Abstract

This survey research investigated the motivational challenges of effective practices among primary school teachers in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. A sample of 140 teachers were drawn through the simple random sampling technique from 475 teachers within the 22 primary schools in the areas as subjects for the study. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The instrument used in the collection of data was the Challenges to Professional Teaching Effectiveness Questionnaire (CPTEQ). The percentage and frequency counts were used to analyze the data collected. The findings revealed that 93% of the respondents had certificate in education while 7% did not. Further, development of children and the society, curriculum development, research and self development/actualization and employment were ranked in order of priority as reasons for qualifying as teachers; while motivational challenges of teachers in hierarchical order included poor salary/grants, poor career development and poor infrastructure/lack of material for teaching, over population in classrooms, poor teacher image and the least unclear strategy for promotion.
Man strives best to attain goals when motivated. According to Anukwe (2009), motivation is all the phenomena that are involved in the stimulation of action towards a particular objective where previously there was little or no movement towards those goals. Thus, in the classroom, the teachers as the sole agent of transferring the educational goals and objectives into reality are faced with great tasks. These tasks if not well harnessed are bound to negatively affect not only the immediate growth and development of the pupils but also the diverse spheres of live where these ones would have been expected to contribute meaningfully to.

Plans and policies of education according to Mgbodili (2003) can be beautifully laid down on paper, the implementation strategies can also be well outlined and other organizational structures well set in terms of who carries what assignment task and the resources both human and materials made available with adequate fund provided; but without the effort of the teachers the goals and objectives of the educational systems cannot be achieved. This is based on the fact that teachers do not just walk into the class to teach. They rather take time to prepare their lessons and with the help of instructional materials in a systematic, rational organized process transmit knowledge, skills, attitude, values that are worthwhile in accordance with professional principles to their pupils. By this process, they assist the pupils to actualize their innate capacity for learning. Teachers, are those who come in contact with pupils most frequently, by these contacts they exert great influence on their pupils. They invariably through their covert or overt behavior influence what their pupils will be in the future. No wonder in recognition of their services to nation, the National Policy on Education (2004) documents that the educational level of any nation cannot grow above the knowledge of the teachers. Therefore, teachers need to be motivated properly in order to foster quality assurance in education.

The teacher’s role does not start and end in the classroom. Abdu (2008) posited that teachers need to be involved in building the school curriculum. They are involved in curriculum implementation in the classroom and know the problems they come across during the process of implementation and can determine ways of solving such problems. In agreement, Akpama, Bassey, Idaka and Egong (2010) contend that as implementers of the curriculum, teachers should participate in curriculum provisions and be given the opportunity to take part in curriculum building. This they would say motivates teachers to match those classroom experiences with the whole of the content. The lack of inclusion of the teachers who implement the curriculum in the classroom is seen as religation to the background, Alumode (2003) saw this as making the teaching job to loose its prestige and not to enjoy any recognition from the public. Elusani (2002) also observed that the teaching profession and the school system have been so destroyed that the remnant of the Nigerian teachers are largely a bunch of disgruntled, disillusioned, frustrated and depressed professionals lacking any motivation or encouragement. Dike (2007) opined that it is a faulty development where teachers are not recognized in their areas of profession and wondered on the
ability of the teachers to successfully achieve curriculum implementation when they do not participate in its development.

In remuneration, Afe (2006) found that Nigerian teachers are poorly paid and inadequately motivated. This according to him results in teachers’ absenteeism, lukewarm classroom practices, militancy and early departure from the profession. In agreement, Okwuede (2010) stated that teachers remain poorly motivated and their work load and nature of services rendered outweigh remuneration and society rating. According to Sa’ad and Atukuan (2010), the society and even government in which the teachers live castigate them. Chijioke (2002) pointed out that the society at any function recognizes men with high financial placement even though they cannot make correct sentences in English. That is honour and respect is given only to people who have made it financially or who are in well paying jobs. Idioli and Umanah (2009) in support emphasized that the society has less regard and appreciation for the teachers. They went on to say that teachers are the least paid personnel and their salaries can be paid at will and no one seems to care or feel their existence. The dilemma in the delay of teachers’ salaries with delayed promotion is not motivational.

