

## DEMOGRAPHIC OF SOCIAL MOBILITY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

By

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### Abstract

*This study focused on the demographic of social mobility among secondary school teachers in Rivers State. Two research questions and two corresponding null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised all the 10,998 teachers in the 247 public secondary schools in the state. A sample of 450 teachers were drawn through multi-stage sampling procedure. An instrument titled "Teachers' Social Mobility Scale TSMS" was used for data collection. Face and content validity of the instrument were determined. The reliability of TSMS was determined, using Cronbach Alpha reliability method and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.72. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 Alpha level of significance. It was found that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of social mobility of male and female teachers based on teachers' promotion, mobility of teachers in urban and rural areas, based on nature of accommodation. It was recommended, among others, that Government should always ensure that teachers' social mobility is determined by the rules and regulations guiding teacher's profession.*

**Keywords:** Promotion, Accommodation and Social Mobility

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### Introduction

Mobility means shift, change and movement. The change may be of place or from one position to another. Social mobility could be seen as the movement of people, families, groups, organizations from one level of social class to another. This movement involves moving up and down the social ladder of people in the society. For instance, an educationist who acquires more educational qualifications needs to move upward in terms of promotion and other entitlements. Similarly, a teacher who has served in a particular public school in a given state for many years needs to be posted to other school to also impart such knowledge to other learners in other areas within the same state. However, Ogbondah and Elechi (2006) see social mobility as basically the movement of individual or groups of individuals from one social position to another. Doob (1994) defines it as the movement of a person from one social class or status level to another, either upward or downward with the accompanying gains or losses in wealth, power and prestige. This movement from one stratum to another describes the nature and amount of change in social position in relation to time. In addition, Haralambos and Holborn (2013) opined that, social

mobility is the amount of movement from one stratum to another. Nwanna-Nzewunwa (2009) notes that individuals in any society are classified into social layers known as strata, and the layer in which an individual belongs determines his social status. Individuals can move from one social layer to another. This movement is known as social mobility.

In common usage, social mobility has a favorable connotation of moving upward. However, upward mobility is only one of the types of social mobility. An individual may also move to a lower status (downward mobility) or to a new and different status that is approximately equal to his old one (horizontal mobility). One of the essence of (UN) emphasis on education is to ensure social equity and justice in human existence, irrespective of culture, ethnicity, nation, race and religion which will propel social movement of people across various sectors of the world economy, be it in teaching, medicine, law, engineering, transportation, agriculture and industries, among others (Sabastine, 2007). In most developed nations of the world such as America, education is seen as a means of advancement of knowledge for improving the living standards of people in the society (Nkwocha, 2013). Nkwocha further notes that the social inequalities in terms of social welfare and movement of employees in their daily activities have been absorbed by quality education delivery in most advanced countries. This indicates that education in the developed world aims at ensuring accelerated social mobility among every individual in the society irrespective of tribe, type of job and religion. Anele (200) maintains that one importance of education is the eradication of social inequality through the accommodation of worth-while views of human existence and advancement of knowledge. This assertion according to him, is more evident in developed countries where favoritism, nepotism and racism have been abused in employment, job and placement of people in different strata or social ranks in the society.

Coloni (2001) emphasizes that the goal of education in the eradication of social injustice in developing countries such as Nigeria has not been achieved in various areas of the society. In the teaching profession for instance, teachers' social mobility is irregular as there is instability in teachers' vertical and horizontal movement (Mark, 2006). This trend of social mobility has also gone contrary to objectives of National policy on education which specified that efforts towards the improvement of quality education at all levels shall include appointment and retention of academically and professionally qualified persons as teachers and heads of educational institutions and provision of improved conditions of service and incentives to motivate teachers and make the teaching profession more attractive (FRN, 2013). Policy documents are not adhered to in the placement and transfer of individuals in different social layers of the society.

