

# Plato's Theory Of Education In Comparison With The Deregulation Of Education In North Central, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study examined Plato's theory of education in comparison with the deregulation of education in North Central, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design in which four research questions were formulated. The population of the study consists of 31,486 subjects (31,415 teachers and 71 SUBEB principal officials, in North Central, Nigeria). A multi-stage sampling technique was used in sampling 530 respondents (499 primary school teachers and 31 SUBEB principal officials). A researcher developed questionnaire titled "Plato's theory of education and education deregulation Questionnaire (PTEEDQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from Philosophy of Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. This yielded reliability indices of cluster A, 0.82, Cluster B, 0.76, Cluster C, 0.78, and Cluster D, 0.7 with an overall reliability score of 0.77. The four research questions were answered using mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD). The result showed that education deregulation has not provided access to equality of educational opportunity in line with Plato's theory of education, education deregulation has not helped in the provision of education for state unity in line with Plato's theory of education, education deregulation has not helped in the provision of compulsory access to basic education in line with Plato's theory of education, education deregulation has not helped in the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning as enunciated by Plato. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher among others recommends that; Government through Federal ministry of education should provide relevant curriculum which emphasize vocational education for the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning.

**Keywords:** Education, theory, educational theory, education deregulation.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a discipline that is directed to man as no other animal whether lower or higher receives education. We often talk of training dogs, cats, monkeys and other animals, but in the case of man, we think in terms of educating man. This implies that education is an act that distinguishes human beings from other creations. It is the act of teaching or training. It throws light on the principles and practice of teaching. Education is a process in which and by which the knowledge, characters and behaviours of the human being are shaped and molded. For Plato (428-347 BC), education is the capacity to feel pleasure and pain at the right moment. Aristotle (384-322 BC) viewed education as the creation

of sound mind in a sound body. It develops man's faculty specially his mind so that he may be able to enjoy the contemplation of supreme truth, goodness and beauty. Going by the notion of the above celebrated and classical thinkers, it is noteworthy to assert that education is a process which enables an individual to distinguish between the true and false, the good and bad, the right conduct and the evil doing. All these benefits of education according to Mbaji, Enemu and Kabiru (2018) can only be actualized through the proper guidance of sound educational theories.

A theory provides general explanation to phenomena. Peretomode (1991) conceived theory to be a set of interrelated concepts, ideas, propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena. In a related view, Feigi (1991) puts it that theory is a set of propositions that can be arrived at from logical and mathematical procedures or through empirical evidence. Theory takes into consideration pieces of knowledge, facts, and laws of models in order to make meaning out of them. It is applicable in every aspect of human endeavour and in every discipline such as medicine, law, pharmacy, education among others. Educational theory according to Okonkwo (1999) is defined as the theory of purpose, application and interpretation of education and learning. Educational theory is a means to gain knowledge, inculcate the forms of proper conduct and acquire technical competency in education. For Mbaji (2012), the main reason for educational theories is the application and interpretation of education that will bring desired change in the society, to develop a generation of virtuous individuals and thus contribute to the development of good human being.

Educational theories help for the preparation and application of sound and worthwhile education. Akinpelu (2005) upholds that it is only education with the proper guidance of sound educational theories that will enable an individual to preserve, maintain and upgrade its societal values and aspiration, knowledge and skills, make informed choices, broaden their horizon and opportunities and to have a choice in public decision making. From the above discussions, one can deduce that a vital and robust educational policy inevitably incorporates virtually theories of philosophers on education. This was illustrated in the educational theories of many philosophers such as Aristotle's and Plato's theories of education.

Plato's theory of education could be described as a carefully staged exhibition and investigation of education in the broadest sense, including all that affects the formation of character and mind (Mbaji, 2013). It is a systematic process through which worthwhile knowledge needed in any educated person could be achieved so as to enable such person to function effectively in the society. Plato's theory of education is an attempt to address issues relating to teaching and learning that is capable of enabling the society to achieve its envisaged goals. For Plato, in his theory of education, the aim of education is to achieve human perfection. It involves the total training of character and aims at producing a morally mature individual. It is, in other words, fundamentally moral in nature. Education involves the total training of character. Its goal is to produce people who are attracted to the good and repulsed by the evil.

