

Optimization Of
SERVICE DELIVERY

IN THE
Education Sector:
ISSUES & STRATEGIES



B.G. Nworgu

OPTIMIZATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR: ISSUES & STRATEGIES

Edited by

B.G. Nworgu
Professor & Dean
Faculty of Education
University of Nigeria
Nsukka

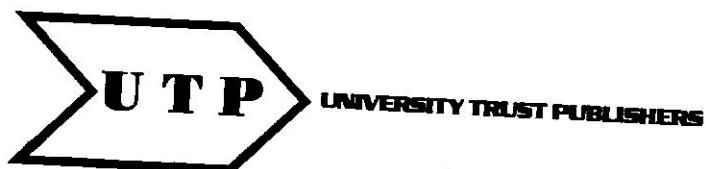


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5. ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) THROUGH ADEQUATE MOTIVATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

N.F. ENE

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY, ABAKALIKI

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the need to ensure the success of the UBE through adequate motivation of English language teachers. The population comprised 53 teachers and they were all used because they are few. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire in three parts – A, B and C. Part A contained information on respondents' bio-data; part B elicited information on personal incentives that can motivate English language teachers while part C sought information on resource materials/personnel that will motivate English language teachers. The instrument was face-validated by two lecturers in Education/English Department of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Data was analysed using frequency counts and means. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made.

INTRODUCTION

The success of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme is of paramount importance to the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Following the formal launching of the UBE scheme on 30th September, 1991, the government is gearing all efforts to ensure that the scheme succeeds. The UBE implementation guidelines, the objectives of which are in keeping with the requirements of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) are stated as follows:

1. Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.
2. Government shall eradicate illiteracy by providing free, compulsory and universal primary education.

The UBE programme covers primary and junior secondary school up to JSS III both of which now form the basic education sector. One of the key elements in achieving the UBE success is the teacher factor. This refers to a core of highly qualified personnel who are equipped with the desirable knowledge, competencies and commitment who in addition are empowered to perform the expected tasks. It seems that the most critical factor in the education system is the teacher since the quality of education in any country is reflected by the quality of the teachers. Tahir (2005:2) quoting Razik put it succinctly: "the validity of any education system naturally is dependent upon the quality of the teachers and the availability of competent teachers" Adesokan (2000) referred to the teacher as the spark and key man in the drive to progress in our education enterprise.

Therefore quality education "would depend on the quality of teachers because what pupils/students learn is directly dependent on what and how the teachers teach which in turn depends on their knowledge, skills and commitment (Tahir 2005:2).

The UBE covers the first nine years of schooling. One of the key subjects of study in our curriculum is English Language. Although, it is a second language in Nigeria but it has come to assume a level of importance because of the varied roles it plays in the different facets

of the education system as well as its international acceptability. English is a core subject in our education system (NPE 2004). It is equally the medium of instruction from the upper primary upwards. English language helps in everyday communication English language requires a crop of well-qualified, competent and well-motivated teachers to handle the teeming population of Basic Education pupils/students.

Motivation can be regarded as the desire to do something. It may be intrinsic or extrinsic but it has the power to catalyse a person to achieve more Shekarau (1996) in defining motivation, agrees that it should be described as incentive, which helps to energise and direct their behaviour of the teacher towards discharging his duties.

The right type of motivation will affect teachers' morale. High morale and enhanced status will add to quality in the profession. One way of improving teachers' morale and that of English teachers in particular is by improving incentives, working conditions e.g. providing good office accommodation and also providing resource materials. Others include provision for in-service training and payment of English teachers' allowance among others. It is pertinent to mention that the minimum professional qualification allowed for teaching in Nigeria is an Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) in the relevant subject. But one of the problems plaguing the Nigerian Education System is the dearth of qualified teachers. According to Ene (2005) English teachers are even in shorter supply.

One of the greatest dis-services that could be done to the training of our children in the present education reform is not to have enough qualified English language teachers. Inadequacy of English language teachers will greatly derail the UBE since language is the key to communication in and outside the country. Instruction is done in English language and worldwide web and Internet are all assessed in English language. Lack of proper knowledge of English language will be a great handicap to our children. Therefore, there is the need to motivate English language teachers to retain them in the teaching field. It therefore behoves on the Nigeria government to ensure the availability and retention of English language teachers through adequate motivation.

There are proven ways of motivating people on the job. It doesn't appear that English teachers are adequately motivated and that accounts for the poor performance of previous students in external examinations such as Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) – Junior School Certificate Examinations (JSCE) and First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC). The advent of UBE may mean that (JSCE) becomes the basic certificate for the First School Leavers. The question is: will they have enough mastery of English language to interact successfully in the outside world? It becomes necessary to find out ways of motivating the English teachers so as to improve their output and ensure the success of the UBE scheme.

This paper therefore aims at finding out ways of motivating English language teachers so as to enhance their performance in the classroom. In pursuance of this objective, the following research questions were posed

1. What personal incentives will increase the motivation of English language teachers?
2. What resource materials will increase the motivation of English language teachers?

Method

The study used a survey design. The population consisted of all the English teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Enugu Education Zone. Junior Secondary is used because it forms part of the UBE programme. Also the English teachers are designated as such unlike in the primary school where one teacher teaches many subjects in the same class. Enugu zone is made up of four Local Government Areas – Enugu North, Enugu East, Enugu South and Isi-Uzo.

