



REPOSITIONING UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION: A NEED FOR TEACHERS RETRAINING AND MOTIVATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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(Received 17, October 2023; Revision Accepted 22, November 2023)

ABSTRACT

Motivation is the driving force that generates and sustains action towards the achievement of a set goal. It is closely related and affects teachers' efficiency and effectiveness in the classroom, which have far reaching implications for national transformation since the teacher is the live wire of education enterprise. This paper delves into the place of motivation for repositioning Universal Basic Education (UBE) for national transformation. The status of UBE teachers' motivation was portrayed in relation to motivational factors and it is evident that UBE teachers lack proper motivation and this affects their service delivery negatively. The lack of motivation among UBE teachers is evidence in the poor and irregular payment of salaries as well as lack of incentives; work overload, poor teaching environment and facilities as well as low status of teachers in the society. The paper also elucidated the roles of motivation in teaching profession for national transformation. These roles include: Production of goal-oriented teacher; production of conscientious and pain-staking teacher; helps to make a teacher maintain a friendly classroom environment; and helps to check brain drain in the teaching profession. Suggested strategies for motivating UBE teachers for national transformation include: enhancement and prompt payment of teachers' salaries and allowances; provision of car and housing loans; provision of free medical services for teachers and their children/wards; provision of free and compulsory in-service training, and provision of better teaching and learning environment in UBE school. Conclusion was drawn.

KEYWORDS: Repositioning, basic education, teachers, retraining, motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Education is generally seen as the key that opens the door for national development because it prepares the human capital resources of a nation for meaningful contribution towards national transformation.

Education is recognized by Nigerian government as instrument par excellence (FRN, 2004). According to Fafunwa (1991), education is the aggregate of all processes by which a child or young adult develops attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the

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equipping individuals with necessary instrument to transform their conditions and that of the society. The vital role education plays in national transformation explains the reason why many countries of the world give paramount attention to education.

There is a general believe that the standard of education in Nigeria is declining. This could be attributed among other factors to lack of teacher motivation. Central at the implementation of the educational programme (curriculum) of a country is the teacher. The cardinal position occupied by the teacher in implementing the curriculum explains why people blame the teacher for the decline in standard of education. The teacher is the heart and soul of the educational programme. He is the live wire of the school system. Priwitt in Nnamani (2011:74) observed that "it's the teachers more than any other single group of people that determine the attribute of the society and who shape the ideas and aspiration of the nation". This underscore the fact that for teachers to effectively carryout the vital role of shaping the behaviour of the children and youths for positive transformation of the nation, they need to be adequately motivated.

It is in recognition of the role the teacher plays in national transformation that Nigerian government placed the production of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teacher for all levels of education as number one goal of teacher education (FRN, 2004). Motivation is the driving force behind an action. It is that which spurs one to set and work towards the achievement of a goal. According to Colman (2003), motivation is the driving force responsible for the initial, persistence direction and vigour of goal – directed behaviour. Nnachi (2010) sees motivation as process of arousing movement in an organism towards a goal even if there had previously been little or no movement towards such goal. Feldman (2000) considers motivation as constituting some factors that direct and energize behaviour of humans and other organisms. Motivation is the force that energizes behaviour and sustains it until a goal is achieved. It explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to work on it, and how long they are willing to work on it in order to achieve a goal.

education to all school age children for the first nine years of schooling. According to Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) (2009), as laudable and positive as the UBE programme may be the huge government investment in the exercise and the overall objective of the programme would only bear fruit and be result-oriented if the teachers who constitute the executors of the process are adequately motivated. Many Nigerian teachers exhibit low morale and lack of commitment in their jobs which are displayed through absenteeism and engaging in petty trade within and outside the school during school hour. Nnamani (2011) states that the low morale and lack of commitment exhibited by teachers could be traced to government's inability to motivate the teachers. Every effort made towards education for national transformation could be jeopardized if teachers are not properly motivated.

UBE and teacher motivation factor

Certain factor affect teacher motivation. Adelabu (2003) summarized the factor into three which include: job context, job content and system.

