

Re-Engineering Primary School Teachers for Sustainable Development through Appropriate Motivation (pp. 301-313)

Muokwue Chinyere A. - Department of Educational Psychology, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe camuokwue@yahoo.com

Rev. Fr. W. N. Ofojebe - Educational Foundations/ Administration Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe frwence@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study investigated the motivational strategies that would be adopted to re-engineer primary school teachers for sustainable development in Onitsha North Local Government Area. Three research questions and a hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was used. 300 primary school teachers (100 primary I, 100 primary II and 100 primary III) made up the sample for the study. Stratified random sampling was used in selecting the sample, with a 25-item self-made instrument to collect the data. Data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and ANOVA. The findings revealed that the motivational strategies that would be adopted to re-engineer primary school teachers for sustainable development are mostly on attractive salary structure, providing opportunity for professional development, staff recognition, parental support, participation in decision making, teaching materials, supervision, funding of in-service training, workshops and conferences, and issuing awards to good performing teachers. Recommendations were made based on observations.

Introduction

Teachers all over the world have been viewed as central to both the problems of education and their solution. Education researchers have faced the challenge of motivating teachers to high levels of performance. This is probably due to the fact that teachers are one of the first lines of shaping the

minds of children who will further carry the responsibility to build nations and companies.

Frase (2002) offers one reason why measures relying on external rewards have been insufficient. There is overwhelming research evidence, he says, that teachers enter teaching to help young people learn, that their most gratifying reward is accomplishing this goal, and that the work-related factors most important to teachers are those that allow them to practice their craft successfully. He further stated that working conditions such as class size, discipline conditions, sabbaticals for research and study are expected to improve teacher performance and motivation, and availability of teaching materials; the quality of the principal's supervision; and basic psychological needs such as money, status, and security are work context factors that affect teachers' ability. In adequate supply, these factors prevent dissatisfaction. Even the most intrinsically motivated teacher will become discouraged if the salary doesn't pay the mortgage.

Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (1997) confirm that staff recognition, parental support, teacher participation in school decision making, influence over school policy, control in the classroom, opportunities for professional development, recognition, challenging and varied work, increased responsibility, achievement, empowerment and authority are factors that motivate primary school teachers. Some researchers argue that teachers who do not feel supported in these states are less motivated to do their best work in the classroom (NCES, 1997). Other research concurs that most teachers need to have a sense of accomplishment in these sectors if they are to persevere and excel in the difficult work of teaching.

Since the goal of current school reform efforts is to improve student achievement, these efforts are well-aligned with the primary motivator of teachers – the power to help children learn.

Some research shows that when principals effectively used shared governance strategies and participatory management, teachers feel energized and motivated, and their sense of ownership and empowerment increases (Blasé and Blasé, 2004).

Well-implemented school improvement plans can increase collegiality and give teachers the satisfaction to committing themselves to school improvement goals. Some practitioners believe that such rewards may be

more effective in motivating teachers and improving teaching practices than individual, extrinsic rewards (Johnson, 2001).

However, Frase and Sorenson (2002) caution that not every teacher will respond positively to educational reform approaches. Autonomy for one may be isolation for another; one teacher may welcome feedback, another may see it as infringement on his or her professionalism; and while one may welcome collaboration, another may see it as stressful imposition. Opportunities for participatory management must be differentiated for each teacher.

The interrelation of teacher motivation and school reform efforts has also been addressed through the issue of staff development. Traditionally, staff development has meant encouraging teachers to enhance pedagogical skills and knowledge of subject matter through advanced academic study at the graduate level; providing occasions for teachers to reflect critically on their practices and to fashion new knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy, and learners, providing funding for conferences and workshops; and developing other training opportunities, including inservice programmes.

Traditional staff development models such as workshops can be motivational if they give teachers control by asking them to set their own agenda at the beginning of a meeting or inservice, asking for their analysis of problems in the school or in children's learning, and respecting their answers (Zemmelman, Daniels, and Hyde, 2003). Many teachers respond with great energy when they are immersed in new perspectives on their own teaching and learning abilities and provided with opportunities to express themselves honestly.

Recognition and feedback have been cited as important motivators for teachers, so it would seem that evaluation is an obvious vehicle for using these incentives to direct the teachers on the path towards professional growth and improvement (Frase, 2002).

