

**RURAL-URBAN DRIFT OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN UYO LOCAL EDUCATION
COMMITTEE, AKWA IBOM STATE**

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Abstract

The study investigated rural-urban drift of teachers and students academic achievement in Social Studies in Uyo Local Education Committee. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. The descriptive survey design was adopted while the population of the study comprised 6,819 Junior Secondary Two (JS2) students in the fifteen (15) public secondary schools in Uyo Local Education Committee. A sample size of 378 Junior Secondary Two (JS2) was selected for the study using Taro Yamane sampling formulae. In order to get an appropriate sampled schools and students, a simple random sampling technique (hat and draw method) was used in the selection of nine (9) sampled schools as well as 42 students from each of the sampled schools for data collection. A self-structured questionnaire titled "Rural-urban Drift of Teachers and Students Academic Achievement in Social Studies Questionnaire (RDTSAASSQ)" was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions while independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed a significant difference in students' academic achievement in social studies based on staff strength and classroom size due to rural-urban drift of teachers in the study area. Based on the study findings, it was concluded that low staff strength and overcrowded classroom instigated by rural-urban drift of teachers can impede positive academic achievement of students in school subjects. The researcher recommended among other things that, more social studies teachers should be employed particularly in rural schools in order to balance the number of teachers in urban schools. Keywords: Rural-urban drift of teachers, academic achievement, social studies, classroom size, staff strength.

Introduction

The learning process is very essential in students' development and improvement of skills, inculcation of right values and performance of a given task. Through learning, students are enabled to develop their knowledge, skills, interest and adopt new behaviours essential for the survival of social norms and values. Students learning and academic performance in school subjects cannot be achieved in the absence of teachers. The teacher

is a compulsory figure for any learning programme. The acquisition of knowledge and skills that would make young ones become useful members of the society is enhanced by the teacher. Teachers are expected to possess some special attributes such as intelligence, dedication, devotion and stability in their assigned schools so that students can learn and perform better in school subjects. On this note, Kolawole (2019) observes that, teachers should not be frequently transferred from rural to urban schools to avoid low staff strength.

The author further described rural-urban drift of teachers as the permanent movement of teachers from one school to another particularly, when the transfer is voluntarily initiated by the teachers. The frequent change of teachers during academic sessions could be very harmful to students because most times, when a teacher is transferred, his or her replacement might take a long time to be filled particularly when it concerns the rural schools location. In such a situation, Farzana, Muhammad, Adeel and Lodhi (2012) note that the students will be the ones to suffer, as those subjects the teachers left behind may be given to another teacher who may not be qualified and competent enough to handle it satisfactorily. The authors further emphasized that due to rural-urban drift of teachers, there are lots of changes in the staff strength and classroom size in rural schools, which impact negatively on students academic achievement and motivation. Teachers' retention and stability in the assigned schools is a significant determinant of students' academic achievement in social studies. Social studies is a subject for junior secondary school students, concerned with the study of social relationships and the functioning of societies. According to Onsomu (2014), the frequent movement of teachers from rural to urban schools may have adverse impact on student's academic achievement in social studies because it might take the students several weeks to become acquainted with the new teacher and adjust to his or her traits. This is because each teacher is different from the other in terms of personality, attitude, interest, skills and dedication to the teaching profession. Rural-urban drift of teachers may instigate worrying conditions to students' academic achievement in social studies. One of such conditions may be low staff strength. Low staff strength occurs when there are not enough teachers to handle school subjects (Ingersoll, 2011). What will happen in such condition is that other subjects will be fully taught while social studies will be left behind due to shortage of subject teachers. As noted by Kolawole (2019), in most public schools particularly the rural ones, some subjects are not always taught due to rural-urban drift of teachers. The author added that the academic achievement of students in these subjects is usually poor for reasons of lack of subject teachers. This implies that, positive academic achievement of students in social studies and other school subjects may be hampered by low staff strength resulting from rural-urban drift of teachers. Students may experience an over-crowded classroom size due to rural-urban drift of teachers, which may likely exert adverse effect on students' academic achievement in social studies. A classroom is said to be overcrowded when the number of students exceeds the optimum level such that it causes hindrance in the teaching and learning process.

