

Primary School Teachers' Motivation as a Tool for Enhancing Basic Education in Nigeria

Stephen Banwar Wanlor*, Grace Hembra Lubis, Cyprien Bitwal Doewat

Primary Education Department, Federal University of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State, Nigeria

*Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

Basic school teacher motivation as a tool for enhancing basic education in Nigeria was generated out of the authors' desire to contribute to the enhancement of basic education standard. Teacher motivation was identified as key to addressing the downward trend in the education sector. The study was guided by the Maslow hierarchy of needs and Herzberg two factor theory which assert that individuals or group of individuals have basic needs which are unending, fluctuating and when a lower level of these needs are satisfied, the next higher one is sought for. It was crucial to clarify key concepts before delving into factors affecting Basic teachers' motivation and that which have great positive influence on them. The paper further discusses how motivation could be used to enhance education standard, issues that demotivates, ways of motivating, and some previous and current attempts of motivating Basic school teachers in Nigeria. It was recommended among others that government should pay teachers their salaries as well as other entitlements accruable to them, use the media to enhance the teaching profession, and ensure that the Annual Education Merit Award continue at the national, state and local government levels, and finally concluded that should the government have the political will, they can produce a highly motivated, conscientious and efficient teachers at the Basic school level for the enhancement of the standard of education in Nigeria.

Key words: Basic School, Teacher Education, Motivation, and Standard of Education.

INTRODUCTION

As the heart is so vital to the body, so also is the Basic school considered to the education system. The Basic school is key to the whole education system such that the rest of education lies on it. Its present successes or failures determine future success or failure of the education system (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], (2013). The whole of what the child learns in the Basic school that determines the success or failure of the system is dependent on the efficacy and efficiency of the Basic school teacher whose responsibility it is to implement the curriculum. Thus, fulfilling the saying that no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) also posits that the goal of teacher education is "to produce a highly motivated, conscientious and efficient teachers for all levels of education. When this is done to Basic school teachers, they will implement the curriculum properly for future educational advancement or development. Unfortunately this goal remains only on paper without implementation, leaving Basic school

teachers not even better than street beggars with a resultant effect of dissatisfied work attitude. This dissatisfaction has led to series of interruption of the education programme. In the light of the above, this paper is of the opinion that unless Basic school teachers are highly motivated, the standard of education in Nigeria will continue to fall and all government or individual efforts will be useless. Therefore, to enhance the educational standard, first of all get the teachers highly motivated.

The paper presents a brief theoretical framework to guide the write up, attempts a clarification of key concepts, looks at Basic education, teacher education, standard of Basic school education in Nigeria, factors affecting teachers' motivation, factors that have great positive influence on teachers' motivation, motivation for enhancing the standard of education, issues demotivating Basic school teachers, ways of motivating teachers in Basic schools and finally looked at some previous and current attempts of motivating Basic school teachers in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The discussion in this paper is guided by the Maslow motivational theory of needs which like the Herzberg motivational two factor theory agreed that every individual has needs. These needs are in levels and once a lower level is satisfied the next higher level is sought for. Individuals at work are either concerned with satisfiers such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and nature of work itself (Chauhan 1983 & Pardee, 1990) or with dissatisfiers such as company policy, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary status, job satisfaction and personal life.

In the context of this paper, teacher motivation implies the dissatisfiers such as improving their working conditions, salary, status, interpersonal relations, personal life and ensuring job security so that they will put in their best for enhancing the standard of education in Nigeria. Left to be seen in this paper is whether the Basic school teachers are motivated to enhance the standard of education in Nigeria or not.

Clarification Of Concepts.

