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## Motivation: The Catalyst for Effective Job Performance in Nigeria Schools

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By

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### Abstract

*Motivation as a catalyst for effective job performance in Nigeria schools was discussed by the writer. The concept of motivation was X-rayed and various theories of motivation were equally discussed. The application of the various theories in schools were also discussed. The relationship between motivation and performance was also discussed, and the write up ended with some recommendations.*

There are several productive resources in the business environment. However, these resources may be classified into two groups namely:

1. Inanimate resources. Example money, material and machines.
2. Human Labour, this is the unique factor of production which cannot be subjected indefinitely to inhuman treatment without showing strain and discomfort. Labour means people who are physically and mentally responsible for carrying out the functions of the company's production goals, but labour (teachers) because they are human beings could resist the management or boss.

In the absence of slave labour as is often the case, labour is only for hire and not for sale. therefore, employees are free to lend their services to the highest bidder who will treat them fairly. If the conditions of service are right, they should do their best for their employers otherwise they should seek employment elsewhere.

Human beings are so unpredictable that they would smile today if you say "Hello" but will not hesitate to tell you to "mind your business" if they are in bad mood the following day. Because of this, one cannot be sure that a worker who can do a job today will want to do the same job at all times. It is the job of the group leader, manager, supervisor, principal to find a way of motivating his subordinates (teachers).

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Motivation is therefore a process of satisfying both the physical, economic and psychological needs of workers in the work environment. It is an incentive or encouragement given to somebody to enable him behaves in a desired manner. In education, motivation is the boosting of the workers' morale to enable them put in the efforts needed to achieve the educational goals. Motivation according to Koontz (1993) referred to the entire class of drives, desires, needs, wishes and similar forces.

A motivator then is something that influences an individual's behaviour. It makes an employee to perform better. These include higher pay, a prestigious title, recognition, promotion or punishment. Remember that motivation is different from satisfaction. While motivation refers to drive and efforts to satisfy a want or goal satisfaction refers to the contentment experienced when a want is satisfied. In other words, motivation implies a drive towards an out come, while satisfaction involves outcome already experienced.

In management, one might have job satisfaction but a low level of motivation for the job, or the reverse might be true. It has been proved that there is the probability that highly motivated persons with low job satisfaction will look for another position, in the same vein, those people who find their positions rewarding but are being paid considerably less than they desire will probably search for more rewarding jobs. Motivation is something that influences an individual's behaviour, it makes the difference in what a person will do. Organizations are therefore encouraged to be concerned with motivators and incentives.

Thus, the educational managers in Nigeria need to understand and apply the theories of motivation in the practice of education if they want better performance from the teachers and students. Teachers in Nigeria really need to be motivated for them to perform.

### **Motivating Workers (Teachers)**

The effective motivation of workers (teachers) depends on the correct diagnosis of workers' needs and the matching of these needs with the most ideal incentives. A thorough investigation into the reasons why people choose to work rather than stay at home will help perhaps to throw some light on the subject of motivation. Earlier scientific research into workers' motivation has revealed that there is not just one but several reasons why people seek employment. If these research findings have not helped matters, it is more so because managers, educational administrators or supervisors, if they are informed, have not demonstrated any serious commitment to the welfare and satisfaction of workers. Some basic motivating factors are considered below:1 monetary reward. As economists say, money is a medium of exchange and a

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stock of wealth and value. People seek money, ideally, not for the sake of it but because it gives financial ability to procure the essential necessities of life.

Although the importance of money in our society cannot be over-emphasized, it seems that its value as a means of reward has almost been blown out of proportion. Both management as well as workers believe erroneously that money is second to none as a motivation factor. This should not be the case. However before highlighting the limitations of monetary incentives, it would be necessary to consider the management of monetary reward as a motivating factor.

- (a) Salaries should be sufficiently high to provide a fair standard of living for workers.
- (b) Salaries should be commensurate with the economic situation of the society.
- (c) Salaries should match the education, skills, experience, risks and responsibilities required of the job.
- (d) Salaries should be comparable with those obtained in similar positions in other occupations.
- (e) Extra jobs or man-hours put in should be compensated for by the management.
- (f) Teachers should be compensated for excellent performance by way of bonus payment etc.

