

A Self-Determination Perspective on the Motivational Needs of Secondary School Teachers in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken to explore the extent to which motivational needs as posited in the Self-Determination Theory explains teachers motivation in secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The motivational needs considered were autonomy, competence and relatedness. Based on these needs, three research questions and their corresponding null hypotheses were developed to guide the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design using a sample of 242 teachers drawn from public and private schools respectively. The instrument for data collection was a modified version of the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (BNSG-S²) which was assessed for validity and reliability before administration. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while independent samples t-test was used to test the corresponding null hypotheses. The result obtained showed that autonomy was a greater motivational need for public school teachers than private school teachers. Conversely, the result also showed that competency and relatedness were significantly greater motivational need for private school teachers than for public school teachers. Based on these findings, appropriate recommendations were made.

Key words: Self-determination; Motivation; Teachers; Bayelsa State.

INTRODUCTION

It has been duly recognized that education is the fulcrum that drives the holistic development of any society in our contemporary times. It is on this realization that considerable effort has been expended in the drive towards the development of human and material resources for not only the understanding but promotion of cultural values, economic advancement and sociopolitical awareness. According to Kayode, Okeke, and Adedoyin (2015), education is a fundamental prerequisite for effective manpower development, wealth creation and a promise to improved success in life and service to humanity. As such, at every level of societal organization including global, regional, national and local, the call for a robust and dynamic educational system has been a reoccurring theme, with the major thrust of achieving a quality education resting on teachers.

Teachers are generally seen as the final executioners of educational policy. It has often been espoused that with teachers being the final operators of educational policy, it is a need for the standardization and professionalization of teaching in Nigeria and making teachers the centre of any educational reform (Eduwen & Osagie-Obazee, 2016). This is because as no meaningful socio-economic and political development can take place without the contributions of teachers. While the government may vote a large budget for education, educational planners may have the best educational policies and curriculum, it is the teacher who is ultimately responsible for translating policy to action and bring bringing principles into practice. On this basis, Afe (1992) calls for a robust improvement on the quality and quantity of teachers available for achieving our educational goals. While there have been repeated calls for the increase in the employment of more teachers especially at the secondary level, improving the quality and experiences of teaching manpower in Nigeria schools have received lesser attention. One area in which teachers' quality can be improved is through understanding the process through which teachers are motivated to perform on the job.

Understanding the concept of motivation in relation to employee performance has remained a herculean task. This might be attributed to the fact that human behaviour is relatively complex and not straight forward. However, it might also be because there are

various approaches proposed and adopted by scholars and practitioners on the most effective methods for implementing motivational systems in organizations, including schools. Also, this might be because there is a wide range of disciplines interested in the construct of motivation and how best it can be operationalized including philosophy, psychology, education, management, leadership etc (Amadi, 2016). To resolve these seemingly lingering challenges, scholars, researchers and practitioners have opted to utilize specific theoretical framework(s) in their study and application of motivation in the work and school environment.

However, the term "motivation has its etymological origin from the Latin word "movere" which implies "to move" or "movement". From this etymological perspective, Coleman (2003) defined motivation as the driving force or group of forces which are responsible for the initiation, persistence, direction and vigour of goal-directed behaviour. Similarly, James, as cited by Ajang (2010:8), conceptualized motivation as how behaviour gets started, energized, sustained, directed, and stopped, as well as the nature of subjective reaction present in a social group during the motivational process. On his part, Denga (in Agbakwuru, 2009) argued that motivation is believed to exist when the desire for a specific outcome creates a sense of restlessness or disequilibrium in an individual which leads to series of behaviour directed towards achieving that outcome and a reasonable level of disequilibrium. To Awujo and Ekechukwu, (2015) motivation is a drive that pushes one to act in a certain manner often to satisfy certain condition such as wishes, desires and goals. While for Tella (2007) motivation is defined as the force that initiates, maintain and direct behaviour until a goal or desire is attained or accomplished.