Key words worthy of clarification in this paper are teachers, motivation and education. Teachers are the people that have been professionally trained in the content and pedagogy of imparting knowledge, skills and values in the learners or pupils and have been certified by a professional body such as the National Commission of Colleges of Education (NCCE), National Teachers Institute (NTI), and other relevant bodies vested with the responsibility of training teachers (Hornby, 2013)

Motivation comes from a Latin word "moveer" which literally means a process of arousing movement in the organism. These movements are produced and regulated through the release of energy within the individual. According to Chauhan (1983, P.186), it is all the phenomena involved in the stimulation of action towards particular objectives where previously there was little or no movement "or it can be said to be a tendency to act to produce one or more effect". The motivation of teachers in the teaching profession could either be intrinsic that is when the individual teacher joins the profession for the joy he/she derives from teaching itself (satisfiers) or extrinsic when the individual joins the profession as a means of securing employment solely to be paid salaries and other fringe benefits (dissatisfiers). To Chauhan, the most important contribution of psychology to learning is the concept of motivation which enables the teacher to know the needs and motives of children at different maturational levels and so help to organize activities that will create interest and motivation in them.

Education is “a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools and colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills” (Hornby, 2013, p. 468). It can also be seen as “The aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive values to the society in which he lives”(Balogun & Ariya, 2005). These knowledge and skills are imparted at various levels among which are the Basic, secondary and tertiary levels. Education is very fundamental to the development of any nation and every great nation has laid its foundation on it which gave its citizens political, social and economic emancipation. Thus, it is key to every investment. Very unfortunately the quality of education being imparted is not suitable to the development of Nigeria as it falls below the required standard (Oloruntoyin, 2011, Awhen, Timre & Agynwuye 2014, introduction Para. 1 & 2).

Basic Education

Basic Education as referred in the National Policy on Education (NPE) is that education given to children aged 6-12 years (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013). It is the first and compulsory stage of education. Here children are placed in a class with a teacher who is primarily responsible for their education and well-being for that year. The place of Basic education within the education system is very paramount because it is the foundation of adult education as well as making the individual child a better adult in future. It has been adjudged that Basic education is heart to the educational system and the nation as the heart is to the body, therefore a faulty Basic education can thwart efforts to the realization of the Basic education goals.

The National Policy on Education further stated that teaching shall be participatory, explanatory, and experimental and child centred, with specialist teachers provided for particular subjects in the curriculum. Government shall provide school libraries, school health services among others as well as feed Basic school pupils to encourage their healthy development and to enable them stay in school. Good as these are, the question is “can these objectives be achieved without an effective and efficient teacher service and can there be an effective and efficient teacher service devoid of motivation?” Thus, for an effective and efficient teaching, the Federal Government has designed and elaborate goals for teacher education.

Goals Of Teacher Education In Nigeria

Teacher education is playing a pivotal role in the provision of standard education, therefore the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013. p.28) said among others that the goals of teacher education is “to produce a highly motivated, conscientious and efficient teachers for all levels of education”, helping teachers to fit into the social life of the community and the society at large, providing in-service education, unhindered promotion opportunities for professional growth and that Teachers Registration Council shall continue to register teachers and regulate teaching profession and practices and then allowing only professionally qualified teachers to practice at all levels. If all these goals are implemented then teachers must be motivated and the standard of education lifted.

The Standard of Basic School Education in Nigeria

The standard of education in Nigeria has been an issue of debate, while some people are of the opinion that the standard of education has fallen others are saying that it has not. Many indices have been used to label the standard of education as having fallen. Some of these indices according to Basic Education Board (2016, para. 1-5) among others include:

Admission of Nigerian University Products in Developed Countries Universities;

The first Nigerian university had their products competing with any other universities in the world but today they rank among the 400 and 1500+ tiers of the world.

Written and spoken English:

Using spoken English as a yardstick for measuring standard of education, a research conducted by university of London find that teachers trained by colonial masters were better than those trained by indigenous teachers. Others used staffing of schools, funding of schools, current foundation of education and the students' performance as measure of standard of education.

Passing or failing External Examinations:

Standard of education can be deduced as failing when students continuously perform poorly in their WAEC, NECO, NABTEB and so on.

Factors Affecting Teacher Motivation.

It is a known fact that no effective learning can take place without effective teaching that must be delivered by the teacher. In order to achieve the main objectives of Basic education, its teachers activities must be compensated and rewarded as an encouragement to enable them work harder.

According to Alam and Farid (2011, factors affecting teachers' motivation para. 2) some of the factors affecting teacher motivation include: personal/social factors, classroom environment, socio economic status, students' behaviour, examination stress, rewards/incentives, self-confidence and personality of the teachers.