Plato emphasized on the theory of equal educational opportunity. The main thrust of this theory is that education should be provided for all citizens. Plato suggested the same type of education to be given to an entire class of people, according to uniform curriculum. This will help the citizens to develop both themselves and the city state. For that reason, boys and girls should be educated together. Women should have the same physical and educational training; they should know the art of war (Plato, 1941). The main aim of education was that each member of the society should undertake his work and responsibilities. Plato believed that women are equal to men. Although, some women are physically smaller or weaker while some are physically equal to men. Therefore, those women who are physically strong should be allowed to acquire the same skills that men do. Plato maintained that male and female should receive the same education and be given the same duties in the society.

Plato also stressed on the theory of education for state unity. For him education must be to develop esprit de corps, that is, the sense or feeling of community life, for the state is superior to the individual. Every citizen must be trained to dedicate himself unreservedly to the state and to forgo private interests (Plato, 1941). Every individual must work to achieve his own perfection and the perfection of the state. There cannot be a perfect state without a perfect man. Man can only become perfect through education. It is based on this premise that Plato defined education as what makes a man eagerly pursue the ideal perfection of citizenship and teaches him how rightly to rule and how to obey (Rusk, 1969).

Plato equally emphasized on the state provision of education. He maintained that education should be provided by the state and not by parents. According to Plato, education is primarily a state function therefore; the philosophy of education forms the heart of any discussion of government (Plato, 1970). Plato emphasized that education should be completely under the control of the state. As such, the state provides the teachers, buildings, and controls the curriculum and methods of teaching. He lamented that the failure of the old Athenian education was due to the failure of parents to inculcate the virtues and training of the children. Plato's conclusion was that family training cannot be trusted; the good of the state demands public control of breeding, nursing and training of the children.

Plato's polis (state) is essentially an educational community. Thus, it can survive only on the condition that all its citizens receive an education that enables them to make rational political decisions (Nwobodo, 2008). It is up to education to preserve the state intact and to defend it against all harmful innovations. The aim of education is not personal growth but service of the state, which is the guarantor of the happiness of its citizens for as long as they allow it to be the embodiment of justice. Plato believes that the child belongs to the state and its education is the responsibility of the state. Education must be compulsory for all. State funds should be used to pay for gymnasiums, instructors, officials, and superintendents in charge of education, both cultural and physical.

With particular reference to Nigeria educational system, education is conceived as the responsibility of the state and is included in the annual budget. In demonstrating the state responsibility to education, the Federal Government of Nigeria provided in section 18(1) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), that government "shall direct its policies towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities to all Nigerians at all levels of education". The governments' commitment to education also resulted in the federal government takeover of education at all levels and from all organizations in the 1980 in order to ensure equal and adequate educational opportunities to all Nigerians (Onwuka, 1997). When government cannot cope with running of education, invitations were extended to private individuals and corporate bodies to participate in the ownership and management of schools in the name of Education deregulation policy.

Education deregulation policy was established in Nigeria consequent on the provisions of section 2(14) (a); 4(19) (i); 5(26); 8(67) of the fourth edition of the national policy on education document in line with the privatization and commercialization policy as provided by the decree no, 9 of 1993 now deemed an Act of the Nigeria National Assembly and by parity of reasoning, a state law (the 1999 constitution, section 315(1) (a)(b)). By these provisions private individuals, groups, Non Governmental Organizations and voluntary agencies, are invited to participate in establishing, managing and funding of schools alongside government owned institutions (FRN, 2008).

Deregulation is the removal of government regulations from a system or an institution to allow the participation of private bodies. Deregulation in other words means privatization. For Adagba, Ugwu & Eme (2012), deregulation is a way of removing impediments to trade thereby allowing the free interplay of the forces of demand and supply in the determination of the prices of commodities. It entails, privatization, elimination of price control and barriers to participation in the production and distribution of goods and services. Enemu (2005), conceived education deregulation as throwing the door open to encourage a wider participation of individuals, groups and non-governmental organizations in the setting up, ownership and management of educational institutions. Education deregulation is the liberalization of access to the establishment, ownership and management of educational institutions. From the estimation of Ejide (2005), deregulation of education is decentralizing the control of educational system, freeing the schools from centralized authority, control, mandates and government monopolies and allowing the control of the educational system to devolve on local authorities nearer to the students. Owing to above definitions, there are numerous educational institutions at all levels owned by private bodies operating alongside with public schools in the country today.

Deregulation, is a worthwhile economic policy but its application to education in Nigeria does not seem to be worthy. This is because of its opposing stand point to the attainment of the UBE objectives. For instance, the objective of developing in the entire citizenry, a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion is yet to be attained owing to deregulation of education.

