

Motivational Strategies of Primary School Teachers for Enhancing Learning in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State

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Abstract

This work investigated motivational preferences of primary school teachers for enhancing learning in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The design of the study was descriptive survey while the sample was 300 public primary school teachers who were drawn through proportionate sampling technique from a population of 924 teachers. Five research questions were stated to guide the study. They were investigated with data which were collected through the administration of copies of researchers' adapted instrument titled "Teachers' Motivational Strategy Questionnaire (TMSQ)" on the sample. The reliability co-efficient of the four sub-sections of the instrument were 0.88; 0.70; 0.85 and 0.90 respectively. The research questions were answered with mean and standard deviation. The results show that building confidence and positive expectations among pupils is the most preferred motivational strategy of teachers. It also show that fulfilling basic requirements of pupils, showing the value of learning to pupils and helping pupils to stay focused on the task constitute motivational preferences of teachers. These results were discussed and some recommendations stated. One of the recommendations is that teacher training institutions should adequately teach their trainee teachers the various strategies of motivating learners.

Keywords: Motivational Strategies, Primary School, Teachers, Enhancing Learning, Ogbia Local Government Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Most human behaviours are motivated. The word motivation is derived from a Latin word "motus" which means to make or to set in motion. Different scholars and psychologists have defined motivation in different ways. (Denga cited in Agbakwuru, 2009) defined motivation as internal forces that ignite, propel, poke, energize, arouse or spur, direct, regulate and sustain behaviour towards goal attainment. According to him, motivation is purported to occur when a need for something creates a state of restlessness or disequilibrium in an individual. The state of restlessness or desire to achieve a goal furnishes the desirable energy required to move towards

goal attainment. Colman (2003) views motivation as a driving force or forces responsible for the initiation, persistence, direction and vigour of goal-directed behavior.

From the above definitions, one can deduce that the spring board of motivation is felt need and the desire to satisfy such need pushes one to action. It could also be deduced that motivation acts all through the process of goal attainment. It arouses, sustains and directs efforts towards goal attainment.

Motivation may be internal/intrinsic or external/ extrinsic. Internal/intrinsic motivation springs up from within the individual. The definition of Denga cited in Agbakwuru (2009), views motivation from this perspective. Intrinsic motivation is propelled by internal forces and lead one to engage in actions for their own sake with the only tangible benefit such as pleasure, learning, satisfaction, interest or challenge (Wang, 2001). On the other hand, external or extrinsic motivation is externally induced. It is a motivation to engage in an activity as a means to an end. Some common extrinsic ways of arousing motivation in an individual are through praises, offering of gifts, good grades, etc.

The importance of motivation in achieving desirable goal in any aspect of human endeavour cannot be over-emphasized. This is especially true when one recalls that the Nigerian school system is currently bedeviled by many anti-intellectual activities such as student's lack of interest in academic pursuit, high dropout rates and high rate of school failures among others. For instance, results of the May/June 2015 West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) show that out of the candidates who sat for the exam, 758,849 candidates representing 47.62 percent obtained six credits and above, 949,862 candidates representing 59.61 percent obtained five credits and above, while 1,114,988 candidates (representing 69.97 percent) obtained credits and above in four subjects. In addition, 1,292,915 candidates representing 78.81 percent obtained credit and above in three subjects, while 1,376,743 candidates representing 86.40 percent obtained credit and above in two subjects (The Nation, August 11, 2015).

The situation in primary schools is not different from what is obtainable in secondary schools. In fact, reports of UNICEF cited in Agbakwuru and Izuchi (2009) shows that Nigerian primary schools are facing the problems of low completion rate by pupils who enroll and lack of interest in school related activities by pupils. These factors are associated with low level of academic motivation among pupils. Since primary school is the bedrock of the Nigerian educational system (FRN, 2004) it also means that any effort which is geared towards enhancing the academic achievement of learners should ideally begin from primary schools.

