
Relationship Between Teachers’ Attrition, Transfers, and Students’ Mobility from Public to Private Secondary Schools in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract – This study examined the relationship between teachers’ attrition and students’ mobility from the public to privately owned secondary academies in Delta State between 2015 and 2019 with a view to understanding how teacher attrition influences students’ mobility to non-state secondary academies. Three research questions were posed and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. The population of the study consists of 11887 public secondary school teachers and 939 private secondary schools. Using the Cochran’s formula for sample size determination, 373 teachers, 91 private secondary schools, and 782 students who moved schools were sampled randomly for the study. The instrument for the investigation was validated and a reliability value of 0.73 for teachers and 0.77 was found for students. Data shows that a remarkable number of students leave the system annually, and analyses with Pearson’s product-moment Coefficient at 0.05 confidence level indicate that teachers’ transfer is not remarkably linked to students’ mobility; instead the need to pass examinations is. The study recommends: annual recruitment of teachers based on needs, equitable distribution of teachers in ways that ensure no school is disadvantaged; and very tight examination invigilation and supervision to discourage mobility from public secondary schools.

Keywords – Teachers Attrition and Students’ Mobility.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ordinarily, a depreciation of the teachers’ work force over the years is expected because of attrition, which may be caused by years of compulsory service, retirement age, or other reasons. Employers of teachers have to periodically employ people to occupy the positions vacated by teachers who exit the profession or a school through transfers to avoid creating a vacuum. The Delta State government did not employ a large number of teachers for many years, except for skeletal employment that did not adequately address the state’s need for teachers.

There are mixed reports on the concept of employee attrition and employee turnover (Rissanen, 2017). While some researchers consider the two concepts to be interchangeable, others recognize a distinction. 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. It is a gradual but deliberate reduction in staff numbers that occurs as employees are lost to retirement, resignation, and so on and are not replaced. Employee attrition represents the reduction of staff for voluntary or involuntary reasons. Teachers’ attrition describes the number of teachers in a specific education system and or a sub-system leaving teaching in a year expressed over a hundred (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2019). It is the unavoidable and incalculable but normal dwindling of the workforce due to resignations, retirement, sickness, or death. The quit rate is teachers’ exit rate expressed as a percentage of the sum of teachers in the system by year (Schreiner, 2017).

Vignesh and Sarojini (2018) studies revealed teachers' attrition can cripple a school. This happens if attrition is not followed by the immediate employment and engagement of fresh hands. Attrition is one of the ways experienced teachers with better qualifications and experience constantly leave the system. Teachers are critically significant people in the lives of learners, especially students in junior secondary schools.

Teachers' transfer, also referred to as "teacher migration," has been identified as a prominent factor of teacher turnover (Ibwongo and Komakech, 2021). It is the movement of a teacher to another school in the same capacity within the jurisdiction of the secondary school management boards and is a regular feature of the public secondary school system. It is a movement within the geographical coverage of the management of the teacher workforce. The transfers constitute the primary reason for teacher transitions between schools within the state. A transfer is the decision by a competent authority to assign a teacher to a school other than the one they are currently working at.

As good as teacher transfers may be, if they are not properly carried out, they may present significant problems affecting the pedagogy profession's academic performance and student outcomes (Noor, Ishaque, Memon & Lodhi, 2012; Komakech, 2017).

As a result of teacher posting patterns and transfers, the impact of teacher shortages tends to exert a more devastating effect in schools. Remote rural schools and schools serving the poor face greater teacher shortages, longer replacement wait times, and a higher proportion of inexperienced teachers (Gray and Tie, 2015). Incessant teacher transfers take a toll on the most deprived and vulnerable students. Teachers' attrition and transfer result in a loss of experienced teachers and a selective loss of those with higher academic qualifications and those with expertise in mathematics and the sciences. Schools without adequate facilities suffer from a dearth of requisite teachers. Fitchett, McCarthy, Lambert, & Boyle (2018) reported that teachers are inadequate and parents are devoting tremendous attention to the quality of schools their children attend.

The learners (students) represent the primary consumers of education as a good, which until now was delivered by the government with intervention from the missionaries in a systematic evangelism baited with education (Polcyn, 2015). Furthermore, in larger communities with few public schools, private schooling thrives (Martinez-Vazquez & Seaman, 1985; and Hamilton & Macauley, 1991). They averred that in communities of various populations having comparatively few schools, there is a high marginal propensity for the emergence of more private schools. Evidence indicates that private enrolments increase when public schools fail to meet the needs of their students. Consequently, greater numbers of investors' schools provide more exit chances for requesters.

The surge of different private secondary schools in the Nigerian education space over the years has challenged the government (Oke and Ihenetu, 2018). This has created a healthy and welcome rivalry between the government and private investors. Students now have a wider choice. Parents who have lost confidence in the state secondary academies comprise the bulk of private secondary school clientele (Onyedinefu, 2019). In some public secondary schools, however, teachers appear insufficient for all the subjects offered. A learner is helpless without a teacher. As parents' awareness has increased over the years, the marginal propensity to move their children and wards to private secondary schools is on the increase.