Education deregulation can neither aid in developing education consciousness nor promote it. This is because private investors, according to Adoga (2008) tend to pay more premiums to profit maximization than on quality and

standard services. Ali (2006) points out with dismay that most of the private schools are owned by some government officials and their cronies, it is not surprising then that these government officials deny public funds to public schools, if only to sabotage public schools to allow their private schools to thrive for the highest bidders, an act aimed at high profit margin. Academic excellence has therefore continued to elude Nigeria since, according to Duze (2011), the private schools also operate under the vagaries of Nigerian circumstance of corruption where much is done on paper but very little done at implementation. Kaplan (2003) asserts that education deregulation amounts to sale of knowledge to the highest bidder and hence, possibly, lowering of standards to attract patronage. This means that, the objective of developing in the entire citizenry, a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion might not be attained under a deregulated educational system.

The decaying state of the education system in the country indicates that, in reality, the objectives of education deregulation are yet to be attained. Omoleke (2010) lamented that the status of Nigerian educational system at the moment especially, in the North Central has nothing to envy, it is low in quality and standard, limited in its reach, non-functional in its products and disturbing in its future. Equally, Dappa and Dagogo (2010) stated that the rot in the North Central education system and the pitiable state of the UBE scheme is a fact which has been blamed on poor funding and such other factors as inadequacy of materials, statistical data and qualified personnel. These abnormalities therefore, aroused the interest of the researcher to investigate the state of Plato's theory of education in comparison with the deregulation of education in North Central Education Zone of Nigeria.

## Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions are stated.

1. In what ways has education deregulation provided access to equality of educational opportunity in line with Plato's theory of education?
2. In what ways has education deregulation helped in the provision of education for state unity in line with Plato's theory of education?
3. In what ways has education deregulation helped in the provision of compulsory access to basic education in line with Plato's theory of education?
4. In what ways has education deregulation helped in the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning as enunciated Plato?

## Research Materials and Methods

**Design of the Study:** Descriptive survey research design was adopted as the design of the study.

**Area of the Study:** The study was carried out in all the public primary schools in the North Central States of Nigeria. The States in the North Central are Benue, Kogi, Nassarawa, Niger, Plateau, Kwara and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. These areas are contiguous and they make up the Middle Belt with Hausa as their common language. The states comprise 119 Local Government Areas as follows: Benue -23, Kogi -21, Nassarawa-13, Niger-25, Kwara-16 Plateau-17 and Abuja Federal Capital Territory -6. Benue state shares boundary with Nassarawa state to the North, Taraba state to the East, Cross River to the South, Enugu to the South West and Kogi to the West. Nassarawa state shares boundaries with Kaduna, Benue, Plateau, Taraba, The federal capital territory and Kogi State. Plateau is bothered by Bauchi to the North East, Kaduna to the North West, Nassarawa to the South West and Taraba to the South East. Niger state shares boundaries with FCT, Kwara and Kaduna. Kogi State shares boundaries with Kwara State, Benue state, FCT. Abuja shares boundaries with Nassarawa, Niger, Kogi and Kwara. Niger state shares boundaries with FCT, Kaduna and Kwara. These states are made up of people from various occupations such as civil servants, politicians, private workers, farmers and business men and women but the major occupation of the people in

these states is farming. The area is chosen for the study by the researcher because of the pitiable state of the UBE scheme in the North Central education system which has been blamed on factors such as inadequacy of materials and qualified personnel whereas education deregulation was in place to provide access to free and equal education for the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning.

### Population of the Study

The population for the study consists of 31,486 subjects. (31,415 teachers and 71 SUBEB principal officials). Statistics available shows that teachers and SUBEB principal officials staff strength are as follows; Niger state 1282 teachers and 10 SUBEB principal officials, Plateau state 15045 teachers and 11 principal officials, Nasarawa state 2,430 teachers and 12 principal officials, Benue state 454 teachers and 11 principal officials, Kogi state 759 teachers and 7 principal officials, Kwara state 1,268 teachers and 12 principal officials and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja 10,177 teachers and 8 principal officials. (Source: Teaching Service Board (TSB) Niger state, Plateau state, Nasarawa state, Kogi state, Kwara state and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja (2016 /2017) academic session).

### Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study consists of 530 respondents (499 primary school teachers and 31 SUBEB principal officials). A multi-stage sampling technique was used to get the sample size for the study. Three stages of selection used in order to draw the sample for the study. For the first stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select the number of states for the study. Out of seven states in the North-central Nigeria namely; Benue, Kogi, Nassarawa, Niger, Plateau, Kwara and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, only three states; Benue, Kogi and Niger states was sampled. In the second stage, 15 primary schools were randomly selected five in each state, out of the three states selected. In the third stage, simple random sampling was adopted to sample 20% of the subjects in the three primary schools. This includes: Benue 91 teachers, Kogi 151 and Niger 257 plus all the 31 SUBEB principal officials in the three states amounting to 530 as the sample size.