Nwanna-Nzewunwa (2009) notes that individuals in any society are classified into social layers and that the layer to which an individual belongs determines his social status. However, education helps an individual to move from one stratum to another and this is regarded as upward or downward social mobility. Ajala (2007) explains that education has the most powerful influence on upward social mobility of an individual, especially when there are practical policies of Government in any given society. Good education helps in upward social mobility of teachers. It also helps to provide better platform for social classification of individual in their workplace and the society at large.

Promotion refers to the act of rising in rank or position. It is a system for advancing participants to higher status positions. Spilerman and Lunde (1991) explained that promotion is the change of rank within an organization. Rank differentiates workers with respect to status, power, and salary; hence any change in the determinants of promotion as one moves up the social ladder reveals how an individual's ultimate occupational achievement is patterned by particular variable. From the foregoing explanation, promotion has variables which influence it, hence education is one of the variables of promotion in workplaces, especially in the teaching profession. In teaching profession, certain qualifications have certain limits of promotion in the terms of incentives.

Accommodation is the act of providing something (lodging, seat or food) to meet a need. It can also be referred to living quarters provided for public convenience. Some of the greatest challenges faced by teachers and institutions are inadequate infrastructural facilities and accommodation for teachers. Office spaces are grossly inadequate as a result of poor maintenance by care centres of the profession. Teachers share chairs, sit on broken desks to prepare their lessons, and there affect effective teaching and learning process as well as intellectual development of learners. To Okoli (2007), there is no steady water and power supply is epileptic in residential homes of teachers. Amadike (2007) states that it is no longer news that majority of teachers live in an uncompleted apartments, some live in a crowded compound, some live in dilapidated apartment where the roof is leaking. In typical manner, good and quality education comes hand in hand with living in a good neighbourhood. Teachers need not to walk long distance to get to school as this will be a difficult task and burdensome, as well as hinder effectiveness in teaching. Eke (2013) asserts that when the home is located on difficult terrain, access to school is problematic. All public schools should have good quarters for teachers; this will provide the best trade-off between housing cost and commuting cost.

Dalby (2013) opines that teachers with higher level of education are generally the ones that get quick promotions and the opportunities that are not available for those without higher level of education. Dalby maintains that the academic and career skill credentials a higher education provides will often help one to stand out among job applicants and peers that might be up for the same promotion. However, social mobility may be prevalent among secondary school teachers in the society. It is against this background that the researcher intends to assess the social mobility of secondary school teachers in Rivers State, based on some demographic correlates.

### **Statement of Problem**

The placement of teachers in Nigeria, particularly the secondary school teachers, in Rivers State, has become a source of concern to stakeholders in the education sector as noticed by the researcher in recent time. This is due to the fact that many teachers do not feel satisfied about their upward social movement in the teaching profession. Despite the efforts of the government in terms of ensuring effective and prompt promotion of teachers, payment of entitlement associated with promotion in the teaching profession and ensuring sanity in the transfer of teachers in the state, many teachers complain of unfair treatment in their promotion and transfer as there are reports of constant favoritism, nepotism and undue-errors among those responsible for their transfers, promotion and other related issues to teachers' welfare in the state. This situation is on the increase in the state and has given rise to teachers' lukewarm attitude towards their teaching activities in the state. Many teachers do not feel happy going to work on time, some are always absent in school, while others do not give adequate attention to their responsibility as teachers in school, especially in the teaching and learning process.

If Nigeria education must achieve its goal of positive change of attitude, values and moral up-bringing of learners in the society, the issue of social mobility of teachers should be properly taken into consideration by both the government and stakeholders in the education sector. The problem of this study therefore, is to assess social mobility among secondary school teachers in Rivers State, based on selected demographic variables.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives were considered.

- i. To investigate if there is any difference between the social mobility of male and female teachers on the rate of promotion.
- ii. To examine if there is any difference between the social mobility of teachers in urban and rural areas based on the nature of accommodation

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

- i. What is the difference between the mean scores of social mobility of male and female teachers on the rate of promotion?
- ii. What is the difference between the mean scores of social mobility of teachers in urban and rural areas based on the nature of accommodation?

