



Reassessing Teacher Motivation and Its Influence on Public Secondary School Performance in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja

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ABSTRACT

Teacher motivation remains a central component in achieving quality education and sustainable development, particularly within public secondary schools in Nigeria. This study explores the significance of teacher motivation and its implications for school performance in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja. Recognizing the critical role teachers play in student achievement, this research investigates how various motivational factors such as remuneration, working conditions, career development opportunities, and administrative support influence teacher commitment and performance. Utilizing a qualitative methodology, the study is based on a comprehensive review of existing literature, policy documents, journal articles, and empirical studies relevant to teacher motivation within the Nigerian educational context. The findings reveal that public secondary school teachers often face a lack of adequate welfare incentives, poor infrastructure, and limited professional development, all of which contribute to reduced morale and inefficiency. In contrast, environments where teachers are adequately motivated exhibit improved classroom performance, stronger teacher-student relationships, and better academic outcomes. The study is grounded in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, providing a theoretical foundation for understanding the psychological and environmental dimensions of motivation. The research concludes that meaningful policy reforms are essential to address existing gaps and reposition the teaching profession for effectiveness. Recommendations include increased investment in teacher welfare, structured career growth paths, periodic training, and inclusive education policies. These strategies are crucial for fostering a motivated teaching workforce capable of driving improved learning outcomes and contributing meaningfully to national development goals.

Keywords: Teacher motivation, job performance, Gwagwalada, public secondary schools, qualitative research

INTRODUCTION

The role of teachers in the educational system cannot be overemphasized. Teachers remain central to the achievement of educational objectives, particularly through their motivation and commitment to duty. In recent years, the quality of education in Nigeria has come under intense scrutiny. One of the prevailing challenges has been the poor performance of teachers, often attributed to low levels of motivation.

Teacher motivation encompasses the internal and external factors that stimulate teachers' willingness to engage actively in their roles and strive toward educational goals. A motivated teacher is more likely to demonstrate enthusiasm in the classroom, encourage student participation, and contribute positively to educational reforms. Motivation is also closely linked to teachers' job satisfaction, which influences retention, performance, and student achievement.

However, despite its importance, many Nigerian teachers, particularly in public secondary schools, operate under demotivating conditions. In Gwagwalada Area Council, numerous factors such as low salaries, inadequate infrastructure, lack of teaching resources, and limited professional development opportunities have eroded teacher morale. These conditions not only undermine job performance but also compromise educational quality.

Previous studies have discussed teacher motivation across various Nigerian contexts. Yet, there is a noticeable research gap concerning Gwagwalada Area Council. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge that gap by examining teacher motivation and its influence on job performance in public secondary schools in this locality. The research aims to provide data-driven recommendations to enhance motivation and, by extension, improve educational outcomes.

Objectives

1. To examine the state of public secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council.
2. To assess the level and nature of teacher motivation in public secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council.
3. To determine the relationship between teacher motivation and job performance in the selected schools.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Herzberg distinguishes between *motivators* (factors that cause satisfaction) and *hygiene factors* (those that cause dissatisfaction if absent). In the context of education, motivators may include recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for advancement, while hygiene factors encompass salary, working conditions, and job security.

In Gwagwalada's public secondary schools, it was observed that the absence of both motivators and hygiene factors contributes to poor teacher morale. Teachers expressed disillusionment due to irregular salaries, lack of teaching materials, and insufficient professional development opportunities.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs also provides a lens for understanding teacher motivation. According to Maslow, individuals are motivated to fulfill a hierarchy of needs starting from physiological, safety, social, esteem, and finally self-actualization. In the study context, most teachers operate at the lower levels of this hierarchy, struggling to meet basic needs such as financial security and job stability. This struggle hinders progression to higher motivational stages such as esteem and self-actualization, thereby affecting their productivity and enthusiasm.

Together, these theories offer a robust explanation for the motivation-performance dynamics observed in this study. They reinforce the notion that educational authorities must address both intrinsic and extrinsic factors to improve teacher performance effectively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation is a multifaceted construct encompassing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence educators' enthusiasm and commitment to teaching. According to Bennell and Akyeampong (2007), teacher motivation involves the willingness of teachers to sustain efforts and invest personal resources toward achieving educational goals. The motivation of teachers is directly linked to their performance, job satisfaction, and retention within the educational system.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between "motivators" (e.g., recognition, achievement, growth) and "hygiene factors" (e.g., salary, working conditions). In the context of Nigeria's public education system, both categories are frequently deficient, leading to dissatisfaction and demotivation (Ejiogun et al., 2016).