**Instrument for Data Collection:** A structured instrument titled “Plato’s theory of education and education deregulation Questionnaire (PTEEDQ) developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A and B. Section A comprises information regarding the demographic data of the respondents. Section B contains 46 items built on four clusters namely; Cluster A comprises 12 items on the ways education deregulation provides access to equality of educational opportunity in line with Plato’s theory of education; Cluster B comprises 12 items on the impact of education deregulation on the provision of education for state unity in line with Plato’s theory of education; Cluster C comprises 12 items on impact of education deregulation on the provision of compulsory access to basic education in line with Plato’s theory of education and Cluster D comprises 10 items on ways education deregulation has impacted on the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning as enunciated by Plato. The instruments was based on a four point rating scale with the following response mode as follows: for cluster A, B, C and D, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with weight scores of SA= 4 points, A= 3 points, D= 2 points and SD= 1 point.

**Validation of the Instrument:** The instrument was given to three experts for face validation. Two of the validates majored in Philosophy of Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation, all from Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The validates were required to scrutinize the items of the instrument in terms of relevance to the study, the adequacy of the items in collecting data to address the purpose of the study. The validates examined the level and appropriateness of language of the items of the instrument. Also, the experts examined the clusters and matched them with research questions and hypotheses. The comments, suggestions and criticisms made independently by the experts helped the researcher to modify and produce the final instrument. Consequently, items that were initially 33 were increased to 36.

**Reliability of the Instrument:** Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire were trial tested on a sample of 10 primary school teachers in ten different schools and 10 SUBEB principal officials in the North-western Nigeria outside the area of the study. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha statistical method was used. Reliability coefficient for the clusters of the instrument was; Cluster A, 0.82, Cluster B, 0.76, Cluster C, 0.78 and Cluster D, 0.74. These gave an overall reliability score of 0.77.

**Method of Data Collection:** Copies of the questionnaire was administered directly to the respondents using five research assistants. The five research assistants were employed and instructed by the researcher on how to distribute the instrument so as to ensure safe handling and maximum retrieval of the filled instrument. The content of the instrument was discussed to the research assistants so as to let them be familiar with the modalities of administering the instrument in appropriate and effective ways. The reason for the instruction and using research assistants is to ensure that the actual respondents, primary school teachers and SUBEB principal officials in reality, filled the questionnaire.

**Method of Data Analysis:** Data collected was answered using mean scores and standard deviation. The benchmark will be 2.50. Any mean score from 2.50 and above will be regarded as positive while below will be considered as negative response.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** In what ways has education deregulation provided access to equality of educational opportunity in line with Plato's theory of education?

**Table 1:** Mean scores and standard deviation of primary school teachers and SUBEB officials on the ways education deregulation has provided access to equality of educational opportunity in line with Plato's theory of education.

S/N	Items	Pri. Sch. Teachers		SUBEB Officials	
		MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
1.	Providing equal right to quality education to every Nigerian child.	1.80	0.39	1.78	0.41
2.	Upholding education as a fundamental human right	1.89	0.30	1.92	0.26
3.	Ensuring access to education by bringing schools closer to the masses.	1.85	0.35	1.82	0.39
4.	Ensuring wider access to education by making it free at the basic educational level.	2.70	0.45	2.64	0.48
5.	Making classrooms accessible to children with physical disabilities	1.60	0.49	1.64	0.48
6.	Ensuring that boys and girls receive equal time from the teachers	2.80	0.39	2.78	0.41
7.	Ensuring that boys and girls receive equal attention from the teachers	2.60	0.49	2.57	0.50
8.	Ensuring that children are not discriminated against according to religion in the school	1.69	0.45	1.75	0.44
9.	Ensuring that teachers have no cultural bias in favour of educating the boy-child	1.82	0.39	1.78	0.41

10.	Ensuring that children with disabilities are given equal attention with other children in the school	2.89	0.30	2.92	0.26
11.	Ensuring that there is no discrimination between children according to tribe	1.88	0.38	1.92	0.39
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>2.16</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>0.41</b>

