

# Relationship Between Teachers' Attrition, Transfers, and Students' Mobility from Public to Private Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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**Abstract** – This study sought to determine the relationship between teachers' attrition and students' mobility from the public to private-owned secondary academies in Bayelsa State with a view to determining the rate, reasons, and influence of students' mobility to non-state secondary academies. Four research questions were posed and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the investigation. Using Cochran's Alpha formula for small sample size determination, three hundred fifty (350) teachers were sampled from a population of 3,744. Twenty-four out of 91 private secondary schools were sampled for 424 students who left public schools. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain data for the study along with data on teachers' attrition collected from the secondary school management board of Bayelsa State. The instrument for the investigation was validated and a reliability value of 0.77 was found using Cronbach's Alpha statistic tool. Findings show that a remarkable number of teachers leave the system annually, and analyses with Pearson's Product-Moment Coefficient at 0.05 confidence level indicate that teachers' attrition is not remarkably linked to students' mobility; instead the need to pass external examinations is. The study recommends, annual recruitment of different subject teachers based on needs and strict compliance with examination ethics and practices.

**Keywords** – Teacher Attrition, Teacher Transfer, Student Mobility, Private Secondary School, Public Secondary School.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers have gained recognition for the transmission of knowledge and instructional activities, and they occupy an unbeatable place in the transmission of socio-cultural values, among others (Lei, Cui, and Chiu, 2018). However, teachers continuously quit teaching for various reasons, whether the move follows compulsory retirement, change of job, resignation caused by medical reasons, and others (Goldhaber and Theobald, 2022). The teachers' attrition poses major staffing challenges for state legislators, education managers, and school administrators. Teachers' attrition remains a fundamental issue confronting education managers and administrators because of the wide ratio it creates between the learner and the teacher that has remained intractable. Teachers continuously quit teaching for various reasons, regardless of whether the move is from a public or private secondary school. The teachers' resignations pose major staffing challenges for state legislators, education managers, and school administrators. Teachers' inadequacy has ever been reported to be a problem in the teaching field (Aeschlimann, Herzog, and Sander, 2019).

There are mixed reports on the concept of employee attrition and employee turnover (Risannen, 2017). While some researchers regard the two concepts as the same and apply them interchangeably (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Harmond, 2017), others recognise a distinction. The study (Kaur and Vijay, 2016) averred that "attrition stands for a gradual reduction in the workforce without sacking, exemplified as in when workers resign or retire

and are not replaced. Attrition is defined by the business dictionary online as “the unpredictable and uncontrollable but normal reduction in the workforce for resignation, retirement, sickness, or death.” It is a gradual but deliberate reduction in staff numbers that occurs as employees retire or resign and are not replaced. Employee attrition represents the reduction of staff for voluntary or involuntary reasons. These may be through formal means like retirement, resignation, termination of the contract or when an organisation declares a position redundant. Attrition describes a situation wherein a teacher is transferred within the state public school system and the teacher is not replaced (referred to as “attrition”), as opposed to those who transfer to another location within the state and are replaced (referred to as “transfer”).

Attrition is still one way for an organisation to reduce labour costs. To this effect, the organisation awaits its employees to leave on retirement and freezes hiring. Waiting for attrition naturally is usually better for an organisation’s morale. It may also negatively influence the employees that remain if they transfer the duties of the eliminated positions to them with no pay increase. It can also limit promotions within the organisation if they cut these jobs, which can cause further attrition and transfer (Kaur and Vijay, 2016). A study in Nigeria by Ajayi and Olatunji (2019) showed that dissatisfaction with scant salaries was a major quit factor among Nigeria’s teachers. Next to job dissatisfaction were personal health issues. That aside, work and family life conflicts and the attendant desire to quit teaching for better-paying jobs were prominent among the issues that triggered the intention of Nigerian secondary school teachers to resign their jobs voluntarily.

However, it has been reported that most secondary school principals face the challenge of students moving from public to private secondary schools. These students endure their schools from JS1 to JS3 and SS1 to SS3 and move to private secondary schools to sit the certification examinations (Onyedinefu, 2019; Okoye, and Onwuzuruoha, 2020). This seasonal drift of students, also known as students’ mobility, migration, transience, or churn, may be initiated by a conglomeration of factors ranging from the inadequacy of teachers for subjects offered, across state schools poses staffing challenges, to personal factors (Ofoyeju, 2022).

