






“Job motivation and management implications: a case of teachers in Nigeria”

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JOB MOTIVATION AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS: A CASE OF TEACHERS IN NIGERIA

Abstract

This research sought to ascertain those job characteristics that influence teacher motivation, which may result in improved pass rates for learners in Ibadan South-West Local Government, Nigeria. Descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate statistical analytic methods were employed to determine the relationships between job characteristics and obstacles to teaching and learning, on the one hand; and respondents' profile, on the other. For the purpose of the research, 456 teachers were surveyed with the aid of a structured questionnaire. Relatively young teachers were surveyed (87%), with females dominating the sample. The results suggest that while salary, career opportunities and duties and responsibilities respectively take central stage in motivating the participants, other job characteristics variables (such as supervision/leadership) do not exert the same effect. Furthermore, the results also show that the lack of resources related to learning and research, and the lack of recognition/reward are deemed as the dominant obstacles in meeting teaching and learning goals, while non-transparent culture is viewed as an insignificant obstacle. A major implication of the findings is that to achieve a sustainable improvement in student performance, a systematic improvement in teachers' job related factors would be needed.

Keywords

teacher job satisfaction, educator motivation, learner performance, Nigeria, learned helplessness

JEL Classification

M10; M12; M52; M54

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important element in the development of any nation. Crucial to this is a committed and motivated group of teachers. Basically, "the extent to which teachers are motivated is a significant factor in influencing the delivery of quality education" (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). In sub-Saharan Africa, the delivery of quality basic education seems elusive. In fact, Emily Richardson (2014: 5) aptly offers the following as the current situation of basic education in sub-Saharan Africa's low income countries:

...there are mounting concerns that there are unacceptably high proportions of teachers in low-income countries who are poorly motivated, due to a combination of low morale and job satisfaction, indecent working conditions, poor incentives and inadequate controls and behavioral sanctions. Teachers' material and psychological needs are not being met. And low teacher motivation leads to negative educational outcomes.

Lauwerier and Akkari (2015) also commented that teachers "work in tough conditions with typically little job security, poor pay and loss of

motivation". The young ones are generally regarded as the leaders of tomorrow and therefore deserve to be groomed through didactic means to contribute to the development of the economy of their nations. There is a youth unemployment crisis of unprecedented magnitude in sub-Saharan Africa (Peace Child International, 2013). It is therefore justifiable that teachers should have a good working environment which will assist in determining the quantity and quality of knowledge children receive; the level of skills to enhance the development of young minds; and the sense of security children feel (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011).

Motivation is a concept that has endured extensive scrutiny for several decades. The reasons for this are not far-fetched. The concept permeates numerous characterizations which the lay man, experienced professional and academic can identify with. The concept has terms such as motive, influence, inspiration, lure, and drive associated with it. While the terms associated with the concept can be loosely located within everyday use, it presents a conundrum for practitioners. The justification for this statement is found in several studies that focused on determining the best way to 'inspire' people whether at work or in some other walk of life. The common denominator in these studies is that people's needs are different and it would take different items to motivate them. While this may sound like a coup-de-grace, it does not reduce the significance of further investigations into the concept. With reference to educators (teachers), it is critical to continue to examine this concept because teachers have been characterized as "the salt of the earth...the co-parents of every child or adolescent in school. They know the students so well. They are often the first to notice if there is a change in a child's demeanor or if something's just not right" (NACoA, nd). As providers of learning and 'care givers' at schools, teachers need to be motivated to do their job properly.