Although monetary reward is considered as essential incentive, the biblical saying that “man does not live by bread alone” becomes relevant. Its limitations rest on the fact that:

- i. Man is insatiable and an Oliver Twist who is always asking for “more.”
- ii. Because of global inflationary trends, the value of money has continued to fall thereby reducing the “real” wages of the worker while the nominal wages continue to rise.
- iii. The continuous wage demand fuels the inflationary trend which always makes the worker the loser.
- iv. Research findings show that the more wages employees receive, the more they value their leisure and the less man-hours they are willing to put in.
- v. High wages in the face of insecurity, threat and other uncondusive working environment do not motivate.

## **2. Non-Monetary Incentives**

Money has serious limitations as a motivating factor; workers could be motivated much better in the following ways according to Koontz (1993):

1. Participation in decision making. Management should give opportunity to all teachers in various degrees in the task of decision making.

2. Recognition of human dignity. People have feelings, emotions and ego which distinguish them from machines and those attributes of man require careful handling.
3. Group efforts. Both management and teachers should be aware of the fact that they operate in group and that the success of the group requires every individual's contribution.
4. Variety on the job. Traditional management principles argue that the work of every worker should be planned and specialized but an extreme view of this could lead to monotony of task and frustration.
5. Opportunity for growth and advancement.
6. Fair treatment with regard to wages, promotion and discipline.
7. Management by objective orientation. Management should state goals and objectives clearly and only against these known goals and objectives should workers' performance be appraised.
8. Management should provide employees (teachers) with adequate resources and environment that should enable them to carry out their individual tasks.
9. Provision of medical, transportation, housing etc facilities.
10. Training and development of teachers.

**Discipline:** In a school setting, both teachers and students could be motivated through the use of punishment by the management. As we reward excellence performance, we must also punish negative performance. Thus, we may use salary reduction, suspension, demotion, salary denial and sack to get teachers motivated while corporal punishment, suspension, repetition and expulsion could be used to motivate students.

### **Some Theories on Motivation**

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954).

Maslow's theory on motivation has received wide acclaim in organizational life. He identified some of the basic and social needs of man and classified these needs in an ascending order of importance. These are:

1. **Physiological needs:** There are needs that are basic to human life and they include food, water, clothing, shelter sleep and sexual satisfaction. For a student or teacher to perform as expected the above basic needs should be provided.
2. **Security or safety needs:** These are the needs to be free from physical danger and fear of loss of job, property, food, clothing and shelter. The fear of failure will actually move one to work very hard in order to over come failure. But insecurity can also make one not to work very hard in an organization. Thus, the employer of teachers should see that the teachers' safety needs are provided for an increased productivity.

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3. **Love and social needs:** Since people are social beings and usually live in social groups, they have a high need of being accepted in the groups to which they belong or affiliated. The School must provide this need for the teachers by showing love and likeness to the teachers so that they can bring out the best in them in their job.
4. **Ego and esteem needs:** Besides the urge for belonging to social groups, people tend to want to be held in high esteem both by themselves and by other members of which they belong. These kind of needs produce such satisfaction as power, prestige, self confidence, esteem and status, that is striving to achieve a high standing relative to others, including the desire to master reputation and prestige.
5. **Need for self- actualization.** Maslow regards this as the highest need in the hierarchy. It is the desire to become what one is capable of becoming, to maximize one's potentials and to accomplish goals. This is the desire to know, understand, systematize and construct a system of values. A school system should provide all the avenues for the workers to reach or attain the highest position in their profession as this will make teachers to be more effective, dedicated and committed in their job.
2. **Herzberg's two factor theory (1959).** Herzberg and other researchers identified a two factor explanation of human motivation. The first group of factors enumerated by Hertzberg were company policies, administration, supervision, working conditions, personal relations, salary, status, job security and personal life". These factors are referred to as "hygiene" or maintenance". He argued that these needs do not motivate although the absence of them could lead to dissatisfaction. In the second group, Hertzberg mentioned the needs for achievement, recognition, challenging work, advancement and growth on the job. These factors he called motivation or satisfiers. But unless the "maintenance" needs were met, the motivators or satisfiers would not motivate. Thus for teachers to effectively perform their teaching assignment, their employer should see that the two-factor theory of Hertzberg is put into practice.
- 3 **McGregor's theories X and Y.** The researcher can count upon many factors to motivate people in life. The applied factors or theories will be determined by the concepts about man himself. Douglas McGregor came up with two theories in explaining motivation, which are called theory X and theory Y. The first dialogue is which of these two theories will produce the best result in management philosophy and organizational environment.

