
TEACHERS MOTIVATION AS DETERMINANT OF ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE-NIGERIA

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Abstract

Undoubtedly teachers' motivation is paramount to the accomplishment of academic outcomes and goals. This study was carried out to determine teachers' motivation as determinant of academic engagement among in-school adolescents in Anambra state using correlation survey design. The population of the study comprised 5,827 teachers in the public schools in Anambra state. A sample of 600 teachers drawn using simple random sampling technique was used for the study. Five research questions and five null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. Two different instruments were used for data collection namely: Teacher Motivation Questionnaire (TMQ) and Academic Engagement Scale (AES). Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instruments and alpha coefficient of 0.73 and 0.70 were obtained for TMQ and AES respectively. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test for correlation analysis. The result indicated high positive relationship between teachers' (incentive, interest, attitude and commitment) and low positive relationship between teachers' (punishment) and academic engagement of in-school adolescents. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that people should join teaching profession on the basis of "choice" rather than "option" mentality among others.

Keywords: Motivation, teachers' motivation, academic engagement and adolescents.

Introduction

The core objective of education is to foster learning and growth in students in order to prepare them for productive, impactful and meaningful lives. The teacher is one of the basic elements of the classroom. No classroom can exist in isolation of a teacher. Teachers play a significant role in the education process most especially in the lives of the students they teach. The credibility of every teacher is measured by his/her ability to teach for effective understanding, train, discipline, and raise useful students in the society. In other words, the role of teaching profession goes beyond preparation and delivery of lessons based on the curriculum but rather entails training, disciplining, understanding and accommodating different categories of students in the classroom with diverse behaviours. Supporting the above statement, Rachika (2019) observed that teachers are integral part of education process with the duty of implementing tasks and activities that would promote effective growth and all round development of students.

Every vision for sustainable and quality education in Nigeria will remain unfruitful, unproductive and a deceit until all authorities concerned with education at all levels diversify efforts towards improving the standard of living and welfare of teachers. Put in another way, viable and quality education is dependent on well qualified, trained, adequately remunerated and motivated teachers. The willingness of a teacher to discharge his/her duties effectively is dependent to a great extent on his/her motivation. The old adage of “Teachers reward is in heaven” does not hold for this present dispensation. The truth again remains that not all teachers will make eternity in heaven and so the need for their own heaven on earth. This sounds funny but is true.

For decades Nigerian government at all levels (Federal and state) encounter a lot of challenges in attracting and retaining quality teachers due to their insensitivity, rascal, dishonest and uncaring attitude to the education sector. This is proven by closure of schools for months and even a year plus, warning strikes and indefinite strikes by teachers and it is usually the last resort for the teachers following violation of signed agreement, non- payment of salaries for months, withholding of promotions, entitlements and benefits, no incentive structures and payment of peanut as salaries by their employers among others.

It will not be an over statement if the researchers deduce by saying that the most neglected sector in Nigeria economy today is the education sector. This is because literature reviewed and personal observations and experiences as teachers revealed total neglect and disdain which resulted severally as earlier mentioned in strikes, riots and protests. To buttress this, in Nigeria the cost of living is accelerating every day but teachers’ salary remains the same for over decades making the profession to suffer a drop in prestige. Indeed in Nigeria, teaching profession is relegated to the background, it then seems as a curse to be a teacher since you cannot compete with a colleague in any other sector on any grounds despite possession of the same educational qualification and years of experience among others. For teachers to boost their ego, increase their self esteem and self concept as well as for survival in a multi-problematic country like Nigeria, most teachers engage in other financial ventures/activities with the resultant effect ranging from teachers’ absenteeism and attrition which has affected teaching and learning drastically.