Bayelsa state seems to be one of the states of the federation that is seriously affected by the problems of low level of students' interest in academic pursuit, high dropout rate and high rate of school failures.

One form of motivation that is cardinal to successful academic career is academic motivation. Wigfield and Eccles (2002) defined it as a student's desire (as reflected in approach, persistence, and level of interest regarding academic subjects when the students' competence is judged against a standard of performance or excellence.

The need to help students to develop academic motivation in the school is cardinal to their achievement of academic success. This assertion is made in the light of the fact that academic motivation is pre-requisite to successful learning. Without sufficient degree of academic motivation, students will not pay attention during lessons and other course activities. They will equally not take time to use effective learning and study strategies nor seek help from others when needed (Schunk, Pintrich & Meece, 2008). In fact, academic motivation makes it possible for students to engage in activities that help them to learn and achieve highly in academic settings.

Different teachers adopt different motivational strategies for enhancing the academic achievement of their students. Sadly, there is an apparent lack of research reports that have investigated academic achievement motivational preferences of primary school teachers in Bayelsa state. This type of research report is necessary in order to ascertain the adequacy or otherwise of the motivational preferences of the teachers for enhancing academic achievement of their students. The research report is also essential for providing a platform for making necessary recommendations that will enable teachers to adopt appropriate strategies for enhancing academic motivation among their students. This study was embarked upon to fill this apparent gap in knowledge and the study was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the most preferred motivational strategy of primary school teachers in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?
- To what extent do fulfilling basic requirements of pupils constitute a motivational strategy of teachers in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?
- To what extent does building confidence and positive expectations among pupils constitute a motivational strategy of teachers?
- To what extent does showing the value of learning to pupils constitute a motivational strategy of teachers?
- To what extent does helping pupils to stay focused on the task constitute a motivational strategy of teachers?

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa. The study adopted the descriptive survey design method. This design was considered appropriate for the study because it involves the collection of data through questionnaire that was personally administered to the respondents by the researcher. In addition, the study involves assessing the opinion of the teachers on their motivational strategies for enhancing the level of academic achievement of their students. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers in all the public primary schools in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The population was restricted to only teachers in public primary schools because of economic constraint and convenience. Statistical data collected from Ogbia Local Government Education Authority, Bayelsa State puts the number of the schools in the area at 73 while the number of teachers in all of them is 924. The sample of this study consisted of 300 public primary school teachers in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa. They were composed through proportionate random sampling technique from public primary schools in the area of study. Proportionate random sampling technique was considered best in this study because the numbers of teachers in the various primary schools is not equal. Thus, it ensured that sample sizes were drawn from the schools based on the number of teachers in the schools.

The instrument for data collection was copies of “Teachers Motivational Strategy Questionnaire (TMSQ)”. This instrument was adapted from Woolfolk’s (2004) research report on strategies for motivating students. The instrument consists of two major sections – A and B. Section A has two items which elicits demographic data of the respondents on the other hand, section B contains 21 items which were sub divided into four sub-sections. Sub section i, ii, iii and iv contain 4, 5, 7 and 5 items respectively. These items elicit relevant information for answering the research questions. These 21 items were designed in the pattern of a modified 4

point Likert-type scale of strongly agree (SA) agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The teachers were asked to indicate their responses to any of the items by making a tick in the appropriate space or column.

Thirty copies of the validated Teachers' Motivational Strategy Questionnaire (TMsQ) were administered to 30 public primary school teachers in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. After an interval of two weeks from the first administrations, another 30 copies of the same instrument were re-administered to the same respondents. Their responses in the first and second tests were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Statistical formula and the obtained reliability coefficients for the four sub-sections of section B were 0.88, 0.70, 0.85 and 0.90 for sub-sections i, ii, iii and iv respectively. Three hundred copies of the research instrument were personally administered to the sample in their respective schools by the researchers. They also waited to collect the completed copies of the questionnaire immediately. This measure was taken to control excessive delay in returning the completed copies of the questionnaire as well as its loss. Point scoring system was applied in scoring items in the instrument. Each response for strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) was scored 4, 3, 2 and 1 point respectively. Thus, the minimum and maximum point for each of the 21 items was 1 and 4 points respectively. All the research questions were answered with mean and standard deviation and 2.50 was adopted as the criterion mean score.

