

ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN LEARNING HABIT OF A SCHOOL CHILD

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Abstract

Learning cannot take place in the absence of motivation. Motivation is considered as the arousal of movement in an individual which energizes, direct and sustain a child to learn. Two types of motivation advanced by psychologist; intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation, operates, independently to arouse human behavior. Intrinsic motivation is biologically inherited, a pushing force that comes from within the person. A child who is intrinsically motivated carry-out activities voluntarily to achieve personal goal. It is therefore the responsibility of teachers to develop learners that are self-directed, self motivated, who initiate and maintain interest in what they are learning, this can be done by creating positively classroom climate where there is happiness, joy and everyone is valued and respected, making learning task interesting. The paper concludes that government should ensure the provision of infrastructural and instructional facilities/materials for teacher-students classroom interactions.

Introduction

Learning cannot take place in the absence of motivation. Learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour which occurs as a result of experience. According to Hornby (2000) learning is a process of gaining knowledge through reading and studying. To learn is to change one's behaviour from one form to the other (Nnachi, 2004). An essential factor that makes learning present or absent, fast or slow is motivation.

Motivation is seen as the arousal of movement in an individual. It is a term used to describe what energizes a child to learn or what directs a person's activity (Nnachi, 2004). Motivation is what energizes, directs and sustains behaviour be it positive or negative. It keeps learners moving to a particular direction and sustained their movement.

The term motivation is derived from the Latin word "movers" which means to move, Opara (2004) defined motivation as forces that moves a person to carry out some activity. That force or motivator could be in the nature of reward and punishment. Schweinle et al (2006) defined motivation as the process involved in arousing, directing and sustaining a behaviour. Motivation is an internal state that arouses us to action, pushes us in a particular direction and keeps us engaged in certain activities. Motivation refers to internal and external prompts that energize human beings to initiate action and direct action towards a goal, maintain action till the goal is achieved. (Reeves, 2006).

In whatever direction the force may go, the individual acts in such a manner to maintain or restore a state of equilibrium. Atherton, (2011) also defined motivation as the forces that energizes and direct human behaviour. Motivation involves needs, want and satisfaction. A child who is motivated to learn shows seriousness by paying attention to what is being taught by the teacher. Even with poor teaching method, and wrong choice of instructional materials, the child may learn a great deal. The problem of motivation is learning how to direct appropriately the great energies of a person. Motivation is properly directed when the academic tasks presented to learners is meaningful, value and beneficial to them.

Types of Motivation

Psychologists have advanced two types of motivation which presumably operate independently to arouse human behaviour. These are:

Intrinsic motivation which is biologically inherited (Opara, 2004), Here, the pushing force or drive comes from within the person. Intrinsic motivation is invisible and can only be inferred through a person's behaviour. A person who is intrinsically motivated carryout activities voluntarily to achieve personal goals. The person is not forced or reminded of performing an activity. Intrinsic motivation is the motivation within the individual that is driven by interest or enjoyment in the task itself, desire to accomplish self-goal (Wikipedia the free Encyclopaedia, 2011).

According to Opara (2004) humans have innate drives (which are biological in nature) which in turn instigate motives such as safety, prestige, achievement etc. These inherent motives are the driving force for motivation and human behaviour. By implication, students learn to excel in academics because they themselves have innate goals, needs and desires expectations to solve through academics (without rewards from parent, teachers).

This study is anchored on Abraham Maslow theory of motivation. Abraham Maslow (1970) in his own theory of motivation designates a hierarchy of motives from highest of motives to lowest. He accepts the idea that some human activity is motivated by the gratification of biological needs, he rejects the preposition that all human motivation can be explained in terms of deprivation, drive and reinforcement. Looking at Maslow's hierarchy, it is observed that biological needs are basic for life because they are necessary for human survival. The basic needs have higher influence on human behavior than the social needs.

The main concern of teachers is to develop learners that are self-directed, self-motivated, who initiate and maintain interest in what they are learning and are genuinely pleased when they finish their work. Intrinsic motivation is characterized by interest and satisfaction derived from acquiring skills. Its strengths are commitment and willingness to work. Its weakness is its ability to get the individual so focused on the object of interest. Intrinsic

motivation means having an interest in the learning task itself and also the satisfaction being derived from the learning task. The person is motivated by the desire to succeed. Extrinsic motivation refers to external forces (environment) which stimulate or energize a person's behaviour. Such extrinsic force could be in the form of incentives such as prizes, money, promotion, grades etc. such rewards come from outside and are externally controlled by someone other than the learner (Opara, 2004). Extrinsic motivation also refers to external rewards or inducements outside the learner such as praise, money, incentives, food etc from parent, teachers and society.

The characteristics of extrinsic motivation are gaining tangible rewards or avoiding negative as consequences. Its strength is that it can develop into more important commitment. Forces in extrinsic motivation are mainly social in order to gain social acceptance.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation do not have the same effect on human learning and performance. Learners who are extrinsically motivated may engage in activity just to collect money that particular activity brings. Again, children or learners who are intrinsically motivated may engage in an activity because it gives them joy and help them develop skills. The benefits of motivation are shown when learners are intrinsically motivated to engage in classroom activities. According to Reeves (2006) extrinsically motivated learners may process information without being thorough and are often interested in performing only easy tasks. Students motivation refers to students desire to take part in the learning process. It also refers to their willingness or unwillingness to participate in academic activities.