Several factors have been implicated for low teacher motivation in sub-Saharan Africa. A recent study (Ogundele & Oke, 2016) found "environmental factors like weather condition, cultural factors and school location" as factors that impede positive learning outcome. In another study, the moderating role of perceived organizational support on emotional labour-burnout relation was investigated by Anomneze, Ugwu, Enwereuzor and Ugwu (2016) who realised somewhat different results. Anomneze et al (2016) found that a job resource such as perceived organizational support can ameliorate any negative feelings which may come from the extreme demands of the job of teaching. Another study recently found different factors responsible for teacher job dissatisfaction in Nigeria. For instance class size and work load affected teacher and learner performance (Undie & Nike, 2016). Other studies have also reported similar conditions among schools in sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria. What we do know is that the consequences of low teacher motivation are in the form of lacklustre performance in class, regular lateness or absence from work and ill-prepared lesson notes. Low teacher motivation also results in teachers engaging in second income-generating activities that distract from teaching duties" (Akyeampong & Bennell, 2007), which then shortchange the focus on provision of quality teaching and impact student performance. Sibanda et al (2015^a), Sibanda et al (2015^b), and Richardson (2014) found that the quality of teachers is instrumental to the performance of students.

Essentially, one can draw the conclusion that teacher poor performance can lead to learner dismal output. So, for them to continue to do their job and remain inspired teachers need to be driven by something either within or outside the job. That which drives or as Berrone (2008) puts it 'stimulates one to take certain actions' can be regarded as an incentive. Incentives are also defined as '*...external factors which an employee perceives whether rightly or wrongly as possible satisfiers of his felt needs. Incentives tend to hold some value propositions to an employee which persuade him to allocate particular behaviours to different circumstances*' (Iwu & Ukpere, 2012). Incentives generally motivate although at different levels for different people.

On the basis of the above, we are hesitant to define the term 'teacher motivation'. In fact, we are consoled by the submissions of Guajardo (2011) and Hasan and Hynd (2014) who are equally in agreement that there is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes "teacher motivation". In short, we will be guided by the popular understanding that both motivation and incentive are '*context-specific*' (Richardson, 2014). This further dilutes our intention to situate this study within a specific or sets of motivational theories. Instead, we will discuss the different and most common incentive elements that are associated with teacher motivation

against the backdrop of satisfactorily determining the relationship between poor performance of high school pupils and teacher motivation in selected high schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. This will enable all stakeholders to have a better understanding of how teachers' level of motivation can influence the performance of students in high schools. Therefore, we ask the following questions: (1) What would teachers in South West Local Government area of Oyo State seek most in terms of incentives? (2) What obstacles stand in the way of teachers fulfilling their primary roles of teaching and learning?

The table below clearly shows that Oyo State of Nigeria ranks very poorly among other states in the South-West region of Nigeria. Considering our earlier position that teachers' level of motivation has a significant correlation to learner performance, it is therefore crucial to find ways of improving their levels of job satisfaction so as to improve the quality of education learners receive.

Table 1. Selected education metrics – South-West region

Source: <http://www.dalberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Transforming-Secondary-School-Education-in-Nigeria.pdf>

State	Public Secondary Enrolment	Public Secondary Schools	Net Secondary Attendance Rate	NECO 5-credit Pass rate	Youth Literacy Rate	State Unemployment Rate
Lagos	256,972	569	85.3%	57.57%	99%	27.6%
Osun	132,170	690	77.1%	57.04%	97.1%	27.6%
Ekiti	34,284	210	84.8%	67.06%	96.2%	28%
Ogun	151,478	332	75.1%	69.61%	91.1%	27.8%
Ondo	117,292	844	76.1%	49.26%	97%	28%
Oyo	116,641	902	70.6%	52.87%	88.4%	27.7%

This study is therefore justified especially as it hopes to uncover the job characteristics that are important in determining teacher's motivation while at the same time proffering remedial measures that can assist in getting them to perform better and improve pass rates in Ibadan South-West Local Government.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Different Incentives Associated with Teacher Motivation

There is ample evidence in literature to suggest that the facets with which teacher motivation can be measured include the components of the work they do, the salary they receive; the opportunities at their disposal for promotion and career enhancement, the level of supervision they get as well as the quality of supervision, and whether they have cooperative co-workers. In fact, Robbins et al., (2009) call these a complex summation of a number of discrete job elements. Skalli, Theodossiou, and Vasileiou (2008) on the other hand affirm that a pleasurable experience with each of the five job facets can result in overall job satisfaction despite the fact that "a different mix of these job characteristics may produce

a different level of overall job satisfaction". This confirms that different incentives stimulate different responses in different individuals.