Table 1 presents the opinions of primary school teachers and SUBEB officials on the ways education deregulation has provided access to equality of educational opportunity in line with Plato's theory of education. In response to items 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9 and 11, both primary school teachers and SUBEB officials disagree that education deregulation has not provided access to equality of educational opportunity in line with Plato's theory of education in terms of providing equal right to quality education to every Nigerian child, upholding education as a fundamental human right, ensuring access to education by bringing schools closer to the masses, making classrooms accessible to children with physical disabilities, ensuring that children are not discriminated against according to religion in the school, ensuring that teachers have no cultural bias in favour of educating the boy-child and ensuring that there is no discrimination between children according to tribe with the mean scores of 1.80, 1.78; 1.89, 1.92; 1.85, 1.82; 1.60, 1.64; 1.69, 1.75; 1.82, 1.78; 1.88 and 1.92 respectively. In items 4, 6, 7 and 10, both respondents agree that education deregulation in line with Plato's theory of education has been tried by ensuring wider access to education by making it free at the basic educational level, ensuring that boys and girls receive equal time and attention from the teachers and that children with disabilities are given equal attention with other children in the school with the mean scores of 2.70, 2.64; 2.80, 2.78; 2.60, 2.57; 2.89 and 2.92 respectively. The table showed a cluster means of 2.16 with a standard deviation of 0.39 (for primary school teachers) and 2.14 with standard deviation of 0.41 (for SUBEB officials).

**Research Question 2:** In what ways has education deregulation helped in the provision of education for state unity in line with Plato's theory of education?

**Table 2:** Mean scores and standard deviation of primary school teachers and SUBEB officials on the ways education deregulation has helped in the provision of education for state unity in line with Plato's theory of education

S/N	Items	Pri. Sch. Teachers		SUBEB Officials	
		MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
12.	Inculcation of national unity as one indivisible Nigeria	1.79	0.40	1.82	0.39
13.	preparing students to resist violence through the promotion of principles of human freedom	1.95	0.21	1.92	0.26
14.	Inculcation of extended understanding	2.00	0.54	2.03	0.50
15.	Promotion of inter-Nigeria solidarity	1.90	0.29	1.85	0.35
16.	Inculcation of national values such as togetherness	2.05	0.49	2.51	0.54
17.	Inculcation of understanding ideologies such as tolerance	1.85	0.65	1.78	0.68
18.	Building of mutual confidence	1.70	0.64	1.71	0.59
19.	Developing a sense of co-operation	1.75	0.43	1.71	0.46
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>1.91</b>	<b>0.47</b>

Table 2 shows the opinions of primary school teachers and SUBEB officials on the ways education deregulation has helped in the provision of education for state unity in line with Plato's theory of education. All the items, with the exemption of item 16 were rated disagree in the mean responses of primary school teachers and SUBEB officials with the mean scores of 1.79, 1.82; 1.95, 1.92; 2.00, 2.03; 1.90, 1.85; 1.85, 1.78; 1.70, 1.71; 1.75 and 1.71 respectively. This is below the criterion point of 2.5 at four point rating scale. These imply that education deregulation has not helped in the provision of education for state unity in line with Plato's theory of education in such areas as the inculcation of national unity as one indivisible Nigeria, preparing students to resist violence through the promotion of principles of human freedom, inculcation of extended understanding, promotion of inter-Nigeria solidarity, inculcation of understanding ideologies such as tolerance, building of mutual confidence and developing a sense of co-operation. In response to item 16, views of the respondents vary. Primary school teachers disagree that education deregulation has not helped in the provision of education for state unity in line with Plato's theory of education in such areas as the inculcation of national values such as togetherness with the mean scores of 2.05. SUBEB officials agree with the mean score of 2.51. The table showed a cluster means of 1.87 with a standard deviation of 0.45 (for primary school teachers) and 1.91 with standard deviation of 0.47 (for SUBEB officials).

**Research Question 3:** In what ways has education deregulation helped in the provision of compulsory access to basic education in line with Plato's theory of education?