Over-crowded classroom creates unsafe environment and makes teaching and learning more difficult. As noted by Olayele, Ajayi, Oyebola and Ajayi (2017), most teachers in rural schools experience huge class size because of the incessant movement of

teachers to urban schools, sometimes for their personal reasons. Given that teachers in rural schools are usually small, the remaining teachers would rather carry-out multiple tasks such as joining two more classes together when teaching the students. Such condition will give room for students' poor concentration and participation in class activities, which invariably can affect their academic achievement in social studies.

Theoretical and Conceptual Review

Jean Piaget's Cognitive Learning Theory (1936) Jean Piaget proposed the cognitive learning theory in (1936). Piaget proposes that the basis of all learning is the child's own activity as the child interacts with the physical and social environment. To Piaget, knowledge does not have the same purpose of representation of an independent reality but instead has adaptive function. Piaget recognized that human beings are born as active exploratory information processing organisms and actively construct their own ways of thinking about things based on their current level of maturation, actual experiences with objects, people and ideas. Piaget noted that the child's mental activity is fully organized into a structure called 'schema' or pattern of behaviour which develops as the child passes through stages of mental development, through the sensory motor, pre-operational concrete and formal operational stages (from infancy to maturation). Thus, as children grow and develop, they go through stages in which they accept ideas that they may later discard as wrong. Understanding is therefore built up step by step through active participation and involvement. Piaget used the terms assimilation, accommodation and reorganization to explain his views about the learning processes in children. The child assimilates new objects by accommodating new ideas that helps to build new cognitive structures. Although Piaget recognized the importance of environment in children development, Piaget laid much emphasis on the role of cognitive structure which helps the child to build experience from important events. According to Piaget, true learning is not something handed down by the teacher, but something that comes from the child through the process of spontaneous invention and discovery. Piaget then maintained that the basis of learning is discovery hence 'to understand is to discover or reconstruct by rediscovery; and such conditions must be complied with if individuals in the future, are to be productive and creative. The relevance of Piaget theory to this work is that it shows explicitly the relevance of teachers' stability or retention in schools on students' academic achievement. From this theory, it is clarified that the teacher is a mere facilitator in the teaching and learning process whose role is to provide a rich environment for spontaneous exploration of the students. It is observed therefore, that for schools to produce learners who will become active constructors of knowledge through discovery learning, an increased level of staff strength is needed so that students can positively learn and perform better in schools subjects.

Concept of Rural-Urban Drift of Teachers

Rural-urban drift of teachers is the frequent change of teachers from the rural to urban schools for voluntary or involuntary reasons. According to Farzana et al (2012), rural-urban drift of teachers is the incessant transfer of teachers during the academic session while replacement takes long time to be filled in future. Sometime, the transfer is done on the teachers' request or through administrative action. As for a request for transfer, a chain of problems turn out for the school administration and for the remaining

teachers and students as well. According to Abel (2009), rural-urban drift of teachers is an agile alteration in assignment within the district, province and from one school to another. The author added that a staff that works together collaboratively and shares common goals performs better, and teachers who are professionally qualified tend to stay in the profession longer. Kolawole (2019) defines rural-urban drift of teachers as the permanent movement of teachers from one school to another, either within or outside area council. There are two types of transfers - voluntary and involuntary. Farzana et al (2012) explained that voluntary transfers are those initiated by the teacher. The authors added that teachers may choose to be transferred for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to the desire to work closer to home or to avoid personality conflict with an administrator or other staff members. Involuntary transfers are those initiated by either a principal or a district administrator. Those transfers initiated by the principal, also called "administrative transfers, may be to move a teacher who is not a good and fit for the school or who is performing unsatisfactorily. Other involuntary transfers may be initiated by the district to solve larger problems, such as teacher surpluses due to changes in students' enrollment, academic programmes, or the budget (Ballou, 2011).