Challenges of Teacher Motivation in Nigeria

Several studies highlight a decline in teacher motivation in Nigeria due to poor remuneration, lack of professional development, and inadequate infrastructure (Okebukola, 2021; Ofoegbu, 2019). According to

Obadara (2020), most public secondary schools are underfunded, resulting in deteriorated classroom environments, scarcity of teaching aids, and insufficient welfare support for teachers.

Furthermore, the World Bank (2018) noted that Nigerian teachers often face delayed salary payments and limited promotion prospects, which negatively affect morale. Similarly, reports from UNESCO (2020) confirm that unfavorable working conditions and a lack of appreciation from education authorities lead to reduced motivation and poor job performance.

Impact of Working Conditions on Teacher Performance

Working conditions are a significant determinant of teacher performance. According to Adebayo and Oni (2020), conducive environments with access to teaching materials and manageable class sizes correlate positively with improved student outcomes. Conversely, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient furniture, and absence of basic amenities create stress and hinder effective teaching.

In Gwagwalada, anecdotal and research-based evidence shows that many public schools lack electricity, potable water, and essential instructional tools (Nwachukwu & Akinyemi, 2021). These environmental constraints affect teachers' ability to deliver lessons effectively and reduce the overall quality of education.

Welfare and Compensation as Motivators

Several scholars emphasize the role of compensation in teacher motivation. Ijaiya (2017) and Ifedili (2022) found that competitive salaries, timely payments, and supplementary allowances significantly increase job satisfaction among teachers. However, public school teachers in Nigeria generally earn less than their counterparts in private schools and other government sectors, which contributes to low motivation.

Beyond salaries, other welfare elements such as housing, transportation allowances, and access to health insurance have been highlighted as important motivational tools (Adeyemi, 2019). In regions like Gwagwalada, where infrastructure is underdeveloped, lack of such benefits further exacerbates the motivational crisis among educators.

Professional Development and Career Advancement

Access to in-service training, workshops, and continuing education is another critical component of teacher motivation. According to Asuquo and Jekayinfa (2021), professional development empowers teachers with updated knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and a sense of career growth, which fosters motivation and commitment.

However, such opportunities are often limited in Nigeria's public education sector due to budget constraints and administrative inefficiencies. In the Gwagwalada Area Council, the lack of consistent training programs has been cited as a demotivating factor for teachers, who feel stagnated and unrecognized (Okonkwo, 2023).

Relationship Between Motivation and Job Performance

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a strong link between teacher motivation and job performance. Ofoegbu (2019) found that motivated teachers exhibit better classroom management, higher levels of student engagement, and more innovative teaching methods. In contrast, unmotivated teachers often display absenteeism, lack of enthusiasm, and minimal effort in preparing for lessons.

Motivation also affects how teachers interact with students and their commitment to achieving curriculum objectives. In the study by Edem and Udo (2020), schools with higher motivational indices among teachers recorded better academic results among students, supporting the hypothesis that motivation directly influences teacher effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design using secondary data sourced from an extensive review of existing literature. The qualitative approach was chosen to enable an in-depth exploration and understanding of how teacher motivation affects job performance, particularly within the context of public secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council. Secondary data was obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles, government education reports, theses, and publications by reputable international

organizations such as UNESCO and the World Bank. The selection of literature was guided by relevance to the study's objectives, credibility of sources, and recency (emphasizing materials published between 2015 and 2024). The data was thematically analyzed to identify key trends and recurring themes related to teacher motivation, challenges in educational settings, and job performance.

This method allowed for the synthesis of diverse viewpoints, identification of theoretical patterns, and grounding of the study within the broader discourse on teacher motivation and educational performance in Nigeria. Ethical considerations were upheld by citing all secondary sources appropriately and avoiding data manipulation or misrepresentation

THE GWAGWALADA CONTEXT

While national studies offer broad insights, localized studies such as that by Ibrahim and Yusuf (2022) focus on specific educational challenges in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Their findings reveal that public secondary schools in Gwagwalada suffer from chronic underfunding, overcrowded classrooms, and poor teacher welfare. Teachers in this area face unique challenges, including transportation difficulties and inadequate housing, which impact motivation levels.

