

# Ife Journal of Theory and Research in Education

ISSN: 0794-6754



## Journal of the Institute of Education

Obafemi Awolowo University  
Ile Ife.

Bi-Annual  
Vol. 3 No. 1 1991



ISSN: 0794-6754

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# **Ife Journal of Theory and Research in Education**

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## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The publication of this journal; the Journal of Theory and Research in Education on a regular basis in this austere time is a demonstration of the strong belief which the Institute of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University has in publication as one of the surest and best means of disseminating information. It is also one of the most important methods of encouraging and sustaining the development and growth of new ideas.

This issue, like the ones before it, contains articles on a wide range, of topics of significant academic and professional interest to people in education. The areas covered in the articles include learner performance measurement, teacher variables, administration etc. It is perhaps, pertinent to add that almost all the articles are reports of empirical studies.

It is hoped that reading through this journal, many people will be challenged and encouraged to contribute article to subsequent issues. We wish you happy reading.

Ibitayo Agun,  
Editor,  
June 11, 1991

**CONCEPT OF EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN THE  
OPERATION OF THE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION  
SYSTEM OF IREWOLE AND AYEDADE LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AREAS OF OYO STATE: 1977-1983**

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**ABSTRACT**

The paper analyses the implementation of the concept of equality of educational opportunity in the Universal primary Education system (UPE) of Irewole and Ayedade Local Government Areas of Oyo State, 1977-1983. The extent to which the various conceptions of equality of opportunity, based on a paradigm: formal-legal, process, procedural and achievement equalities, were implemented in the Universal Primary Education system of the Local Government Areas, was determined.

It was found that the implementation of the concept was not in favour of the formal-legal conception of equality of opportunity, rather the implementation favoured processes and procedural conceptions. Moreover, little prominence was given the implementation of the achievement conception of equality – particularly the mild-achievement conception. But since the mild-achievement conception is held in the best esteem by philosophers it is recommended that the government gives more prominence to the implementation of mild-achievement equality in the UPE system, particularly in the area of co-curricular activities which has suffered from inequality of access.

**INTRODUCTION**

In September, 1976, Universal Primary Education (UPE) was launched in Nigeria by General Olusegun Obasanjo (Rtd), the then Head of State. In the launching, the then Head of State announced that the UPE would provide *equal educational opportunities* for all children of school age irrespective of the circumstances of their birth (Daily Times 7th September, 1976, p. 1). The statement was entrenched in the *National Policy on Education 1977* wherein it is stated that: *Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and equal educational opportunities* for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels (*National Policy on Education, 1977, p. 4*). But the concept of equality of educational opportunity which is seen as the basis of the launching of the UPE, is itself subject to various interpretations because it involves

various conceptions. Moreover whichever conception of equality of educational opportunity one holds would certainly influence one's implementation of the concept given a practical situation. Warnock (1977, p. 26), Wringe (1976, p. 88) and Peters (1974 pp. 118) have viewed the concept in terms of social equality wherein fairness and justice are emphasized. Whereas, Lieberman (1961), Coleman (1968) and Akinpelu (1981) have viewed the concept in the light of the following conceptions:

- (i) *formal equality*: which involves making policy statements with the view to foster equality, without necessarily bothering to implement the statements (See Akinpelu 1981, pp. 214-216). Thus this conception of equality only involves the *idea* of equal practical steps towards implementing the idea.
- (ii) *procedural equality*: which involves taking practical steps towards the removal of pupils' educational barriers (e.g. payment of school fees) and the provision of adequate facilities (e.g. supply of books). (See Akinpelu p. 217; Lieberman, 1961, p. 137).
- (iii) *process equality*: which involves the provision of the same type of education for every pupil of the same age group (e.g. through central distribution of teachers, exposure of pupils of the same age group to the same curriculum, and the abolition of promotional examinations, such that pupils of the same age group could move forward at the same time without discrimination) (See Akinpelu 1981, p. 218).
- (iv) *achievement equality*: which involves ensuring that pupils' academic, social, and political attainments are equal. (See Coleman, 1968, p. 17, Akinpelu, 1981, pp. 219-221).