Teachers’ motivation enables the teacher to stay focused and unmoved by possible distractions. When teachers are motivated it will definitely show on the students especially in their academic engagement, otherwise the students are often disengaged which can lead to challenging behaviours. Most students especially in the senior secondary school cadre are

already in their adolescence stage. Steinberg (2014) explained the adolescence as a developmental period marking the transition from childhood to adulthood with eruption of biological, mental, psychological and social changes. Williams (2022) share the same view of adolescence with Stenberg (2014) but added that there are also emotional changes and this stage in life has three phase namely early, middle and late adolescence. Psychologists had stressed the need for adequate attention and understanding of this very important stage in life because of the developmental tasks challenges including their academic challenges. Okeke and Joe-Akunne (2020) noted that the adolescent experience more stress than would normally be expected in response to a stressful or unexpected event resulting in significant problems in their relationship and academics. These adjustment problems continue to have behavioural reactions that can contribute to feeling anxious and depressed. The need to ensure the academic engagement of these adolescents is inevitable to rearing of future generations of dignity, celebrity and pride.

Academic engagement is currently one of the most highlighted themes in educational research because of its importance for academic outcomes and academic success. Student engagement is a necessary ingredient to fulfill the education mission. Hughes (2021) asserted that academic engagement as a measure of a student's level of interaction with others, the amount of involvement in his/her academic as well as the amount of effort directed toward activities that lead to persistence and completion of the academic task. Oqab, Huy and Bing (2016) explained academic engagement as a term that portrays student quality of participation, investment, commitment and identification with school and school-related activities to enhance performance. In the context of this research work, the researchers explain academic engagement as the extent to which students' are committed and dedicated to their studies which are measured through their attention, perseverance, curiosity and interest.

Academic engagement is in various dimensions. Melissa and Nina (2020), Bowden, Tickle and Naumann (2021) outlined four dimensions of academic engagement to include behavioural, affective/emotional, cognitive/mental and social. Students demonstrate behavioural engagement through actions like consistent attendance, completing assignments, coming to class prepared and participating in class activities. Students' feelings about their teacher, classroom and sense of belonging depict their emotional engagement. Cognitive engagement shows intrinsically motivated students' are in their learning process, rate of understanding and retention of information, solving questions, reasoning and transfer of knowledge. Social engagement is demonstrated through interaction and collaboration with others.

Different authors and researchers have attempted explaining students' academic engagement using various psychological constructs like peer influence, dysfunctional homes, aggressive tendencies/behaviours, self efficacy, resilience and home factors among others. Another psychological construct that could be used to explain students' academic engagement is teachers' motivation. Motivation is one of the most important prerequisite for teaching and learning or classroom instructions. Certainly if teachers' are not willing to teach, all investments in the education enterprise such as buildings and equipments becomes a waste. Motivation includes all those factors which increase and decrease the vigour of an individual's activity/effort. Put in another way motivation is the urge, drive, desires, aspirations or needs of man which are internal. Motivation produces goal directed behaviour. For instance an employee may give his/her staff a promotion with the aim of improving his performance, Therefore motivation is based on human behaviour.

Hawthorne (2021) noted that motivation is one's enthusiasm for engaging in a task as well as the reason behind every action we take. He further emphasized that motivation is an indispensable component of teaching and learning which produces positive behaviours and greater sense of well being in students. Kendra (2022) explains motivation as a goal driving force, a process that initiates, guides, maintains goal-oriented behaviours. She asserted that motivation includes the biological, emotional, social and cognitive force which stirs human behaviour. Aligning with Kendra's explanation is Andrea Cox (2022) who observed that motivation is an internal desire or willingness to do something, stay on the work and accomplish it. It boosts the initiation and persistence of activities.

Teacher's motivation is the willingness and desire of a teacher to teach. Hawthorne (2021) defined teachers' motivation as attraction, retention and concentration to teach and remain in the teaching profession. Hung (2020) opined that teachers' motivation include all factors that determines their level of involvement in teaching activities. The researchers in the context of this research work explain teachers' motivation as all school, student, societal and policy related factors that influence the choice of teaching, performance and retention of teaching profession.