Primary school teachers need to be appropriately motivated because they lay the foundation for pupils who intend to be doctors, nurses, engineers, pharmacists, politicians and any other profession (Obilor, 2005). Therefore, if it happens that these teachers are not properly motivated, it means that Nigerians are gradually destroying the only profession that tend to give them economic, social and political development bearing in mind that the primary school teachers are the only people in position to imbibe acquired values,

knowledge and skills on part of the growing child who will then transform the society in future (Obueze, 2005).

Unfortunately, appropriate motivation of primary school teachers have not been achieved despite all efforts by the government to assist primary school teachers in solving any problem that might arise in the precedes of discharging their duties in the school environment. Teachers can be effectively motivated in the performance of their duty through a harmonisation of their condition of service, fringe benefits, in-service training and promotion. Ukeneme (2000) also observed that at times motivation of teachers come from aspects directly concerned with their jobs like provision of adequate teaching materials, classroom accomodation, organizing seminars and workshops, attractive salary and general welfare. This is to educate them from time to time on what they should expect from a growing child and how to handle them. Hence, motivating teachers is not expensive and does not take a lot of effort. Intrinsic motivation of teaching only goes so far before teachers question their choice of career. There is urgent need to create a strong foundation of support, recognition, and motivation for all teachers and pupils to prosper.

Statement of the Problem

Primary school teachers appear to be facing a lot of obstacles such as poor salary scheme or irregular payment of teacher's salary, lack of promotion, and accommodation, lack of materials and equipment to teach in class, low teachers' morale, and intimidation from parents and guardians whenever they happen to correct their children or wards through flogging or any other reasonable punishment. Current school environments are a reward-scare setting for professional work and often seem to work against teachers' best efforts to grow professionally and improve student learning (Peterson, 2005). Thus, teachers are at times dissatisfied and disenchanted leading to incessant strikes and closure of educational institutions (Isyaku, 2001). Much of teachers' work is carried out in self-contained classrooms that isolate them from the support of their colleagues. Because of this organizational structure, teachers are difficult to supervise, do not receive regular feedback from others, and often find it hard to collaborate. Thus, perform at a very low level. It also leaves negative effects on the children who are bound to suffer due to inadequate learning and skills from the teacher. The children may also have poor academic development, which may make it difficult for them to contribute something meaningful to the growth of the society.

Perhaps as a result of these circumstances, Frase (2002) rightly stated that many good teachers leave teaching in the first three years. Clearly, schools need to find ways to keep teachers in the profession and keep them motivated because a motivated teacher is one who not only feels satisfied with his or her job, but also is empowered to strive for excellence and growth in instructional practice.

Therefore, the general problem in this study is to determine motivational strategies that would be adopted to re-engineer primary school teachers for sustainable development.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine motivational strategies that would be adopted to re-engineer primary school teachers for sustainable development.

Specifically, the study sets to find out the following:

1. To determine motivational strategies that would be adopted to re-engineer primary school teachers for sustainable development.
2. To determine any problem that might arise when primary school teachers are not properly motivated.
3. To find out adequate solution to the problem created by not motivating primary school teachers properly.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed for the study:

1. What motivational strategies would be adopted to re-engineer primary school teachers for sustainable development?
2. What are the likely problems that would arise when primary school teachers are not properly motivated for sustainable development?
3. What are the adequate solutions to the problem created by not motivating primary school teachers?

Research Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of confidence.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of primary one, two and three teachers on the motivational strategies that would be adopted to re-engineer primary school teachers.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research was used for the study. According to Maduakonam (2004), a descriptive survey research seeks to collect detailed factual information that describes the nature of existing conditions. It assesses the characteristics of the whole population and usually study sample drawn from the population of the study.

The population of the study consisted of all primary school teachers in Onitsha North Local Government Area. Based on the data collected from Onitsha North Local Government Authority (February, 2007) in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State, there are 572 primary school teachers. However, the sample was made up of 300 teachers selected from 10 primary schools. This comprised 100 primary I teachers, 100 primary II teachers and 100 primary III teachers. 10 teachers were selected from each class, giving a total of 30 teachers per school. Stratified random sampling was used in selecting the sample size.