## **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- i. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of social mobility of male and female teachers based on the rate of promotion.
- ii. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of social mobility of teachers in urban and rural areas based on nature of accommodation

## **Materials and Methods**

The design of this study was descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprised all the teachers in the 247 public secondary schools in the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State (LGAs). As at the time of the study, the population of teachers in all the public secondary schools in Rivers State was 10,998 (Rivers State Ministry of Education: teachers' enrolment figure, 2017). A sample of 450 teachers was drawn from the population and used for the study. Taro Yamen's formula was used to establish the minimum sample size of 393, which shows that the sample size of 450 teachers is a good representation of the population. Multi-stage sample approach was adopted for the selection of the research subjects. In doing this, simple random sampling technique was used to draw 80 secondary schools from the 23 LGAs in Rivers State. This was followed by the proportionate stratified random sampling technique which was used to draw the sample of 450 teachers from the schools and used for the study.

The instrument for the study was a self developed questionnaire titled, "Teachers' Social Mobility Scale" (TSMS). The TSMS consisted of bio-data such as: gender, subject area of specialization, school location, marital status, school area and 25 items in five sections; A B C D E. Section A consisted of items 1-5 measuring promotion, Section B consisted of items 6-10 measuring nature accommodation, Section C of items 11-15 measuring authority, Section D of items 16-19 measuring prestige while, Section E consisted of items 21-25 measuring respect. All the items were structured, based on the four-point modified Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree = (SA), Agree = (A), Disagree = (D), and Strongly Disagree = (SD) which was assigned a numerical values of 4,3,2, and 1 for positively keyed items. The validity of the instrument (TSMS) was determined through face and content validation, determined by experts who vetted the items in terms of there relevance, appropriateness and language level. The reliability coefficient of the instrument (TSMS) was determined, using Cronbach Alpha. The internal consistency of the instrument used a sample of 30 teachers who were not part of the study sample, a reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained All the data collected were analysed with SPSS (Version 7). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 Alpha level of significance.

## **Results**

**Research Question One:** What is the difference between the mean scores of social mobility of male and female teachers on the promotion?

**Table 1:** Weighted mean, standard deviation and mean set of male and female teachers on the promotion

S/n		Male=189		Female=261		Mean set $\bar{x}\bar{x}/2$	Remarks
		$\bar{x}$	Sd	$\bar{x}$	Sd		
1	I always get quick promotion in my teaching employment	3.28	.96	3.45	1.02	3.36	Agreed
2	I am promoted regularly in my place of work	3.52	1.02	3.58	.85	3.55	Agreed
3	I have not experienced any difficulty in my promotion exercise	3.49	.98	3.52	.76	3.50	Agreed
4	I do not struggle to get my promotion as a teacher	3.78	.70	3.18	1.15	3.48	Agreed
5	Teachers do not encounter delay in promotion in the profession	3.48	.94	3.51	.88	3.49	Agreed
	<b>Aggregate <math>\bar{x}</math> and Sd</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>.92</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>.93</b>	<b>3.47</b>	

Table 1 indicates that the mean score of the male teachers ( $\bar{x} = 3.51$ ) is slightly greater than the mean score of the female teachers of ( $\bar{x} = 2.88$ ), it shows that the male teachers had slightly higher social mobility on promotion than their female counterparts.

**Research Question Two:** What is the difference between the mean scores of social mobility of teachers in urban and rural areas based on the nature of accommodation?

**Table 2:** Weighted mean standard deviation and mean set of teachers in urban and rural areas based on the nature of accommodation

S/n		Teachers in urban area=244		Teachers in rural=206		Mean set $\bar{x}\bar{x}/2$	Remarks
		$\bar{x}$	Sd	$\bar{x}$	Sd		
6	Teaching profession offers me the opportunity to live in a personal accommodation	3.62	.74	3.69	.75	3.66	Agreed
7	Promoted teachers enjoy better accommodation facilities	3.75	.54	3.41	.99	3.58	Agreed
8	I enjoy decent accommodation due to my higher rank in teaching	1.48	.92	1.59	1.08	1.54	Disagreed
9	My accommodation is based on my position as a teacher	3.32	1.03	3.45	.76	3.39	Agreed
10	Teachers of higher rank have modern accommodation facilities	3.64	.75	3.61	.64	3.63	Agreed
	<b>Aggregate <math>\bar{x}</math> and Sd</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>.79</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>.84</b>	<b>3.16</b>	