Job context: UBE aim at providing nine year of free and compulsory education for very Nigerian child. This has brought about population explosion in primary and secondary schools without provision of adequate school facilities, and teachers to cater for the teeming population. Nnamani(2009) observed that there is shortage of teacher and school facilities in most primary school in Calabar Metropolis. Similar condition may be obtained in other states of the country. Ossai and Nwalado (2010) noted that UBE schools have inadequate infrastructural equipment and the teachers work in dilapidated classrooms, with rickety desks and chairs.

Job content: Development in science and technology and research have brought about knowledge explosion. Knowledge explosion in recent times is reflected in UBE curriculum. Mba (2010) observed that the expansion of curriculum with the inclusion of new subjects have increased the work load of the teacher. The UBE curriculum though laudable is over-loaded and taught in over-crowded classrooms. In primary school, a teacher teaches about fifteen subjects, while in junior secondary school, students offer about

sixteen subjects. The UBE teacher is engaged in other co-curricular activities, coupled with his teaching assignment. All these hazards in the

weaknesses of his teaching strategy and plans on how to remedy the weakness.

teacher work environment need motivation to cushion them.

Reward system: The teachers' salaries are not paid regularly and with no fringe benefits. Often times, the teachers go on strike for non-payment of their salaries and non-implementation of the Teacher's Salary Scale (TSS). Teachers at the UBE level are esteemed very lowly and often scorned at by members of the public. The teaching profession especially at the UBE level is fast losing its glory and attraction due to lack of motivation among the teachers. For any meaningful national transformation to take place, the teachers who play vital role in shaping the society have to be adequately motivated.

The roles of motivation in teaching profession for national transformation

Motivation performs various important functions in human life and particularly in the teaching profession. Adequate teacher motivation plays the following roles for national transformation.

Motivation makes teachers goal orientation

Teachers who are not properly motivated to go to school with no set goal to be achieved, they go to school unprepared for their lessons. Nnachi (2010) stated that motivation sets a goal for the teacher. Highly motivated teacher takes time to prepare his lesson notes stating clearly his instructional objective, which he hopes to achieve at the end of every lesson. He comes to school with definite plans of what to achieve in the course of his interaction with his pupils or students. Highly motivated teacher also sets goals for himself professionally. He enrols in in-service training programme to improve himself academically. A demotivated teacher may not bother about his professional growth. He would rather be looking out for a non-teaching job.

Motivation makes a teacher conscientious and pain-staking in his duty

When a teacher is well motivated, he does not just set goal, but works conscientiously towards the achievement of the goal. According to Ossai and Nwalado (2010), teacher effectiveness to a great extent is dependent on motivation. A motivated teacher takes pain to achieve excellence in his service. He carries out research and reads voraciously so as to be knowledgeable in his subject area. He takes time to evaluate his learners in order to diagnose the strengths and

Motivation makes a teacher maintain a friendly classroom environment

Some children loathe going to school because of the angry, harsh and unfriendly disposition of their teachers who lack job satisfaction due to poor motivation. According to Whiles and Bondi (2011), classroom environment influences the kind of learning that occurs in the class. A high motivated teacher maintains an atmosphere of friendliness in the classroom. He is always ready to encourage and help the learners in areas of learning difficulties. When a teacher enjoys job satisfaction as a result of adequate motivation, he maintains a sense of humour and this makes the learners to learn in a relaxed mood with no fear of molestation. A motivated and friendly teacher takes interest in the individual members of his class. He gives individual attention to each of the learner and is able to diagnose their strengths and weakness so as to map out strategies of helping them overcome their weaknesses. The friendly environment created by a motivated teacher helps to sustain the learners' interest which is indispensable for effective learning.

Motivation helps to check Brain-drain in the teaching profession

Teaching is a noble job that is quite tasking but rewarding. Unfortunately due to lack of motivation many professional teachers are leaving the job. Lack of motivation of teachers in Nigeria has led to the general notion that teachers are of low esteem and this has led to mass exodus of good brains in the teaching profession (Nnamani, 2011). The education sector in Nigeria is fast losing its talented and creative professional teachers to other organisations that are ready to meet their needs and demands. It is quite obvious that good welfare packages, for teachers will help to check brain-drain in the education sector. When teachers are adequately motivated, they will enjoy job satisfaction and remain in the job to train those who will replace them when they retire.

