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## **Motivation as an Elixir to Participatory Pedagogy for Academic Success in Schools: Implications for the Nigerian School System**

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### **Abstract**

Motivation is a significant tool in educational systems all over the globe. The success or failure of pedagogy may be adduced to teachers and the way they motivate their students to learn. A student may know what and how to study, and may realise that studying is important, yet she may not study because he lacks the motivation or drive to self-regulate him/her. This study, therefore, brings out how the teacher can motivate his students so that they can effectively learn. The concept of participatory pedagogy, the relativity of motivation to students' performance, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and its effects in classroom instruction, some motivational theories and their relationship to learning, teachers' role in motivating students to learn and the implication for the Nigerian school system were investigated. The essence of the study was to point out the relevance of motivation and how it works in the school pedagogy. Motivation influences an individual's behaviour to and performance in a task.

Motivation directs behaviour towards a particular goal, makes students enthusiastic about a task and also fosters their persistence in classroom activities. A well-motivated student may find learning interesting so much so as to prevent academic and emotional problems from arising, and increase their performance.

**Key words:** Intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, academic success, learning improvement

### **Introduction**

Pedagogy is effective when learning is participatory. Students' participation in learning is precipitated by internal and external energy which is stimulated by both inherent and environmental factors. Literatures have shown that most students perform poorly perhaps because of poor participation in classroom interaction (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Students need to be motivated by their teachers in order to enhance effective participation in classroom procedures. It is commendable for students to actively participate in class as it fosters good teacher-student relationships which in turn promote, creative experiences in the students. More so when students are effectively engaged in class activities, the rate of delinquency among them is reduced. Iyamu (2014) postulated that the rates of drop-out and truancy among our students could be traced to poor motivation by their pedagogue. A well-motivated student is active and participates in classroom activities.

Also, according to Weiten (2005), motivation is regarded as the energy that stirs, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviours. It causes an individual to engage in an activity more vigorously and more efficiently than the unmotivated person. Apart from motivation being a "ready state" for action, it is also goal oriented, that is, the entire process of motivation has a focus or an objective to be achieved, for example, to pass one's examination, and/or to win a prize or an award (Azeez, 1995). Thus, motivation strengthens behaviour. The assumptions behind motivation can be biological, social, emotional or cognitive (innate, environmental, feeling and thinking) in nature. This is why it directs, controls and guides a person's behaviour in a particular direction. In other words, motivation is self-regulatory as it exerts influence over what one does (Bandura, 1997). A learner may know what and how to study but yet she may not study because she lacks the energy to self-regulate him or her. It becomes the responsibility of the pedagogue to initiate intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in such a student to stimulate participatory behaviour.

Moreover, students' poor participatory manner in teaching and learning processes is worrisome. This had led students into a lot of emotional and social challenges that had made some of them to take to crime and violence, while some others have become miscreants, political touts and high way hawkers. It is a painful sight to

see some youths who are termed leaders of tomorrow blacklisted for various offences in courts. The question that stares us in our face is what could be responsible for these challenges? Variables like government, parents, society and teachers have all proved significant in most researches. However, solutions proffered have not seemed to have helped the situation. This study has therefore identified motivation as a very crucial variable that could trigger students' interests in class activities. Gesinde (2000) argued that the drive to achieve excellence in class varies from one student to another. While a student may have a very strong desire to achieve success, another may be poorly oriented towards success. What may be responsible for the variation could be lack of motivation as the individual is fully motivated when he/she understands the content of what was taught and is able to apply same to get a good result. The thrust of this study therefore, is to examine motivation as a necessary tool for students' participation in classroom pedagogy. The purpose of the study is to bring to bear the relevance of motivation and how it could be maximised for students' academic success. This paper is therefore discussed under the following sub-headings:

- The concept of participatory pedagogy.
- The relativity of motivation to students' performance.
- Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as it effects pedagogy.
- Some motivational theories and their relationship to learning.
- Teachers' role in motivating students to learn
- Its implication for the Nigerian school system

### **The Concept of Participatory Pedagogy**

Participatory pedagogy is a procedure where students are encouraged to be actively involved in the instructional process in the classroom irrespective of the various differences in class. It is also an idea that creates an opportunity for students to have a say in classroom interactions. To get good performance in the classroom, teachers and students must make up their minds to value and have confidence in each other's ideas (Tuckman and Monetti, 2011). The students' acknowledgment of their teachers is dependent on pedagogical knowledge of the content of study and the ability to adequately motivate students for active participation in the classroom instruction. Pedagogical knowledge of the content includes ideas of the common difficulties that students have as they try to learn a content area, typical paths students should take to understand their study, and the area and strategies for overcoming the difficulties they experience in the course of their study. As a result, teachers should endeavour to motivate learners by monitoring learning, evaluating students' progress and identifying the types of difficulties they are likely to encounter in the class. Bransford, et al, (2006) opined that expertise in the knowledge of a particular subject does not indicate the ability to effectively teach it to make students learn as an expert in content knowledge

most times may be faulty in methodology. Learning without the proper use of motivation may lead to poor realisation of stated objectives. It is pertinent therefore, for the class instructors to be well acquainted with the principle and practice of motivation as they serve as a toner of the students' interest and ability in the classroom.