**Table 3:** Mean scores and standard deviation of primary school teachers and SUBEB officials on the ways education deregulation helped in the provision of compulsory access to basic education in line with Plato's theory of education

S/N	Items	Pri. Sch. Teachers		SUBEB Officials	
		MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
20.	Discouraging school drop-out through the provision of free writing materials	1.90	0.29	1.85	0.35
21.	Discouraging school drop-out through the provision of free transportation	2.06	0.49	2.02	0.54
22.	encourage enrolment of children with disabilities in the community	1.85	0.65	1.78	0.68
23.	Encouraging the enrolment of children that drop out of schools	1.70	0.64	1.71	0.59
24.	Ensuring that street trading by young children of school age are prohibited by national legislation	1.75	0.43	1.71	0.46
25.	Establishing educational task force to enforce the laws pertaining the universal basic education	1.50	0.52	1.53	0.51
26.	Ensuring that teachers does not form effort on those children from wealthy families	1.94	0.59	1.96	0.57
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>1.78</b>	<b>0.53</b>

Table 3 displays the opinions of primary school teachers and SUBEB officials on the ways education deregulation helped in the provision of compulsory access to basic education in line with Plato's theory of education. The results

as presented on the table showed that all the items had their mean scores below the cut-off point of 2.5. This disclosed that both respondents maintained that education deregulation has not helped in the provision of compulsory access to basic education in line with Plato's theory of education. Based on the analysis as reported on the table, item 25, which sought to establish if educational task force enforces laws pertaining the universal basic education had the lowest mean score of 1.50; followed by item 23 which focused on encouraging the enrolment of children that drop out of schools with mean score of 1.71. The remaining items had mean scores ranging between 1.74 – 2.03 which are below the criterion mean of 2.5 at four point rating scale. The table showed a cluster means of 1.81 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.50 (for primary school teachers) and 1.78 with standard deviation of 0.53 (for SUBEB officials).

**Research Question 4:** In what ways has education deregulation helped in the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning as enunciated by Plato?

**Table 4:** Mean scores and standard deviation of primary school teachers and SUBEB officials on the ways education deregulation helped in the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning as enunciated Plato

S/N	Items	Pri. Sch. Teachers		SUBEB Officials	
		MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
27.	Providing the child with diverse basic skills for entrepreneurship development	1.95	0.21	1.92	0.26
28.	Provide the child with basic knowledge for educational advancement	2.15	0.85	2.17	0.81
29.	Equipping schools with the academic facilities to ensue the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy.	1.90	0.29	1.85	0.35
30.	Equipping schools with the infrastructural facilities to ensue the acquisition of appropriate levels of skills	1.85	0.65	1.78	0.68
31.	Providing relevant curriculum which emphasize vocational education for the acquisition of appropriate level of knowledge.	1.50	0.52	2.57	0.48
32.	Providing relevant curriculum which emphasize technical education for the acquisition of appropriate level of skill	2.05	0.54	2.51	0.49
33.	Providing adequate qualified personnel for effective teaching of skills in the schools.	1.50	0.51	1.53	0.52
34.	Upgrading infrastructures to meet the changing technological needs for lifelong learning.	1.79	0.40	1.82	0.39
35.	Ensuring the acquisition of skills through engaging students in industrial training.	1.95	0.21	1.92	0.26
36.	Ensuring the acquisition of technical knowledge through engaging students in industrial training.	2.00	0.54	2.03	0.50

37.	Promoting functional education for skill acquisition	1.90	0.29	1.85	0.35
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>1.86</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>1.94</b>	<b>0.46</b>

Table 4 presents the opinions of primary school teachers and SUBEB officials on the ways education deregulation helped in the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning as enunciated Plato. All the items, with the exemption of items 31 and 32, 16 were rated below the criterion point of 2.5 at four point rating scale with the scores of 1.95, 1.92; 2.15, 2.17; 1.90, 1.85; 1.85, 1.78; 1.50, 1.53; 1.79, 1.82; 1.95, 1.92; 2.00, 2.03; 1.90 and 1.85 respectively. By implication, education deregulation has not helped in the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning as enunciated by Plato in areas like providing the child with diverse basic skills for entrepreneurship development, basic knowledge for educational advancement, acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, acquisition of appropriate levels of skills, providing adequate qualified personnel for effective teaching of skills in the schools and upgrading infrastructures to meet the changing technological needs for lifelong learning. In items 31 and 32, views of the respondents vary. Primary school teachers disagree that education deregulation has not helped in the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning as enunciated by Plato with the mean scores of 1.50 and 2.05. SUBEB officials in their own responses agree with the mean scores of 2.57 and 2.51. The table showed a cluster means of 1.86 with a standard deviation of 0.44 (for primary school teachers) and 1.94 with standard deviation of 0.46 (for SUBEB officials).

## Discussion of Results

### Ways education deregulation provides access to equality of educational opportunity

Research question one was concerned about the ways education deregulation has provided access to equality of educational opportunity in line with Plato's theory of education. It was discovered that education deregulation has not provided access to equality of educational opportunity in line with Plato's theory of education. This implies that the main thrust of Plato on equality of educational opportunity has not been met. This informed the earlier assertion of Thompson (1982) that fair play and social justice will be enhanced by "extending educational opportunities in order that all members of society have equal opportunities to compete for the limited number of position of privilege.