A 25-item self-made instrument titled “Teachers’ Motivational Strategy Questionnaire” was used for data collection. The items were constructed based on literature reviewed on re-engineering primary school teachers for sustainable development through appropriate motivation. The TMSQ was measured on a 4-point likert-type format of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree, which were assigned numerical values, 4, 3, 2, and 1. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and collected personally by the researchers. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data for the research questions while ANOVA was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of confidence. The acceptable level of mean score was 2.5 and above.

Face and content validity of the instrument were established by lecturers who were experts in psychology and education foundations. They scrutinized the contents of the questionnaire, offered useful corrections and suggestions, which led to some modifications. Based on such corrections and modifications, the instrument was considered adequate and the final draft of the questionnaire was produced.

The reliability of the instrument was established when it was administered to 30 primary school teachers selected from two schools, which are similar with the people used in the main study. The instrument has reliability of 0.79 and 0.83 Cronbach alpha and split-half (Spearman-Brown) respectively. The

reliability coefficients were considered high enough and suitable for use in this study.

Presentation of Results and Analysis of Data

Major findings of the study were presented in tables based on the research questions.

Analysis in table 1 shows that all the items rated above the acceptable mean of 2.5. The conclusion is that these strategies can be used to motivate primary school teachers for the attainment of sustainable development.

Table 2 shows that all the items rated above the acceptable mean of 2.5. The conclusion is that these are the likely problems that would arise when primary school teachers are not properly motivated for sustainable development.

Analysis in table 3 shows that all the items rated above the acceptable mean of 2.5. The conclusion is that these may be adequate solutions to the problem created by not motivating primary school teachers for sustainable development.

The result of the test of hypothesis reveals that the F-value is less than the table-value at 0.05 level of confidence. The null hypothesis of no difference is therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significance difference in the ratings of primary one, two and three teachers on the motivational strategies that would be adopted to re-engineer primary school teachers for sustainable development.

Discussion of the Findings

The response to research question one (table 1) revealed that providing opportunity for professional development, staff recognition, parental support, participation in decision making, attractive salary, teaching materials, supervision, funding of inservice training, workshops and conferences, and issuing awards to good performing teachers are factors that motivate primary school teachers for sustainable development.

This finding is attributed to the fact that the issue of motivating teachers in primary school takes the form of understanding the nature of their jobs as well as the pains they experience while giving service to the nation.

The response of teachers in research question one support National Center for Education Statistics (1997), which confirms that staff recognition, parental support, teacher participation in school decision making, influence over school policy, opportunities for professional development, recognition, challenging and varied work, increased responsibility, achievement, empowerment and authority motivate primary school teachers.

Supporting this view, Ukeneme (2000) also said that at times motivation of teachers come from aspects directly concerned with their jobs like provision of adequate teaching materials, classroom accomodation, organizing seminars and workshops and general welfare. Such action as derived from Blasé and Blasé (2004) shows that when principals effectively used shared governance strategies and participatory management, teachers feel energized and motivated, and their sense of ownership and empowerment increases.

The responses to research question two (Table II) revealed that the problems that would likely arise when primary school teachers are not motivated for sustainable development lie in the teaching profession dying due to incessant strikes, children will have nothing to learn, the future generation will be in trouble, teachers will not grow professionally, the primary school system will collapse, there will be juvenile delinquency, and illiteracy will be high in the society.

These findings may be attributed to the fact that whenever primary school teachers go on strike or face any academic problem, children will have to suffer bearing in mind that they are the only people in position to train a child in a way that will make him have full knowledge and contribute to the growth of the society in near future. This finding supports Obueze (2005) who believes that when teachers are not properly motivated, it means that Nigerians are gradually destroying the profession that tend to give them economic, social and political development bearing in mind that primary school teachers are the only people in position to transfer knowledge and skills on the part of the growing child who is likely to transform the society in near future.

The responses as regard to research question three (Table 3) revealed that the adequate solution to the problem created by not motivating primary school teachers lie in government and societal recognition of teachers' effort, reviewing teachers' salary from time to time, creating teachers welfare association, recognizing teachers effort in shaping the future of the child, and funding conferences and workshops.