When theory Y is viewed, it seems to favour humanism on the surface rather than theory X. Recall that sentiments alone cannot make enough judgment

because there are occasions where theory X is called for, there are equally those situations where theory Y works best. Lyndal (1970) therefore emphasized that the optimum theory then will be theory Z in which case the manager would have to apply both approaches at one time or another. A manager who operates on theory Y alone feels that an effective organizational atmosphere has lesser, more general supervision, greater decentralization of authority, less reliance on coercion and control a democratic leadership style and more participation in decision processes.

**Theory X of McGregor:** The average individual is basically passive and therefore prefers to be directed rather than to assume any risk or responsibility. Above all, he prefers security 2: the average man dislikes work and he will avoid it to the extent he can 3: in this respect therefore, most people have to be forced or threatened with punishment to get them to make the effort necessary to accomplish organizational goals.

**Note:** Any educational administrator who fits into theory X group leans toward an organizational climate of centralized authority, close control and autocratic leadership.

**Theory Y of McGregor:** The researcher is of the opinion that an alternative management philosophy to theory X was needed for schools to meet their professional growth, commitment to teachers and to improve the intellectual, social and emotional welfare of the teachers. This optimistic philosophy, otherwise viewed as modern view of human nature was called theory Y by McGregor. In theory Y, he believes that management is responsible for organizing the elements of production (Money, materials, People and equipment) in the interest of economic ends.

1. That people are not by nature passive or resistant to organizational needs, but experience made them so.
2. That physical and mental works are as natural as play, if they are satisfying.
3. That man will exercise self direction and self control toward organizational goals if he is committed to them.
4. That commitment is a function of reward. The best rewards are satisfaction of ego and self- actualization.
5. That the average person can learn to accept and seek responsibility.
6. Creativity, ingenuity and imagination are wide spread among people and do not occur only in a selected few.

School administrators who accept the assumptions of theory X and theory Y will, of course, utilize the essential ideas in planning their policy, in making decisions and in carrying out other facets of the administrative functions. McGregor believes that

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the continuing use of theory X assumptions in management prevents the administrators from discovering and utilizing the best potentials of the average worker. He recommended the ideas in theory Y as the ideal stance for efficiency in administration, basing his arguments on the theories of human motivation and satisfaction proposed by Maslow 1954 and others.

The best school administrators should use both theories X and Y in their administration depending on the current situation in order to achieve the desired school goals and objectives.

### **The Satisfaction Causes Performance Theory**

The main assumption of those who believe in the “Satisfaction causes performance” theory is that the extent of an employee’s feeling of job satisfaction significantly affects his or her job performance. This agrees with the human relations movement who believe that a happy worker is a productive worker or that high morale would lead to improved productivity.

As satisfaction causes performance, so does motivation cause performance. Ideally, motivation leads to greater performance all things being equal. In school setting, the students’ performance in examinations could be used to measure the teachers’ performance. Okafor (2006) studied teachers’ motivation and performance in public secondary schools and private secondary schools in Ojo LGA of Lagos and found that students in private schools did better than their counterparts in public schools because both teachers and students in private schools were better motivated than their counterparts in public schools.

### **How to Motivate Nigeria Teachers for Effective Performance:**

1. At every level of education, teachers should be paid better than their counterparts in other occupations.
2. The condition of service of teachers should be better than that of their counterparts in other occupations.
3. Teachers’ promotion should be regular and should be released on time.
4. Teachers’ arrears of payment should be paid to them.
5. The government should provide adequate school facilities and materials such as office /office equipment laboratory/ laboratory equipment, library /library equipment etc.
6. Government should provide opportunities for teachers to grow on their job and finally actualize their potentials.
7. In giving political appointments, teachers should not be forgotten.
8. Exceptionally performing teachers should be given awards in any form by their employer.

9. Adequate punishment should be given to teachers who contravene the education laws. The above where applicable should be extended to students.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the writer is of the view that high motivational level among both teachers and students will definitely bring about better school performance. The writer is of the opinion also that the poor performance in our public schools today is mainly caused by poor teachers' and students' motivation by the concerned authorities. So, the panacea to these abnormalities in our schools is adequate motivation of both the teachers and students by the concerned stake holders in terms of good salaries, conditions of service, provision of school facilities, materials and personnel.

### **Recommendation**

The following recommendations are made to enhance school performance.

1. Teachers should be adequately paid just like the politicians if not better than the politicians.
2. The condition of service of teachers should be improved upon so that they will not like to join another occupation.
3. The public image of teachers should be improved upon by paying them handsomely even better than their counterparts in other jobs.
4. Government should see that schools are adequately funded by providing enough school facilities, materials and personnel.
5. Both teachers and students should be adequately punished when the need arises since punishment is a motivational factor.

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