Based on the findings of the study, it is obvious that education deregulation has not provided access to equality of educational opportunity in line with Plato's theory of education in terms of providing equal right to quality education to every Nigerian child, upholding education as a fundamental human right, ensuring access to education by bringing schools closer to the masses, making classrooms accessible to children with physical disabilities, ensuring that children are not discriminated against according to religion in the school, ensuring that teachers have no cultural bias in favour of educating the boy-child and ensuring that there is no discrimination between children according to tribe. This finding is surprising considering the fact that several efforts and declarations have been made with respect to equality of educational opportunity. For instance, section 18.1 of the Nigerian Constitution of 1979 emphasized that government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels. Notwithstanding all efforts and declarations to ensure equality of educational opportunity, why is there still disparities in education? Going by the present state of knowledge and practice of education in Nigeria, has the Nigerian educational system succeeded in effecting equality of opportunity? No educational system has succeeded in effecting equality of opportunity to achieve success. Baikie (1999) recognized that problems have been created by noticeable disparities in education between sections of the country. For Ejie (2004), equal educational opportunities can be enhanced if parents can participate actively in school administration particularly in decision making. Positive discrimination by the local education anticipative in favour of very poor neighbourhood in respect of allocation of

educational resources will enhance equalization of educational opportunity. To ensure the maintenance of standards among the schools and to promptly take any necessary remedial actions the school needs to be effectively supervised.

### **Ways education deregulation helped for the provision of education for state unity**

The results of this section of the research showed that education deregulation has not helped in the provision of education for state unity in line with Plato's theory of education. The finding is obvious because according to Francis (2006), in a nation where violence, conflicts, corruption and bad governance prevails, it will be an overstatement to talk of state unity.

Based on the finding of the study, education deregulation has not helped in the provision of education for state unity in line with Plato's theory of education in such areas like the inculcation of national unity as one indivisible Nigeria, extended understanding, understanding ideologies such as tolerance, building of mutual confidence, developing a sense of co-operation and preparing students to resist violence through the promotion of principles of human freedom. This is an indication that Education deregulation has a great role to play in the provision of state unity as enunciated by Plato. This being the case, is it a reasonable expectation that education deregulation is a precondition for state unity? As expressed by Ihonvbere (1993), the world's future depends upon a growing need for state unity for a better understanding of all the risks and threats that affect populations and individuals. Notwithstanding, the question then is: is it truly possible to have a state unity in Nigeria through education deregulation? As earlier stated by Adepoju (1999), all hope is on education and it is through the undertakings of education that people will learn how to tolerate each person's dissimilarities, build mutual confidence and develop a sense of co-operation to resist violence through the promotion of principles of human freedom. The rationale behind the result of the study is emphasis to recognize the crucial role of education deregulation in relation to Plato's theory of education that will inform people with values and knowledge to love one another and the world at large that will contribute towards a state unity.

### **Ways education deregulation helped for the provision of compulsory access to basic education**

This study as regards to research question three found that education deregulation has not helped in the provision of compulsory access to basic education in line with Plato's theory of education. The result of the study is obvious in such areas like discouraging school drop-out through the provision of free writing materials and free transportation, encouraging the enrolment of children that drop out of schools, ensuring that street trading by young children of school age are prohibited by national legislation and establishing educational task force to enforce the laws pertaining the universal basic education.

The finding of the study is an indication that educational materials such as writing materials are vital elements which schools must employ for the actualization of the provision of compulsory access to basic education. This informed the earlier assertion of Akinsolu (2004) that the actualization of the goal of the Universal Basic Education in such area like the provision of compulsory access to basic education is to a large extent dependent on the adequacy and availability of educational facilities. In setting the tune of this discussion, one may be bordered to ask a question like: how can we be talking of the provision of compulsory access to basic education at the absence of adequacy and availability of educational facilities and material? This question is as well as talking of convocation before admission. In an attempt to address this issue, Abutu (2007) stated that many primary schools lack educational facilities like computer set, drawing board, textbooks, desk and chair, lockers among others for the actualization of compulsory access to basic education. Thus, the question then is: when educational facilities are lacking, is there no tendency that the goal of the Universal Basic Education in such area like the provision of compulsory access to basic education will not be actualized?

