

Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Motivational Strategies in Public Speaking: Evidence from Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

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Abstract

This study investigated teachers' perceptions and practices of motivational strategies in the teaching of public speaking among senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The research employed a descriptive survey design, sampling 180 English language teachers across six education districts using stratified and simple random techniques. Data were collected through a validated structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, regression, and ANOVA. Findings revealed that teachers generally held positive perceptions of motivational strategies ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.48$), while the application of these strategies in classrooms was moderate ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.52$). There is a significant positive relationship between perceptions and practices ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), with perceptions significantly predicting practices ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$). Demographic factors, including age, sex, and qualifications, did not significantly influence practices. Teachers reported contextual challenges such as large class sizes, limited space, and insufficient instructional resources, which moderated the full implementation of motivational strategies. The study concludes that enhancing teacher awareness and professional development, alongside improving school infrastructure, is essential for optimizing students' public speaking competence. Recommendations include targeted professional training, mentorship programs, and policy initiatives to improve learning environments, with implications for developing effective communication skills critical for academic, professional, and societal engagement.

Keywords: Teachers' perceptions, teachers' practices, motivational strategies, public speaking, Lagos State.

Background to the Study

Public speaking is one of the most essential communication skills that enable students to communicate effectively, build confidence, and enhance academic and career readiness. Adeyemi, (2022) describes public speaking as abilities which are integral, not only for academic presentations but also for personal

development and professional success. It involves the ability to articulate thoughts clearly, present ideas persuasively, and engage an audience effectively. Beyond being a skill for political leaders, media personalities, or professionals, public speaking is increasingly recognized as a fundamental competence for students in secondary schools, as it enhances confidence, critical thinking, and self-expression (Lucas, 2020; Oyeleye, 2019). Education in Nigeria considers oral English and speech presentation as part of the curriculum, hence, public speaking is an indispensable tool for students' academic development, social interaction, and future career success (Adebisi & Oladunjoye, 2021). However, the teaching and learning of public speaking among senior secondary school students present a number of challenges. Daly, Vangelisti, & Weber (2017) identified that students experience communication apprehension, stage fright, or lack of confidence in expressing themselves before an audience. These difficulties, according to Ola-Busari, (2018) and Oduolowu & Fawole, (2020) are compounded by limited exposure to speaking opportunities, cultural inhibitions, peer pressure, and in some cases, inadequate teacher support. Consequently, the development of effective public speaking skills is often hindered, leaving students inadequately prepared for the demand of higher education and professional life (Ezenwafor & Okeke, 2019). This fear can inhibit students from participating actively in classroom discussions, group projects, and oral presentations, thus limiting their educational experience (Eze & Bello, 2023).

Motivation is an important strategy that can help students overcome barriers associated with public speaking. According to Smith, (2023) teacher motivational strategies refer to a set of approaches and techniques that educators use to inspire and engage students in the learning process. These strategies are essential for creating a positive and encouraging classroom environment that fosters student participation, enhances academic performance, and nurtures personal growth. Ryan and Deci (2017), motivational strategies are rooted in the principle of intrinsic motivation, where students are encouraged to learn for their own satisfaction and interest, rather than external rewards. Motivational strategies range from verbal encouragement, positive reinforcement, use of role models, peer collaboration, to constructive feedbacks. These stimulate students' interest and willingness to participate in public speaking activities (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). Teachers, as facilitators of learning, are central to the application of these strategies. Their perceptions of motivational strategies and their practical implementation in the classroom can either encourage or discourage students from engaging meaningfully in public speaking tasks (Adebayo, 2022; Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2014).

One fundamental component is the creation of a positive and inclusive learning environment, where students feel respected, valued, and safe to express their thoughts (Wentzel & Miele, 2017). In such

an environment, students are more likely to engage in classroom activities and take intellectual risks, knowing that their efforts will be met with encouragement rather than criticism. This strategy helps to reduce anxiety, a common barrier to motivation, and supports students in developing confidence in their abilities.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these strategies depends largely on how teachers perceived and practices motivational strategies. Teachers with right perceptions of these strategies can more effectively create a learning environment where students feel encouraged to participate, persist, and succeed academically (Eze & Bello, 2023). The way teachers manage learners' anxieties, inspire confidence, and foster communicative competence may significantly shape students' overall proficiency in spoken English (Ogunyemi, 2021; Richmond, Wrench, & McCroskey, 2019). Thus, examining teachers' perceptions and practices of motivational strategies can provide insights into effective pedagogy and highlights potential areas for improvement in secondary education.

