

**PHILOSOPHERS OF EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (PEAN), 42ND
ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO HELD ON
OCTOBER, 2023.**

A Presidential Welcome Address Presented

By

The President

PROF KOLA BABARINDE

Professor of Philosophy and Sociology of Education

Protocol

It is a great honour and privilege to welcome all the eminent personalities here to the opening ceremony of the 42nd Annual conference of Philosophers of Education Association of Nigeria (PEAN) being hosted by University of Uyo and Akwa Ibom College of Education.

On behalf of all members of the association I thank you for honouring our invitation. I must also recognise the tireless efforts put into the organization of this conference particularly by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) under the leadership of Dr. Iniobong Ekpo. Organizing a conference of this magnitude and at a time like this must have taken a lot of time, wit and resources. PEAN recognises and praise your efforts and sacrifice.

We also appreciate the heads of the hosting institution - Prof. Nyaudoh Ndaeyo, The Vice Chancellor of the University of Uyo. We have been briefed of your support and encouragement and we express our deep appreciation. Academic activities through conferences of this nature can only thrive if they are actively supported by the leadership of academic institutions as part of their commitment to research and continuous faculty development.

I wish to specially welcome our members who have traveled down to Uyo from different states and regions of our great and expansive country Nigeria. You are most welcome and your sacrifices both physical and financial demonstrate your commitment and loyalty to our association.

Philosophers of Education Association of Nigeria (PEAN) is the umbrella body of researchers, teachers and scholars of Philosophy of Education in the tertiary institutions across Nigeria. It was established forty-two years ago by some of our mentors in the discipline. We shall continue to praise their vision and pray for the good health of those of them who are still alive while we also pray for the repose of the souls of those who have departed. PEAN organises annual conferences on carefully selected themes that have national and academic relevance. Papers are presented,

analysed and criticised with a view to gaining insights into the topics and offering relevant recommendations for the improvement of the society through the educational system.

The theme of this year's conference is Equity, Quality and Autonomy of Nigerian Tertiary Education. The issues raised continue to confront our nation and her troubled education. As students of Philosophy and following the checkered scholarly traditions of Socrates, Plato, Peters, Rumi, Omatseye, Akinpelu, Okoh among others, we are obliged to raise pertinent questions about the theme. For example; what does equity refer to - to all citizens or to some groups? What makes people or groups unequal? Can we force or decree equity? Can we be equal and still be excellent? Is Equity desirable and if so, how can it be achieved? On Quality -What are the criteria of quality and can it apply to Nigerian education? Is quality a universal value or is it dictated by social class or other artificial classifications? What are the limits and possibilities of quality in Nigerian education? What is autonomy? Is autonomy applicable to both humans and things. What is the history of autonomy in higher education? What is the desirability of autonomy for our tertiary education? Is there a definitional consensus on autonomy? What are the implications of conceptual confusions of the concepts of equity, quality and autonomy on educational policy implementation? What harm would be done to Nigerian Tertiary Education by the wanton erosion of institutional autonomy such as the NUC newly imposed Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS)? The next two days will see us interrogate and dissect these concepts in the best tradition of philosophical inquiry. And if anyone assumes that these questions are straight forward, then the person is yet to understand the questions. Of course, we have the keynote speaker here whose role is to set the pace for the discussion of this theme. Our eminent scholar here will do that. Mine should simply be taken as mere appetiser while the main course is to be served by the keynote speaker.

One notable event happening at this opening ceremony is the public presentation and unveiling of the association's latest Publication, a book titled African Philosophy of Education - Issues and Insights. This publication is a collection of well researched articles by some of the best scholars in the discipline. The project was inspired by members' intellectual engagements and encouragement by our mentors and 'living ancestors'. The publication has been highly rated and recommended. For example, according to Prof. Olatunji Oyeshile, immediate past Dean of Arts, University of Ibadan and eminent Professor of Philosophy;

"Given the facticity of human existence, granted that all humans find themselves within a peculiar social environment with specific cultural variables and given the fact that most social problems arise from the imposition of passion and emotion over reason, education becomes imperative in providing solutions to the myriad of problems encountered by humans. It is in meeting the foregoing challenges that this book: *African Philosophy of Education: Issues and Insights*, edited by Professor K. Babarinde and Dr. O. Olufowobi, has focused on education from African Weltanschauung (worldview) in a holistic manner towards the quest for sustainable

development in Africa, especially through indigenous education. This book is a welcome addition to the growing corpus of books on education and development as it provides a good basis for our being-in-the-world in Africa."