Student mobility, also called “churn” or “transience,” may include any time a student moves from a learning facility for reasons other than promotion to another grade, but in general, it means a student changing schools during a school year. This movement could be voluntary, as in the case of a student changing schools to participate in a new programme; or involuntary, as in being expelled or fleeing from bullying. Student mobility is often connected to residential mobility, as is the case when a family becomes homeless or moves due to changes in a parent’s job (Spark, 2016). It includes moves that follow attention to academic attributes and programmes by the type of school or target discipline, wherein learners are typically attracted to top-ranked schools because these schools suit the students’ superior academic abilities and they are willing to pay a premium for top-quality schools. However, it has been observed that most students in their final year move to private secondary schools where examination conduct and ethics are compromised. Some such students in junior secondary school return to the public schools they refused to enrol in after taking the examinations, while those in public school go to private secondary schools to take the final examinations and come to their public schools to take classes (Ofoyeju, 2022).

There has been a steady decline in the number of public secondary school teachers over the years in Bayelsa State. The condition is worsened by a long period of no employment and compulsory retirement as a result of the compulsory retirement age limit, death, and voluntary resignation, among others. The aforementioned has

resulted in inadequate teachers in different subject areas, thereby creating an uneven distribution of teachers in state secondary academies. Furthermore, there is a reported increase in sectional students' mobility to private secondary schools with less qualified and less paid teachers in schools with poorer quality facilities. The issue addressed in this study therefore is to assess whether students' mobility to private secondary schools is as a result of teachers' attrition. To achieve these purpose three questions were asked and one hypothesis was proposed:

- What is the rate of teachers' attrition in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State?
- What is the rate of students' mobility to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State?
- What are the reasons for students' mobility to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State?

*Hypothesis:*

There is no significant relationship between teachers' attrition and students' mobility to private secondary schools in Bayelsa.

### 1.1. *Theoretical Framework*

This study is based on the Reasoned Action theory propounded by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). The theory proposes that individuals pass through a causal chain of using their intention knowledge, attitudes, intentions, and beliefs to make a particular decision and to take an action. It seeks to explain the link between attitudes and behaviours within the framework of human activity. The theory predicts individual future behaviours based on their previous attitudes and behavioural intentions. Reasoned Action theory posits that an individual's resolveses to undertake a specific behaviour (like teaching) is a function of the attendant benefits hoped for by performing the behaviour (teaching). Since an individual's resolution to undertake a specific behaviour is based on the attendant benefits hoped for, if the job fails to offer the teacher's needs in the form of poor and irregular pay, delayed promotions as opposed to expected regular promotions, the teacher may resign from the job if there is an alternative. This is the point of teachers' attrition.

Similarly, it is the wish of workers to serve and live in a place that provides them with their needs with respect to the quality of environment defined by social amenities, infrastructure, and the standard of education present and desired for their children and wards. If the aforementioned is available, the teacher will definitely stay in that place and school; if not, the teacher will seek a transfer elsewhere. This is the point of teacher transfer.

In addition, parents desire to keep their children and wards in a school with adequate teachers for the subjects offered. While this condition is met, the marginal propensity for parents to keep their children and wards in that school heightens. However, with changes in the aforementioned position, the propensity to withdraw children and wards takes precedence. Under this condition, parents would definitely contemplate withdrawing their children and wards. This is the point of students' mobility.

## **II. METHOD**

The design of the research was descriptive survey and the choice was made because it gave the current status of the level of teachers' attrition, transfers, and students' current data on mobility from public to private

secondary schools. The population of the study consists of 3,744 public secondary school teachers and 424 private secondary schools for students who left public for private secondary schools in Bayelsa State. Using Cochran’s formula, a sample size of 350 was determined and randomly selected from the population of public secondary school teachers, while all the 424 private secondary schools for students who left public for private secondary schools participated in the study. A structured questionnaire was used in eliciting information from the participants. The questionnaires were called ‘Teachers’ Attrition Questionnaire (TAQ)’ and the ‘Students’ Mobility Questionnaire (SMQ)’. The instruments were validated and their reliability determined using Cronbach’s alpha statistic tool. A Cronbach’s alpha reading of 0.73 for the teachers’ questionnaire and 0.77 for the students’ questionnaire. The readings were all above the 0.70 benchmark; therefore, the instruments were considered reliable.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the first research question: What is the rate of teachers’ attrition in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State?, the simple percentage was used to determine the rate of teachers’ attrition. The result is represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Rate of teachers’ attrition in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

State	Year	Total Number of Teachers	Teachers’ Attrition (N)	Rate of Attrition (%)
Bayelsa	2015	5185	999	19.27%
	2016	3806	1379	36.23%
	2017	3746	60	1.60%
	2018	3543	203	5.42%
	2019	3260	283	8.68%
	Mean	3908	584	14.24%

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Table 1 shows the rate of teachers’ attrition between 2015 and 2019 for the states studied. In Bayelsa State, the rate of attrition in 2015 was 19.23%. The attrition rate increased to 36.23% in 2016; fell to 1.6% in 2017; and further increased in 2018 to 5.42% and 8.68% in 2019. The mean rate of attrition across the years of study in Bayelsa State is 14.24%. The graph is presented in Figure 1.