1.2. Income

The income one receives is an important element with respect to gauging how motivated a teacher is. In fact this element has remained within management scholarship and practice as perhaps one of the most investigated in virtually every discipline. The reasons for this are not far-fetched. Firstly, salaries constitute a major spend of any organization. Secondly, if salaries constitute a major expenditure of an organization, it presupposes that the organization must receive a positive return on its investment (i.e. the monetary expenditure on workers). Therefore the money that is paid to workers should be reasonably satisfying.

1.3. The Work Itself

There are studies which have shown that pay does not necessarily motivate rather accompanying elements such as status of the job and the environment in which the job is performed. Wushishi et al (2014) found that participants (consisting of teachers) frowned at the speed with which government replaced teachers in Nigeria. This seemingly frustrating narrative sounds like a call to the authorities to rather care about teacher's job content and context so as not to encourage them to seek greener pastures elsewhere. Pietersen (2005) describes this as providing intrinsic job satisfaction laden with job variety, autonomy, effective skill utilisation, self-fulfillment and self-growth.

1.4. Opportunities for Growth

While most teacher-based motivation studies have reported a high need for improved pay and infrastructure, Koch (1998) says workers generally want to be recognized and rewarded for their contributions. Rewards can come in the form of growth opportunities such as promotion to a higher office, new training opportunities, participation and presentation of papers at conferences and seminars. Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009) offer the following as reasons why workers are likely to keep their jobs: "Quality and depth of company leadership development programmes, including personal growth and development opportunities; high-performance workplace cultures that offer challenging and stimulating work opportunities; an attractive company brand and a culture that actively promotes people development and is ethical in its business approach; competitive remuneration packages"

1.5. Supervision

Supervision is a non-financial incentive. The importance of non-financial incentives to employee job satisfaction cannot be disputed. Non-financial incentives are important in motivating workers to respond to their job roles as well as to retain their jobs. Therefore, we argue that effective supervision can facilitate employee performance. In fact, Cameron (2011) stated that the "emotional state of leaders has a significant impact on the emotional climate of a team and therefore their performance

output. Stressed leaders not only lose their self-awareness and social awareness, which are key to emotional intelligence competencies, but also trigger their staff's stress response".

1.6. Co-worker Relations

Abraham Maslow's motivational framework (1954) recognizes social needs as one of the core aspirations of humans in any society. This need acknowledges the desire of people to be accepted and loved by a group of people. As far back as 1969, Smith, Kendall and Hulin's facets of job satisfaction featured co-worker support essentially indicating that supportive co-workers have a substantial effect on employee job satisfaction. Interestingly, a few years ago, Luthans (2002) warned that co-worker relations are not unwaveringly crucial to job satisfaction, especially if relationships become acrimonious. This provides evidence that supportive colleagues alone may not necessarily satisfy. But more importantly, 'the conditions in which teachers work matter a great deal to them' (Johnson et al, 2012).

It is clear from the review above that teacher motivation is associated with different elements. These elements include pay, the job itself, supportive workers including supervisors and opportunities for growth. With respect to this, the instrument that was used for data collection in this study was designed to focus on these motivational elements. Details of this as well as the methodology are contained in the next section.

2. RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

In this study, 547 teachers in 23 schools (pre-nursery to senior high schools) in the Ibadan South-West Local Government Area in Oyo state, Nigeria, were surveyed with the structured questionnaire, designed to be respondent-completed. The questionnaire had mostly closed-ended questions and only two open-ended questions. This study needed quantified information to reach findings that will help to offer recommendations related to research questions. Veal (2011) proposed that questionnaire surveys are ideal to harness quantified information such as the one sought in this study.

The researchers identified the schools to be targeted for respondents (in this case, teachers) using a simple random sampling method. Four hundred and fifty-six (456) usable questionnaires were received, yielding about 91% response rate. Teachers were given the questionnaire in their classrooms to fill-in when they were on break. These questionnaires were later collected by the researchers.

The questionnaire consisted of respondents' profile, job characteristics variables related to motivation, and obstacles to teaching and learning goals. Questionnaire items were similar to those used in previous empirical studies (such as Johnson et al, 2012; Skalli, Theodossiou, & Vasileiou, 2008).