### **The Relativity of Motivation to Students' Performance**

Studies by Sandrock (2011) and Tuckman et al (2011) had shown that in a classroom interaction, learners' motivation can be increased to achieve academic success. Tuckman et al (2008) expanded on McClelland's idea (1985) of increasing peoples' motivation to seek achievement. Tuckman's idea was centred on four strategies.

First, the learner must be taught to take a reasonable risk. This means that students should be introduced to tasks that are attainable because such tasks may energise learners to make steady progressive growth. To achieve this, the teacher may do the following:

1. Provide learners with assignments of diverse difficulty levels.
2. Teach learners how to break down the assignments into manageable bits.
3. Learners should be taught goal strategies.
4. Let learners use failures as a learning experience.

Students may be less motivated if all of them are assigned tasks of the same difficulty level but when risk levels are adjusted for each student, that is allowing individual students to progress at an intermediate difficulty level, they may be motivated to learn.

The next strategy is make learning "internal focus", This means that students must or take responsibility for the outcome of their study. Alutu (2011) opined that students are better motivated when they take responsibility for their learning outcome. She explained that excuse giving or dodging blames may de-motivate learners because if students understand why they perform the way they do; they may likely put more effort in their study. For the teachers themselves, they should acknowledge and reward students' efforts, and encourage self-reliance and self-guided studies as these may motivate students to study.

Sourcing information from the environment by the learners themselves is another motivating strategy. Motivation can be enhanced in students when enabling environment is provided for study. A conducive and cooperating environment is a significant tool for motivation. According to Rogers (1987), students should be accorded positive regard in classroom activities because it paves way for them to achieve maximum success.

Feedback is another motivating strategy. Using feedback makes students pay attention to the result of their behaviour. Rather than evaluate students, teachers should give performance feedback that students can incorporate to improve learning. Motivation is a remedy for inactive behaviour in the classroom (Olubor, 2003). Motivation does more than just helping students acquire good grades. It also helps them to have actual experience of the subject taught. It is therefore pertinent for instructors to set a motivating classroom environment that would help students design and carry out projects to help them explore concepts in their various subjects. Another way to motivate students is to assist them in sampling needs, identifying relevant ones and guiding them in achieving them. All these will enhance their academic success.

### **Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation and Its Effects on Classroom Instruction**

Motivation can be classified as both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. Intrinsic motivation is driven by interest, that is engaging in an act because of the satisfaction derived from a specific task. Such a task is performed for its sake rather than for an external reward because it comes from the inherent satisfaction one gets in indulging in activities (Iyamu, 2015). A student that is intrinsically motivated is usually anxious to learn in classroom situations. The challenge is about the student who shows little intrinsic motivation. How will a teacher inspire him or her for better performance? Lepper and Hodder (1989) proposed four ways: challenge, curiosity, control and fantasy. Bandura (1986) recommended that students should be made to set goals that are “challenging yet attainable” Corroborating this view, Tuckman and Monetti (2011) suggested that students should be encouraged to “take a reasonable risk” that will raise their hope and subsequently motivate them. Studies (Snyder, Shorey, Cheavens, Pulvers, Adams, Wiklund, 2002; in Tuckman & Monetti, 2011) have also revealed that students can be aroused internally by initiating curiosity and this can be achieved when they are acquainted with information that is discrepant, absurd or astonishing compared to what they know. When this is done, students are anxious to find out what happens next. Teachers should involve students in classroom management. Once they perceive that their ideas are respected and they are a part of classroom control, they tend to show interest and are thus motivated. Fantasy connotes the ability of the teachers to combine their own inspiration with the students’ existing interest to create procedures for translating lessons into adventures. Once there is a synergy among these factors - Challenge, Curiosity, Control and Fantasy students with low intrinsic motivation may be aroused to perform maximally.