Several studies have highlighted the central role of teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies in shaping students' public speaking development. Okoro and Olatunji (2020) examined the influence of teachers' perceptions on students' performance in debate and speech competitions in Anambra State. Using a mixed-method design, they surveyed 250 English teachers and conducted focus group discussions with selected students. Quantitative analysis revealed that teachers who frequently employed motivational strategies such as goal setting, rewards, and supportive speaking environments reported significantly higher student performance in public speaking (ANOVA, $F(2,247) = 4.73$, $p < .01$). Qualitative findings indicated that students felt encouraged to take risks and manage speaking anxiety when teachers demonstrated strong awareness of these strategies. The study demonstrates that teachers' positive perceptions directly enhance learner engagement and resilience in public speaking contexts.

Ibrahim and Salami (2022) further investigated the impact of teachers' perceptions on students' confidence in extemporaneous speech delivery in Kaduna State. Adopting a quasi-experimental design, 120 students were divided into experimental and control groups based on whether their teachers had high or low perceptions of motivational strategies. Pre- and post-test results revealed that students taught by teachers with strong perceptions of motivational practices including scaffolding, reassurance, and praise showed significant gains in speaking confidence (Mean difference = 10.7, $t(118) = 2.94$, $p < .01$). The findings confirmed that teachers' perceptions influence both instructional choices and affective student outcomes, including reduced anxiety and improved self-expression.

Collectively, these studies underscore that teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies are pivotal in creating supportive classroom environments where students build confidence, manage speaking anxiety, and refine public speaking competence.

Several studies also emphasized the importance of teachers' actual classroom practices in fostering public speaking skills. Ogunleye and Ajayi (2020) examined teachers' application of motivational strategies in senior secondary schools in Ogun State. Using a descriptive survey design with 180 English teachers across 12 schools, the study employed classroom observation checklists and questionnaires. Findings showed that teachers regularly applied strategies such as praise for effort, constructive feedback, peer-support activities, and modeling of effective speaking. Analysis indicated that classrooms where these practices were consistently used had significantly higher student participation in oral presentations ($\chi^2 = 12.76$, $p < .05$). The study concluded that teachers' daily practices directly enhance student confidence and engagement.

Similarly, Eze and Danjuma (2022) investigated teachers' practices in promoting debate and oral communication skills in Plateau State. Using a mixed-method approach with 200 teachers and interviews with 30 students, the study found that frequently applied strategies included goal-setting, recognition of improvement, and collaborative speaking exercises. Regression analysis showed that these practices explained 42% of the variance in students' public speaking performance scores. Qualitative insights revealed that when teachers provided reassurance and acknowledged progress, students felt less anxious and more willing to participate. The study affirmed that consistent application of motivational strategies is critical for fostering resilience and active engagement in public speaking. Going by the background to this study and precious research on teachers' perceptions and practices and students' public speaking competence, this study seeks to examine both aspects within the context of Lagos State's senior secondary schools. One of the characteristics of Lagos State is its diverse and competitive educational environment, where students face challenges such as large class sizes and limited speaking opportunities. It is therefore crucial to understand how teachers perceive and apply motivational strategies to improving students' speaking competence, enhancing classroom participation and engagement, and preparing learners for academic and professional success.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of public speaking as a crucial skill for academic achievement, personal development, and career readiness, many students in secondary school continue to struggle with effective oral communication, among other language skills. Studies have shown that students often experience stage fright, anxiety, and low confidence when asked to speak before an audience. In the Nigerian context, these challenges are exacerbated by limited speaking opportunities, cultural

inhibitions, peer pressure, and inadequate teacher support. Consequently, students are often not adequately prepared for higher speaking or oral tasks and professional engagements that require strong oral communication skills.

Motivational strategies have been identified as a critical factor in reducing public speaking anxiety and enhancing students' participation and performance. However, the extent to which teachers' perceptions of these strategies, and how consistently they apply them in public speaking instruction, remains unclear. While some teachers may perceive motivational strategies as valuable, their actual classroom practices may not align with these perceptions due to constraints such as lack of training, limited resources, or time pressures.

Lagos State has a diverse and competitive educational environment; hence, the gap between teachers' perceptions and actual practices of motivational strategies in fostering students' public speaking competence has not been sufficiently investigated. Without a clear understanding of teachers' perceptions and application of motivational strategies, efforts to improve oral communication among students may remain ineffective. Therefore, this study, examined teachers' perceptions and practices of motivational strategies in teaching public speaking in selected senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions and practices of motivational strategies in the teaching of public speaking in selected senior secondary schools in Lagos State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies in the teaching of public speaking in Lagos State.
2. Identify the motivational strategies teachers apply in teaching public speaking in Lagos State.
3. Determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions and their classroom practices of motivational strategies in public speaking in Lagos State.
4. Explore the challenges teachers face in applying motivational strategies to public speaking instruction in Lagos State.