Job characteristics and obstacle items were measured along a 5-point Likert scale (ordinal). The scale ranged from 1 (extremely unimportant; never) to 5 (extremely important; always). Respondents' profile items were arranged into categorical variables. A section of the questionnaire also provided an opportunity to respondents to list other factors which influence their work motivation.

Data analysis was done using SPSS version 22 software (IBM Corporation, 2013). Analysis, in the first stage used descriptive statistics to extract frequency of questionnaire items. Second stage of data analysis used multivariate analytic method (reliability test) to explore the consistency of items in job characteristics and obstacle sections (5-point Likert scale variables). Cronbach's Alpha value was estimated as a reliability measure to infer the internal consistency of the items within the two

sections. A cut-off point of 0.5–0.7 is commonly used for Cronbach Alpha values (Buehl & Zoefel, 2005; George & Mallery, 2003; Nunnally, 1978), hence we can say with confidence that a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.7 or above shows internal consistency of items in a section, offering us the assurance that we can rely on those items to explain a common feature such as job characteristics and obstacles to teaching and learning goals.

Finally, Pearson Chi-square test (a bivariate analysis) was used to check for relationships between job characteristics and obstacles to teaching and learning, on the one hand; and respondents' profile, on the other hand. Statistical tests used a 95% confidence interval for significance measurements. Veal (2011) confirmed the use of the Chi-square test to check for relationships between nominal and/or categorical variables. For the Chi-square test, 5-point Likert scale variables were recoded into categorical variables.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results show that female teachers dominate the research sample. Teachers between the ages of 23 and 45 make up about 87% of the respondents. Teachers with 6 – 10 years of experience dominate the sample. Most teachers who responded teach in either or both junior and senior high schools. It can therefore be said that teachers in the Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo state, Nigeria, are relatively young and experienced, with females dominating the popu-

Table 2. Profile of the respondents (n = 456)

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	40.0
	Female	60.0
Age group	23–35	48.0
	36–45	38.9
	46–55	10.4
	56–65	2.7
Teaching experience in years	0–5	29.0
	6–10	40.6
	11–15	22.0
	16–20	5.3
	21 and above	3.1
Level of class taught	Pre-nursery to Primary	5.0
	Junior High	44.9
	Senior High	25.7
	Both Junior and Senior High	24.4

Table 3. Reliability test: importance of job characteristics' variables to work motivation (n = 456)

Job characteristics variables*	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Pay/salary	4.51	.606	430
Duties and responsibilities	4.40	.631	430
Job title/status	4.09	.961	430
Recognition and reward	4.19	.915	430
Working conditions	4.28	.910	430
Supervision/leadership	3.98	1.077	430
Interpersonal relationships	4.20	.778	430
Job security	4.35	.844	430
Growth opportunities	4.49	.643	430

Reliability statistics, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.866, N of items = 9.
Valid cases = 430 (94.3%), Excluded cases = 26 (5.7%), Total = 456.
Scale: 1(extremely unimportant); 2(unimportant); 3(neutral); 4(important); 5(extremely important).

Note: *Reliability tests conducted on 5-point Likert scale variables.

lation. An interesting finding here and one that tickles the mind is the realization that female teachers dominated the research sample. Does this suggest that there are more female teachers in Nigerian schools? Or could this have something to do with the argument that in Nigeria, teaching is not such a prestigious job in terms of remuneration? And if this is the case, men are not likely to pursue a career in teaching, but instead opt for more financially rewarding ventures.

Reliability results show internal consistency and adequacy of the variables used in measuring job characteristics that influence motivational level at work.