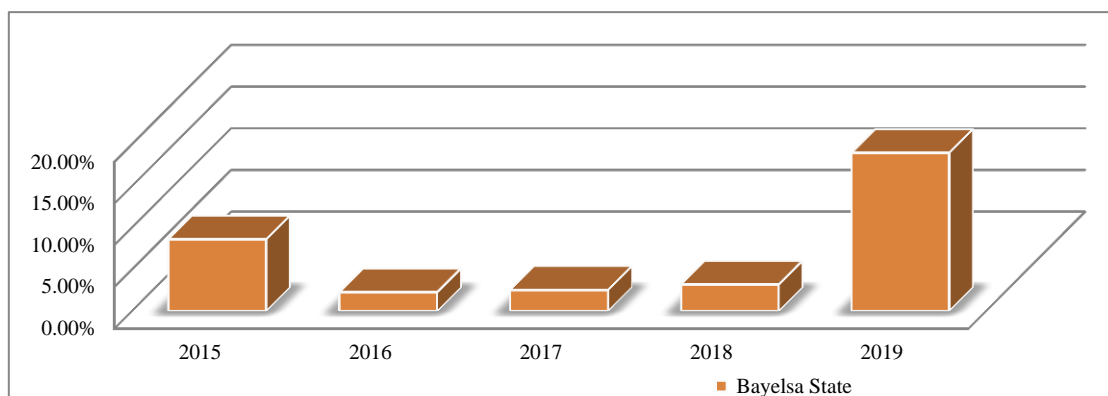


Fig. 1. Rate of Teachers’ Attrition in Public Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

The first research question sought to find out teachers’ attrition rates in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State for 5 years between 2015 and 2019. The findings showed an average attrition rate of 14.24% was recorded for the period of the study. The study further revealed that Bayelsa State recorded a higher attrition rate in 2019, at 8.68% and the highest record of 19.27% in 2015. This finding agrees with that of Meyer, Espel, & Weston-Sementelli, 2019), who reported 12% attrition in state secondary academies in four states of America. Here in Nigeria (Adamu, 2010) reported that the rate of teachers’ attrition varied from one geographical and political divide to another. In the South-South political division, teachers’ attrition is milder with about 10-15% compared to the northern part with between 15 and 20% teacher attrition rate (Adamu, 2010). The variations between the rates obtained in the present study and those reported by Adamu (2010) are probably due to the time or period of study. While the finding of Adamu was reported in 2010, the present study is from 2015 to 2019. In addition, It is both crucial and critical to note that between the years 2010 and 2019; the economy of Nigeria has been unstable with growing inflation rates; unstable crude oil prices, currency devaluation, fluctuating value of currency, surging cost of living, dwindling standard of living, soaring unemployment rate, morbid corruption and colossal malfeasances of collective wealth have negatively affected the economy in spite of a six percent rate of growth for the six-year period from 2004 to 2010 (Jaiyeola & Bayat, 2020). The outcome is dissatisfied teachers with no alternative than to remain in teaching, in support of the findings of the New Zealand Post Primary Teacher Association (NZPPTA, 2016) that reported alternative salaries in jobs outside teaching is part of the problem of teachers’ attrition.

To answer this research question: **What is the rate of students’ mobility from public to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State?**, a descriptive statistic was conducted using a frequency count and percentage. The information used to answer this research question was based on the students’ responses and data from the post-primary schools board. This data is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Rate of Teachers’ Attrition in Public Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

State	Year	Total Number of Students	Number of Students that Moved to Private Schools (N)	Rate of Students’ Mobility (%)
Bayelsa	2015	52,727	71	0.13
	2016	53,510	97	0.18
	2017	52,190	122	0.23
	2018	50,871	109	0.21
	2019	47,117	135	0.29
	Mean			107

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Table 2 shows that in Bayelsa State, 71 (0.13%) of students moved from public to private schools in the year 2015; 97 (0.18%) moved in 2016, 122 (0.23%) moved in 2017, 109 (0.21%) moved in 2018 and 135 (0.29%) moved in 2019. A mean of 107 (0.21%) of students in the schools studied moved to private schools, giving a mobility rate of 0.21% in Bayelsa State between 2015 and 2019.