Hypotheses

Four null hypotheses were raised for this study.

1. H_{01} : There is no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of motivational strategies in the teaching of public speaking in senior secondary schools in Lagos State.
2. H_{02} : Teachers do not significantly apply motivational strategies in the teaching of public speaking in Lagos State.

3. H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions and their classroom practices of motivational strategies in public speaking in Lagos State.
4. H₀₄: Teachers do not encounter significant challenges in applying motivational strategies to the teaching of public speaking in Lagos State.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it examines the relationship between teachers' perceptions and practices of motivational strategies and students' development in public speaking. For students, exposure to strategies like constructive feedback and supportive classroom environments enhances confidence, reduces speaking anxiety, and fosters academic and life skills, including leadership, self-expression, and critical thinking. For teachers, the study highlights the importance of perceptions and consistent application of motivational strategies to improve teaching effectiveness and student engagement. Policy makers and curriculum developers can use the findings to integrate motivational pedagogy into teacher training and professional development. Beyond the classroom, the study emphasizes the broader societal impact, preparing students to be confident communicators in workplaces, civic engagement, and leadership roles, contributing to national development and global competitiveness.

Scope and Delimitation

This study is limited to senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria, chosen for its educational and cultural diversity. The population is restricted to English language and related subject teachers who directly engage students in oral communication tasks. Conceptually, the study focuses on teachers' perceptions (beliefs and attitudes) and practices (classroom applications) of motivational strategies in teaching public speaking. Specifically, it examines strategies such as verbal encouragement, constructive feedback, use of role models, peer collaboration, task-based activities, and reinforcement systems. The study is cross-sectional, covering only current practices and perceptions during the 2024/2025 academic session, without considering longitudinal changes.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine teachers' perceptions and practices of motivational strategies in public speaking across selected senior secondary schools in Lagos State. This design was chosen because it allows for the collection of quantitative data on perceptions, practices, and demographic characteristics from a large sample. It also enables statistical analysis to test the proposed hypotheses. Data were collected from 180 English language teachers sampled proportionally from six education districts. Teachers were selected using stratified and simple random sampling to ensure representation across districts, gender, age, and qualifications. The instrument was a structured questionnaire with items rated on a 4-point Likert scale, covering

perceptions, classroom practices, and challenges in applying motivational strategies. The instruments were validated by experts in educational research and English language teaching, while reliability was done through a pilot study and analyzed using a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, which indicate high internal consistency. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations), Pearson correlation, regression, and ANOVA/t-tests, aligned with each hypothesis.

Results and Discussion by Hypotheses

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Explanation/Interpretation
Age	25–34 years	99	55	Majority are young teachers, reflecting recent recruitment of graduates. Energetic workforce likely open to innovative strategies.
	35–44 years	54	30	Moderately experienced teachers; bring some stability and experience.
	45 years and above	27	15	Few highly experienced teachers; may provide mentorship.
Sex	Male	68	38	Male teachers less represented in English teaching at SSS level.
	Female	112	62	Majority are female, consistent with national trends in language teaching.
Marital Status	Single	81	45	May have more time for extracurricular support, e.g., public speaking clubs.
	Married	90	50	Balanced representation; marital status may affect

				availability for additional duties.
	Widowed	9	5	Small proportion; may influence workload flexibility.
Qualification	Bachelor’s Degree	108	60	Meets minimum requirement; professionally qualified.
	Master’s Degree	72	40	Higher qualifications can enhance pedagogical knowledge and application.
	PhD	9	5	Few highly qualified teachers; potential mentors or leaders.
Teaching Experience	1–5 years	63	35	Young and energetic, may bring new pedagogical ideas but less experience.
	6–10 years	72	40	Moderate experience; balance between innovation and competence.
	Over 10 years	45	25	Experienced; potential role models for younger teachers.

Hypothesis 1: Relationship Between Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices

Correlation Analysis:

Variables	1	2
1. Teachers’ Perceptions	—	
2. Teachers’ Practices	0.62**	—

Regression Analysis:

Predictor Variable	B	SE B	B	T	P
Teachers’ Perceptions	0.78	0.10	0.58	7.80	<0.001

Discussion: Teachers with positive perceptions of motivational strategies are significantly more likely to apply them in classrooms. This highlights the predictive power of perceptions on practices. Contextual constraints in Lagos State, such as large class sizes and limited infrastructure, may reduce the full application of these strategies, but awareness remains a key driver.