Table 3 indicates that pay/salary, growth opportunities, and duties and responsibilities respectively, are deemed more important for work motivation than other job characteristics variables, with supervision/leadership deemed as the lowest motivational variable, amongst respondents. This finding especially with respect to growth opportunities confirms Koch's (1998) thesis that workers appreciate an acknowledgment of their inputs and consequently leading to the opportunity to enhance their skills. Unfortunately, given what we know about Nigeria, the opportunity for skills enhancement is reduced by lack of funding – a consequence of poor economy. The often reported climate in Nigerian schools is that of a deprived community. As this study has shown, it is not surpris-

Table 4. Reliability test: obstacles in meeting goals of teaching and learning (n = 456)

Obstacles to teaching/learning goals*	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Inadequate infrastructure	2.62	1.233	355
Communication barriers	2.51	1.182	355
Lack of resources related to teaching	2.81	1.228	355
Lack of resources related to research	2.85	1.351	355
Quality/skills of new intakes	2.59	1.200	355
Lack of mutual cooperation and pleasant environment	2.42	1.238	355
Cultural barriers	2.30	2.017	355
Multiple task overload	2.53	1.411	355
Institutional bureaucracy	2.15	1.145	355
Non-transparent work culture	1.94	1.085	355
Multiple stakeholders with divergent goals	2.48	1.247	355
Lack of recognition/reward	2.81	1.574	355

Reliability statistics, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.923, N of items = 12.
Valid cases = 355(77.9%), Excluded cases = 101(22.1%), Total = 456.
Scale: 1(never); 2(rarely); 3(occasionally); 4(often); 5(always).

Note: *Reliability tests conducted on 5-point Likert scale variables.

Table 5. Importance of job characteristics' variables to work motivation compared with respondents' profile (n = 456)

Job characteristics variables*	Unimportant (%)	Neutral (%)	Important (%)	compared with respondents' profile
Pay/salary	0.9	1.8	97.3	N.S.
Duties and responsibilities	2.2	0.9	96.9	N.S.
Job title/status	8.1	14.6	77.3	***6–15 years' experience agree most; *Junior High teachers agree most
Recognition and reward	5.6	15.2	79.2	***Males agree more; ***Age group 36–45 agree most; ***6–10 years' experience agree most; ***Junior High teachers agree most
Working conditions	5.6	13.0	81.4	***Males agree more; ***Age group 36–45 agree most; ***6–10 years' experience agree most; ***Junior High teachers agree most
Supervision/leadership	15.2	7.7	77.1	***6–15 years' experience agree most
Interpersonal relationships	3.8	9.6	86.5	**6–15 years' experience agree most
Job security	1.6	17.4	81.0	***Males agree more; ***6–10 years' experience agree most; ***Junior High teachers agree most
Growth opportunities	1.8	2.9	95.3	***Males agree more;

Notes: Pearson Chi-square test significance. N.S., no significant results. *, $p < 0.05$; **, $p < 0.01$; ***, $p < 0.000$. Analysis done on recoded categorical variables. Agreement relates to the variable being important.

ing that the variables – leadership and supervision – do not motivate because those who should lead in schools do not have the necessary paraphernalia to support their team members.

Reliability results show internal consistency and adequacy of the variables used in measuring obstacles to teaching and learning.

Results also show that lack of resources related to learning and research, and lack of recognition/reward are deemed the dominant obstacles in meeting teaching and learning goals in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo State, with non-transparent culture being viewed as an insignificant obstacle.

The results in table 5 show that all the job characteristics variables used in this research are very important to work motivation amongst the respondents. This study has some very interesting results; though pay or salary, and duties and responsibilities, are deemed by the respondents to be highly important for work-related motivation, no demographic variable was found to have a particular relationship with them. This means, that pay/salary and duties and responsibilities are deemed highly important for

motivation, amongst respondents, irrespective of their demographic characteristics. These variables are therefore labeled '*universal motivators*', by this study. However, male respondents deem growth opportunities (also deemed highly important by respondents) more important than their female counterparts, highlighting the culture of masculinity in Nigeria. This finding is not entirely surprising especially with regard to pay/salary emerging as the top job satisfaction variable. The authors take this position given that Nigerian teachers are known for not getting paid sometimes up to six to nine months (see Abayomi, Olarinoye, Olatunji, Duru, Obahopo & Nanlong, 2015; teacher solidarity, 2016). Poor remuneration of teachers does not only affect the morale of the teacher, but can be generally limiting. For instance, a poorly paid teacher is highly unlikely to self-sponsor a conference or further training and development. The danger in this sort of treatment of teachers is that "it makes many teachers to use teaching as a waiting point for the real job to come", thus making "it very difficult for the teacher to put in his or her best because he or she is not motivated to put in his or her best" (Doggoh, 2014). In Nigeria, it is obvious that economic satisfaction is critical to the motivation of teachers and therefore financial remuneration cannot be underplayed considering