In recent times, there have been indications that secondary schools have experienced and are continuing to ex-

-perience an increase in students' inter-school mobility. A practice wherein students change from one school to another, other than when they are promoted from one school level/grade to another and when students have to move from primary school to junior secondary school (JSS) or junior secondary school (JSS) to senior secondary school (SSS). It includes the drawing of students to important schools (Alves and King, 2022).

The concept of moving schools is quite different from what is referred to as inter-school transfer. In the latter, the “transferring student” is accepted when the receiving school is satisfied not only with the academic performance of the student who is moving but also gets a good transfer certificate from the principal of the student's previous school. But in the latter, which is inter-school movement, such transfers from one school to another do not require these essential transfer credentials. Mobile students can change between terms and within school years, such as during the term or during the school year (Rumberger, 2015).

Each academic year, most principals experience the challenge of student loss to private secondary schools (Onyedinefu, 2019; Okoye and Onwuzuruoha, 2020). There is a perception that there is a high rate of student mobility in the studied state. Students' mobility, also known as transience or churn, includes any change of school other than grade promotion, such as from the junior secondary school to the senior secondary school (Rumberger, 2003). This often comes with a price.

Student mobility is defined as any time a student leaves a learning facility for reasons other than promotion to the next grade level (Rumberger, 2003). However, it generally 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 (Rumberger, 2003; Spark, 2016). It includes moves that consider the academic attributes of schools and programmes by the type of school or target discipline, in which 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.

Ofoyeju (2022) reported that some students in their final year in junior secondary schools move to private secondary schools where examination conduct and ethics are compromised. Some such students return to the public schools they refused to enrol in after taking the examinations, while those in public schools go to private secondary schools to enrol in the final examinations. Often, they return to their public schools to take classes.

The surge of different private schools in the Nigerian education space over the years has challenged the government. This has established a healthy and welcome competition between the government and private investors. Students now have a wider choice. Parents who have lost confidence in the state secondary academies comprise the bulk of private secondary school clientele. In some public secondary schools, however, teachers appear insufficient for all the subjects offered. Parents' awareness has increased over the years, and, the marginal propensity to move their children and wards to private secondary schools is on the increase.

Students' mobility to private secondary schools from public secondary schools is now commonplace. This suggests a drop in the level of confidence imposed on public secondary schools. School principals now contend with students moving schools annually and doing all they can to keep their students. If the public secondary schools had met the needs of their students, they may not have considered moving. The study seeks to find out

how students' mobility to private secondary schools is a function of teachers' attrition. The issue addressed in this study is, "What is how does teacher attrition and transfer affect student mobility to private secondary schools in secondary schools?".

II. METHOD

2.1. *The Study Instrument*

A structured four-point Likert Rensis scale instrument was administered to teachers and students. The instrument administered to teachers was a 70-item instrument with 4 sections. Section 'A' sought teachers' demography with 8 items, while Section B had 18 items on the teachers' report on attrition factors and 35 items on the teachers' report on reasons for transfer, while 9 items probed personal reasons for teachers' transfers. The instrument administered to students had 26 items. Seven probed demographic characteristics while 19 sought students' mobility factors. Each item was posed to yield four different responses; strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The instrument was validated and its reliability determined with the Cronbach Alpha statistic tool, the reliability value of the teachers' survey instrument was 0,73 and that of students was 0,77.

2.2. *The Study Purpose*

The general purpose of the study is to determine how teachers' attrition and transfer influence students' mobility from public to private secondary schools in Delta state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to,

1. Find the rate of teachers' attrition in public secondary schools in Delta State.
2. Determine the rate of teachers' transfers in public secondary schools in Delta State.
3. Ascertain the reasons for students' mobility to private secondary schools in Delta.
4. Establish the relationship between teachers' attrition and students' mobility to private secondary schools in Delta State.
5. Establish a relationship between teachers' transfers and students' mobility to private secondary schools in Delta State.

2.3. *Population of the Study and Sampling of Participants*

The population of the study consists of 11887 public secondary school teachers and 1402 of which 939 are private secondary schools and 463 are public. Using the Cochran's formula for sample size determination, 373 teachers, 91 private secondary schools, and 782 students who moved schools were sampled randomly for the study.

2.4. *The Study Questions*

Five questions were posed to guide the study.

1. What is the rate of teachers' attrition in public secondary schools in Delta State?
2. What is the rate of teachers' transfers in public secondary schools in Delta State?
3. What are the reasons for students' mobility to private secondary schools in Delta State?
4. What is the relationship between teachers' attrition and students' mobility from public to private secondary

schools in Delta State?

5. What is the relationship between teachers' transfers and students' mobility from public to private secondary schools in Delta State?

