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Motivational Strategies as Correlates of Senior Secondary School Geography Students' Achievement

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Abstract

The study investigated the level of teachers' awareness and utilization of motivational strategies and their influence on secondary school students' cognitive achievement in geography. Eight one Geography teachers who were randomly selected from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria participated in the study. The teachers responded to awareness as well as utilization of motivational strategies' scales, while Geography achievement test was administered on the students. Frequency counts, percentages and multiple regression were used to analyse the data. Results showed that over 85% of the teachers were aware of motivational strategies that can be used to enhance students' learning. Teachers' level of utilisation of motivational strategies was, however, poor. Teachers' use of relevant teaching materials to harness students' curiosity had statistically significant effect on cognitive achievement in geography. Findings in this study have implications for introduction of capacity building that will delve into emergent educational issues that can be used to solve instructional problems in the classroom. These should be organized through regular training and re-training programmes for teachers.

Keywords: Motivational Strategies, Utilisation, Geography, Senior Secondary School, Nigeria.

Background

Teaching and learning are depended on each other. Teaching takes place only when someone has learnt. The practising teacher is recently been prodded to adopt and perhaps be held accountable for not using best practices in the classroom.

Student performance in secondary school Geography has consistently been poor. Chief Examiner's reports indicate that students perform poorly in map work and Physical Geography. Many students equally see school Geography syllabus as been too elaborate and so difficult to pass when compared with other subjects. Since learning is dependent on good or effective teaching, it is of importance that the teacher exhibits good teaching practices that can engender effective learning. Some of the many important knowledge base that the present day teacher is required to have are a command of pedagogical skills, academic knowledge and perhaps be able to increase student motivation to attain improved academic achievement. Such knowledge base according to Okpala, Onocha and Oyedeji (1993) entails proper planning and provision of learning opportunities intended to bring about certain desirable changes in the learner.

The teacher has direct influence on the quality of learning that takes place in the classroom. The teacher is at the centre of classroom managerial process and decision making, it is he/she who paces learning by determining what is to be learnt, how, when and in what amount it is to be learnt. Literature is replete with the need for effective classroom communication, that is, effective interaction between teacher, learner and material. This is ensured by the way learning materials are presented to the students, the way students are involved in learning and the attitude they develop in the process. Such attitudes in particular should have enhancing influence on what is learnt and how; and should form strong driving force for obtaining and sustaining academic performance. The effective teacher is characterized by his or her ability to establish rapport with students, nurture them, establish a caring learning environment for personal development, and activate student energy to work toward a more just and humane social order (Arends, 1991). Indeed, an effective teacher creates productive learning environment by focusing on things that can be modified in increasing students' motivation. Making reference to Duch, Groh and Allen (2001), Chan (2004) asserts that students can be motivated when learning materials are provided in real life

situation, setting a goal and action plan for learning and relating the learning to students' needs.

Motive is defined as an inner state that energizes, activates or moves behaviour towards a goal (Denga, 1999). Motivation is derived from the term motive and is agreed by many educators as a force that propels and sustains behaviour towards goal attainment. It guides students' behaviour (Denga, 1999, Okeke, 1999 and Okwilagwe 1986). In the views of Okeke (1999), motivation is a management responsibility and in the classroom, the teacher is the manager of teaching – learning process. If well implemented, motivation as a behavioural process, should sustain higher learning and performance.

Every rational human being wants to achieve. She/he desires to satisfy some felt needs. The need disposition theory propounded and extended by McClelland (1958), Atkinson (1958) and Atkinson and Feather (1966) has its central focus on the desire by people to take action and invest energy in pursuit of some outcomes such as achievement, affiliation and influence. By this theory, (Arends, 1991: p.108) contends that a teacher who exhibits achievement motives 'tries to provide good instruction and acts as a competent professional.' Similarly, a student who strives to reach the objectives of the teacher or make serious attempt to learn a particular subject is manifesting achievement motives. Thus active engagement in the learning process, Stipek (1988) contends characterises a motivated student. Motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. Identifying four perspectives of intrinsic motivation, Chan (2004) posits that they are competence, curiosity, autonomy and internalised motivation. The essence of these perspectives lie in engendering in the teacher the need for creating positive learning environment by employing strategies that can make students active participants in their learning. Therefore, it is rational to think that the teacher has the ability to enhance intrinsic motivation in students to enable them learn effectively irrespective of whether the content to be learnt is interesting or not. Citing Hidi (2000), Schraw, Flowerday and Lehman (2001), Fives and Manning (2005) contend that such a teacher

has the pedagogical skills of 'presenting materials in an exciting and personally relevant context' (p.7).