Table 6. Obstacles in meeting goals of teaching and learning, compared with respondents' profile (n = 456)

Obstacles to teaching/ learning goals	Never or rarely (%)	Occasionally (%)	Often or always (%)	compared with respondents' profile
Inadequate infrastructure	55.1	18.8	26.1	***0–5 years' experience agree most; ***Senior High teachers agree most
Communication barriers	58.6	21.4	20.0	***0–5 years' experience agree most; ***Senior High teachers agree most
Lack of resources related to teaching	40.9	26.2	33.0	***Females agree more; ***Age group 23–35 agree most; ***11–15 years' experience agrees most; ***Both Junior and Senior High teachers agree most
Lack of resources related to research	43.3	19.7	37.0	***Females agree more; ***Age group 23–35 agree most; ***11–15 years' experience agree most; ***Both Junior and Senior High teachers agree most
Quality/skills of new intakes	41.8	34.1	24.1	***Males agree more; ***Age group 46–55 agrees most; ***0–5 years' experience agree most; ***Both Junior and Senior High teachers agree most
Lack of mutual cooperation and pleasant environment	47.1	33.6	19.4	***Males agree more; ***Age group 46–55 agree most; ***0–5 years' experience agree most; ***Both Junior and Senior High teachers agree most
Cultural barriers	65.0	19.6	15.4	***0–5 years' experience agree most; ***Senior High teachers agree most
Multiple task overload	50.2	25.8	24.0	***Females agree more; ***Age group 23–35 agree most; ***11–15 years' experience agree most; ***Junior High teachers agree most
Institutional bureaucracy	57.7	29.9	12.4	*Age group 23–35 agree most; ***0–5 years' experience agree most; ***Junior High teachers agree most
Non-transparent work culture	66.4	21.7	11.8	***0–5 years' experience agree most
Multiple stakeholders with divergent goals	45.1	30.2	24.7	***Females agree more; ***Age group 23–35 agree most; ***11–15 years' experience agree most; ***Both Junior and Senior High teachers agree most
Lack of recognition/ reward	41.5	23.1	35.4	***Females agree more; ***Age group 23–35 agree most; ***11–15 years' experience agree most; ***Both Junior and Senior High teachers agree most

Notes: Pearson Chi-square test significance. *, $p < 0.05$; **, $p < 0.01$; ***, $p < 0.000$. Analysis done on recoded categorical variables. Agreement relates to the variables deemed more frequent.

its capacity to not only take care of one's family but also one's social responsibilities. This is hardly achievable in a country whose citizens are known to live on less than USD1 a day (see Rhodes, 2013; Jorge 2014).

Within the workplace, a direct relationship exists between employee performance and motivation. As an inner desire to satisfy an unmet need (Smit, Cronje, Brevis & Vrba, 2007), motivation is reflected in an individual's performance. With respect to the section of the questionnaire which permitted the respondents to disclose other factors which influence their work motivation, the feedback included cooperation between teachers and students,

good quality students, presence of extra-curricular activities, opportunities for training and development, and quite intrinsically - love for children. One can argue that given the factors listed above, teachers will be motivated to channel their energies towards the attainment of objectives that promote teaching and learning.

The above table shows that lack of resources related to learning and research, and lack of recognition/reward are deemed the dominant obstacles in meeting teaching and learning goals in Oyo State, with non-transparent culture being viewed as insignificant obstacle. A study that focused on South African teachers found that lack of resources for

teaching and learning, multiple task overload and lack of recognition/reward were among the first five in a rank order which constituted the major obstacles of teachers in meeting their goals of teaching and learning (Iwu, et al 2013). Results of other studies share almost similar patterns. For instance, Iwu and Iwu (2013) noted a lack of adequate infrastructure as a major impediment in the effective management of schools. In fact, Iwu et al (2013) noted “a lack of adequate resources for teaching could also lead to increased workload for educators”, and “in the presence of a disturbing lack of resources for teaching, there is little doubt that the educators will not be able to perform their functions properly”.