Concept of Academic Achievement

Academic achievement refers to the degree of students attainment in the learning programme. Academic achievement is the extent to which a student, teacher, or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals (Tertindi, Joshua and Gabriel, 2019). Students' final grade point average in school and completion of educational degrees such as high school and bachelor's degrees represent academic achievement. Academic achievement refers to what the students have learned or skills that have been acquired and is usually measured through assessments like standardized tests, performance assessments, and examination. In every school setting, students are perpetually in search of academic success, the success of academic achievement is their ultimate goal. Thus, academic achievement in social studies can be expressed in the form of good scores as a result of hard work and exceptional performance in classroom test, assignment and examination (Robinson, 2011).

Staff Strength and Students Academic Achievement

A teacher is a person that imparts knowledge to students, shows care when the need arises and possesses character traits that motivated the students to learn. Teachers' shortage can create imbalance or disproportion in teacher-students ratio in schools, and therefore could make students lose positive attitude, interest and desire in the learning. Smithers and Robinson (2018) stated that, most students in public secondary schools tend to perform poorly and consequently drop out of school due to teachers' shortages or low staff strength. The authors added that excessive workload on the teachers in rural schools such as administrative duties; preparation of lesson note, conduct of continuous and end-of-term evaluations in the school might be reasons why some teachers sought for transfer to urban schools. Effective implementation of teachers' role can not be achieved when teachers are unavailable in schools. According to Okpala and Onocha (2009), one could only evaluate students' motivation to learn and performance in school subjects when teachers are available in schools for lesson delivery. This means that students can never

show interest in learning as well as performing better in school subjects when there is shortage of teacher or when teachers are unavailable to handle school subjects. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015) reported that, Nigeria need to increase its teaching workforce by 6.6 percent yearly to meet the students' demands; and that shortage of teachers lies in the distribution and retention of teachers. Abumere, Tolorunloju and Sadoh (2018) stated that in Nigeria, most places are being plagued with the problem of acute teacher shortages due to incessant movement of teachers from rural to urban schools. The author added schools in rural areas do not receive their quota of trained teachers while many of the few ones in the rural areas seek frequent transfer into the cities. In one of the studies conducted by Subair and Talabi (2015), which revealed that, students' academic achievement in school subjects would significantly be poor if staff availability is low. This finding also agrees with the earlier finding of Smithers and Robinson (2013) that, most students in public secondary schools tend to perform poorly and consequently drop out of school due to teachers' shortages or low staff strength. This is true because effective implementation of the school curriculum is determined by the readiness and availability of teachers to handle school subjects.

Classroom Size and Students Academic Achievement

Classrooms that are overpopulated often have the teacher-students ratio higher than what is expected which may impact negatively on students' academic achievement. According to Beshavion (2011), it is obvious that students in over-populated classes would likely not understand what the teacher teaches as their attention is divided. The author added that such situation is solely responsible for social vices, hardship, commotion, poor performance and involvement of criminal act among students. According to The National Policy of Education, the teacher-student ratio should be one teacher to 40 students (1:40), per class in secondary schools (FRN, 2013). Teacher-student ratio is the number of teachers in school with respect to the number of students who attend the school. According to Afoma (2013), it has been observed that the average number of students per classroom in most public secondary schools is about eighty to one hundred (80-100). One of the causes of higher number of students in class, according to Arshad, Ahmed and Tahira (2009), is the rise in students' enrolment as well as joining two more classes together for a teacher due to teacher transfer. Kennedy (2014) noted that having so many people in class would make the class congested and will be very difficult for the teacher to pass instructions to students, thereby hindering students' motivation towards learning. In a study conducted by Olaleye (2017), the authors found that students' learning motivation in some schools are negatively influenced by overcrowded classrooms. The authors added that when a class is over-crowded, a teacher may find it difficult to conduct each student's activities properly and to promote their learning skills and capabilities.