In order that students are adequately motivated to learn, the teacher must engage them in, as well as encourage worthwhile and meaningful learning in the classroom. Teaching has to be collaborative and participatory. Of equal importance is that the teacher should be aware that some degree of intrinsic motivation is essential if purposeful learning is to go on in the class. Research evidence by Deci and Schwartz (1981) and Stipek (1988) have shown that intrinsic (internal) motivation – which is either inherent in the learner or in the task itself is long lasting to the learner. For instance Brunner a great proponent of intrinsically motivated self-directed learning, contend that this is the ideal model for education. He argues that; "when students learn out of curiosity and the desire for challenge, they are more involved in and satisfied with the learning and they understand and can integrate the material more fully". However, Slavin (1980), noted that "some extrinsic motivation is needed to maintain student academic effort at a high level. Extrinsic motivation is supposedly to be provided by the teacher. The above contentions clearly imply that motivation is both students and teacher oriented; one complements the other for effective teaching and learning to occur.

There are several methods available to teachers in motivating students to learn. Generally, teachers should harness and capitalise on students' interest, attitudes and ideals, self-esteem, curiosity and provide adventures to make them study better (Moore, 1992). To the geography teacher in particular, Wittkop (1938) gave a number of specific methods that could be used to motivate students to learn geography. These range from producing and discussing with students different pictures from various books and magazines, as well as tourist pictures; use of films projected on the screens, to arranging for a panel of experts in various fields to give talks on local/foreign matters and events.

Several researchers over the years have identified various methods and strategies that can be used to enhance the teaching and learning of geography. Prominent among

these are Okunrotifa (1979), Faniran (1971) and Okwilagwe (1999). Nonetheless, these studies failed to focus on the influence of geographically related instructional resources as motivational strategies in attaining and enhancing students' achievement in the subject.

In a study in which teachers' knowledge of research endorsed motivational strategies was examined, Fives and Manning (2005) found that in spite of the lack of emphasis of information within educational framework detailing teachers' knowledge base in motivation strategies, their study finding suggests that pre-service and practising teachers are aware to some extent of motivational strategies reflective of motivational research. They also observed a marked difference between the teachers' approaches to student motivation and researchers' systematic investigation. Findings from their study indicated that using the multidimensional nature of classroom, practising teachers tended to focus on multiple aspects of classroom situation while addressing student engagement issue, in contrast to most researchers' who focused on isolated motivational aspects of learning. Also, the teachers drew from a variety of theoretical framework in their responses to the scenario given, while researchers tended to work from within single articulated theoretical framework to understand human behaviour.

In view of the importance of motivation in learning vis-à-vis the continuous poor performance of students in Geography, it is doubtful if many practising teachers are aware of, or employ these resources in the teaching of Geography. It is the assumption of this researcher that by virtue of their training, teachers are aware of strategies to get students in the learning mode and to influence their academic achievement. Further, if teachers are aware, they are also able to recognise when these should be used and be able to effectively implement these strategies. In the light of the foregoing, the present study set out to examine the level of Geography teachers' awareness and use of motivational (instructional) strategies in teaching. It also examined the correlates of the utilization of these strategies on Geography students' achievement in the subject.

In order to achieve this, two research questions were investigated.

1. What is the level of awareness and utilization of motivational strategies by practising Geography teachers in Nigerian secondary schools?
2. What are the composite and relative effects of level of utilization on students' achievement in Senior Secondary School Geography?

Methodology

Research Type

The study is a correlational study that examined teachers' awareness and utilisation of motivational strategies in explaining students' achievements in secondary school geography. Correlations studies enable relationships to be established between and among variables with a view to obtaining a better understanding about them.

Sampling Technique and Sample

The multi-stage stratified sampling procedures were adopted. This enabled the researcher to expand the scope of teacher inclusion. The country was zoned into six – geopolitical zones out of which two states per geo-political zone were randomly selected to participate in the study. From every state chosen, five secondary schools were randomly selected to take care of the geographical extent and rural-urban or semi-urban dimension of the state. Lastly, the Geography teachers in the sampled schools were automatically selected to participate in the study. However, where two or more teachers were present, only the SSS Three teacher was selected. Eighty one teachers, who participated in this study, were randomly drawn from six geographical zones of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory. The sample comprised of 80.2% males and 19.8% females. Sixty percent of them were professionally trained (i.e 62.96% were B.Ed/M.Ed degree holders, and 12.35% NCE holders), while 24.69% did not have professional training (B.A./M.Sc. honours and others). In terms of experience;

54.3% were very experience, having been teaching for the past 10 years and above, 21% were moderately experienced with 4-9years teaching experience, while 24.7% were relatively young teachers with under 3years of experience. In terms of area of specialisation, 87.7% specialised in Geography, while 12.3% were not.