Suggested strategies for motivating UBE teachers for National transformation

There is urgent need for UBE teachers to be adequately motivated in order to achieve the laudable objectives of the programme. UBE

teachers could be motivated in the following ways;

health care services because of lack of funds. Michael (2000) advocated that management should prioritize staff health at all times to sustain high commitment. This implies that providing free

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1. Increment and prompt remuneration teachers:

Teachers' salaries and allowances should be tremendously improved and paid as at when due. Mfen (2020) asserted that when teachers perceive their salaries to be commensurate with their efforts, they will put in their best on the job. Ube teachers should therefore receive among other allowances, wardrobe allowance to their public image. Their salaries and allowances should be well enhanced and the payment not delayed unnecessarily. A well paid worker is motivated to perform at optimum (udoh, 2018). UBE teachers should be well paid in order for the UBE goals to be well achieved.

2. Making fiscal facilities available for UBE teachers

Fiscal facilities such as housing loans, car loans and other categories of empowerment loans should be made available for interested UBE teachers by the government. This will enable them meet some of their pressing needs which their salaries cannot immediately purchase. Udoma (2009) stated that allowing workers to take loans to meet their needs is a motivating factor that can propel them to greater job commitment. Modern management practices now make loans available for staff in order to enhance staff wellbeing (Wiwa 2022). UBE teachers can own their own houses, cars, home equipments, laptops and other belongings through loans. Loans should therefore be made available to UBE teachers by the government.

3. Provision of free medical services.

Medical services connote access to hospitals, doctors, medications and other health enhancing resources. UBE teachers should be provided with medical services and other medical resources at no cost. According to Magah(2020), although the federal government of Nigeria have launched the National health insurance scheme (NHIS) to reduce the financial burden of health care on civil servants, this scheme does not favour UBE teachers who work at level. State governments in Nigeria have not created a framework to significantly lessen the financial burden of health care on UBE teachers in their states. Teachers job performance may be negatively impacted when they and their wards cannot access good

medical services to UBE teachers will enhance their commitment and performance.

4. Provision for free and compulsory in-service training

There should be periodic in-service training for all categories of UBE teachers at no cost. Magaji (2022) noted that staff training is a motivating strategy for employees. UBE teachers can be sponsored in higher degree programmes such as Bachelors and masters degrees. They can also be sponsored in conferences, workshops and seminars. These training programmes will enable them hone their skills in the areas of lesson note preparation, lesson delivery, classroom management and other tasks. Staff training should be the continuous target of every school management (Moses 2020). The government and philanthropic organisations and stakeholders should sponsor and involve teachers in different training programmes to enhance their productivity.

5. Provision of teaching facilities

Teaching facilities includes all necessary resources that can aid both teachers and students in the teaching and learning process. Brut (2021) noted that facilities such as classroom blocks, office facilities, well equipped libraries, well equipped laboratories and sports equipments are necessities for schools that wants to achieve educational goals. Menlan (2021) stated that modern ICT facilities are needed by teachers of 21st century for content delivery, subject mastery and content creation. Teaching facilities when they are available will enhance teachers' performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the forgoing analysis and reviews, the following recommendations were made:

1. UBE teachers' salaries and allowances should be improved and paid as at when due.
2. Loan facilities should be provided for interested UBE teachers
3. Free medical services should be provided for UBE teachers
4. Periodic in-service training should be provided for UBE teachers at no cost.

5. Better and modern teaching facilities should be made available in schools especially at the basic level.

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CONCLUSION

National transformation requires high productivity among the human capital resources of a nation. Central to the issue of high productivity is motivation of the work force. Motivation is the vital key that unlocks the energy for high productivity. Research and literature have shown that Nigerian teachers at the UBE level are not motivated, hence the low morale, lack of commitment, lack of job satisfaction, and low self-esteem experienced among the teachers. This ugly scenario in the education sector adversely affects the development of the nation since teachers are the moulders of character for national transformation. Motivation plays vital roles in teachers' effectiveness. When UBE teachers are adequately motivated, it will go a long way in helping in the realization of the laudable objectives of UBE programme as well as contribute to national transformation in Nigeria.

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