Hypothesis 2: Influence of Demographics on Practices

Age Groups:

Age Group	N	Mean Practice	SD
25–34 years	99	3.12	0.53
35–44 years	54	3.11	0.50
45+ years	27	3.08	0.55

ANOVA Result: $F(2,177) = 0.28, p = 0.75$

Qualification Levels:

Qualification	N	Mean Practice	SD
Bachelor's	108	3.09	0.52
Master's	72	3.14	0.51
PhD	9	3.17	0.49

ANOVA Result: $F(2,177) = 0.42, p = 0.66$

Discussion: Demographic factors such as age and qualification did not significantly affect classroom practices. This suggests that environmental constraints, rather than individual characteristics, primarily determine the extent of strategy implementation.

Hypothesis 3: Challenges in Applying Motivational Strategies

Challenge	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Large class sizes	150	83
Limited classroom space	120	67
Insufficient instructional resources	102	57
Student lack of motivation/interest	78	43
Time constraints in curriculum	60	33

Discussion: Teachers face significant challenges, particularly due to overcrowding and infrastructural limitations. These barriers hinder the translation of perceptions into effective classroom practices, even among highly motivated and qualified teachers.

Descriptive Statistics of Perceptions and Practices

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Teachers' Perceptions	180	3.42	0.48	Positive perception
Teachers' Practices	180	3.11	0.52	Moderate application

District-Wise Mean Scores (Figure 1)

District	Mean Perception	Mean Practice
District I	3.45	3.12
District II	3.50	3.15
District III	3.40	3.08
District IV	3.38	3.05
District V	3.44	3.10
District VI	3.41	3.14

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal a strong relationship between teachers' perceptions and practices of motivational strategies and the development of students' public speaking skills in Lagos State secondary schools. Teachers, who held positive perceptions of strategies such as constructive feedback, praise, goal-setting, and peer collaboration implemented them consistently, which enhanced students' confidence, reduced speaking anxiety, and increased active participation. This aligns with previous studies (Okoro & Olatunji, 2020; Adewale & Nwachukwu, 2021; Ibrahim & Salami, 2022) showing that teacher awareness directly influences both instructional choices and affective student outcomes. The study also highlights that actual classroom practices, regular use of verbal encouragement, modeling effective speaking, and creating supportive environments significantly improve student engagement and oral performance, corroborating findings from Ogunleye and Ajayi (2020) and Eze and Danjuma (2022). These results underscore the importance of aligning teachers' perceptions with practice and suggest that professional development and supportive infrastructure are essential to optimizing students' public speaking competence in Lagos State.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that teachers' perceptions and practices of motivational strategies play a significant role in shaping their classroom practices in public speaking instruction among senior secondary schools in Lagos State. While teachers generally hold positive attitudes towards these strategies, their practical application is moderated by contextual challenges, including large class sizes, overcrowded classrooms, and limited instructional resources. The study further revealed that demographic factors such as age, sex, and qualifications do not significantly influence the use of motivational strategies. This implies that environmental conditions are the primary determinants of effective practice.

In general, the findings underscore the critical importance of teacher awareness and professional development in enhancing the teaching of public speaking. When supported by conducive learning environments and adequate infrastructure, teachers are more likely to implement motivational

strategies effectively, thereby fostering students' confidence, communication competence, and resilience. This has broader implications for academic success, employability, and societal engagement, highlighting the need for coordinated efforts by educators, school administrators, and policy makers to create supportive and resourceful learning environments.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Teachers should continually update their knowledge of motivational strategies and adapt them creatively to suit large classroom environments, such as using peer-led activities, structured group work, and rotational speaking tasks to ensure active student participation.
2. Schools should prioritize classroom management strategies that reduce overcrowding impacts, provide spaces for public speaking activities, and encourage mentorship programs where experienced teachers support younger colleagues.
3. Lagos State Ministry of Education should continue to expand school infrastructures to accommodate the growing student population and ensure conducive learning environments for public speaking instruction. Also, policies supporting ongoing teacher training in motivational strategies should be implemented.
4. Researchers should explore longitudinal studies to examine changes in perceptions and practices over time, as well as investigate the effectiveness of specific motivational strategies in large classrooms and urban school contexts.
5. Activities that can strengthen public speaking skills through effective classroom practices and enhance students' communication competence, better prepare them for professional and social interactions in workplaces and society at large should be encouraged.

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