Instrumentation

Two instruments Awareness of Motivational Strategies (AMOS) and the Use of Motivational Strategies Scale (UMOSS) were used to gather data from the teachers in the study. Both AMOS and UMOSS consisted of ten items each. The teachers were expected to rate their awareness on AMOS on a 2-point scale of 'Aware' and 'Not Aware' and in the listed strategies of UMOSS on a 4-point scale of 'very frequently' (4) 'often' (3) 'seldom' (2) and 'never' (1). A Geography achievement test with 50 items was administered on the students. The AMOS and UMOSS respectively yielded a psychometric property of 0.88 and 0.83 while the geography achievement test using K-R 20 was 0.86.

Data Analysis: Frequency counts, percentages and multiple regression were used to analyse the data.

Results

Table 1 presents the summary of teachers' responses on their awareness of motivational strategies. In each of the items, over 85% of the teachers agreed that they are aware of the various motivational strategies that could be used in effective teaching of Geography lessons.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Teachers' Awareness of Motivation Strategies

Strategies	Aware	Unaware
1. Films projected on the screen	75 (92.6%)	6(7.4%)
2. Tourist pictures	76 (93.8%)	5(6.2%)
3. Arranging for a panel of experts to give talk on local or foreign matters and events	73 (90.1%)	5(9.9%)
4. Producing and discussing with students from pictures from books and magazines.	75 (92.6%)	8(7.4%)
5. Organizing local field trips and excursions to local geographical sites.	80 (98.8%)	1(1.2%)
6. Use of relevant teaching materials to harness students' curiosity.	79 (97.5%)	2(2.5%)
7. Getting students to scout for local teaching materials to be used in the classroom.	69 (85.2%)	1(14.8%)
8. Participation in manipulating physical and improvised teaching materials used in the classroom.	71 (87.7%)	10(12.3%)
9. Use of verbal and non-verbal reinforcements (e.g. praise/ a pat on the back)	70 (86.4%)	6 (7.4%)
10. Use of relevant models in explaining geographical concepts and principles.	80 (98.8%)	1 (1.2)%

Table 2 presents the results of practising teachers' responses on the utilization of motivational strategies in the teaching of Geography. Between 30% to 44% of these teachers, reported that they use relevant teaching aids, pictures from books and magazines, relevant models, involve students in participating in classroom instruction, use verbal and non-verbal reinforcement. They, however, often and very frequently use relevant teaching materials (41%) respectively but hardly use filmstrips (69.5%), resource persons (experts) (45.7%), or go on local field trips (37.0%).

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Statistics of Teachers Utilization of Motivation Strategies

Strategies	Never	Seldom	Often	Very frequent
1. Films projected on the screen	57(69.5%)	15(18.5%)	7 (8.6%)	2 (2.4%)
2. Tourist pictures	25(30.6%)	26(32.1%)	25 (30.6%)	5 (6.2%)
3. Arranging for a panel of experts to give talk on local or foreign matters and events	37(45.7%)	28(34.6%)	15 (18.5%)	1(1.2%)
4. Producing and discussing with students from pictures from books and magazines.	6 (7.4%)	13(16.0%)	38 (46.9%)	24(29.6%)
5. Organizing local field trips and excursions to local geographical sites.	30(37.0%)	26(32.1%)	20 (24.7%)	5 (6.2%)
6. Use of relevant teaching materials to harness students' curiosity.	5 (6.1%)	8 (9.9%)	34 (41.9%)	34(41.9%)
7. Getting students to scout for local teaching materials to be used in the classroom.	9 (11.1%)	21(25.9%)	28 (34.6%)	23(28.4%)
8. Participation in	8 (9.9%)	20(24.7%)	31	22(27.2%)

	manipulating physical and improvised teaching materials used in the classroom.				(38.3%)
9.	Use of verbal and non-verbal reinforcements (e.g. praise/ a pat on the back)	9(11.1%)	9(11.1%)	32 (39.5%)	3 (38.3%)
10.	Use of relevant models in explaining geographical concepts and principles.	12(14.9%)	7(8.6%)	34 (41.9%)	28(34.6%)

Table 3: Multiple Regression Model for Composite Effect of Utilisation of Motivational Strategies on Students' Achievement in Geography

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Sum of Squares	F	Sig.
Regression	49.592	10	4.959	1.504	156NS
Residual	234.662	71	3.297		
Total	283.654	81			

R = .418

R² = 175

Adjusted R² = .059

Std Error of estimate = 1.8157

Table 3 shows the model summary as well as the Regression ANOVA of Multiple Regression conducted on the level of utilisation of motivational strategies (independent variables), with students' achievement in senior secondary school Geography as the dependent variable. The table shows that the level of utilization of motivational strategies which has a multiple correlation ($R=.418$) with students' achievement in Geography was not significant. However, an R^2 of 0.175 or an adjusted R^2 of 0.059 representing 6% of the

variance in students' achievement in geography was accounted for by the teachers' utilisation of the motivational strategies.

