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MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY PRINCIPALS TOWARDS IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

The seeming decline in academic performance of students in public and private secondary schools in Nigeria necessitated this study on motivational strategies of principals for improved academic performance of students in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. One research questions guided the study, while One hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 8, 362 and 17,217 teachers in the 256 public and 923 private secondary schools respectively in Enugu State. The sample for the study comprised of 1,100 teachers made up 0f 500 teachers from public and 600 teachers from private secondary schools drawn through a proportionate simple random sampling technique. A researcher's developed questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts who are lecturers, two in Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Educational Foundations and the other in Educational Management and Planning, Department of Educational Management and Policy all in the Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State Nigeria. The Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items which yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.72. The researchers with the help of ten research assistants distributed and successfully collected the copies of the questionnaire administered. The research questions were answered using the arithmetic mean while the hypotheses were

tested using t-test. It was found among others that principals in public and private secondary schools in Enugu state to a high extent adopt motivational strategies for improved academic performance of students. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that principals should ensure that their teachers are adequately motivated through award of prizes and payment of honorarium to teachers for extra or additional duties performed.

Keywords: Motivation, Academic Performance.

Introduction

The decline in the quality of Nigeria's secondary school education system can be deduced from the growing awareness of mass failure of senior secondary school students in public examinations conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO); the growing complaints by parents, Heads of tertiary educational institutions and employers of graduates of this level of education also indicate that secondary school graduates are poorly prepared for the challenges ahead. The persistent poor performance of students in these external examinations appears worrisome most especially when viewed against the standard obtained in the years past, when secondary school graduates in Nigeria used to be of high quality, evident in the excellent performance in external examinations and skills possessed by the graduates. This ugly trend tends to negate the objectives of secondary education (Post-Basic Education and Career Development) in Nigeria aptly spelt by the Federal government of Nigeria (FGN) (2009).

It is in recognition of the objectives that the various states in Nigeria commits her resources to ensure the provision of secondary school education for its citizens and also tailors their policies towards ensuring that it is made accessible to the generality of its citizenry.

Secondary school education (senior secondary education) is the form of education children receive after nine years of basic education and before the tertiary stage. Its

importance lies in its position both as the bridge between the basic and tertiary education and the agent for preparing individuals for useful living in the society. There are two categories of secondary schools in Nigeria; public and private secondary schools. Public secondary schools are schools that are owned by the government and its agencies and they are controlled and managed directly by public education authority or agency, governing agencies or by a governing body (council, committees etc) most of whose members are appointed by a public authority or elected by public franchise (UNESCO, 2001). Private secondary schools on the other hand are schools owned, financed and managed by private individuals, missions, corporate organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGO's). Private secondary schools according to Etuk (2005) were set up for the reason of providing better teaching and learning conditions than that obtained in the public secondary schools. Irrespective of the ownership, secondary schools have common objectives to achieve as enshrined in the FGN (2009); thus ensuring that quality education is handed down to the students has become one of the pivot issues accorded priority in the recent educational reform going on worldwide (including Nigeria).

The principal is the one that will coordinate activities towards efficient and effective teaching and learning in the secondary schools so as to be able to Improve the academic performance of the students. The development and utilization of effective motivational strategies are critical to quality education everywhere in the world. Strategies are the internal policies put in place in various institutions towards ensuring that the institutions is fulfilling its purposes as well as the standards that apply to secondary education.

The extent the principals use motivational strategies in public and private secondary schools in Enugu state as a strategy for ensuring improved academic performance of students is not known. Since improved academic performance could be measured by the percentage of passes in such external examinations such as SSCE and NECO (Tes, 2003). Perhaps that may be why some parents want their children to go to public schools and others prefer private schools depending on the performance of such schools. Going by the recent constant decline in the performance of students in public and external examinations such as WAEC and NECO, one begins to wonder what could be

responsible for the decline. Could it be that the schools are no longer interested in ensuring improved academic performance of the students? Or could it be that the motivational strategies adopted by these schools to ensure improved academic performance are faulty and inadequate? It is against this background therefore that this study was necessitated.