However, the above definitions do not fit the universal application of motivation in the workplace. This is partly due to the assertion by Greenberg and Baron (2000) that motivation, especially in the work environment is composed of three distinct, but related parts namely arousal, choice and behaviour maintenance. *Arousal* deals with the drive or energy that initiates a person's action, *choice* refers to the direction people take in order to achieve the goals, while behaviour maintenance specifies how people maintain or persist in the chosen behaviour until their desired objective is achieved. Considering the above definitions, motivation, as used in this study,

refers to the factors, events or process which either individually or collectively energizes, directs, and sustains behaviour to achieve the desired objective. According to this definition, more than one factor could be responsible for the chosen behaviour, as such motivation is not fixed or uniform, rather is open to the multiple dynamic influences of personal, psychological, financial, social and environmental factors. The scientific study of motivation has evolved tremendously over the past two centuries. This might be attributed to the positive outcome of motivated employees including productivity (Said, Zaidee, Zahari, Ali & Salleh, 2015), lower absenteeism and a reduced level of turnover (Salleh, Dzulkifli, Abdullah & Yaakob, 2011), as well as put staff into action, improves the level of employees' efficiency, build friendly relationship among employees and leads to stability in the workforce (Afful-Brone, 2012). These benefits notwithstanding, the evolution of human motivation has passed through distinct phases, or schools of thought, that has informed the application of motivational systems in the workplace as shown next.

Elding (2005) documents the evolution of the study of human motivation in the workplace beginning from the 19th century. During the later part of the 20th century, Fredrick Taylor developed the *scientific management approach* to motivation. In this approach, Taylor saw employees as being lazy and needs to be pushed towards contributing to organizational goals by providing their economic needs. This school of motivation believed that the major source of motivation was monetary reward and punishment. In other words, this approach posited that the major drive for employee performance was the use of reward and punishments. With the turn of the 20th century, this view was replaced by the *human relations management approach* which argued that employees are not motivated only by economic needs but also by their social needs. This approach led to a shift in the provision of social services and relationships for workers. It became a priority for organizations to enable work environments that engender social interactions among managers and between employees.

Eventually, this approach was replaced by the *human resource management approach* during the mid-part of the 20th century. According to this approach, the individual need of the worker should be given a greater priority than the interaction of working groups. The human resource movement views the worker as being largely pre-

motivated to perform to the best of their abilities and it is the responsibility of management to provide enabling condition whereby workers can meet their own individual goals at the same time as meeting those of the organization they work for. Motivational factors within the Human resource movement, therefore, included a wide range of factors such as money, affiliation, achievement and performing a meaningful job.

A common theme among the various approaches to motivation presented above shows that there is a need that determines human motivation. According to Gagné and Deci (2005), when used in organisational-behaviour context as reflected in the above approaches, needs are treated as individual differences, with people differing on the strength of specific needs. Furthermore, these approaches takes a passive view of human agency, thus seeing motivation as something that can be induced or promoted from the inside, with minimal or no contributions of the individuals involved. As such much of the theories that have dominated motivational studies, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, McClelland's Theory of Needs, Herzberg's Two Factors Theory, Skinners' Reinforcement Theory, have proposed that human needs are often extrinsically motivated, with little or no human agency.

In the light of integrating human agency and universality of human needs, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of Motivation was proposed (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In SDT, motivation is seen as a universal reflection of human needs. Needs, as used here, are universal nutriment that are essential for optimal human development and integrity as posited by Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser and Deci (1996). Within the conceptual framework of SDT, something is a need only to the extent that satisfying it promotes psychological wellbeing and thwarting it weakens psychological health. On the basis of this definition, three universal needs, namely autonomy, competence and relatedness, were identified in SDT which have been shown, through empirical research, as being important for all individuals. So the focus of SDT research is on the extent to which individuals are able to satisfy the needs within the social environment and not on the consequences of the strength of those needs for different individuals (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