From Table 4, 'use of relevant teaching materials', with a β weight of -0.319 made a significant relative contribution to students' achievement in Geography at $P \leq 0.05$ while all the other variable were not significant at the set level of significance.

Table 4: Relative Effects of Utilisation of Motivational Strategies on Students Achievement in Geography

	Variables	Unstandardize d coefficients B	Std Erro r	Standardize d coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	Constant	19.895	.889		22.37	.000
1.	Films projected on the screen	-.367	.327	-.151	9 -1.123	.265
2.	Tourist pictures	-.277	.270	-.144	-1.025	.309
3.	Arranging for a panel of experts to give talk on local or foreign matters and events	-1.764E-02	.278	.008	-063	.950
4.	Producing and discussing with students from pictures from books and magazines.	-.273	.266	-.140	-1.025	.309
5.	Organizing local field trips and excursions to local geographical sites.	.347	.239	.178	1.451	.151

6.	Use of relevant teaching materials to harness students' curiosity.	-.597	.290	-.319	-2.058	.043*
7.	Getting students to scout for local teaching materials to be used in the classroom.	.634	.346	.349	1.833	.071
8.	Participation in manipulating physical and improvised teaching materials used in the classroom.	.225	.292	.123	-.770	.444
9.	Use of verbal and non-verbal reinforcements (e.g. praise/ a pat on the back)	.223	.229	.148	.974	.334
10.	Use of relevant models in explaining geographical concepts and principles.	-.207	.235	-.140	-.882	.381

*= Significant
at $P \leq 0.05$

Discussion

Findings in this study indicate that a large proportion (over 85%) of practising Geography teachers reported that they are aware of the various motivational strategies to teach Geography. However, relevant teaching materials (41%) respectively are 'often' or 'very frequently' used by these

teachers through pictures from books and magazines (46.9%), relevant models (41.9%), verbal and non-verbal reinforcement (39.5%) were often used by these teachers. The teachers also, reported that they make geography instruction participatory by allowing students manipulate instructional materials (38.3%) and scout for local teaching materials (34.6%). On the contrary, these teachers reported that they 'seldom' use tourist pictures (30.6%) and 'never' use: filmstrips (69.5%), arrange for resource persons (experts) to give talks on geographic information (45.7%) and organise local fieldtrips (37.0%). This finding is supported by the findings of Fives and Manning (2005).

With respect to the extent to which the use of motivational strategies explains students' achievement in Geography, a multiple R of .418 and an adjusted R² of 0.059 was observed, indicating 6% contributions to the variance in students' achievement in Geography. Though the observed relationship was not significant, the use of relevant teaching materials (β .349; $t=-2.058$; $p < 0.05$) made the highest relative contribution to student achievement in geography, while the others did not.

The finding in this study with regards to the prediction of achievement, tends to run contrary to the McClelland (1958) achievement motivation or need disposition theory. While McClelland and his colleagues are saying that a teacher who exhibits achievement motives will strive to be competent by providing good instruction, it would seem that these Geography teachers in spite of their awareness of these motivational strategies did not strive to put to use what they know. Reasons for this laxity could be attributed to their lack of commitment, motivation and perhaps poor supervision by the school personnel in charge. Okwilagwe & Okunogbe (2009) found that when teachers are motivated by government through prompt payment of salaries and other emoluments, and the school gives free hand in carrying out their duties, as well as allow them take part in decision making among others, teachers significantly improve their task performance. Furthermore, it is pertinent to ask if these teachers have sufficiently harnessed the intrinsic motivation in the students (Chan, 2004). Or were the learning materials not sufficiently

interesting to the students? (Hidi, 2000; Schraw, Flowerday, & Lehmann, 2001). It is essential that teachers create learning environment that enables the interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational behaviours that could encourage students to learn.

Conclusion

Motivation is an essential ingredient in ensuring that students learn effectively any school subject irrespective of whether it is intrinsically or extrinsically aroused. Better still is when the two types of motivation are juxtaposed complementarily in the teaching-learning process to achieve effective learning. The current work has brought to the fore the fact that teachers need not only to be aware of requisite motivational strategies, but should be able to utilize them by planning instruction and creating learning environments that tends to support their use to meet students' needs and the demands of the teaching process. The study findings suggest that to a large extent, Geography teachers in the country's secondary schools are aware of the relevant strategies but awareness did not translate into utilization. The reasons for this and the implications for learning were discussed in the study.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Geography teachers should be exposed to re-training programmes that go beyond mere pedagogy to theories that delve into emergent educational issues like motivation and other related issues in solving instructional problems in the classroom. Also, they should endeavour to extend their academic horizon beyond the utilization of teaching materials as the only means of motivating students, this should be seen as the bases, which may be restrictive in extending the horizon of students' learning since students utilize all the sensory modes in learning. There should be a shift to the more dynamic, practical and effective strategies such as the use of models, experts, films and the like which appeal to more senses.

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