Statement of the Problem

Students' academic achievement is better placed if the learning environment encourages them to interact, acquire skills and scientifically develop their mindset. If the learning process does not satisfy the academic needs of the students, it may likely influence their academic achievement in school subjects. Sadly, in Uyo Local Education Committee, the researcher observed that most students have experienced abysmal failure

in social studies, which may be due to rural-urban drift of teachers. Most times, social studies students in rural schools usually complain that they lack sufficient number of teachers to teach the subject, while others complain of their classes being overcrowded because their teacher always pair them with students in other junior classes when teaching. In most situations, junior secondary school students usually complain that social studies subject has been taken over by another subject teacher in the school because their subject teacher has been transferred. Due to the rural-urban drift of teachers, a low qualified teacher who takes over the subject may lack the skill and ability of utilizing instructional materials that can facilitate students understanding and impact positively on their academic achievement. The presence of these factors has hampered students' motivation, interest and overall performance in social studies. Sometimes, the ill-timed transfers are caused by those married teachers whose husbands are government officials and would like their wives to follow them wherever they are posted to work. This situation has continued to become worst, even to extent that some students usually complain of not having interest in the subject. Therefore, the present study seeks to provide empirical data on the difference in student's academic achievement in social studies based on rural-urban drift of teachers in Uyo Local Education Committee, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered in this study: 1.

In what way does students' academic achievement in social studies differ based on staff strength in Uyo Local Education Committee? 2. In what way does students' academic achievement in social studies differ based on classroom size in Uyo Local Education Committee?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. 1. Students' academic achievement in social studies does not significantly differ based on staff strength in Uyo Local Education Committee. 2. Students' academic achievement in social studies does not significantly differ based on classroom size in Uyo Local Education Committee.

Research Method Research Design

The descriptive survey design (after the fact) was adopted for the study. This design is a type which describes the present condition of a particular event. Nworgu (2006) asserted that descriptive survey design is the one in which group of people are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a representative sample of people or items considered for the entire group. This design is suitable because it enabled the researcher to describe the difference in student's academic achievement in social studies based on rural-urban drift of teachers in Uyo Local Education Committee.

Population of Study

The population of this study consisted of 6,819 Junior Secondary Two (JS2) students in the fifteen (15) public secondary schools in Uyo Local Education Committee (State Secondary Education Board, Department of Planning and Research Statistic Division, 2021). Sample and Sampling Technique A sample size of 378 Junior Secondary Two (JS2) was selected for the study using Taro Yamane sampling formulae. In order to get an appropriate sampled schools and students, simple random sampling technique (hat

and draw method) was used to select nine (9) public secondary schools for the study. The same method was applied in the selection of 42 JS2 students from each of the sampled schools for instrument administration, which gave a total of 378 sampled respondents.

Instrumentation

A self-structured questionnaire titled "Rural-urban Drift of Teachers and Students' Academic Achievement in Social Studies Questionnaire (RDTSAASSQ) was used for data collection. The items were framed in line with the research questions and hypotheses of the study. The questionnaire had two sections. Section A contained items on staff strength and classroom size (which are measures of rural-urban drift of teachers) while section B contained 15 items achievement test measuring students' academic achievement in Social Studies. The respondents were required to tick from a list of options as individuals.

Validation of Instrument

To ensure the face validity of the instrument, two copies of the instrument were given to two experts in Measurement and Evaluation Unit of the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, University of Uyo, to assess the suitability or otherwise of the items in the instrument. The inputs and corrections made by the evaluators were harmonized by the researcher's supervisor to form the final copy for administration to respondents.

Reliability of Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was applied. Here, the instrument was administered on 40 JS2 students in a selected school not included in the population sample. Data obtained were subjected to correlation and Cronbach Alpha statistics used for test of internal consistency of the instrument. This yielded the overall reliability co-efficient of .79 for items measuring rural-urban drift of teachers' as well as .83 for items measuring students academic achievement in social studies respectively. This index according to Udoh and Joseph (2005) is a high reliability index since, the reliability co-efficient is above .50.