Benefits of Intrinsic Motivation

It matters a lot that a learner is intrinsically motivated, the direction he finds himself determines the types of help he needs.

1. This is because intrinsic motivated students tend to employ strategies that enable them to process information more thoroughly (Lepper, 2005).
2. It is found out that when students are confronted with complex intellectual tasks, those that are intrinsically motivated use various strategies to do the tasks than the students who are extrinsically motivated.
3. Students who are intrinsically motivated also tend to prefer tasks that are challenging, whereas extrinsically motivated students go for tasks that are less difficult. Extrinsically motivated are decline to put little effort in doing a task.
4. Intrinsically motivated students tackle assigned tasks willingly and are eager to learn classroom work.
5. An intrinsically motivated students undertake an activity for its own sake and for the enjoyment it provides. On the other hand, a student who is extrinsically motivated work hi order to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment associated with the activity itself such as teacher approval (Lepper, 2005).

Fostering Learning Habits in a School Child.

To foster a learning habit in a school child, one needs to identify what motivates an individual child and this can be done by observing them and taking note of what they do on their own and what they are helped to do. This observation of the child can be done either in the child's home or in the school.

In the home

Parents need to encourage children to enhance their academic motivation. Parents need to understand that poorly motivated pupils do not do well in school activities. Teaching and learning should be enjoyable and a good foundation from home matters a lot. It can go a long way helping the pupils to be intrinsically motivated. Parents must provide children with the basic needs of food, shelter, and love. They should allow the children to explore their environment, answer their questions and build in them self-esteem and confidence. Carlton (2003) opined that young children learn from everything they do because they are naturally inquisitive and curious and want to explore and discover. If their explorations bring pleasure and success, they will want to learn more. Children who receive the right support and encouragement from parents at the early years will be creative throughout their lives. Children who did not receive the right support and encouragement are likely to have negative attitude to learning later in life. Parents are therefore advised to support the development of motivation of their children so that they can achieve educational success. According to Carlton (2003) there are many strategies parents can use in the home to help children to be intrinsically motivated. These include; e Provision of appropriate toys and activities that allow children to explore their environment. Provision several opportunities for children to explore together and interact with adults as children play, observe and encourage them.

- ❖ Provide activities that are slightly difficult for children. This will make them be more motivated when it is accomplished.
- ❖ Provide children opportunities to evaluate their own tasks or works and ask them questions.
- ❖ Do not give too much rewards. Praise and rewards should be based on their efforts and persistence. Allow children time to play and exercise their bodies.

In The School

The school environment need to motivate children to learn things and good behaviour in a particular way. Therefore, school environment should be conducive for effective teaching and learning, equipped with adequate trained and motivated teachers, adequate classroom, adequate teaching and learning materials, effective teaching methods, adequate water supply, good health and sanitation facilities. With the availability of the above, teachers can do more positive things to motivate students to learn in the school.

The Role of Teachers

In the school environment, teachers should view themselves as active socialization agent, capable of stimulating student's motivation to learn. Teachers can stimulate students to learn through:

1. Creating positive classroom climate. This motivates pupils to learn in that if students find out the classroom as carrying, a place where there is happiness, joy and everyone is valued and respected, they tend to participate fully in the learning process.

2. Making learning task interesting. Presenting simple tasks can foster motivation to learn. Tasks that involve calculations, helping students to know how to solve them is important because they stimulate student inquisitiveness and curiosity (Lepper, 2003). Again, defining task and presenting them bit by bit can help students make effort. Noting the purpose of specific tasks when introducing them is also important (Atherton, 2011).

- Having an interest in a task itself as a key to motivation.
- Introducing a task to pupils, teachers should take account of their abilities and previous learning.
- Link the present task to previous experience to aid memory, and help the understanding of the new tasks.
- Effective teaching must be given to win the hearts and minds of pupils and the learning experience should involve intrinsic motivation and interest.
- In the classroom, teachers are to recognize students even when students are cheating.
- Excess use of corporal punishment should be avoided as it may make the child hate school.

3. Using project work: Project work can act as a source of motivation. Topics selected and presented to pupils should be of interest to pupils. Indicate the usefulness and relevance of the topic to their needs, provide pupils with regular feedback concerning their performance and competence.

4. Use of praise. Teachers praise is a powerful motivator, although it depends on how it is used. Praise should be used with credibility well consisted use of praise that identify the pupils is powerful. Conclusion

The role of teachers in the development of motivation in pupils to learn cannot be overemphasized. Teachers should understand that it is better to encourage learners to be intrinsically motivated than being extrinsically motivated and that there are several methods one can use singly or combinative in his classroom to motivate learners. The use of any method depends on the type of learner in his class. For effective compliance, it entails that teachers need to be adequately motivated to do their job. It is only motivates teachers that can motivate their pupils. To this end therefore, there is need to motivate Nigerian teachers by giving them the best training in the training colleges and universities. When they are motivated adequately to work, they will increase their efforts to do their teaching work. Both motivation and emotion can regulate our behaviour. So if teachers have a strong motivation to achieve, they spend long hours studying and working. Interest is what causes pupils to have a motivation for learning. Motivated behaviour is energized directed and sustained.

Recommendations

1. Governments and all stakeholders should take the welfare of teachers very seriously to ensure good job performance.
2. Teachers should be allowed through sponsorship to attend conference, workshops and seminars regularly as it will motivate them as well update their knowledge.
3. Governments should ensure the provision of infrastructural and instructional facilities/materials for teacher-students classroom interactions.

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