There are 22 Junior Schools and 53 English language teachers. All the 53 teachers were used because of the small number. A structured questionnaire was used by the researcher to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire has three sections. Section A deals with the preliminary data on name of school, location, subject taught. Section B deals with personal incentives that excites motivation while section C deals with other incentives that would lead to motivation of English language teachers. The instrument was face-validated by two lecturers in Education English Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. For data analysis research questions were answered with frequency count and mean.

Results

The following are the results of the data analysis:

Research Question 1: What personal incentives will increase the motivation of English teachers?

Table 1: Personal incentives to motivate English language teachers

S/n	Incentives	\bar{x}
1.	Regular payment of salaries	3.52
2.	Improved Teachers Salary Structure (TSS)	3.86
3.	Going on in-service training	3.02
4.	Going on study leave with pay	2.86
5.	Sponsored attendance to seminars/workshops	2.91
6.	Payment of language teachers allowance	3.76
7.	Payment of other allowances	2.54
8.	Provision for membership of English teachers association	2.33
9.	Using professionals to teach English language	2.85
10.	Enforcing the practice of speaking English	1.25
11.	Provision of conducive working environment	3.01
12.	Reasonable teaching load	3.24
13.	Equal salary structure with university lecturers	2.02

Table 1 presents the personal incentives that can motivate teachers. Among the items listed, improved salary structure has the highest mean of 3.86 followed by payment of language teachers' allowance 3.76 and regular payment of salaries 3.52. Also high are items 3, 10 and 11 with mean scores of 3.02, 3.01 and 3.24

Research Question 2: What Resources will increase Motivation of English Teachers?

Table 2: Resource Personnel/Materials as Motivational Agents

S/n	Resources	\bar{x}
1.	Provision of current textbooks and journals	3.88
2.	Provision of language teaching classroom	2.46
3.	Provision of a good library	3.70
4.	Provision of a knowledge laboratory	3.26
5.	Provision of ICT materials e.g. computer, CD, etc.	3.00
6.	Sponsored invitations of resource persons	2.65
7.	Provision of charts/pictures	3.26
8.	Provision of virtual library	2.57
9.	Use of old calendars as charts	1.65
10.	Use of chalk boards	2.05
11.	Use of improvised resource materials	1.53

Table 2 presents the list of resources that can help to motivate English teachers. Items 1, 3 and 4 with mean scores of 3.88, 3.70, 3.26 respectively, show that resource materials can motivate English teachers if provided. Also high are items 5 and 7 with mean scores of 3.00 and 3.26 respectively showing that provision of ICT is an important language resource. The use of chalkboard 2.05 and improvisation of other resources recorded low means.

Discussion

From table 1, item 2, which is the provision of improved salary structure for teachers has the highest mean of 3.86. Equally high is regular payment of teachers' salaries as well as the payment of language teachers' allowance. All of them are pointing towards improvement in the remuneration paid to teachers. It is a known fact that English language teaching is not easy because it is a core subject and every student offers the subject. For the teacher to be committed to discharge his duties effectively, he must be handsomely remunerated. Tahir (2005:3), stresses this view when he mentions that quality education would depend on the quality of teachers because what pupils/students learn is directly dependent on what and how teachers teach and in turn depends on their knowledge, skills and commitment. The nation's education system has the teaching force as its live-wire because the teacher has direct contact with the learners. Shekarau (1996:76) citing Azare says:

The teacher is central to the learning process and hence to education in all its ramifications. We can improvise for equipment and other teaching materials. But we have not so far found ways of doing anything without teachers.

Table 2 presents the list of resource material/personnel that can help to motivate English language teachers. The availability of current textbooks and journals and a good library are indicated as motivators for language teachers. It is a known fact that resource materials help to bring the lesson home. The table shows that the blackboard rated as low as 2.00 while using calendar as charts also scored 1.65 because teachers are not interested in improvising. The availability of working material contributes largely to the self-esteem of the teacher and ensures motivation. Records shows that many schools lack equipment essential for language teaching such as language laboratories, tape recorders, radio or even standard library. Ene (2006) laments that the absence of ICT material in language teaching is leaving us miles behind in the information age. A teacher working without the right materials is usually frustrated and cannot be motivated to put in his best. All these will not augur well with the UBE programme. This should be reviewed especially when the FRN (2000) has guaranteed proper funding as stated in the UBE guidelines.

Recommendations

This study has shown that English language teachers are not adequately motivated through personal incentives or the availability of working resource materials. This has been found to be affecting their output negatively. The recommendations are as follows:

1. The government should consider adequate remuneration of teachers by implementing the (TSS) Teachers Salary Structure.
2. Language teachers should be sent on in-service training to acquire the skill of employing ICT in the modern language classroom
3. Language teachers allowance should be introduced
4. Only professional teachers should teach English because non-professionals do more harm than good.

5. There is every need to provide the resource materials needed for proper language teaching.

Conclusion

The success of the UBE depends to a large extent on the availability of well-trained and well-motivated teachers. To do this will require taking care of the teachers' personal welfare. In addition his working conditions need to improve and working materials must be provided for the teacher to deliver the goods. The English language teachers' peculiar requirements must be provided for the subject to be effectively taught. The UBE is a laudable programme that will be of benefit to the entire nation.

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