Apart from the issue of remuneration and receiving of salary last among other civil servants, the teachers working environment and the total well being attest to the fact that they are abandoned or forgotten. The classroom condition is unbearable, over crowded with no space for free movement within the classroom. Worst of it all is that sometimes two or three classes are merged giving a total of over hundred children in one classroom. Under this condition, the teacher can only be an exceptional one to be able to do his work effectively. Yet, they are expected to be competent in classroom management and control during instruction, irrespective of external factors that influence pupils attention, asserts Anikweze (2004). Teachers are expected to enhance reasoning skills in pupils and have creative imagination for developing and implementing new and better ways of doing things by pupils, states Igborghor (2006).

Further, most of these classrooms lack learning resources. Azikiwe (1994) defined learning resources as all forms of devices, real objects or representations used by teachers to promote, enhance and encourage teaching and learning activities. Onwuasoanya and Gozio (2006) noted that for learning to occur, the teacher need to utilize the resources effectively in class. This is especially so in a large class where teachers need to arrest the interest of learners and channel them appropriately. Onwuasoanya (2008) pointed out that where tools and expendable materials are not available; teaching becomes a mere story telling with little or no learning. In agreement with Ehiametalos (2003) this paper emphasis that condition of service, lack of materials to work with and deteriorating classroom reduce the teachers’ morale to its lowest ebb.

In order to make ends meet, some of these teachers have taken to other part time businesses to the detriment of the profession they love and went on to study.
This then has affected their effectiveness. This study therefore is posed at finding out the motivational factors of payment of teachers’ salaries, promotion, teachers’ involvement in decision making, teachers’ quarters and teachers’ development opportunities in teachers’ effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

Education is an indispensable instrument for the development of an individual as well as the society and nation at large. This is made possible by the use of teachers whose duty is to transfer knowledge to learners. The primary school teacher is no exception. His own duty is more tasking as he deals with the very young ones who are very tender and difficult to work with. They are expected to form in them the foundation of the basic things of life. But these teachers that are so important are often not motivated and not encouraged. They are therefore most often too weak to carry out their practices effectively. Their weakness in doing their job is reflected in pupil’s academic performance as it is recently observed in their poor performance in both internal and external examinations. This study therefore is aimed at finding out if the motivational factors identified can pose a challenge to teachers’ effective practice.

Research Questions

The following three research questions were asked to guide the study:

1. What percentage of primary school teachers are professionally qualified to teach?
2. For what purpose did you desire to qualify as a professional teacher?
3. What do teachers perceive to be the motivational challenges of effective practices since they join the system?

Method

Survey research design was adopted for this study. The population consisted of all primary school teachers in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. This was made up of 475 teachers distributed in 22 government primary schools in the area. The sample size was 140 teachers drawn from 15 schools. The area was stratified into three zones. From each of these zones, 5 schools were selected. The subjects were sampled through the simple random sampling technique. Between 9 and 10 teachers were sampled out from each selected school. One instrument was used for data collection and that was – Challenges to Professional Teaching Effectiveness Questionnaire (CPTEQ). It consisted of items that sought to whether a teacher is professionally qualified to teach or not. In this regards, any teacher without a certificate in Education but a graduate in any field is not a professionally qualified teacher. The second question was based on reason why teachers choose teaching as a profession. The third question was based on challenges to effective practice. The question 2 and 3 were measured on a 4-point Likert type-scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree to Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by experts in test and measurement. The percentage and frequency counts were used to analyze the data.
Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study was done to reflect the manner in which the questions (3 in all) were ordered. The simple percentage statistical analysis was used for the analysis of the data.

Result

Question One: What percentage of Primary School teachers are professionally qualified to teach?

The frequency counts and percentage scores of subjects response to part I of the CPTEQ is presented in Table I.