Teachers who are motivated are more likely to set goals and work harder towards accomplishing those goals than their counterparts. Some authors including Orina, Kiumi and Githae (2022), Peshal and Prem (2021) and Rani, Tehseen and Umbreen (2021) have enumerated factors that increase teacher's motivation to include school related factors, socio-cultural factors, policy related factors and student related factors in broad terms. Specifically these factors include compensation, work environment, professional development opportunities, social recognition, salary, benefits and promotions among others.

Personal observation revealed that when teachers are motivated they teach with love and passion, ready to solve personal problems of the students, counsel the students as well as mediate between the students and their parents to ensure students academic success. On the other hand lack of teacher's motivation kills interest and enthusiasm to teach, hinders access to research which are vital for updating of information, teaching skills and strategies and educational development. Worst is the encouragement of all kinds of social behaviours among teachers such as regular absent from school, extortion, sorting and sexual harassment. Poor self concept and negative self esteem are also consequences of lack of motivation which are enemies of academic growth and development.

Several authors and researcher including Hawthorne (2021), Jamie (2022), Rachika (2019), Robert (2020) and Hung (2020) has established from the findings of their research that teachers' motivation enhances students' academic engagement. To the best of the researchers no research work has been done to determine the extent of relationship that exist between the various dimensions of teachers' motivation and the dimensions of students' academic engagement. Thus in this study, we are looking at teachers motivation under five dimensions based on identified constructs from review of related literatures that constitute the major elements of human motivation (attitude, reward/incentive, commitment, punishment and interest) and establishing their extent of relationship with the four dimensions of academic engagement (behavioural, emotional, cognitive and social) among in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

Observation of adolescents' behaviours in some secondary schools in Anambra state in recent times is worrisome. A lot of behavioural and social problems are evident ranging from harassment of teachers to the extent of waiting for them outside school premises for physical attack and assault, lateness to school, loitering in the neighbour hood village or town while lessons are going in the school, refusal to do assignments, non copying of notes, bullying, stealing and the worst is that some of these adolescents engage in serious crimes like robbery and kidnapping. To worsen the situation, teachers' who are supposed to serve as disciplinarians exhibit non challant attitude towards these students' and their social behaviours. Of a truth as mentioned early in this work, an ideal teaching task is exceptionally challenging because it goes beyond the daily teaching and grade scoring to management of students' behaviours and family issues. But today in the teaching sector the story is different. Even when parents come to school to enquire or make reports concerning their wards, a teacher response with all boldness will be that the school is not a reformatory centre and his/her duty is to teach and nothing else. This research work is borne out of personal observation of the low standard of teaching and learning as well as disciplinary problems in some secondary schools in Anambra State where some teachers were seen teaching with very outdated notebooks in spite of the technological era of internets where they can easily get recent information, some come to school two times a week, some do not give assignments, exercises and projects to the students and where they are given, they are never marked. Students note remain unchecked all through the session. Some teachers come to school with all manner of items ranging from food stuff, clothing and jewelries for sale. They were rather busy with their sales at the detriment of their primary assignment. Thought of possible reasons for teachers' low morale for their profession and the related activities involved is what necessitated this study. The study was guided by five research questions and five null hypotheses.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does teachers' incentive/reward determine academic engagement of in-school adolescents' in Anambra state-Nigeria?
2. What is the extent of relationship between teachers' attitude and academic engagement of in-school adolescents' in Anambra state-Nigeria?
3. What is the extent of correlation existing between teachers' commitment and academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria?
4. To what extent does teachers' punishment determine academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria?
5. What is the extent of relationship between teachers' interest and academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' incentive and academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria.
2. Teachers' attitude is not a significant predictor of academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria.
3. Teachers' commitment does not predict academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria.
4. Teachers' punishment has no significant predictive power on academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria.

5. There is no significant relationship between teachers' interest and academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria.