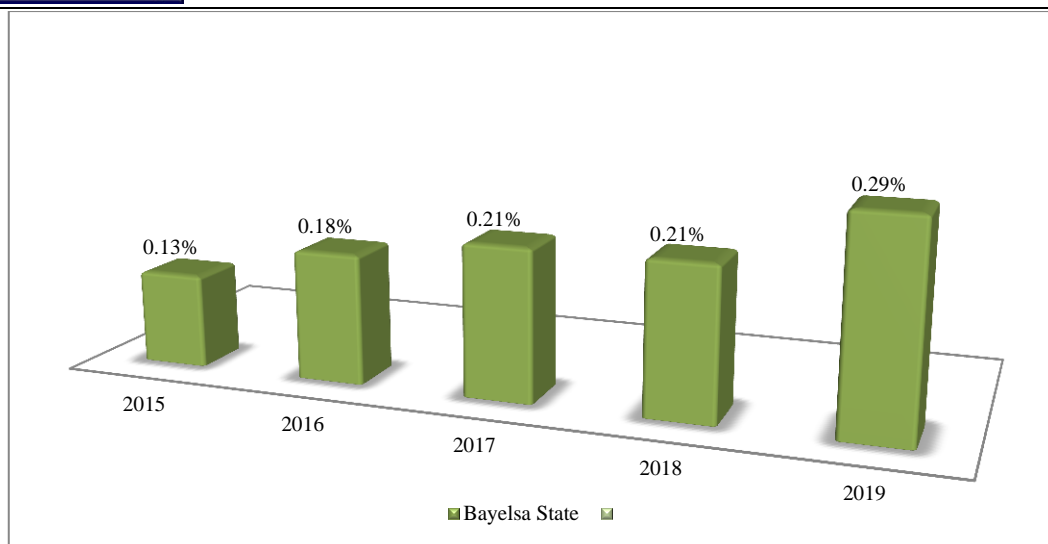


Fig. 2. Rates of students' mobility from public to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

The second research question sought to determine the rates of students' mobility from public to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State in the years studied. The findings revealed a low rate of students' mobility to private secondary schools. An average student mobility rate of 11.16% was found for Bayelsa State students. This confirms that students' mobility is a constant occurrence among secondary school students. The finding of this study is consistent with the report (Welsh, Duque & Mceachin, 2016), that students' mobility is widespread and unheralded and that other reasons for school mobility are often caused by families and may come from the change of residences attendant to sudden and impromptu occurrences such as job changes or relocation to better homes, eviction or complicated family conflicts with cataclysmic outcomes such as a divorce. Obviously, most public secondary schools, especially in urban areas, are better than private ones when judged by school plant; quality of teachers, available amenities, and different equipment, to mention only a few. Public secondary schools pay better salaries than private ones. In spite of this, there has been a continuous drift of students out of public secondary schools and into private ones. The obvious reason is that some moving students do so for better results obtained by examination malpractices, based on the fear of failing because they may not be aided to pass their examinations by fraudulent means (Jerinde, 2007; Agwu, Orjiakor, Odii, Onalu, Nzeadibe, & Okoye, 2020 and Okoye & Onwuzuruoha).

The third research question sought to determine the reasons for students' mobility to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State? The responses from student participants are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Reasons for student's mobility from public to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

No.		Bayelsa	
		Mean	Std. Dev.
1	High rate of teacher transfers.	3.31*	0.56
2	No teachers for most of my subjects.	3.34*	0.53
3	No teachers for more than four subjects that I offer.	3.44*	0.55
4	No replacement for transferred teachers.	3.39*	0.49
5	Delay in replacing transferred teachers	3.36*	0.51

No.		Bayelsa	
		Mean	Std. Dev.
6	Unsuitable replacement of transferred teachers.	3.42*	0.49
7	My school is rural with fewer teachers hence I moved.	3.42*	0.50
13	Lesson flows were frequently disrupted by transfers	3.41*	0.51
14	The lessons I received were not qualitative, hence I moved.	2.81*	0.83
16	If I was to change schools, I would consider moving to a Private Secondary school.	3.47*	0.51
17	I moved because I am in certificate class	3.48*	0.50
18	I was afraid I cannot pass my external examinations in my school hence I moved.	3.43*	0.53
19	I fear my teachers will not assist me to pass my examinations, hence I moved.	3.45*	0.53

Source: Field survey 2019.