Table 2 indicates that the mean score of teachers in urban ( $\bar{x} = 3.16$ ) is slightly greater than the mean score of the teachers in rural area ( $\bar{x} = 3.15$ ). It shows that the teachers in urban areas had slightly higher social mobility on accommodation than their rural counterparts.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of social mobility of male and female teachers on the promotion.

**Table 3:** z-test analysis on the mean scores of male and female teachers on social mobility promotion

Category	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd.	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
Male teachers	189	3.51	0.92	448	1.409	1.96	Not significant
Female teachers	261	2.88	0.93				

Table 3 revealed that male teachers have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.51 and 0.92 respectively, while the female teachers have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.88 and 0.93 respectively. With a degree of freedom of 448, the calculated z-test value of 1.41 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. By implication, there is no significant difference between the mean score of social mobility of male and female teachers on the promotion.

**Hypothesis two:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of social mobility of teachers in urban and rural area based on the nature of accommodation

**Table 4: z-test analysis on the mean scores of teachers in urban and teachers in rural areas based on accommodation in social mobility**

Category	N	X	Sd.	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
Teachers in urban areas	244	3.16	0.79	448	0.13	1.96	Not significant
Teachers in rural areas	206	3.15	0.84				

Table 4 revealed that teachers in urban areas have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.16 and 0.79 respectively while the teachers in rural areas have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.15 and 0.84 respectively. With a degree of freedom of 448, the calculated z-test value of 0.13 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96. Hence, there is no significant difference between the social mobility of teachers in urban and rural areas based on the nature of accommodation

### Discussion of Findings

Discussion of findings were based on summary of the findings.

#### Social Mobility of Male and Female Teachers, Based on Promotion

The findings indicate that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of social mobility of male and female teachers, based on promotion. This finding also implies that, male and female teachers are always given equal consideration, in terms of promotion in the teaching profession. This finding is in agreement with that Ogunleke (2009) who found in his study that, there is no significant influence of gender on social mobility of teachers. However, this finding is not in agreement with the ear her finding of Lukeman (2009) who found in his study that, there is significant influence of gender on social mobility of primary school teachers. The deviation in this finding is due to the sample size used and the area of study he present study used a sample of 880 secondary school teachers, while that of Lukeman (2009) used a sample of 423 primary school teachers.

#### Social Mobility of Teachers in Urban and Rural Areas on the Nature of Accommodation

The finding shows that, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of social mobility of teachers in urban and rural areas, based on the nature of accommodation. This finding means that teachers at various levels in secondary schools have access to any type of accommodation they desire, considering its availability and ability to bear the cost and this does not any way affect their down or upward social movement in the teaching profession. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Ojo (2014) who found that, there is no significant influence of school location on social mobility of secondary school teachers and that school location alone cannot influence social mobility of teachers either positively or negatively. On the other hand, this finding is not in agreement with that of Mark (2006) who found a significant influence of school location on the school mobility of teachers. The difference in these two findings is due to the sample size of used. While the present study used a sample size 880 secondary school teachers, the study of Mark (2006) used a sample size of 250 primary school teacher.



## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that social mobility of teachers is not based on gender, school location, and subject area of specialization, school area and marital status. Also, the forgoing demographic variables do not determine promotion, respect, prestige, nature of accommodation, and authority in the teaching profession.

## Recommendations

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

- (1) Government should always ensure that teachers' social mobility is determined by the rules and regulations guiding the teaching profession.
- (2) Government should always ensure that teachers are provided with adequate welfare services such as accommodation and security as these will help to enhance their living condition and accelerate their performance positively.

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