The opinion of these respondents tend to support Obilor (2005) who believes that primary school teachers need to be appropriately motivated because they lay the foundation for pupils who intend to be doctors, nurses, engineers, pharmacists, politicians and any other profession. When the government reviews such attitude, it becomes possible for primary school teachers to be recognized in our society.

Conclusion

Discovering what matters to teachers and how best to motivate them for sustained and improved performance is a complicated challenge. A lot of strategies, which ranges from providing opportunity for professional development, staff recognition, parental support, participation in decision making, attractive salary, teaching materials, supervision, funding inservice training, workshops and conferences, and issuing awards to good performing teachers are factors that motivate primary school teachers for sustainable development. Therefore, new directions in participatory school improvement, comprehensive and meaningful staff development, and supportive teacher evaluation hold great promise for improving teachers' professional motivation.

Recommendations

1. Government should motivate primary school teachers by redefining the teaching job to include blocks of extended time for teachers' professional development.
2. Government should provide incentives like good salary structure, and issue awards to good performing teachers.
3. Government should from time to time organize and fund seminars and workshops where primary school teachers can present their problems.
4. Corporate bodies, non-governmental organizations and charity organizations should assist government in mapping out strategies on how to motivate primary school teachers on their professions.

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Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation ratings on what motivational strategies would be adopted to re-engineer primary school teachers for sustainable development.

Item No	Item Description	Item Mean Score	SD	Decision
1	Providing opportunity for professional development and staff recognition.	3.7872	0.7701	Accepted (A)
2	Providing funding for conferences, seminars, workshops and inservice training for teachers.	3.6167	0.7472	A
3	Compensating teachers for outside classroom duties like state scholastic competitions.	3.6700	0.9431	A
4	Adequate inspection and supervision of primary school teachers.	3.8433	0.7055	A
5	Providing basic psychological needs like good salary, benefits, status, and security.	3.5600	0.8458	A
6	Providing current teaching materials and equipment.	3.4933	0.7992	A
7	Teachers' participation in school decision-making.	3.7733	0.6026	A
8	Providing parental support through Parents Teachers Association.	3.7067	0.6234	A
9	Making more awards available and nominating teachers for awards and competitions	3.6700	0.7138	A

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation ratings on the likely problems that would arise when primary school teachers are not properly motivated for sustainable development

Item No	Item Description	Item Mean Score	SD	Decision
10	Teachers will not grow professionally so as to improve learning.	3.6600	0.7670	Accepted (A)
11	Children will have inadequate learning and skills from the teacher.	3.7933	0.5941	A
12	There will be juvenile delinquency in our society.	3.8300	0.5373	A
13	Teachers will abandon their jobs and look for more lucrative profession.	3.7800	0.5996	A
14	The primary school system in Nigeria will not be efficient in setting the foundation for learning.	3.6533	0.6003	A
15	Pupils will not learn the proper skills and values for preparing them in secondary and tertiary level.	3.8451	0.7514	A
16	There will not be adequate current materials and equipment for teaching the children.	3.7933	0.5941	A
17	There will be no trained teacher to impact knowledge and skills on the growing child.	3.8300	0.5373	A
18	Government and society will not recognize teacher's efforts.	3.7800	0.5996	A
19	Illiteracy will be high in the society.	3.7533	0.6003	A
20	There will be incessant strikes	3.8452	0.7083	A

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation ratings on What will be the adequate solutions to the problem created by not motivating primary school teachers for sustainable development.

Item No	Item Description	Item Mean Score	SD	Decision
21	Funding of inservice training like workshops, seminars, and conferences for teachers.	3.7400	0.6167	Accepted (A)
22	Reviewing the salary structure of teachers from time to time.	3.7600	0.6085	A
23	Providing free medical services for teachers and their families.	3.6600	0.7657	A
24	Recognizing and rewarding teachers' effort in shaping the future of the child.	3.8533	0.7103	A
25	Providing sabbaticals for research and study abroad	3.8217	0.7248	A

Table 4: Analysis of variance on the mean scores of primary one, two and three teachers on the motivational strategies that would be adopted to re-engineer primary school teachers for sustainable development

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sign Level	Decision
Between Groups	219.007	2	109.503	2.754	0.065	
Within Groups	11807.940	297	39.757			Accepted
Total	2026.947	299				Ho