Statement of the Problem

The decline in quality of secondary education in Nigeria has been a source of worry to every well -meaning Nigerians. It appears that our secondary education is not discharging its obligation as expected, Omoregie (2005) expressed sadness on the products of today's secondary education as they can neither usefully live in the society nor move into higher institutions without their parents' aid or forgery and other forms of malpractice. A critical look at the result released by WAEC 2021 May/June result indicates a drastic decline in the performance of students. The expected learning outcome has not been attained as the percentage level of performance is relatively poor as abot 40% of the total candidates had up to the benchmark, five credits and above in five subjects including English Language and Mathematics. More also, the results of 130,00 candidates of those that applied for the examination were being withheld in connection with different kinds of examination malpractice. The performance is some step backwards when compared to what is obtainable in the time past. This poor performance conforms with Ajayi (2002) and Omoregie (2005) who asserted that secondary education in Nigeria is riddled with crisis of various dimensions and magnitude all of which may combine to suggest that the system is at low quality.

One may therefore begin to wonder what could be responsible for this persistent decline in the performance and quality of products produced in the present Nigeria secondary education system. Is it that the principals do not adopt adequate motivational strategies? Finding answers to these and other related questions necessitated this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the motivational strategies adopted by principals of public and private secondary schools in Enugu State for improved academic performance of students. Specifically, this study found out the:

1. Motivational strategies adopted by principals of public and private secondary schools in Enugu State for improved academic performance of secondary school students.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What are the motivational strategies adopted by principals of public and private secondary schools in Enugu State for improved academic performance of students?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There will be no significant difference in the mean response ratings of teachers in public and private secondary schools on the motivational strategies adopted by principals in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State for improved academic performance of students.

Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of 25, 579,718 teachers (8,362 public and 17,217 private) in the 1,179 secondary schools (256 public and 923 private) in the six education zones in Enugu State Nigeria. The sample for the study consisted of 1,100 teachers (500 public and 600 private) drawn through proportionate simple random sampling technique.

The instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher from views of experts and literature reviewed. The questionnaire was

subjected to face validation using three experts who are lecturers; two in the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency (reliability) of the instruments which yielded coefficient of 0.72. The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of 10 research assistants who are post graduate students in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka**.** The research question was answered using the arithmetic mean and standard deviation, while the hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance**.**

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research Question

What are the motivational strategies adopted by principals of public and private secondary schools in Enugu State for improved academic performance of students?

Table 1

Table showing the Motivational Strategies adopted by Principals of Public and Private Secondary Schools in Enugu State

S/N	In my school, the principal motivates the teachers in the following ways:	PUBLIC (N = 500)			PRIVATE (N = 700)			TOTAL (N = 1,100)		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
44	Involve teachers in the decision making process.	3.60	0.79	Accepted	3.13	0.87	Accepted	3.15	0.84	Accepted

45	Provides in-service training for teachers.	2.70	1.06	Accepted	2.79	1.05	Accepted	2.78	1.05	Accepted
46	Recommending teachers due for promotion.	3.54	0.98	Accepted	3.36	1.12	Accepted	3.41	1.06	Accepted
47	Provision of good working environment.	2.94	1.12	Accepted	3.27	1.10	Accepted	3.26	1.11	Accepted
48	School sponsorship for teachers to attend workshops and conferences.	1.60	0.94	**Not Accepted**	1.67	0.93	**Not Accepted**	1.68	0.93	**Not Accepted**
49	Getting teachers involved in the school administration.	3.33	0.86	Accepted	3.26	0.95	Accepted	3.29	0.91	Accepted
50	Organizing get-together for teachers.	3.16	0.81	Accepted	3.13	0.88	Accepted	3.16	0.85	Accepted
51	Encouraging teachers informal associations like Welfare Association.	3.65	0.68	Accepted	3.54	0.80	Accepted	3.57	0.75	Accepted
52	Helping teachers in solving their personal problems.	3.37	0.67	Accepted	3.30	0.78	Accepted	3.33	0.73	Accepted
53	Having respect for the teachers human person.	3.21	0.74	Accepted	3.13	0.82	Accepted	3.16	0.78	Accepted