### **Ways education deregulation helped for the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning**

The result of the study also found that education deregulation has not helped in the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning as enunciated by Plato. This is an indication that the quality of education offered in this area is not adequate for the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning. The finding informed the earlier assertion of Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) that no meaningful progress can take place in any educational institution or at any school level at the absence of adequacy and availability of educational facilities and material.

Based on the finding of the study, it is obvious that education deregulation has not helped in the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning as enunciated by Plato in areas like providing the child with diverse basic skills for entrepreneurship development, equipping schools with the academic and infrastructural facilities to ensue the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, providing relevant curriculum which emphasize vocational education for the acquisition of appropriate level of knowledge, providing adequate qualified personnel for effective teaching of skills in the schools and upgrading infrastructures to meet the changing technological needs for lifelong learning. This finding is line with Odia and Ome (2007) that infrastructural facilities such as buildings, laboratories, workshops and administrative blocks among others are lacking and if available are grossly inadequate for the purpose of teaching, learning and the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning. Going by the above findings, is it truly possible for the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy and life-long learning to be actualize in such school system? Facilities in the Nigerian primary school are inadequate, bad and outdated. In most primary schools, their buildings are as old as when the institutions were founded. It is worrisome to note that due to inadequate classrooms and laboratories, for teaching and learning, students are overcrowded in the available classrooms. Some are seen standing; some sitting on the windows while others are seen hanging around the corridors and corners of the classrooms (Baribor, 2003). Going by the above state of affairs, the issue at this juncture is; will the students see the basic education system as a means of acquiring certificates or the desired skills such as the appropriate level of literacy? Can there be appropriate level of literacy without a sound educational system? The implication of the above finding is that buildings, laboratories and are highly needed if the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning will be attained.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that;

- Federal ministry of education should provide relevant curriculum which emphasize vocational education for the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning.
- Government should equip the primary schools with all the facilities needed for practical works to flourish. They should build classrooms, build and equip the laboratories with the relevant practical specimen and enough chairs for students' practical works. These are highly needed if the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning will be attained.
- Government should equip the primary schools with modern basic educational facilities such as computers, printers, scanners among others to arouse students' interest in teaching and learning. This will go a long way towards actualizing the goal of the Universal Basic Education in such area like the provision of compulsory access to basic.
- Government should establish educational task force in every local government education authority to enforce the laws pertaining the universal basic education so as to reduce street trading by young children of school age and as well, encourage the enrolment of children that drop out of schools.
- Primary school authorities should ensure that children are not discriminated against according to tribe and religion in the school. This necessary in order to ensure equal right to quality education to every Nigerian child.

- Primary school authorities should request for educational materials like writing materials from non government organizations and influential people of the community where the schools are located so as to discourage school drop-out through the provision of free writing materials.
- Teachers should engage students in industrial training in order to ensure the acquisition of technical knowledge needed for lifelong learning.
- Parents teacher association should assist the schools by donating educational facilities like computer set, drawing board, textbooks, desk and chair, lockers among others so as to ensure effective teaching and learning. This will help in providing the child with materials for diverse basic skills for entrepreneurship development.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, education deregulation policy which is meant to be a worthwhile economic policy appears not to be worthy in its application particularly, in the North Central Nigeria. This seems to be as a result of its opposing stand to its attainment like providing access to free and equal education. Based on existing situations, private investors, tend to pay more premiums to profit maximization than on quality and standard services. Consequently, only the rich, who can afford the high cost of quality education, have access to it. The less privileged people, who are also the majority in the country, are denied access to quality education, forced to stay out of school or withdraw due to high costs of schooling. Social and educational inequalities are encouraged. As a result of these, there has been a continuous falling in the standard of education, increase in school dropout and continuous decrease in school enrolment, leading to increase in the rank and files of school going children in the country.

The decaying state of the education system in the North Central Nigeria indicates that, in reality, the objectives of education deregulation are yet to be attained. Based on the existing situation, the position of Nigerian educational system in different states of the federation at the moment especially, in the North Central has nothing to envy, it is low in quality and standard, limited in its reach, non functional in its products and disturbing in its future. Equally it seems that the pitiable state of the UBE scheme in the North Central education system is a fact which has been blamed on factors such as inadequacy of materials and qualified personnel whereas education deregulation was in place to provide access to free and equal education for the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy needed for laying of solid foundation for life-long learning. Thus, the researcher concludes that emphasis should be made to recognize the crucial role of education deregulation in relation to Plato's theory of education for access to equality of educational opportunity, compulsory access to basic education and acquisition of appropriate level of literacy to thrive.

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