Personal/Social Factors: Teachers do not all have the same ability because of hereditary and environmental factors that affect them. Obviously there are some that have low intelligent quotient (I.Q) or are bedevilled by some problems such as health and other challenges that make them not to perform.

In view of the non-performance of some few, the society has labelled the Basic teachers as incompetent, un-qualified and often looked down upon. Most people as well as the media are blaming them for the inability of most Basic school pupils to read, write and do simple arithmetic. These does not motivate the teachers to teach.

Classroom Environment: A good classroom physical surrounding or social climate can be a source of motivation (encouragement) to teachers than a dilapidated or unconducive or bad one. A bad classroom without doors, windows, floors, ceilings, blown off roofs, corrugated or punch blackboards, lack of blackboards, lack of reading and writing materials, dirty pupils or pupils infested with different types of communicable or contagious diseases discourage and reduce teachers' self-esteem and as a result prevent them from actualizing what they have to teach the pupils.

Socio-Economic Status: This refers to the social and economic factors that affect teachers at this level. It refers to their choice of profession and the society's perspective of it. For instance Alam and Farid (2011) findings shows that Basic school teachers were not satisfied with their economic status and choice of profession. They complained of low pay compared to other professions. Most Basic school teachers have not been paid their salaries for months not even to talk about promotion, leave and transport grants, and so on. These have brought untold hardship on the Basic school teachers. In the face of this economic meltdown, most of them are as poor

as the church mouse. This does not motivate the teachers to go into the classrooms to teach even if they are in the school.

Students' Behaviour: Students' behaviour can balance or unbalance teachers in the classroom and can either encourage or discourage them from giving out their best. For example when pupils are attentive in class, respond to teachers questions and ask questions, behave well and so on, the teachers will be happy unlike when students behave otherwise. Also cultic or disobedient children are a threat to the teachers as well as the school. They make teachers fear to instruct them and as such deprive innocent children from receiving the needed instruction that could mould them.

Examination and Stress: These factors caused dissatisfaction in teachers and makes them to comply mostly under compulsion when they are not yet through with the content of the syllabus. Currently in Nigeria, there is low teacher to pupils ratio primarily caused by government inability to employ teachers to match with increasing pupils' population in schools or to replace either dead, retired or teachers who left the profession for greener pastures. These increase teachers' workload, makes pupils difficult to control in school and so on. The findings of Alam and Farid also showed that teachers' stress level is usually high during examination and record keeping.

Reward/Incentives: This has positive effect on teachers' performances. When teachers work hard and produce good result through improved students' performances and the demonstration of competence in their profession then they are supposed to be rewarded or given some incentives to boost their morale. Examples of such reward or incentive could be the positive portrayal of the teachers and their profession by the media. Teachers who excel could be given scholarship to study abroad, promoted or have some steps added to their salary grade levels ([i.e. increase pay and good condition of service with less pressure] Chigbu, 2006, p.23).

Self-Confidence/Personality of the Teachers: A teacher who knows his subject matter very well and can relate well with his colleagues is bound to be motivated to teach well unlike the one who does not. In the same vein a teacher who has a charming personality both in his physical appearance and his character is bound not only to be motivated to teach but is also a role model to his pupils. Unfortunately because of the low economic status of the Basic school teachers, such as low income coupled up with non-payment of salaries and other fringe benefits, they do not dress well, look haggard, demoralized and cannot boast of their profession as others. Gradually, they have lost their self-esteem and lack confidence even before their pupils, members of the community and the society in general.

Factors That Have Great Positive Influence On Teachers' Motivation.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) stated in its National Policy on Education that the goal of teacher education is to raise a highly motivated teachers at all levels of education in order to encourage their commitment. This then implies that without motivating the teachers, they will not be committed to the work and consequently there will be a fallen standard of education.