An early definition of Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier and Ryan (1991:327) of the various needs sees competence as involving the

understanding on how to attain various external and internal outcomes and being efficacious in performing requisite work-related demand. Relatedness involves developing secure, meaning and satisfying relationships and connections with other individuals in a social milieu, while autonomy is the perceived belief that humans have a choice to determine what they can do in contributing to organizational effectiveness. The central research direction of SDT researchers and studies have focused on the extent to which these needs have been met by the workplace environment. Results from much of such studies have shown that work environment that supports the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs facilitate autonomous motivation, psychological and physical wellness and enhanced performance (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017). These results have confirmed the major thrust of the theory which focused on not only workplace performance but also wellness of employees. As applied to work settings, research, as reviewed by Gagné and Deci (2005), has shown that climates that promote the attainment of these needs enhance intrinsic motivation and full internalization of extrinsic motivation. When these are available, workers are more likely to maintain behavioural change, perform effectively, especially on-task requiring creativity, cognitive flexibility, and conceptual understanding, as well as display positive work-related behaviour, psychological adjustment and physical well-being.

From these needs, SDT researchers have formulated a continuum of motivational types based on the degree of autonomy experienced in the performance of specific tasks. This ranges from amotivation which is the total lack of any autonomy to intrinsic motivation which refers to a total state of self-determination. Between the states of amotivation and intrinsic motivation, there exist four types of extrinsic motivation namely external, introjected, identified, and integrated being progressively self-determined. Summarily, intrinsic motivation as conceptualized by SDT refers to the act of doing an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable outcome or consequences, while extrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity, not for the enjoyment of the activity, but for the attainment of a separable outcome or instrumental value (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

There has been a wide application of SDT to human motivation including parenting, education, healthcare, sports and

physical activity, psychotherapy and management, with the result being consistent and similar. For instance, Fernandez and Moldogaziev (2015) showed that empowerment practices that promote autonomy, competence and relatedness have positive and sizable effects on job satisfaction among federal employees in the United States of America. The result from Richer, Blanchard and Vallerand (2002) study showed that employees who have a high level of autonomy had more satisfaction and less emotional exhaustion, and lower turnover intention. Similarly, Kuvaas (2009) found out that autonomy was significantly positively related to self-reported work performance among public sector employees in the United States, with Fernet, Austin and Vallerand (2012) showing that autonomous motivation was negatively related to work exhaustion among school principals, but positively related to work commitment.

Apart from autonomy, research by Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte and Lens (2008) found that when taken together, the satisfaction of motivational needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence led to less exhaustion, while Lian, Lance, and Brown (2012) found that it led to less organizational deviance behaviour. Finally, Vander Elst, Van Den Broeck, De Witte and De Cuyper (2012) found out that frustration of the basic needs of autonomy, predicted poorer work-related well-being, as revealed by a greater level of emotional exhaustion. These studies confirm the positive benefits of the satisfaction of such needs as well as the negative consequences associated with the frustration of such needs. A diagrammatic representation of the core elements of SDT as applied to the work domain as presented by Deci et al (2017) is shown in Figure 1 below:

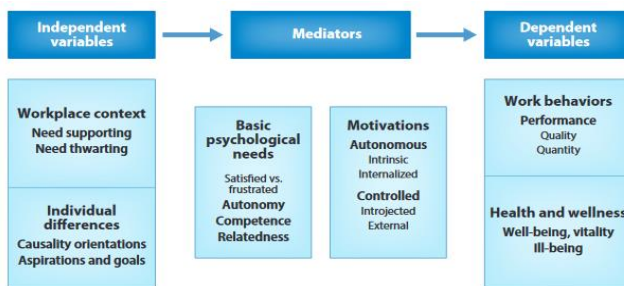


Figure 1: Self-determination theory model in the workplace (Adopted from by Deci et al, 2017).

An observation of the cited studies applying SDT to work environment indicates that most of them were foreign. This in no way suggests that Nigerian researchers have not made an effort towards understanding motivation in the workplace. For instance, Nwosu (2017) investigated on motivation and teachers' performance in Ogun State of Nigeria and found that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' job performance and motivation. Furthermore, finding from the study showed that reward system, professional training and development, work situational factors accounted for 10.4%, 29.1%, and 13.9% respectively of the variance in the motivation of teachers in public secondary schools. Similarly, the result of the study by Falemara (2013) showed that remuneration was the major determining factor affecting job performance of teachers in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau States.