54	Praising and recognizing teachers' efforts.	3.11	0.96	Accepted	3.07	1.01	Accepted	3.09	0.99	Accepted
55	Facilitating prompt payment of teachers' salaries.	3.50	0.74	Accepted	3.51	0.73	Accepted	3.51	0.73	Accepted
56	Provision of sick benefit and medical care for teachers.	2.95	0.86	Accepted	2.91	0.91	Accepted	2.93	0.89	Accepted
57	Giving portion of school farm lands to teachers to cultivate for their personal use.	3.33	0.82	Accepted	3.17	0.99	Accepted	3.24	0.92	Accepted
58	Reinforcing teachers' efforts through the award of prices.	1.31	0.69	**Not Accepted**	1.53	0.94	**Not Accepted**	1.45	0.84	**Not Accepted**
59	Payment of honorarium to teachers.	1.55	0.76	**Not Accepted**	1.73	0.96	**Not Accepted**	1.66	0.88	**Not Accepted**
60	Ensuring teachers safety within and outside the school.	1.62	0.86	**Not Accepted**	1.69	0.95	**Not Accepted**	1.65	0.91	**Not Accepted**
	Grand mean							**2.84**		

Table 1 showed the motivational strategies adopted by the principals. it revealed that the respondents accepted majority of the items whose mean scores were above the decision mean of 2.50 as indicated on the table. Table 1 further indicated that four items were

not accepted by the teachers as motivational strategies used by their principals as their mean ratings are below the decision rule mean of 2.50.

Hypothesis

There will be no significant difference in the mean response ratings of teachers in public and private secondary schools on the motivational strategies adopted by principals in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State for improved academic performance of students.

Table 2

Table showing the z-test Output of the Ratings of Teachers in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Enugu State on the Motivational Strategies adopted by Principals.

Variable	School Ownership	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	df	Decision
Motivational strategies	Public	600	2.8568	.36558	1.075	1318	Not Significant
	Private	720	2.8345	.38310			

z-cal< 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level

Table 2 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public and private secondary schools on the motivational strategies adopted by principals for improved academic performance since the calculated value of 1.075 is less than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The study shows that there is no significant difference between the responses of public and private teachers on the motivational strategies adopted by the principals. Thus, it is concluded that there is no

significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public and private secondary schools on the motivational strategies adopted by principals for improved academic performance in Enugu State.

Discussion of Findings

Motivational Strategies for Improved Academic Performance

The study disclosed that principals in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State adopt motivational strategies towards improved academic performance of students. This is revealed in table 1 as responses from majority of the items on supervision strategies were above the benchmark mean score. This means that both public and private secondary school principals in Enugu State adopt and carry out their motivational function in order to ensure improved academic performance of students in their respective schools. The findings further revealed that though principals in Enugu State adopt motivational strategies, however, principals of public secondary schools adopt it slightly more than the private secondary school principals. However, the study revealed that the difference is not significant.

The findings is in concurrence with Ajayi and Oni in Babayemi (2006) who opined that a school principal must not only be trained in the act of administration but must be well-acquainted with the principles that guide and control administrative processes. As the chief executive, the principal owes it a duty therefore to modify the attitude of the staff and motivate them to put in their best at achieving educational goals through effective teaching-learning process. The finding is in tandem with Khan (2001) who maintained that in other to maintain a high level of job performance from the teachers, some motivational strategies needed to be adopted by the secondary school principals.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the findings of this study is that both public and private secondary schools in Enugu State of Nigeria adopt motivational strategies to ensure improved academic performance of students. One therefore can conclude that the adequate use of motivational strategies towards achieving quality could not be

responsible for the sharp and continuous decline in the academic performance of secondary school students in internal and external factors but could be other factors.

Recommendations

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

1.Principal should ensure that their teachers are adequately motivated through award of prizes and payment of honorarium to teachers for extra or additional duties performed.

1. Principals of public and private secondary schools should encourage their teachers and sponsor them to attend conferences and workshops
2. The government also should make adequate provision for security within the schools
3. Prices and awards should be given to teachers for outstanding performance in both public and private secondary schools in Enugu State.

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