectives. Challenges identified encompass the potential erosion of collaborative educational practices, a prioritization of short-term gains over long-term sustainability, and the looming risk of neglecting the communal aspects of learning.

Hursh (2007) illuminates the nuanced challenges educational leaders confront, emphasizing the delicate balance required when market-driven expectations permeate educational governance. The potential erosion of collaborative educational practices arises as a significant concern, suggesting that a shift towards individualized outcomes might undermine the synergistic efforts that collaborative environments foster. The literature underscores how the prioritization of short-term gains, driven by market demands, may compromise the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of educational initiatives.

Moreover, the risk of neglecting communal aspects of learning emerges as a critique within a neoliberal framework. The emphasis on individualization and competition may overshadow the importance of community-building within educational institutions (Hursh, 2007). This

finding underscores the need for a nuanced leadership approach that reconciles market demands with broader educational goals. Educational leaders, as indicated by the literature, must navigate these challenges with strategic acumen, fostering a balanced approach that upholds both the immediate demands of market-driven expectations and the enduring communal values intrinsic to effective education.

The integrative literature review on educational administration and neoliberalism provides a nuanced understanding of historical trajectories and contemporary dynamics. The findings underscore the transformative impact of neoliberal ideologies on educational systems, from historical shifts in policies to the ongoing challenges faced by educational leaders. These insights contribute to a broader conversation on the complex interplay between neoliberalism and educational administration, informing future research directions and policy considerations in the field.

Conclusion

This study delved into the historical and contemporary perspectives on the intersection between educational administration and neoliberalism. Through an integrative literature review, we unraveled the intricate dynamics that have shaped the landscape of educational governance over the past few decades.

The historical evolution of neoliberal influence, as identified by scholars such as Apple (2001) and Ball (2003), revealed a transformative period in the late 20th century. This era marked the ascendancy of neoliberal ideologies, manifested through the introduction of standardized testing and the reshaping of educational systems to align with market-oriented objectives. These historical underpinnings provided a crucial foundation for understanding the current complexities within educational administration.

Marketization and privatization trends, explored through the lens of Lipsky (2010) and Ball (2012), showcased how neoliberal policies have led to the emergence of school choice mechanisms, charter schools, and corporate management strategies. The blurring of lines between public and private administration reflects a contemporary trend where market-driven practices play a pivotal role in shaping the organizational structures of educational institutions.

Examining the implications for educational equity, with a focus on Sahlberg's (2011) work, highlighted the paradox within market-driven reforms. While intending to increase efficiency and choice, neoliberal policies often exacerbate existing educational inequalities. The commodification of education creates a system where access to quality education is contingent on economic status, perpetuating and widening social disparities.

The challenges and critiques faced by educational leaders, as illuminated by Hursh (2007), underscore the complex terrain navigated within a neoliberal framework. The potential erosion of collaborative practices, the prioritization of short-term gains, and the risk of neglecting communal aspects of learning call for a nuanced leadership approach. Balancing market demands with broader educational goals becomes imperative to ensure sustained effectiveness and equity.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted relationship between educational administration and neoliberalism. The findings emphasize the need for critical examination, policy interventions, and nuanced leadership to navigate the challenges posed by neoliberal ideologies. By acknowledging the historical roots and contemporary manifestations, this research aims to inform future endeavors in educational governance, fostering systems that are responsive, equitable, and aligned with the broader goals of societal development.

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