Table I

Professionally Qualified Primary School Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>With Certificate in Education</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Without Certificate in Education</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the findings as presented in Table I, 140 (93%) of the respondents had certificates in education while only 10 (7%) did not.

Question Two: For what purpose did you desire to qualify as a professional teacher?

To answer this question, the researchers did the frequency counts and percentage scores of subject response to items (5 in all) in part 2 of the research instrument. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Priority Reasons for Qualifying as Teachers

(N = 140)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Development of children/society</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>(97)</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Curriculum development to reflect national needs</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>(92)</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>(87)</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Self development/actualization</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>(73)</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Employment opportunity</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>(59)</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 2 show that development of children/society ranked first with a total frequency count of 136 (97%) as priority reason for subjects who qualified as teachers. This was followed by curriculum development 129 (92%), research 122 (87%) and self development/actualization 102 (73%) which ranked 2nd, 3rd and 4th respectively. The least was the item on employment opportunity 82 (59%) which ranked 5th.
Question Three: What do teachers perceive to be the motivational challenges of effective practices since they joined the system?

In the bid to answer this question, the researchers did the frequency count and simple percentage computation of subjects response to items (7 in all) in part 3 of the CPTEQ as presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Motivational Challenges of Teachers Effective Practices (N = 140)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items on Challenges</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unclear strategies for promotion</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poor teachers image in the society</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Poor career development in the area of scholarship, in service, etc</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poor infrastructure/lack of materials</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Exclusion of teachers from curriculum planning and development</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Poor salary/grants</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Over population of pupils in the classroom</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 3, poor salary/grant 134 (96%) ranked first as the motivational challenge of primary school teachers effectiveness. This is followed by poor career development (item 3) and poor infrastructure/lack of material (item 4) with 131 (94%) each. Over population of pupils in classroom 128 (91%). Poor teachers image 123 (88%) and exclusion from curriculum planning and development 108 (77%) ranked 4th, 5th and 6th. The least factor in rank is: Unclear strategies for promotion 86 (61%) which ranked last (i.e. 7th).

Discussion of Results

In answer to question one on how many teachers were professionally qualified to teach in the primary school; it was revealed that 93% of teachers were qualified and only 77% of the teachers were not qualified. This high percentage of qualified teachers goes to show how much teachers struggle to get the required qualification that is needed to teach in the primary school. The National Policy on Education (2004) states that the qualification of teachers to teach in the primary school was to be NCE. Many teachers now have the NCE and some even have higher qualifications such as B.Ed., M.Ed. and even Ph.D. This goes to show how enthusiastic teachers are at getting the right qualification to teach.

In giving reason for qualifying as teachers, it was revealed that 97% of teachers had joined teaching to help develop children and society. This finding supports Igborghor (2006) who had earlier stated that teachers were to enhance reasoning skills in pupils and to have creative imagination for developing and implementing new and better ways of doing things. This is the way by which teachers influence pupils for development in the society. For curriculum development
reflecting national needs, the result revealed that 92% of teachers had agreed that they had joined teaching to develop curriculum that would reflect national needs. This result supports Abdu (2008) and Akpama, Bassey, Idaka and Egong (2010) who all agreed that teachers must be involved in curriculum development since they are the implementers. Since they are the chief implementers of curriculum, they expected to have a better knowledge about problems of curriculum and so should be involved in curriculum development. 87% of teachers also agree that they had joined teaching to carry out research. Teachers being in the school system are aware of the various problems in the school. Through research teachers can find solutions to these problems. 73% agreed that they had joined teaching for self development actualization. It is a normal inert tendency for humans to develop. Teachers therefore must develop themselves to acquire higher qualifications, and make their dreams to actualize. Though many teachers have complained that at the end of their career they do not have anything to show for it. They are never really known for the contribution they have made in the society. This may not be true because the development in the society we have today is the work of the teachers of yester-years. There is sure to be better development in future due to the introduction of the technological know how and the effort the teachers are putting in making use of this technology for societal development and self actualization of the teachers. 51% of the teachers agreed that they had joined teaching because of employment opportunities. Job opportunities in other profession are difficult to get into, teaching is the only job that any one can get employed easily but in Nigeria, teaching is not regarded. It is not as lucrative as other jobs. That is why it has the least percentage as shown on the table of items on the questionnaire. Generally, people do not like to take up education as a profession. Teachers are not motivated they are not encouraged. Some people take it as a last resort when there is no other opportunity.