Administration of Instrument

The questionnaire was personally administered on the respondents in their respective schools by the researcher, together with two research assistants. The questionnaire was administered within three weeks and all the 370 copies of the instrument were retrieved instantly to avoid any loss which gave a 100% return rate.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions while independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected if the calculated t-value is greater than the t-critical and vice-versa. Results and Discussion of Findings Research Question 1: In what way does students' academic achievement in social studies differ based on staff strength in Uyo Local Education Committee? Hypothesis 1: Students' academic achievement in social studies does not significantly differ based on staff strength in Uyo Local Education Committee. Table 1: Result of mean, standard deviation and independent t-test analysis on the difference in students academic achievement in social studies based on staff strength

Staff Strength	n	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
High	216	20.11	3.89	376	8.88	1.960	S
Low	162	13.08	1.01				

S = Significant; $P < .05$; $df = 376$; $t\text{-crit} = 1.960$

The result in Table 1 indicates the mean responses on students' academic achievement in social studies based on staff strength in Uyo Local Education Committee. From the table, it is observed that the mean of students with high/staff strength ($x = 20.11$) achieved better in social studies than those students with low staff strength ($x = 13.08$). The result therefore implies that students are most likely to show high academic achievement if the subject teachers are readily available in school and vice versa. More so, hypothesis one is rejected since the calculated t-value of 8.88 is greater than the t-critical.

Research Question 2:

In what way does students' academic achievement in social studies differ based on classroom size in Uyo Local Education Committee?

Table 2: Result of mean, standard deviation and independent t-test analysis on the difference in students academic achievement in social studies based on classroom size

Classroom Size	n	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Large	206	11.23	0.75	376	7.21	1.960	S
Small	172	15.04	0.96				

S = Significant; $P < .05$; $df = 376$; $t\text{-crit} = 1.960$

The result in Table 2 indicates the mean responses on students' academic achievement in social studies based on classroom size in Uyo Local Education Committee. From the table, it is observed that the mean of students with small classroom size ($x = 15.04$) achieved better in social studies than those students with large classroom size ($x = 11.23$). The result therefore implies that students are most likely to show high academic achievement if the class is not overcrowded or filled with a large number of students and vice versa. More so, hypothesis one is rejected since the calculated t-value of 7.21 is greater than the t-critical.

Discussion of Findings

Result from the research hypothesis 1 revealed a significant difference in students' academic achievement in social studies based on staff strength in Uyo Local Education Committee. This finding is in agreement with the finding of the study by Subair and Talabi (2015), which revealed that student's academic achievement in school subjects would significantly be poor if staff availability is low. This finding also agrees with the earlier finding of Adeyemi (2011) that, most students in public secondary schools tend to perform poorly and consequently drop out of school due to teachers' shortages or low staff strength. This is true because effective implementation of the school curriculum is determined by the readiness and availability of teachers to handle school subjects. Hence, it is observed from this finding that the inadequacy of teachers' in exercising their teaching roles would adversely affect students' academic achievement and motivation in learning. Result from the research hypothesis two revealed a significant difference in students'

academic achievement in social studies based on classroom size in Uyo Local Education Committee. This finding is in agreement with the finding of the study conducted by Olaleye, et al (2017), which revealed that students' academic achievement was negatively influenced by overcrowded classroom. The authors further revealed that when a class is over-crowded, a teacher may find it difficult to conduct each student's activities properly and to promote their skills and capabilities, hence resulting in students' poor achievement. This is true because in overcrowded classroom while some students will be concentrating, others will be playing at the back, hence impacting negatively on their academic achievement. Therefore, it is observed from this finding that overcrowded classroom may impede students' positive achievement in social studies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The Government in collaboration with the State Ministry of Education should as a matter of urgency provide social amenities and accessible road network that lead to rural schools as this will reduce seeking for voluntary transfer from the rural to urban schools.
2. More social studies teachers should be employed particularly in rural schools in order to balance the number of teachers in urban schools.
3. The teacher students ratio of one teacher to 40 students (1:40) per class in secondary schools as stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) should be strictly observed by school administrators in order to enhance effective class control, evaluation of students with ease and facilitate positive academic performance of students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that low staff strength, and overcrowded classroom instigated by rural-urban drift of teachers' can impede positive academic achievement of students in school subjects.

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