As these studies showed, motivation factors are usually extrinsic and dependent on the work environment, as well as the provision of rewards and other external benefits. The few studies explored which have considered the role of autonomy, relatedness and competence among employees, were not done among teachers and were all foreign articles. It is against this background to contribute to the advance of knowledge and to fill the existing gap in the literature that informed the conduct of the present study on the self-determination perspective of motivational needs of secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was developed to provide a self-determination perspective of the motivational needs of secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. In specific terms, the objectives of this study include:

1. Ascertain the extent to which autonomy is a motivational need of public and private secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
2. Determine the extent to which competency is a motivational need of public and private secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
3. Examine the extent to which relatedness is a motivational need of public and private secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Based on the stated objectives, the following research questions were developed to guide this study:

1. To what extent is autonomy a motivational need of public and private secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State?
2. To what extent is competency a motivational need of public and private secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State?
3. To what extent is relatedness a motivational need of public and private secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State?

From the above research questions, the following null hypotheses were developed for testing at 0.05 level of significance as presented below

1. There is no significant difference in the extent to which autonomy is a motivational need of public and private secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State.
2. There is no significant difference in the extent to which competency is a motivational need of public and private secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State.
3. There is no significant difference in the extent to which relatedness is a motivational need of public and private secondary school teachers in Bayelsa State.

RESEARCH METHODS

Design: The descriptive survey research design was used for the study as the study was focused on ascertaining the extent to which the three basic motivational needs of the self-determination theory determined the work outcome of teachers in public and private secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique. A sample of 242 teachers was used for this study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the teachers used for the study. Firstly, three Local Government Area from the eight local government areas in the state were selected using simple random sampling. Thereafter, the convenience sampling technique was used to draw the sample size from both public and private secondary schools.

Instrument for Data Collection: A modified version of the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (BNSG-S²) developed by Gagné (2003). The instrument was developed to assess the satisfaction of basic needs in the general population and has been shown to be applicable to teachers. The instrument was composed of 21 items and was modified into a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (A). The instrument was divided into two broad sections of A and B. Section A of the instrument contained spaces for respondents to provide their demographic characteristics, while section B was further divided into three subscales of seven, six and eight items to access autonomy, competence and relatedness respectively.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument: The instrument was subjected to validity through the expert-panel approach. In this direction, one expert each in educational measurement and evaluation, educational psychology, and educational management assessed the components of the instruments to identify the extent to which the items measure what they claimed to measure. After minor modifications, the instrument was deemed fit to measure the construct under consideration. Reliability of the instrument was accessed using the Cronbach Alpha methods. The instrument was administered on a sample of 30 teachers in one of the Local Government Areas not selected for the study. Result revealed that the entire instrument has an Alpha coefficient of 0.85, while the sections on autonomy, competence, and relatedness had coefficients of 0.71, 0.92 and 0.80 respectively. These values showed that the instrument possessed a suitable level of reliability.

Data Collection and Analysis: The questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers using the direct administration method. Here the instrument was given in person to the respondents and collected immediately after responding. For data analyses, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The obtained results are presented in Tables as shown below. Furthermore, since the hypotheses were drawn directly from the research questions, the answer to the research questions and the result of the hypotheses testing were presented simultaneously in the same tables.

Table 1: Extent to which autonomy is a motivational need of public and private school teachers

Type	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	alpha	Decision
Public	152	22.94	4.36	240	1.15	0.25	0.05	Retain
Private	90	22.30	3.81					Ho ₁

From the mean rating of teachers in public secondary schools (22.94) and those of their counterparts in private secondary schools (22.30) as shown in Table 1 above, it is found that autonomy is a greater motivational need of teachers in public schools than those in private schools in Bayelsa State. However, the result showed that, when tested using independent sample t-test, a t-value of 1.15 was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.25 which was greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05. Since the p-value was greater than the chosen alpha, it, therefore, indicates that there is no significant difference in the extent to which autonomy is a motivational factor for teachers in both public and private secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The null hypothesis was therefore retained.