Olatunji A. Oyeshile, Ph. D., Professor of African Philosophy and former Dean of Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

To Attahiru M Jega, OFR, Professor, Department of Political Science, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, Former Vice - Chancellor, Bayero University, Kano, Former Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Former President, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU); "This book, edited by two of the reputable and leading scholars in the field, provides an in-depth survey and critical assessment of the most pertinent issues pertaining to the African philosophy of education. It is a compendium that promises to be an invaluable asset for scholars, researchers, students, and general-purpose readers looking for insightful contributions on the subject matter. I, therefore, unhesitatingly strongly commend it to all".

On his own, Khaemba Ongeti, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, Dean School of Postgraduate Studies, Research and Innovation, Moi University, Kenya wrote, "The ideas in this book have a hook on what you will never forget: the depth of the African philosophy of education. Authors of the 17 chapters articulate meaning, methodology, tools for examining philosophy, and functionalism in African philosophy. Indigenous education relates to holistic development. This book argues for a connection between cognitive knowledge and employable skills."

According to Natasja Holtzhausen, D Litt et Phil (PAD), Professor of Public Administration and Management, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of Pretoria, Hatfield, South Africa, "The book is a much-needed contribution to the body of knowledge on African Philosophy of Education. In terms of philosophy, African education emphasizes communalism and the interconnectedness of individuals within a community. Education is seen as a collective endeavor, with everyone playing a role in the educational process. Although there are many challenges the continent is facing; the spirit of Ubuntu is part of the foundation of many, if not all nations. Challenges can be turned into opportunities if each of us embodies the spirit of humanity to others. African education is a rich and dynamic field that is deeply intertwined with the continent's culture, traditions, and philosophy. It continues to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of African societies, while also embracing the opportunities and challenges presented by technology."

Lastly but definitely not the least, Emeritus Professor, PAI OBANYA, Institute of Education, University of Ibadan commented, "Here comes a rich compendium of essays by leading scholars of Philosophy as solid foundation stone for life and Education. The contributors have remarkably

succeeded in bringing philosophy down to the level of the average reader. The book provides sufficient proof that philosophizing is not new to traditional African societies, all of which have promoted Education (in the full sense of the term) long before contact with a wider world, mainly through our colonial experience. Enriching the principles, processes and outcomes (and therefore, enhancing the functionality) of our contemporary education systems should therefore borrow a lot more than just a leaf from our rich tradition.

Here then is a well-researched, pedagogically well-presented textbook for the student, a within-reach source material for the teacher, and an invaluable guide to policy actors on Education. It comes readily as a must-have, a must-read, and a must-regularly-consulted easily-digestible book for us all.

We hereby call on the eminent guests and personalities here to support us by launching this publication to defray the huge cost and encourage us to continue to make significant intellectual contribution and search for the viable solution to the myriad of challenges that face the Nigerian society and her education in particular

Although a society not seriously committed to Education may not see much in the value of a book like this. But luckily for us, some eminent Nigerian personalities with records of passion and commitment to Education have been identified to be honoured today for their past records and achievements. Shortly, they are going to be formally presented to this noble gathering of thinkers who have traveled from different states of Nigeria for this conference and those who are participating virtually across the academic world. It is my hope and that of the whole membership of PEAN and this audience that these eminent Nigerians and awardees would also support this publication.

In concluding this address, I wish to pay condolences to the families and relations of some of our members who departed us in between our last conference and now. I refer to Late Professor Ambrose Yemi Akinkuotu of Lagos State University, Ojo and Late Professor Musa Ruwa of University of Maiduguri. Both of them were highly committed PEAN members who have served the association in several offices and positions. May their souls rest in peace.

Finally, I thank you all for your time and attention and wish all of us happy conferencing.

Kola Babarinde PhD
Professor of Philosophy and Sociology of Education,
Department of Early Childhood and Educational Foundations,
University of Ibadan.

President,
Philosophers of Education Association of Nigeria (PEAN).

Wednesday 24 October 2023
University of Uyo,
Akwa Ibom State