RESULTS

The results of the statistical analysis of the research questions are presented in the following tables:

Table 1: Most preferred motivational strategy of teachers

S/No	Motivational Strategy of Teachers	\bar{X}	SD	Rank
1.	Building confidence and positive expectations	3.16	0.89	First
2.	Showing the value of learning to pupils	3.10	0.93	Second
3.	Fulfilling basic requirements of pupils	3.09	0.90	Third
4.	Helping pupils to stay focused on the task	3.06	0.81	Forth

The result on table 1 shows that item number 1 has the highest mean score of 3.16 followed by item numbers 2, 3 and 4 with mean scores of 3.10, 3.09 and 3.06 respectively. This result shows that the most preferred motivational strategy of primary school teachers in Ogbia LGA is building confidence and positive expectations among students.

Table 2: Fulfilling basic requirements of pupils as a motivational strategy

S/No	Motivational Strategy of Teachers	\bar{X}	SD	Criterion \bar{X}
1.	Providing an organized class environment for them to stay and learn.	3.75	0.61	2.50
2.	Being supportive to them.	3.81	0.69	2.50
3.	Assigning them challenging but not too difficult work/task.	2.95	1.01	2.50
4.	Making their tasks worthwhile	2.93	0.93	2.50
	Grand mean score	3.36		2.50

The results in table 2 show that the grand as well as single item mean scores of all the items are greater than the criterion mean score of 2.50. This result shows that fulfilling basic requirements of pupils constitute a motivational strategy of primary school teachers in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Table 3: Building confidence as a motivational strategy of teachers

S/N	Motivational Strategy of Teachers	\bar{X}	SD	Criterion \bar{X}	Rank
1.	Beginning work at the pupils level	3.82	0.33	2.50	First
2.	Making learning goals to pupils clear, specific and attainable.	3.81	0.29	2.50	Second
3.	Stressing self-comparison and not competition to pupils.	3.02	0.41	2.50	Third
4.	Communicating to pupils that academic ability can be improved.	3.00	0.28	2.50	Fourth
5.	Modeling good problem solving skills in pupils.	2.95	0.92	2.50	Fifth
	Grand mean score	3.32		2.50	

The result in table 3 shows that the mean scores of the five items as well as the grand mean score are all greater than the criterion mean score of 2.50. This result shows that building confidence and positive expectations among pupils constitute a motivational strategy among primary school teachers in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Table 4: Showing the value of learning to pupils as a motivational strategy of teachers

S/N	Motivational Strategy of Teachers	\bar{X}	SD	Criterion \bar{X}	Rank
1.	Connecting the learning task to the needs of the pupils.	2.69	1.02	2.50	Sixth
2.	Tieing class activities to the pupil's interest.	2.87	0.97	2.50	Fifth
3.	Arousing curiosity among pupils	3.98	0.34	2.5	Second
4.	Making use of novelty and familiarity while teaching.	4.00	0.00	2.50	First
5.	Explaining connections between present learning and later life.	3.00	0.82	2.5	Fourth
6.	Providing incentives and rewards to pupils.	3.59	0.61	2.50	Third
	Grand mean score	3.36		2.50	

The result in table 4 shows that the mean scores of the 6 items and the grand mean score are greater than the criterion mean score of 2.50. The result revealed that showing the value of learning to pupils constitutes a motivational strategy of teachers.