Table 2: Extent to which competency is a motivational need of public and private school teachers

Type	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	alpha	Decision
Public	152	18.43	3.77	240	2.13	0.03	0.05	Reject
Private	90	19.63	4.91					Ho ₂

According to the results displayed in Table 2, the mean rating of teachers in public secondary schools was 18.43 (SD = 3.77), while those in private secondary schools had a mean value of 19.63 (SD = 4.91), it is indicative that competence is a greater motivational need of teachers in private schools than those in public schools in Bayelsa

State. Furthermore, the result showed that, when tested using independent sample t-test, a t-value of 2.13 was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.03 which was lesser than the chosen alpha of 0.05. Since the p-value obtained was lesser than the chosen alpha guiding the study, it, therefore, indicates that private school teachers consider competence as a significant motivational factor than public school teachers in Bayelsa State. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Table 3: Extent to which relatedness is a motivational need of public and private school teachers

Type	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	alpha	Decision
Public	152	24.68	4.16	240	4.02	0.0001	0.05	Reject
Private	90	26.93	4.30					Ho ₃

From the mean rating of teachers in public secondary schools (24.68) and those of their counterparts in private secondary schools (26.93) as shown in Table 3 above, it is found that relatedness is a greater motivational need of teachers in private schools than those in public schools in Bayelsa State. In addition, the result showed that, when tested using independent sample t-test, a t-value of 4.02 was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.0001 which was lesser than the chosen alpha of 0.05. Since the p-value obtained was lesser than the chosen alpha, it, therefore, indicate that there is a significant difference in the extent to which relatedness is a motivational factor for teachers in public and private secondary schools in Bayelsa State, with private school teachers rating relatedness more than public school teachers. Thus the null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION

The result of the study showed that teachers in public secondary schools consider autonomy to be a greater motivational factor than those in private schools. This result may have been obtained because, in public secondary schools, there is less concern for standard maintenance as teachers are more likely to see the job as not something that should be taken seriously. However, these researchers believed that autonomy should have been stronger in private schools than public schools because private school teachers are often pushed to work longer hours

and commit more than those in public secondary schools who are given more liberty on how and when to resume working. The result of this study is similar to that obtained by Deci, Ryan, Gagné, Leone, Usumov and Kornazheva (2001) who found that there was a significant difference in the level of autonomous motivation between American and Bulgarian employees.

From the second research question and the corresponding null hypotheses, it was revealed that competence was considered a significantly greater motivational need for private secondary school teachers than for public secondary school teachers. This result implies that private school teachers are more likely to consider their skills and effectiveness a more important for their satisfaction than teachers in public secondary schools. This result similar to that obtained by Nwosu (2017) wherein teachers considered personal training and development as significant motivational factors in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Finally, the result of the study showed that from the analysis of the third research question and the corresponding null hypotheses, private school teachers considered relatedness as more of a motivational factor than public school teachers. This result is not surprising but expected as most private secondary schools in Bayelsa State experience a higher rate of employee turnover unlike those in public secondary schools who often stay for a long time in the job. Furthermore, the nature of the heavy workload of teachers in private secondary schools and the time demands involved might give little or no rooms for social interactions and building connectedness with other staff and students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While most studies on motivation have focused on the provision of external needs, SDT as a theory of motivation has been unique in that it provides a basis for the universalization of human needs as well as show employees as active agents in the satisfaction and fulfilment of such needs. It, therefore, offers a unique approach for modifying the work environment to meet these needs, not only for teachers but for the changing workforce in modern society. Based on the result obtained, the following recommendations are therefore made:

1. The government should make it a priority to provide school teachers with relative autonomy to design their curriculum and implement same as this would bring a greater level of motivation into the teaching profession.
2. School administration should be decentralized to allow for greater input from teachers in the management and administration of schools so that teachers would get a sense of autonomy.
3. Teachers, especially those in public secondary schools, should be provided more training and professional development opportunities to enable them to feel competent on the job. When teachers experience a measure of competence, they are more likely to deliver better which improve their self-efficacy and thus the motivation to execute the job.
4. Finally, private school administrators should develop a forum where teachers are given the opportunity to contribute to the learning system in schools, as well as interact among themselves as this is likely to increase their reported level of relatedness.

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