The philosophical positions generally about these conceptions are such that achievement equality (particularly of the *mild* kind) is held in the highest esteem, followed by procedural, process and formal equalities respectively (See Coleman 1968, p. 17, Akinpelu 1981, pp. 212-219, Lieberman 1961, p. 133). Achievement equality of the *mild* kind otherwise known as *mild-achievement* equality, involves the provision of maximum facilities for each category of pupils, such that each pupil irrespective of his financial and similar means, is able to have maximum realization of his potentials according to his ability, interests, and efforts (Akinpelu 1981, p. 221).

It would therefore be important to find out the conception of equality of educational opportunity that the government was interested in implementing in its UPE programme announced in 1976. This would be necessary if a critical analysis of such conception is required in the light of philosophical positions on the concept adopted. Consequently relevant recommendations towards future implementation of the concept would be clearly stated.

This study would analyze the implementation of the concept of equality of educational opportunity in the Universal Primary Education system of Irewole and Ayedade Local Government Areas of Oyo State. The analysis is based on the Universal Primary Education (UPE) became a matter for National Policy on Education (1977) to 1983.

#### METHODOLOGY

The population comprises of all UPE graduates of 1981/82 and 1982/83 sessions



in Irewole and Ayedade Local Government Areas. This is because only these two sets of UPE beneficiaries in the areas had the opportunity of attending the UPE for six full-years between 1976/77 session and 1982/83 session, thus their periods of attendance fell within the year-range that concerns this study (i.e. 1977-1983). However the UPE graduates were already in the (forms 3 and 4) secondary schools education by the time this study was conducted (1985/86 session) which further enabled them to have the competence to fill the Equality of Access Questionnaire (EAQ).

To analyse the implementation of the concept of equality of opportunity in the Universal Primary Education of the Local Government Areas in 1977 - 1983, random sampling procedure was used to select 1,200 UPE graduates of 1981/82 session and 1982/83 session of the Local Government Areas. The UPE graduates were randomly selected from 9 Secondary Schools in the two Local Government Areas. Their stratified-random selection was based on the classification of the schools in the Local Government Areas into the two four divisions. The divisions comprises of Ikire and its environs (division 1); Gbongan, Odeomu and environs (division 2); Apomu, Ikoyi and environs (division 3); and Orile-Owu and Araromi-Owu (division 4). Moreover the random selection took the urban versus rural location of the schools into consideration.

Thirty-four primary schools in the two Local Government Areas were also randomly selected in order to analyse government implementation of the concept of equality of opportunity in the light of government expenditure per pupil, and in the light of distribution of teachers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data collected were subjected to statistical and philosophical analysis as would be found in the following tables and in the discussions that follow.

### Implementation of the Concept of Equality of Opportunity Via Government Expenditure Per Pupil between 1977 and 1981

In the table above, Expenditure per pupil =

$$\frac{\text{No. of teachers} + \text{No. of Classrooms}}{\text{No. of pupils}}$$

The expenditure per pupil was compared for pupils in the four divisions (i.e. categories 1, 2, 3, 4 on table above), and in accordance to whether the pupils were in urban-rural areas (i.e. categories 1, 2 respectively on table). On the table: Expenditure per pupil = EXPPUP; No. of pupils per class = PUPCLA; No. of pupils per teacher = PUPTEA (this is however found on Table 2). Complete data of expenditure per pupil in the 34 selected schools were available for 1977 to 1981 only.

It can be seen from the table above that government expenditure per pupil was the same irrespective of pupils' location in the Local Government Areas and irrespective of whether the pupil's school was in urban or rural area. Moreover expenditure per pupil reduced gradually as one moves from 1977/78 session to 1980/81 session.