Also, extrinsic motivation is an action that is consequent to external drives. A specific behaviour is emitted by an individual as a result of material and social rewards (e.g., praises and applauses from the teachers’ high scores) or avoidance of punishment. For example, a student who does his/her homework only because he/she dreads the

teacher's anger is extrinsically motivated. Similarly, a student who does his/her home work because he/her personally believes it is valuable for his/her chosen career is also extrinsically motivated, as behaviour was elicited based on external reward. Weiten (2005) argued that external rewards are very important in teaching and learning processes because they can induce the students to participate in an activity they had no initial interest in. External rewards motivate people to also acquire new skills or knowledge. Once these initial skills have been acquired, the individuals may become more intrinsically motivated to pursue the activity. Thus, an individual who is both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, all other things being equal, may likely perform well in school.

Furthermore, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is the compelling force behind desired responses. Researchers (Deci et al, 1991; Ryan, 1991) declared that these two types of motivation can differ in how effective they are at developing behaviour. Although, they may differ in the way they arouse behaviour, but they both facilitate better behaviour in the classroom. For example, a child that scores the highest in a Mathematics test and is being rewarded, all things being equal, may be motivated to work harder not just to maintain the score but to get the reward associated with the good performance. Thus teachers must endeavour to use his/her lessons to stir up in the children extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to enable them to achieve educational objectives. Teachers' oriented motivation is very critical to the educational system. The learners see the teacher as an authority. His behaviour and language mean a lot to them. Teachers' action can motivate or discourage the child from learning. The teacher must therefore, from time to time, use instructional materials during his lesson in order to provide the necessary drives that will ignite students' cooperation and participation in the classroom.

### **Some Motivational Theories and Their Relationship to Learning**

Philosophers like Dewey and Pestalozzi postulated that students are the essence of learning activities and that education consists of two sets of individuals: the teacher and the student. A responsive teacher must be able to facilitate the readiness of students by making learning activities goal oriented. There are a lot of motivational theories that have been developed by psychologists to explain the nature and relevance of motivation in pedagogy. These theories are virtual attempts at describing motivation, the essence of human activities and what individuals can do to be motivated.

Walter Cannon (1932) observed that all organisms seek to maintain homeostasis –a state of physiological equilibrium or stability. For example, human temperature moves around 98.6 degree Fahrenheit. When it drops or rises, the body responds by way of looking for stability or equilibrium. Drive theorists, therefore, believe that when an internal tension is created, the individual seeks for ways of

reducing tension by trying to maintain homeostasis. A drive is an internal state of arousal that motivates an organism to engage in an activity that should reduce the tension. According to Drive theory, when individuals experience a drive, they are motivated to pursue the action that would reduce it. For example, the teacher should use chat and video/audio aids to create an intrinsic motive or arouse positive tension in the students as these will create eagerness in them to learn. In addition, this theory emphasises a state of equilibrium. The teacher therefore, should create conducive classroom atmosphere that will yield a state of equilibrium in the students and in their studies, that is, a synergy between teaching and learning. This implies that the teacher must be accessible to students, explicit in instruction and show integrity in classroom discipline and management.

Also, the incentive theorists are another group of psychologists who believed that an external stimulus regulates a motivational state. That is, an external drive has the capacity to motivate behaviour towards a desired goal. Incentive motivation is an interaction of stimulus and object in the environment. The incentive theorist or the behaviourist's view claimed that incentives add interest or excitement to the class and direct attention towards appropriate and away from inappropriate behaviours (Emmer & Evertson, 2009). Examples of classroom incentives include numerical scores and letter grades which provide feedback from the quality of the students' work, placing in honour roll and verbally mentioning students' accomplishments. Other types of incentives are allowing students to do what they like doing best, for example, play football, play computer games or go for field trips. Incentives should be given with caution and they must be contingent on the appropriate behaviour, that is, the students should be able to associate the good performance with the incentives. Incentive theory depends basically on association of incentives with desired behaviour, that is, motivation is enhanced in a learner when he is able to associate the good behaviour with the reward (incentives). Drive and incentive theories are contrasted as push versus pull theories. Drive explains how the internal state of tension (intrinsic) pushes an individual to act in an appropriate manner while the incentive explains how external stimuli (extrinsic) pull people in a certain desired direction. Thus, incentive theory hinges on environmental factors of motivation while drive emphasises the biological basis of human motivation.

### **Teachers' Roles in Motivating Students in a Classroom Situation**

Learning is meaningful when set objectives are achieved and this may depend on how students are motivated to learn. The pedagogue must plan strategies for motivating learners in the classroom. Such strategies include the following:

**Lesson Presentation:** The ability to prepare and deliver lessons is at the centre of the teaching and learning processes. The primary function of the teacher is to

facilitate learning by various means to motivate students to learn. For example, using the right teaching methods and relevant audio and visual aids may help concretize the lesson. Using teaching methods like discussion, questioning and demonstration encourage students' participation in class, instil confidence and motivate them to learn. Similarly, the effective use of instructional materials which promote participatory learning and good performance may awaken students interest in learning.