In view of the above, there is the need to state some of the factors that have great positive influence on teachers' motivation. Thus, according to Alam and Farid (2011) and Chigbu (2006), these factors are paramount: Job satisfaction for teachers, rewarding teachers on showing good result, paying teachers according to their abilities, good relations with pupils, giving pupils a sense of achievement, good discipline, better in-service training, increasing pay/status for different posts in schools, promotion to posts of additional responsibility, giving teachers professional body, more/new opportunities for promotion within classroom teaching, having sufficient time for families, regular payment benefits and allowances, bonus for job training, provision of good working environment and improving teachers general well-being.

Looking at the above positive factors one wonders whether any one of them is being implemented to the fullest by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Teaching at the Basic school is synonymous with poverty which makes teachers dissatisfied with their jobs, and are always looking for better jobs should the opportunity avails itself, resulting into brain drain. Furthermore teachers are neither rewarded on showing good result nor paid according to their abilities but on experiences in the field. Non performing teachers who have stayed longer earn more money than those who are producing good results but have short experiences. Similarly, the relationship between teachers and pupils are poor, hence the teachers do not give the pupils any sense of achievement, and do not discipline pupils for fear of being indicted by parents and the community.

Practicing teachers into in-service training in higher institutions are left without any form of assistance, most especially in the states. There are no allowances for in-service training and their status or pay is not even increased after completing such courses. The gain in knowledge by these teachers after in-service training does not earn them a new opportunity for promotion or a promotion to a post of additional responsibility. Furthermore, there is usually a lot of fraud in the stipends given to them for any training embarked upon by some staff of the Universal Basic Education Board or they may virtually pay for some training they need for the enhancement of classroom teaching.

The working conditions of the Basic school teachers is one of the worst among all civil service work in Nigeria. For instance, they suffer from lack of accommodation, lack of mobility, lack of classes or structures, teach under trees, endure harsh weather etc. In fact the Basic school teachers' well-being is yet to be addressed in Nigeria, and accept these conditions are changed for the better, the standard of education will continue to fall. Let Nigerians not forget the popular adage that says "to whom much is given, much is expected." The nation cannot expect much from these category of teachers because not much has been given to them. Thus, unlike tertiary institutions lecturers who have TETFUND, Basic school teachers have none. They suffer neglect in terms of personnel development, provision of material resources and infrastructural development.

Motivation For Enhancing the Standard of Education.

It is generally believed that motivation is key to performance and achievement, therefore those that are vested with the responsibility of training the future leaders should be properly motivated otherwise there would be incompetent people to handle the affairs of Nigeria tomorrow. Orphilms (2002) and Alu, Eya, Ado, Ede and Ugwu (2001) said that motivated teachers always complete the tasks set before them even when such assignments proved difficult and uninteresting, teachers behaviour is directed towards particular goals as it leads to increase energy and effort.

Motivation affects teachers' behaviour such that it increases their cognitive processing, initiation of activities, persistence in activities and leads to improved performance, hence lifting the standard of education. Ophilms, Alu, Ega, Edo, Ede and Ugwu further said that motivated teachers are quality oriented, productive and always determined to give their best to achieve maximum output (qualitative education). Motivation sustained national growth and development as well as the welfare of its citizens. It is the vehicle of social change, self-development, culture and society, and it helps individuals to grow into persons. Motivation has played an important role in the education sector of developed countries and can therefore do same in Nigeria.

Issues Demotivating Basic School Teachers.

There are many issues that demotivate Basic school teachers and hence lower their performances instead of lifting it. Some of these issues according to Chigbu (2006), Basic Education Board (2012), Awhen, Timre, and Agynwuye (2014) are discussed below.

Discipline: This is one of the most outstanding attributes of education that is lacking most especially in public Basic school in Nigeria. This can be seen in both teachers and pupils late coming to school and leaving the school before closing time, teachers and pupils' truancy, drunkenness, disobedience, cultism, lack of repeating pupils who failed promotion examinations and lack of compliance to the 75% attendance to qualify pupils to write examination. These and many others deter committed teachers from putting in their best.

Politicizing Education: The Nigeria Basic school system has been politicized and bastardized. For instance new Basic schools are created by politicians just to fulfil political campaign promises without minding the consequences of the facilities, learning materials and the availability of the adequacy of teachers. Some although not qualified to teach, find themselves teaching either because of the quota system policy or have politicians at the higher rung who stood for them and so on. Such teachers are disasters to the education system hence they lack both content and pedagogical knowledge to teach these young pupils.