Thus the government made provision for the same number of pupils per classroom, and per teacher – the locality notwithstanding. However the uniform expenditure reduced progressively as the pupils themselves increased in number over the years, which shows that the government did not deliberately reduce expenditure rather it was the population explosion of pupils over the years that overwhelmed the resources. But uniform expenditure per pupil only guarantees provision of the same educational facilities (e.g. building, books, teachers) for the pupils; as well as the abolition of social fees and similar barriers: all of which indicate process and procedural implementation of the concept of equality. The provision was not quite adequate because different categories of pupils should not have been given the same educational provision. For instance, pupils from poorer home environments and those from less-privileged socio-economic backgrounds who were found more in the rural schools would certainly need greater financial attention. Thus rather than make uniform provision which is progressively inadequate, the government should strive to ensure adequate expenditure for the various categories of pupils so that pupils of different financial means might still be able to achieve their highest educational goals in accordance to their various interests, abilities and efforts – in spite of their different financial means and home environments. It is when adequate expenditure is ensured in this connection that the government would have implemented mild-achievement equality in the UPE. Admittedly, a lot of expenditure would be incurred and therefore the implementation has to be piece-meal (Lieberman, 1961, p. 133).

#### **Implementation of the Concept of Equality of Opportunity Via Distribution of Teachers between 1977 and 1983**

On the table above, PUPTEA = No. of pupils per teacher; PUPGRA = No. of pupils per teacher with minimum of Grade II Certificate; PUPGRB = No. of pupils per teacher with less than Grade II Certificate.

The implementation of the concept of equality of opportunity via distribution of teachers in the four divisions of the Local Government Areas has been largely discussed under 'Government Expenditure Per Pupil'. This is because government expenditure per pupil was discussed in terms of: number of pupils per teacher and number of classrooms per pupil. So it is only left to say here that the number of pupils per Grade II teacher is less than the number of pupils per less-qualified teacher. In other words fewer pupils enjoyed the services of qualified teachers. However the fact still remains that the government provided various categories of teachers (although many of them were unqualified) which shows that the government would want to make adequate provision of teachers for every category of pupils. This was an effort towards procedural implementation of the concept in the UPE (Akinpelu, 1981; Lieberman, 1961) particularly because also at this time, more classroom buildings, and free books were provided while school fees was abolished. So the government could be commended for its determination in maintaining such provision of teachers in spite of its overwhelmed resources. However the government should explore avenues of ensuring maximum provision of various categories of teachers

so that it could ensure that pupils of various categories of interests, abilities and efforts realize their potentials whereby they would be able to achieve their highest educational goals. When this is done the government would have implemented mid-achievement equality via its distribution of teachers.

#### **Implementation of the Concept of Equality of Opportunity via Pupils Access to Co-Curricula Activities**

The provision made by the government for curricula activities is not enough. It has to foster provision of co-curricula activities as well in implementing the concept of equality of educational opportunity. The provision of co-curricula activities (e.g. sports, games, clubs, societies) was tested in the selected schools for uniformity in the same way as the provision of curricula activities like the sciences, social sciences and language arts. Participation was also tested since it was not necessarily the same as provision in order to see whether pupils participation in the activities was uniform irrespective of pupils school location, socio-economic background, ability to finance the activities, and pupils home environments.

On the table below the four divisions of the Local Government Areas are seen as categories 1, 2, 3, 4; urban-rural areas are seen as categories 1, 2 respectively; while pupil's Home Environment is categorised as 1, 2, 3, to mean educationally poor, medium, rich home environment respectively – this is in accordance with the level of education of pupils parents.

The table above confirms that schools were evenly distributed in the divisions. Pupils belonging to the various divisions irrespective of whether they lived in urban or rural areas, or whether they came from poor, medium, or rich home environment trekked virtually the same distance to school. However the provision of co-curricula activities and pupils participation depended on, and varied with the different divisions, urban-rural areas, different home environments, and different financial capabilities of the pupils. On the average about four co-curricula activities were provided in the schools out of which about two (i.e. as many as half) had to be financed by the pupils. Schools participated in the activities according to their varying abilities to provide for the activities. Thus schools in division 4 participated most followed by those in 3, 1, 2 respectively. Similarly, urban schools and pupils from rich home environments participated more in the activities and that is because the schools and pupils financed the activities more than rural schools and pupils from poor home environments.