**Reinforcement Principles:** The proper use of positive and negative reinforcement by teachers could motivate students to learn properly. Reinforcement is a stimulus that is contingent upon the emission of a response that tends to increase or decrease the probability of a behaviour re-occurring in future. Positive reinforcement is a process of delivering a positive reinforcer after a response in such a way that it will increase the probability of the behaviour re-occurring. For example, if a teacher poses a question to a student and he/she gives the correct answer, the teacher may positively reinforce the student in any of the following ways: - "that's fine, keep it up", "correct", "good", "excellent" and "smart boy" All these are verbal forms of positive reinforcement. But when the teacher nods his head, smiles or shake hands with the student, it is a non-verbal positive reinforcement. This type of reinforcement is a way of motivating pupils/students to learn. On the other hand, negative reinforcement is the removal of whatever thing that prevents the emission of a desired response. For example, a student who has not done well in Mathematics due to bad teaching may be negatively reinforced by the removal of the bad teacher and then the pupil might develop the right attitude towards Mathematics. Other examples could be the removal of loud noise, removal of a pupil from another noisy child or removal of fear. The removal of an aversive stimulus is regarded as a negative reinforcement; the essence is to motivate students to learn.

**Prompt Assessment of Students' Assignment:** Teachers should endeavour to mark assignments on time as the feedback could spur students to want to learn. No matter the level of education- nursery, primary, secondary or tertiary, correction of assessed work should be done in order to ensure that wrong knowledge is put right.

**Creating an atmosphere that is conducive in the classroom:** A teacher's ability to manage his class effectively and efficiently could create an atmosphere that is conducive for learning. The teacher should always make himself accessible to students and try to relate pleasantly with all of them. The atmosphere for conducive learning will be achieved if this is done

### **Some Motivating Principles that Teachers Must Imbibe**

A responsive teacher should know how and when to motivate his students. For example, a normal daily dosage of motivation is of great help to pupils/students.



Motivation directs behaviour towards a particular goal. As a result, teachers as agents of change should endeavour to make classroom experiences stimulate students' interest in learning. The classroom should have a lot of interesting charts that must be changed from time to time to suit the lessons for the day. Teachers' comportment and etiquette should also be motivating. This way, good performance is ensured.

Again, moderate anxiety motivates pupils to learn. Little anxiety caused by teachers in the class increases pupils' effort and energy. Lessons should be thought provoking and directly related to pupils/students' needs and goals. When this is achieved, students would spend more time with their work. Motivation is energy oriented. A little puzzle in class lessons may lead to an increase in the amount of effort and energy that learners put in class.

Additionally, success motivates more than failure. The more learners are motivated to achieve academic success, the more they appreciate high grades and dislike low grades. This is the reason students' efforts must be reinforced contingent on good response. Motivation often enhances performance. A learner who is motivated performs better than the one who is not. It is therefore, the duty of teachers to ensure that their lessons are interesting.

Self-set goals motivate people better. Teachers should encourage their pupils to desire a thing. No matter how young they are, some of them have dreams of what they want to be. Some might want to be doctors, lawyers or teachers. Once these goals are set, pupils are motivated to take their studies more seriously. Students with set goals pay more attention in class than those without goals.

### **Benefits of Motivation in the School Setting**

Motivation is a crucial educational tool. It influences on individuals' behaviour and performance in a task. Motivation directs behaviour towards a particular goal thus it determines students' choices. A child whose motive is to become a medical doctor may prefer to work hard in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry than in other elective subjects Motivation is goal specific and it energises behaviour.

Motivation makes an individual enthusiastic about a task and thus ignites students' persistence in the activities. The child whose interest is singing will spend much time with musical instruments compared to other activities. Motivation determines the time an individual spends on a task and it is an important factor in learning and achievement.

Motivation develops individual cognition. A child that is motivated does more of an analytical study than the one that is not. A child who is motivated is more likely to pay attention to class work and understand tasks instead of exhibiting a care free attitude to studies. It also prevents students from developing problems. A well-

motivated student may find learning interesting and this may prevent academic and emotional problems from arising. A student that is well motivated is engaged fully in class room work, doing all routine and is ever ready to learn.

Additionally, if students are well motivated, their academic performance will not only be high, there also will be no room for enormous cases of school dropouts because they will be able to create a good social and psychological knowledge of their school work. Also, students will work harder at a task when they are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. They will also show great interest in the teaching and learning processes.

### Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is seen that motivation is an indispensable tool in the present day student and pedagogue. It is the duty and responsibility of responsive teacher to ensure that the children under their care are well taught. Teaching and learning can only be successful when the teachers as well as the students are motivated. A motivated student does not only carry out his works heartily but also does it with all his might.

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