Teacher Pupils' Ratio: The teacher-pupils ratio of 1:35 is no longer adhered to due to government nonchalant attitude in employing teachers to either replace retired, dead or teachers who left the service for greener pastures. Some state governments flushed out unqualified Basic school teachers without first of all recruiting new ones. This consequently left the few remaining teachers with more pupils than they could curb. Worst of all, is the fact that the pupils may be belonging to different sets of classes and are combined in one class to be taught by a teacher who has no multi-grade teaching techniques.

Teachers Welfare: Most state government of Nigeria are owing Basic school teachers back log of their salaries to such an extent that the president has given "belt out" to tackle this problems. These teachers have not been promoted for years, there are no annual increment, annual leave transport grand's and accommodation. There is lack of government commitment to the implementation of minimum wages for Basic school teachers and lack of the implementation of the Teachers' Salaries Structure (TSS) despite all efforts by the Nigerian Union of Teachers to make it come to pass.

Prolong Strike Action: Teachers often have to go on strike in order to press home their demands and be given what rightly belongs to them. Whenever they go on strike, syllabi are not covered and pupils transit to next classes without covering such syllabi. The resultant effect of this is pupils' inability to read, write and solve simple arithmetic. The inability of pupils' literacy and numeracy discourages teachers because the basics have not been taught.

Poor Infrastructural Facilities and Equipment: Most public Basic schools in rural areas do not have buildings not even to talk of furniture, equipment for games, reading materials and so on. In rural areas, it is common to find some pupils sitting on bare floors or stones, learning under trees, using a single exercise books for all subjects, lacking writing materials among others. These indeed does not encourage the teachers.

Corruption: The get rich quick syndrome in the country has made some Basic school leaders at the local government and state levels to connive with government officials or contractors to cheat schools by siphoning funds meant for school projects into their pockets thereby causing poor quality jobs and making the learning environment demoralizing for both teachers and pupils.

The goal of work is for the individual to have satisfaction in what he/she is doing then such a job will be done satisfactorily. To get the teachers to do satisfactory jobs, government, society, community as well as individuals should look for ways of motivating these teachers for them to enhance the standard of Education in Nigeria.

Ways Of Motivating Teachers In Nigerian Basic Schools

Several ways abound for motivating Basic school teachers to put in their best for enhancing educational standard. According to Shamakil (2005, the influence of teachers job production Para.2), Hosler (2013, education world, six ways to really motivate teachers, Para .5-10) and Davis (2005, six ways to motivate teachers Para. 1-6), posit first that leaders who adopt the democratic leadership style empowers teachers to do their work well with less effort. Here, teachers are intrinsically motivated, thus reducing their stress and anxiety. Such leaders identify teachers need and try to solve them.

Secondly, teachers need peace and quiet time to do their work (planning schemes of work, lesson planning, teaching, designing instructional aids, testing, examination, recording and grading pupils without interference,) but once a while parents should visit them to know what they need. Supervisors as well as school administrators should show them love rather than hatred that comes through unnecessary threats. Teachers should be given more authority over their instruction and meeting their pupils' needs.

Thirdly, with the persistent non-payment of teachers' salaries, promotions and other fringe benefits teachers should be taught and encouraged to participate in entrepreneurial skills so that they can bring additional income to their families. However, to keep them out of stressful conditions, they must be allowed to take on part-time jobs. A 2011 Economic policy Report found that teachers were paid less than their similarly qualified professionals from other fields which is a shame, when one considers how important their job is to the economy of the country.

Thirdly, provide the teachers with the necessary instructional materials as visual and audio-visual material to enable them teach well instead of using their meagre salary to buy them. In the same vein, let the teacher pupils ratio of 1:35 be maintained in order to give them time to evaluate and work with each child. This will not make the facilities to be overstretched.

Fourthly, tell the teachers they are important, they need to read or hear how important their contribution is to the society, they should be highly appreciated rather than being condemned by individuals or groups whose stock in trade is to criticize them through various media avenues. People should openly appreciate teachers by saying inspirational things about them and how noble their profession is as nation builders. They also need to be respected, therefore administrators should use positive language on them all the time and also listen to their concerns and observations.