In essence although government implementation of the concept in this connection did not just involve the *idea* of providing the activities on the *assumption* that pupils would have equal access to education, (that is, it was not just a formal implementation) the practical implementation was minimal. That was why students with better financial means went ahead to supplement the provision of co-curricula activities whereby they were able to participate in more activities and to achieve more than their less-privileged counterparts. Pupils' different drives for maximum participation and

achievement in the co-curricula activities varies with their different financial means, academic interests, abilities, home environments and socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore in order to ensure that pupils of varying abilities, interests, and efforts achieve their highest educational goals irrespective of their financial abilities and home environments, the government should maximize its provision of co-curricula activities. In essence the process implementation involved in the uniform provision of the co-curricula activities should give way for mild-achievement implementation of the concept of equality of opportunity.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Philosophical positions on the concept of equality of educational opportunity show that the mild-achievement conception is held in the highest esteem, followed by procedural, process and formal-legal equalities respectively. (Coleman 1968, p. 17, Akinpelu 1981, pp. 212-219; Lieberman 1961; p. 133; Warnock 1977, p. 26). But the study shows that government implementation of the concept is not in total agreement with the philosophical positions on the concept. This is because the government also disfavoured the implementation of formal equality in preference for process and procedural equalities, although, it did not give enough prominence to the implementation of achievement equality- particularly mild-achievement equality. It is recommended that government give more prominence to the implementation of mild-achievement equality in the UPE system. This particularly will be applicable to the provision of co-curricula activities – the area that has suffered from inequality of access.

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Table 1  
SUMMARY ANOVA TABLE ON: GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE  
PER PUPIL BETWEEN 1977 AND 1981

Expenditure per Pupil by (1) 4 Divisions (2) Urban-Rural Areas	Grand Mean	Category Deviation				F	Signi- ficance of F
		1	2	3	4		
PUPCLA 1 by Div. (1977/78)	-18.50	-70.51	48.54	4.74	35.32	0.703	0.999
EXPPUP 1 by Div. "	0.28	-0.21	-0.02	0.21	0.07	0.689	0.999
PUPCLA 1 by Ur. Rur. "	-18.50	-54.28	25.96			1.314	0.259
EXPPUP 1 by " "	0.28	0.14	-0.06			0.711	0.999
PUPCLA 2 by Div. (1978/79)	25.56	2.45	9.59	-10.01	-6.06	0.761	0.999
EXPPUP 2 by Div. "	0.12	0.15	-0.06	-0.28	-0.33	1.475	0.241
PUPCLA 2 by Ur.-Rur. "	25.56	4.25	-2.03			0.325	0.999
EXPPUP 2 by " "	0.12	-0.07	0.04			0.242	0.999
PUPCLA 3 by Div. (1979/80)	27.36	5.25	10.60	-14.32	-5.92	0.621	0.999
EXPPUP 3 by " "	-0.71	-1.84	0.77	0.77	0.75	0.782	0.999
PUPCLA 3 by Ur.-Rur. "	27.36	1.85	-0.88			0.030	0.999
EXPPUP 3 by " "	-0.71	-1.60	0.77			2.160	0.148
PUPCLA 4 by Div. (1980/81)	21.88	11.65	5.68	-16.09	-5.69	0.858	0.999
EXPPUP 4 by Div. "	-1.10	0.36	-1.11	0.19	1.16	0.338	0.999
PUPCLA 4 by Ur.-Rur. "	21.88	14.70	-7.03			2.282	0.137
EXPPUP 4 by " "	-1.10	-0.91	0.44			0.700	0.999

\*P &lt; 0.05 (significant Result).