A comparative study that took place in Zimbabwe (Chakacha, Iwu & Dakora, 2014) also found that a

well-equipped school functioned more effectively and presents better learning opportunities for the learners. With respect to lack of recognition/reward, studies have shown that rewards can come in the form of growth opportunities such as promotion to a higher office (in the case of teachers perhaps a senior teaching position), new training opportunities, participation and presentation of papers at conferences and seminars and competitive remuneration packages. The words of Koch (1998) aptly describe the critical significance of rewards and recognition: “employees want fair, competitive compensation – but they also want to be recognized for their contributions” and she goes on to say that treating employees this way yields higher productivity and performance, and increased employee devotion.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many would agree that the concept of motivation has a universal appeal which extends significantly to the educational enterprise and also influences our understanding of the motivational dynamics of school achievement. Assuming an implicit relationship between teachers’ performance and pass rates, this paper sought to ascertain those job characteristics that influence teacher’s motivation which result in improved pass rates in Ibadan South-West Local Government. To attain this goal, it was imperative to establish those factors that motivate teachers to perform at their peak and those that obstruct these efforts from effecting the requisite change in students’ pass rates.

The results suggest that while pay/salary, growth opportunities, and duties and responsibilities respectively, take central stage in motivating the participants in this study other job characteristics variables such as supervision/leadership deemed do not exert the same effect. Furthermore the results also show that lack of resources related to learning and research, and lack of recognition/reward are deemed the dominant obstacles in meeting teaching and learning goals, with non-transparent culture being viewed as an insignificant obstacle. It is interesting to note that while the teachers surveyed were relatively young (87%) and female dominated, their level of experience (6–10 years) suggests that they can perform optimally if incentives that they identify with are presented to them.

Playing job characterizes as determinants of motivation against demographic variables highlighted the culture of masculinity in Nigeria, given that male respondents deem growth opportunities (also deemed highly important by respondents) more important than their female counterparts. This finding is not entirely surprising especially with regard to pay/salary emerging as the top job satisfaction variable. Poor remuneration of teachers does not only affect the morale of the teacher, but can be generally limiting.

It is not uncommon to find studies conducted in developed countries not reporting issues of pay as significant to job motivation. In fact, even in developing countries such as South Africa, most studies have only reported growth opportunities, working conditions, and job security as imperatives for job satisfaction. This goes to show that different incentives play different roles in terms of motivating teachers.

Essentially, the plight of the Nigerian teacher is grave and fast degenerating into what Maier and Seligman (1976) describe as learned helplessness (a condition characterized by submission to a negative

situation). While initiatives that span public recognition may be the starting point in the effort to place Nigerian teachers in the well-deserved pedestal, as groomers of future leaders who are the foundations of future growth, the intrinsic (such as the factors that promote or inhibit teaching) and extrinsic conditions (their stipend and work condition) of this noble profession should take central stage.

This study offers significant implications to both theory and practice. A significant implication of this study that sits well with current literature is that teacher motivation is important for the satisfaction and fulfillment of the teachers themselves. In short, the study has a major implication for school teacher and learner experience scores. We offer this because we are convinced that the motivated teacher may inspire learners to achieve good results. Attracting and retaining proficient teachers is central to upholding and maintaining high quality education in Nigeria. Therefore, we are of the strong view that to achieve a sustainable improvement in learner performance, a systematic improvement in teachers' job related factors which can motivate and reduce obstacles in meeting goals of teaching and learning would be needed. Considering that the study focused on South-West region of Nigeria, generalizing the results of this study to the entire country should be done cautiously owing to among others, the cultural differences in various regions which may impact incentives. In closing, we offer two possible future research projects. First, we think there may be a need to broaden the study to state and national levels. Secondly, we suggest an investigation into the actual relationship between learner performance, job characteristics and obstacles to teaching.

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