Fifthly, teachers' act of service should be appreciated to enable them stay on the job. Lack of appreciation and encouragement has made teaching a last resort for most Basic school teachers. These teachers are going through tough times as their take home pay can no longer take them home. Therefore a little encouragement from the public can make them stay on for another spin.

Six, encourage teachers to walk it out. Teachers need to show love to their pupils besides knowing their subject matter well, but at time it is very hard because every day they are being pulled in thousand directions. They should be encouraged to go outside and walk outside. This reduced their stress and get them back to their work making them happier and to think properly.

Previous And Current Attempts of Motivating Basic School Teacher In Nigeria.

It is widely acclaimed that during the missionaries' era, most especially before government took over of Basic schools in 1976, there were teachers' compound even in villages for teachers, they were paid their salaries at and when due, all their entitlements were paid to them to the extent that the words "strike action" was unknown to

them. It was a joyous thing to be a teacher because they were well respected and held in very high esteem and were not taking up part-time jobs because their salaries and other entitlements could afford them what to buy and solve other problems with some left-overs. Unfortunately, today, the reverse is the case.

Seeing that teachers welfare was not being considered a government priority, the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) Plateau State Branch in the year 2000 decided to collect bicycles and motorcycles loans for its members from some banks. This was to enable teachers stay in their homes or other convenient areas and be going for their work. Unfortunately, it became a disaster for these teachers, as government payment of salaries were delayed for months and bank interest rate kept on increasing. Apart from all these, some of the teachers who collected the motorcycle loans either sustain injury or died as a result of accidents on them.

The Federal Government of Nigeria in 1976, declared all Teacher Training Colleges Free and even paid allowances as well as provided learning materials to students. This was all in a bid to motivate people into the teaching profession and indeed it succeeded in attracting many. This noble objectives came to a halt in 1983. The federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) in its National Policy on Education has it that rural Basic school teachers should be given some allowances to motivate them to stay on the job, but unfortunately the policy only existed on paper. Similarly, science or special subject teachers' allowances are not being paid most especially in most states.

A onetime former president of Nigeria, Retired General Olusegun Obasanjo, in a bid to motivate teachers in the year 2007 decided to give Best Teachers and School Administrators Merit Award to the 36 states of the federation. It was the first of its kind but was never repeated by other administrations at the Federal level up till today. The Lagos state Government must be commended here because it is the only state that conduct the Annual Education Merit Award for school personnel's, pupils and students. The merit Award is aimed at motivating stake holders in the teaching and learning process in public schools for effective and efficient service delivery (State Annual Merit Award 2013, Para. 1). This is supposed to be emulated by other states of the Federation in order to motivate teachers to put in their best for the enhanceing of the standard of education in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Nigerians' have longed recognized that Basic education is the foundation of all educational system and a fault or crack in this could lead to future under development for the individual and the nation at large but unfortunately this recognition is just on paper. Government does not have the political will to fulfil the first goal of teacher education (i.e. to produce a highly motivated, conscientious and efficient teachers for all levels of education)

If Nigeria wants to develop as other developed countries of the world, it must motivate the teachers through the various ways that have been outlined in this paper. Except the Basic school teachers are highly motivated they cannot put in their best as their physiological as well as other needs are not met. While the politicians parade themselves in flashy cars and living in sky crappers, and the poor teachers work with unhappy faces down the streets, it is worthy to note that no nation can raise above the quality of its teachers. Therefore, for the enhancement of the standard of basic education in Nigeria, the Basic school teachers must be highly motivated.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the discussion made in this paper the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Government should pay teachers their salaries as well as other entitlements to motivate them to teach well.

2. The media should always portray the good side of teachers rather than criticizing and condemning them.
3. There should be a body similar to TETFUND for Basic school teachers to enhance their professional growth.
4. The Annual Education Merit Award should be continued at the national, state and local government levels to promote teachers commitment.
5. The physical environment for learning should be conducive for the Basic school teachers to teach as it is in tertiary institutions.

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