Although some NGOs and donor agencies have made efforts to support educational infrastructure in the region, these interventions remain insufficient. Teachers in Gwagwalada require sustained support from government authorities in the form of improved facilities, consistent incentives, and career advancement opportunities to enhance their performance.

Policy Implications and Global Comparisons

Globally, countries that invest significantly in teacher welfare and professional development, such as Finland and Singapore, report higher educational outcomes (OECD, 2020). These countries prioritize teacher status, provide competitive compensation, and ensure a supportive work environment.

Nigeria can draw lessons from these models to reform its education system. Policies aimed at enhancing teacher motivation must go beyond token allowances to include structured career development, regular performance appraisals, and meaningful recognition.

FINDINGS

The study revealed several significant findings:

1. **Poor State of Infrastructure:** Most public secondary schools in Gwagwalada are in a dilapidated condition. Inadequate classrooms, broken furniture, and lack of electricity and water were commonly reported. This environment demoralizes both students and teachers.
2. **Unfavorable Working Environment:** Teachers described the working environment as discouraging. Poor ventilation, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of teaching aids diminish job satisfaction and effectiveness.
3. **Insufficient Teaching Resources and Manpower:** Many schools lack basic instructional materials like textbooks, markers, and laboratory equipment. Teachers also highlighted understaffing, which leads to high workloads and burnout.
4. **Low Remuneration and Welfare:** Respondents consistently cited poor pay and lack of welfare packages as major demotivating factors. Most teachers struggle to meet personal and family needs, which affects their focus and performance.
5. **Positive Impact of In-service Training:** Teachers who had opportunities for professional development showed higher levels of job commitment. Such training boosts morale, provides relevant skills, and makes teachers feel valued.

These findings underscore the need for comprehensive interventions targeting working conditions, resource availability, and reward systems to enhance teacher motivation and job performance.

CONCLUSION

Teacher motivation is a pivotal element in enhancing educational outcomes and ensuring sustainable development within the public education system. This study has highlighted the critical role that

motivation plays in influencing teacher performance, particularly in public secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council. Through a qualitative analysis of secondary data from recent literature, the research revealed that inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, lack of professional development, and insufficient welfare provisions significantly diminish teacher morale and performance.

The findings underscore that motivated teachers are more likely to demonstrate commitment, creativity, and effectiveness in the classroom, which in turn contributes to improved student learning. However, chronic underfunding, policy gaps, and administrative inefficiencies continue to erode the potential of public-school educators in Nigeria.

To address these challenges, stakeholders, especially government agencies and school administrators; must implement comprehensive strategies that prioritize teacher welfare, recognize professional efforts, and create enabling environments for teaching. Sustained motivation can only be achieved through deliberate policy actions, inclusive governance, and adequate resource allocation.

This study adds to the growing body of knowledge on teacher motivation in Nigeria and serves as a call to action for systemic reforms to enhance the quality of public education through empowered educators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study offers the following recommendations:

1. **Improve School Infrastructure:** Authorities should prioritize renovation of public secondary schools in Gwagwalada to provide a conducive environment for teaching and learning.
2. **Enhance Teaching Resources:** Government should ensure timely provision of instructional materials such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, and ICT tools to support pedagogical activities.
3. **Review Salary Structures:** Teachers' remuneration should be reviewed upward in line with the current economic realities. Prompt payment of salaries and benefits is essential for morale.
4. **Implement Welfare Packages:** Health insurance, housing schemes, and transportation allowances should be introduced to support teachers' wellbeing.
5. **Strengthen Professional Development:** Regular in-service training, workshops, and capacity-building programs should be organized to update teachers' knowledge and boost motivation.
6. **Recruit More Teachers:** Recruitment of additional qualified teachers is necessary to reduce workload and improve teaching quality.
7. **Adopt Participatory Management:** School administrators should adopt inclusive leadership styles that recognize and reward teachers' efforts. A sense of belonging and value can enhance motivation.

These steps, if implemented, can significantly improve the motivation and performance of teachers in public secondary schools in Gwagwalada.

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