Table 2  
SUMMARY ANOVA TABLE ON:  
DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS BETWEEN 1977 AND 1983

Distribution of Teachers by (1) 4 Divisions (2) 2 Areas (Urban-Rural)	Grand Mean	Category Deviation				F	Signi- ficance of F
		1	2	3	4		
PUPTEA 1 by Div. (1977/78)	22.41	2.56	4.37	-3.10	-8.29	2.251	0.102
PUPTEA 1 by Ur.-Rur. "	22.41	3.05	-1.46			1.346	0.254
PUPTEA 2 by Div. (1978/79)	23.74	0.76	3.96	-3.32	-3.46	1.185	0.332
PUPTEA 2 by Ur.-Rur. "	23.74	3.04	-1.45			1.668	0.203
PUPTEA 3 by Div. (1979/80)	28.96	-0.53	0.58	-2.58	4.55	0.779	0.999
PUPTEA 3 by Ur.-Rur. "	28.96	-0.23	0.11			0.012	0.999
PUPTEA 4 by Div. (1980/81)	23.99	5.03	-3.64	-4.51	5.34	1.092	0.369
PUPTEA 4 by Ur.-Rur. "	23.99	6.64	-3.17			3.520	0.067
PUPTEA 5 by Div. (1982/83)	30.29	-1.90	-0.40	1.26	2.35	0.129	0.999
PUPGRA 5 by Div. "	58.91	-4.65	-1.62	4.31	4.79	0.119	0.999
PUPGRB 5 by Div. "	77.80	10.19	-11.82	-2.59	7.94	0.188	0.999
PUPTEA 5 by Ur.-Rur. "	30.29	1.51	-0.72			0.190	0.999
PUPGRA 5 by " "	58.91	-4.16	1.99			0.204	0.999
PUPGRB 5 " "	77.80	1.03	-0.49			0.004	0.999

\*P &lt; 0.05 (Significant Result).

**Table 3**  
**SUMMARY ANOVA TABLE ON: EQUALITY OF**  
**ACCESS TO UNIFORM CO-CURRICULA ACTIVITIES**

Equality of ACCESS by (1) 4 Divisions (2) 3 Distances (3) 2 Areas (Ur.-Rur.) (4) 3 Home Envir.	Grand Mean	Category Deviation				F	Signi- ficance of F
		1	2	3	4		
No. of Games and Sports by Div.	1.75	0.10	-0.07	0.02	-0.13	6.443*	0.001
No. of Clubs & Soc. by Div.	2.13	0.20	-0.21	-0.22	0.49	19.836*	0.001
Clubs Participation by Div.	1.47	0.02	-0.14	0.09	0.18	7.155*	0.001
No. of Games fin. by Div.	1.09	0.09	-0.07	-0.10	0.14	17.941*	0.001
No. of Games by Div.	1.28	0.16	-0.18	0.00	0.07	15.619*	0.001
No. of Games by Urban-Rur.	1.75	0.08	-0.16			39.045*	0.001
No. of Clubs by Urban-Rur.	2.13	0.20	-0.38			72.046*	0.001
Clubs partic. by Urban-Rur	1.47	0.10	-0.18			30.139*	0.001
No. of Games fin. by Ur.-Ru.	1.09	0.02	-0.04			4.917*	0.025
No. of Clubs fin. by Ur.-Rur.	1.28	0.12	-0.23			63.259*	0.001
Schl. Dist. by Ur-Rur.	1.59	0.01	-0.02			0.608	0.999
School Dist. by Home Env.	1.59	-0.01	0.02	-0.06		0.535	0.999
No. of Games fin. by Sc. Dis.	1.09	0.02	-0.02	-0.01		0.834	0.999
No. of Clubs fin. by Sc. Dis	1.28	0.01	0.02	-0.19		2.413	0.088
Clubs partic. by Distance	1.47	0.02	-0.00	-0.15		1.233	0.292
No. of Games by Home Envir.	1.75	-0.05	0.04	0.21		4.975*	0.007
No. of Clubs by Home Envir.	2.13	-0.15	0.12	0.72	0.72	17.276*	0.001
No. of Games fin. by H.Env.	1.09	-0.02	0.01	0.17		4.356*	0.013
No. of Clubs " " "	1.28	-0.09	0.07	0.46		15.845*	0.001
Clubs partic. by H.Envir.	1.47	-0.12	0.10	0.66		24.831*	0.001

\*P < 0.05 (Significant Result)