Method

Correlation research design was adopted for the study. A correlation research design seeks to ascertain what relationship exists between two or more variables (Nworgu, 2015). This design is considered appropriate for this study because it sought to establish the extent of correlation between teachers' motivation and academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all the 5,827 teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra state. The sample of the study consisted of 600 teachers. There are six education zones in Anambra state namely: Awka, Ogidi, Otuocha, Nnewi, Aguata and Onitsha with a total of 261 public schools. Using purposive random sampling technique, the researchers' selected 5 schools from each education zone (2 male, 2 female and 1 co-educational) giving a total of 30 schools. Then from each of the chosen schools, 20 teachers were randomly selected.

Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. Data for the study were collected using two different instruments namely: Teacher Motivation Questionnaire (TMQ) consisting of 22 items adapted from the works of Obunadike (2013) and Academic Engagement Scale (AES), an 18 item scale adapted from the work of Hart, Stewart and Jimerson (2011). The instruments were structured on a four point likert fashion ranging from Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree to Strongly disagree. Experts in education validated the instruments. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instruments and alpha coefficient of 0.73 and 0.70 were obtained for TMQ and AES respectively. The administration of the instrument was done through direct delivery approach. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation in answering the research questions and t-test for correlation analysis for testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Extent of Relationship Between Teachers' Incentive and Academic Engagement of In-School Adolescents

N	Correlation Coefficient(r)	R ²	Remark
600	.903	0.82	High Correlation

Table 1 revealed a high correlation between teachers' incentive and academic engagement of in-school adolescents as seen from $r = .903$ and $r^2 = 0.82$.

Table 2: Extent of Relationship Between Teachers' Attitude and Academic Engagement of In-School Adolescents.

N	Correlation Coefficient(r)	R ²	Remark
600	.899	0.81	High Correlation

Table 2 above from the scores of $r = .899$ and $r^2 = 0.81$ showed that a high relationship exist between teachers' attitude and academic engagement of in-school adolescents.

Table 3: Relationship Between Teachers' Commitment and Academic Engagement of In-School Adolescents.

N	Correlation Coefficient(r)	R ²	Remark
600	.876	0.77	High Correlation

Results from table 3 above revealed that $r = .876$ and $r^2 = 0.77$. The researchers' therefore conclude that a high correlation exist between teachers' commitment and academic engagement of in-school adolescents.

Table 4: Relationship Between Teachers' Punishment and Academic Engagement of In-School Adolescents.

N	Correlation Coefficient(r)	R ²	Remark
600	.403	0.16	Low Correlation

Results from table 4 above revealed that $r = .403$ and $r^2 = 0.16$. This implies a very low correlation between teachers' punishment and academic engagement of in-school adolescents.

Table 5: Relationship Between Teachers' Interest and Academic Engagement of In-School Adolescents.

N	Correlation Coefficient(r)	R ²	Remark
600	.901	0.81	High Correlation

Table 5 revealed a high correlation between teachers' interest and academic engagement of in-school adolescents as seen from $r = .901$ and $r^2 = 0.81$.

Table 6: Test of Relationship Between Teachers' Incentive and Academic Engagement of In-School Adolescents.

Correlation Coefficient (r)	N	df	α	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
90	600	598	0.05	92.2	1.960	Reject

Result from table 6 above showed the calculated value of $t = 92.2$ is greater than t critical value = 1.960. Null hypothesis 1 was therefore rejected.

Table 7: Test of Relationship Between Teachers' Attitude and Academic Engagement of In-School Adolescents.

Correlation Coefficient (r)	N	df	α	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
90	600	598	0.05	92.2	1.960	Reject

From table 7 above, null hypothesis 2 was rejected because the calculated t value of 92.2 is greater than the critical t value of 1.960.

Table 8: Test of Relationship Between Teachers' Commitment and Academic Engagement of In-School Adolescents.