A benchmark of 2.50 was used to accept or reject as significant, reasons students moved from public to private schools. Reasons with a mean score above 2.50 are accepted reasons for movement. Based on the students' view in Bayelsa State, it was accepted that the high rate of teacher transfer. 3.31); no teachers for most of my subjects (3.34); no teachers for more than four subjects (3.44); no replacement for a transferred teacher (3.39); delay in replacing transferred teachers (3.36); inappropriate replacement of transferred teachers (3.42); my school is rural with fewer teachers; thus I moved (3.42); and transfer lesson flows were frequently disrupted (3.41). I moved because I was afraid I wouldn't pass my external exams at my school, so I moved (3.45), and I was afraid my teachers wouldn't help me pass my exams, so I moved (3.43). These were the reasons for students' mobility from public to private secondary schools.

The third research question sought to determine the reasons for students' mobility to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The findings shows that a high rate of students' mobility followed absence of tutors for many subjects, the untimely replacement of the transferred teacher; and the unsuitable replacement of transferred teachers were some of the reasons students moved from public to private schools. Others were the rural location of the school with fewer teachers, frequently disrupted lesson flow by teacher transfers, and low-quality lessons that caused a dislike of public schools and a move to private secondary schools. However, most students' mobility from public to private secondary schools was accounted for by students' in certificate classes because the students knew they would not be assisted to pass the examinations, and the worry of failing the examinations in their previous schools accounted for most students' mobility from public to private secondary schools.

Moving schools with insufficient tutors is reasonable from a cognitive standpoint; however, moving to a worse school with fewer qualified tutors and insufficient material resources in certificate classes is questionable. Students' mobility from better state schools to poor, ill-equipped private secondary schools with poorly paid teachers negates the findings of (Chowa, Masa, Ramos & Ansong, 2015; Wunti, Hafsat & Igbaji, 2017; and Ahmodu, Lateef & Sheu, 2018) that there is a nexus between a school's amenities and learners' academic output.

In keeping with the outcomes of this investigation (Jerinde, 2007 ; Jekayinfa, Omosewo, Yusuf and Ajidagba,

2011; Onyedinefu, 2019; and Okoye & Onwuzuruoha, 2020), reported the manifestation of syndicates with innovations in fraudulent and criminal techniques for examination malpractices across the country called Examination Miracle Centre and that this is often the reason some candidates move schools to take the JSSCE and SSCE outside the colleges they attend, especially if they move schools. In place of their schools, they prefer to enrol in private schools charging unreasonably high fees for guaranteed success, called “miracle centers” in the local parlance. This is in order to engage in examination malpractice.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ attrition and Students’ mobility from public to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test hypothesis 1.

Table 4. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of the relationship between teachers’ attrition and students’ mobility from public to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

State	R	r <sup>2</sup>	P
Bayelsa	-0.495	0.245	0.397

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

Table 4 shows that there was a negative negligible connection between teachers’ attrition and students’ mobility from public to private secondary schools ( $r = -0.495$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) in Bayelsa State. The fourth research question and hypothesis 1 was posed to determine the relationship between teachers’ attrition and students’ mobility from public to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The findings showed that there was a negative but non-significant relationship between teachers’ attrition and students’ mobility from public to private secondary schools in Bayelsa state. This report is probably as a result of the fact that fewer students moved schools for lack of teachers for some subjects offered in their schools, while the bulk of students’ mobility to the private secondary schools from government schools was for guaranteed success through examination malpractices (Jerinde, 2007 and Okoye & Onwuzuruoha, 2020).

#### **IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the rate of teachers’ attrition varied with time and year, and it has been increasing over the years. Teachers’ quits had a non-outstanding negative influence on students’ mobility from public to private secondary schools in Bayelsa State. In addition, the rate of students’ mobility to private secondary schools was low but showed a propensity for continuous rise. Based on the findings, it is recommended that:

1. Teachers’ remuneration and conditions of service should be improved upon by federal and state governments not only to attract teachers to the profession but also to retain and encourage and motivate teachers to put their best into the profession. In this regard, the 2020 Teachers’ Day proposed new teachers’ salary structure and elongated service time pledged by President Muhammadu Buhari (retired) should be implemented speedily. This should enhance teachers’ welfare and result in increased productivity that will ultimately reduce attrition.
2. Teachers’ employment by the Bayelsa State government should not be politicised.
3. The Bayelsa state government should employ teachers annually with regard to subject area vacancies and s-



-should discontinue the practice of waiting for a lengthy period before employing.

4. The Bayelsa State government should take private secondary schools' examination supervision and invigilation very seriously to discourage students' mobility to private secondary schools.

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