Table 5: Helping pupils to stay focused on the task as a motivational strategy

S/N	Motivational Strategy	\bar{X}	SD	Criterion \bar{X}	Rank
1.	Giving pupils frequent opportunities to respond	3.05	0.61	2.50	First
2.	Providing opportunities for pupils to create a finished product	3.00	0.83	2.50	Second
3.	Avoiding heavy emphasis on grading	2.40	0.99	2.50	Fourth
4.	Reducing task risk without over simplifying the task	2.39	1.03	2.50	Fifth
5.	Teaching learning tactics/ skills to pupils.	2.96	0.71	2.50	Third

The result in table 5 shows that except items 3 (avoiding heavy emphasis on grading) and 4 (reducing task risk without over simplifying the task), the mean score of the other items as well as the grand mean score are all greater than the criterion mean score. The conclusion which can be drawn from this result is that helping pupils to stay focused on the task constitute a motivational strategy of teachers.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the analysis of research question with mean and standard deviation show that the most preferred motivational strategy of the teachers is building confidence and positive expectations among pupils with a mean score of 3.16 and standard deviation of 0.89. Following this strategy in the preference of the teachers is showing the value of learning to students with a mean score of 3.10 and standard deviation of 0.93 and fulfilling basic requirements of students with a mean of 3.09 and standard deviation of 0.90. Finally, helping students to stay focused on the task is the least preferred motivational strategy of the teachers with a mean score of 3.06 and standard deviation of 0.81. The low standard deviation scores of the respondents for the most preferred motivational strategy as well as the three other motivational strategies show that the respondents did not differ widely in their responses to the items. The preference of teachers for this motivational strategy over others collaborates Asagwara's (2000) identification of having confidence in the pupils and holding them in high esteem as the first motivational task of teachers. It is the foundation of other motivational strategies because unless the teacher holds the pupils in high esteem and repose confidence in them, he cannot meaningfully do much more to motive them for enhanced learning tasks.

The result of the analysis of research question 2 shows that fulfilling basic requirements of pupils constitute a motivational strategy of teachers. This result supports the research report of Woolfork (2004) which shows that fulfilling basic requirements of pupils is one of the ways through which teachers enhance the academic motivation of their pupils.

The result of the statistical investigation of research question three shows that building confidence and positive expectations among pupils constitute a motivational strategy of teachers. The reason for this obtained result appears to be connected with the preparation of teachers with knowledge in principles and practice of education. This preparation exposed them to the various methods of motivating learners which building confidence and positive expectations among them is one of the methods. All teachers received this exposure during the period of their professional preparation.

The result of the statistical investigation of research question 4 with mean and standard deviation test statistics confirmed that showing pupils the value of learning is a motivational strategy of teachers. This type of result appears to be built on the teachers' firm belief that unless pupils are made to understand and appreciate the value of learning, the tasks of arousing, directing and sustaining their interest towards academic goals will be an impossible task. This assertion collaborates the statement of Denga cited in Agbakwuru (2009) that motivation only begins to occur when one feels a need for something. This need for something creates a state of restlessness or disequilibrium in the individual. Finally, the result of research question 5 shows that helping pupils stay focused on the task is a motivational strategy of primary school teachers.

The teachers of helping pupils to stay focused on the task as a motivational strategy is attributed to their professional exposure to principles and methods of education while they were in training. Furthermore, their acceptance of helping pupils to stay focused on the task as a motivational strategy corroborates the findings of Woolfork (2004), Asagwara (2000) and Asagwara in Agbakwuru (2009) which identified among other ways, helping pupils to stay focused on the task as a motivational strategy of teachers.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings from this study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- Teachers should employ a combination of motivational strategies in enhancing academic motivation among their pupils.
- Teachers should see building confidence and positive expectations among their pupils as their core motivational task. They should therefore devise appropriate ways to accomplish this task.
- Teacher training institutions should adequately teach their trainee teachers the various strategies/ways of motivating learners.

CONCLUSION

From the results of this study, it is concluded that:

- Primary school teachers in Ogbia local government area of Bayelsa state prefer building confidence and positive expectations among pupils as a motivational strategy over other strategies.
- Primary school teachers employ fulfilling basic requirements, building confidence and positive expectations, showing the value of learning and helping pupils stay focused on the task as their motivational strategies for enhancing learning among their pupils.

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