In giving answer to question 3, it was found that poor salary/grants ranked 1st with 96% as a challenge to teacher effective practice. This may not sound strange as salary is the major factor that can motivate teachers to work. Salaries that are paid at the end of every month are used by teachers for most of their pressing needs. If these needs are not solved, the teachers may not pay attention to the job he/she is doing. He may not therefore be effective. This result supports Afe (2006) who found that Nigerian teachers are poorly paid and inadequately motivated. This according to him has caused teaches absenteeism and lukewarm classroom practices.

Poor career development and poor infrastructure/lack of material rank 2nd with 94%. When teachers put in all their effort and they are not encouraged to move higher in their career, they may not be effective in their job. Most teachers struggle through school by their own personal effort. Most of them have never had any scholarship. Infrastructure and instructional materials are very important for teachers to be effective. A situation where a teacher sits with his children under the shade to teach may not be conducive. This result supports that of Ehiametalos (2003) and
Onwuasoanya (2008) who stated that the teacher needs a conducive environment to work well.

Over population in classrooms is also another problem that ranked 4th with 94%. It was found that most primary schools are over populated and teachers find it very difficult to move within the class. This result supports that of Ogbondah (2005) who found that over population of pupils in the classroom and imbalance in the teacher-pupil ratio are nagging problems throughout Nigerian primary schools. This according to him affects teacher’s effective practice.

Poor teacher image in the society ranked 5th with 88%. The result revealed that poor teacher image in the society has great influence on teacher’s effective practice. This result also supports Chijioke (2002) who has stated that society in any function recognizes men of high financial placement. Ogbondah (2005) states that this poor teacher image is as a result of neglect from government, due to governments nonchalant attitude towards payment of teachers salaries, and poor working environment.

The least on the line of the items on the questionnaire is unclear policy for promotion. It ranked 7th with 61%. The result revealed that teachers were not sure of the strategy that is used in promoting them. In the civil service normal years into next promotion is three years. But for teachers, many have stayed for over four years without any promotion. This can discourage teachers from doing their work well.

Summary

Individuals perform better when motivated and teachers are no exception. As indispensable entity of human development and nation building, teachers activities though mostly observed in the classroom and the school, go beyond the classroom to affect the entire nation. Thus, if they are motivated in such areas as active participation in curriculum planning, development and innovation, prompt promotion with mapped out policies for their promotion, conducive working environment and workload and provision of learning resources; this will help improve the teachers image as worthwhile civil servants of the nation as well as buttress their self esteem thereby motivating them to give of their best to the pupils/student and the nation.

Conclusion

Teachers’ motivation invariably implies the empowerment of teachers for productivity, effectiveness, efficiency, quality delivery, possible and quality outcomes of the educational system. Therefore, the motivation of teachers should not be overlooked as teachers’ job satisfaction means quality assurance in education.
Recommendation

On the basis of the conclusion drawn of teachers as essential personnel of effective development of the individual and the nation, it is therefore recommended that the stated factors of participation in curriculum planning, development and innovation should have more classroom teachers sampled across the nation to be active should be assessed by the diverse activities involved in the work role of the teachers and they be paid accordingly. Like every other civil servant the guideline for promotion should be made clear to them so as to ensure that promotion exercise is carried out yearly and implemented accordingly. The working environment of the teachers should also be looked into. They need conducive rooms to sit in between classroom or their classrooms should be made conducive in such a way that they would be proud to welcome even their visitors to their work place. Their work load should be looked into with a view to reducing it for efficiency and learning resources are made available for effective teaching.

With these factors being well tended to, teachers are bound to be energized to face challenges in their work role and place.

References