Correlation Coefficient (r)	N	df	∞	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
90	600	598	0.05	90.1	1.960	Reject

Analysis from table 8 above showed the t calculated value as 90.1 and t critical value as 1.960. Null hypothesis 3 was therefore rejected because the calculated t = 90.1 is greater than the critical t = 1.960.

Table 9: Test of Correlation Between Teachers' Punishment and Academic Engagement of In-School Adolescents.

Correlation Coefficient (r)	N	df	∞	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
90	600	598	0.05	30.2	1.960	Reject

From table 9 above, null hypothesis 4 was rejected because the calculated t value of 30.2 is greater than the critical t value of 1.960.

Table 10: Test of Relationship Between Teachers' Interest and Academic Engagement of In-School Adolescents.

Correlation Coefficient (r)	N	df	∞	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
90	600	598	0.05	92.2	1.960	Reject

From table 10 above, null hypothesis 5 was rejected because the calculated t value of 92.2 is greater than the critical t value of 1.960.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that teachers' motivation is a great determinant of academic engagement of in-school adolescents and that teachers' (incentive, attitude, commitment, interest) have high positive relationship while teachers' (punishment) have low positive relationship with academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria.

The researchers wish to point out that the findings of this study agree with their personal experience as teachers. When teachers are motivated, they teach with love, zeal and passion, ready to solve students' problems, counsel, reprove, discipline and correct students as well as furnish parents' with first hand information about their wards. On the other hand, lack of motivation kills teachers' interest to teach, hinders teachers of research which are vital for education growth and development, breed poor self concept and negative self esteem which are enemies to academic outcomes and goals. This means that teachers' motivation is paramount to academic engagement of students.

This finding aligns with that of Rachika (2019) that teachers have impact on students but the influence will be more positive if they are motivated. Rachika emphasized by saying that denial of grants, entitlements and allowances hinders teachers access to new knowledge, new ideas and their being intellectually stimulated which gives them the urge to teach. The

findings of this research work also agree with Robert (2020) that teachers' interest is vital for academic engagement of students. He opined that when teachers are intrinsically motivated that is, enjoys and are satisfied with their teaching profession, they give every necessary attention to the students. Supporting this fact, Jamie (2022) noted that inspired teachers make a more positive impact in students' academic lives.

Furthermore, the finding of this study is in line with Peshal et al (2021) and Orina et al (2022) that teachers' motivation is indisputably the major determinant of students' academic engagement. They outlined compensation, performance appraisals, recognition and opportunities for career growth as factors potentially capable of impacting teachers' motivation. Proper academic engagement of in-school adolescents is crucial to quality assurance in secondary school education and motivating teachers with the proper incentives is the key to realizing such goals but if otherwise, will remain a dream unaccomplished.

Conclusion

The researchers conclude that teachers' motivation is a great determinant of academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria. From the results of the hypotheses tested in the study, teachers' (incentive, attitude, commitment, interest) have high positive relationship while teachers' (punishment) have low positive relationship with academic engagement of in-school adolescents in Anambra state-Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. People are admonished to join teaching profession as a "choice" and not as an "option". This is because teachers' interest, attitude and commitment has been established in this study as vital for academic engagement among students and such the "choice" is what will deliver rather than the "option" mentality.
2. Teachers who are motivated are less likely to consider their job as burdensome but will be rather willing to go extra mile to accomplish purpose. Therefore, to foster better teaching and learning outcomes, governments at all levels are encouraged to make teachers' motivation a priority. Though it may be challenging, however it is very essential in the best interest of the students.
3. All stake holders in education are encouraged to support the government in inspiring the teachers by offering support, consistent standards, evaluations and accountability structures. Such support can improve dedication, diligence and professionalism among others as well as reduce the rate of teacher absenteeism which is an enemy to academic engagement of students.
4. Teachers are the ones in the trenches making a direct impact on students lives including their academic engagement, therefore proper attention should be given to their all round needs (physiological, psychological, social, financial and otherwise) to motivate them for maximum and impactful results.

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