2.4. Tables and Figures

Table 1. Rate of Teachers' Attrition in Public Secondary Schools in Delta State, Nigeria.

State	Year	Total Number of Teachers	Teachers' Attrition (N)	Rate of Attrition (%)
Delta	2015	9561	398	4.16%
	2016	9163	912	9.95%
	2017	12228	396	3.24%
	2018	11832	708	5.98%
	2019	12007	531	4.42%
	Total attrition	54791	2945	27.75%
	Mean	10958	598	5.55%

Source: Field survey 2019.

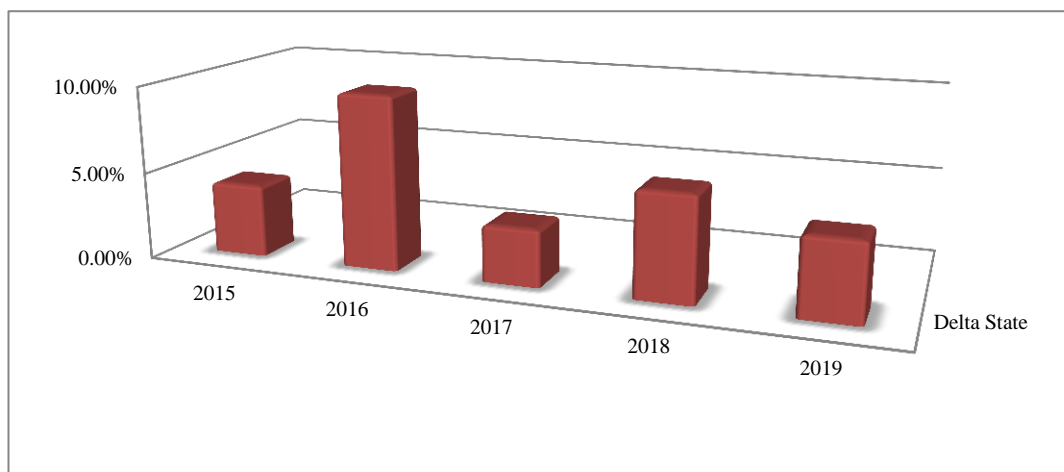


Fig. 1. Rate of Teachers' Attrition in Public Secondary Schools in Delta State Nigeria.

Table 2. Rate of Teachers' Transfer in Delta State.

State	Year	Total Number of Teachers	Teachers Transfer (N)	Rate of Transfer (%)
Delta	2015	9561	823	8.61%
	2016	9163	249	2.72%
	2017	12228	309	2.53%
	2018	11832	463	3.91%
	2019	12007	2280	18.99%
	Mean			825

Source: Field survey 2019.

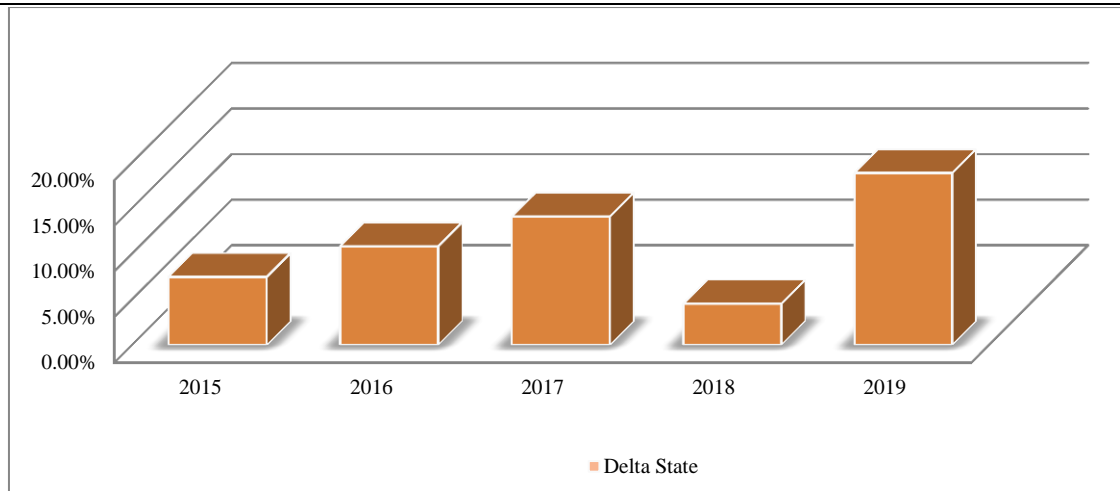


Fig. 2. Rates of Teachers' transfer in Public Secondary Schools in Delta State.

Table 3. Reasons for Student's Mobility from Public to Private Secondary Schools in Delta State.

No.		Mean	Std. Dev.
1	High rate of teacher transfers.	3.35*	0.57
2	No teachers for most of my subjects.	3.43*	0.54
3	No teachers for more than four subjects that I offer.	3.32*	0.60
4	No replacement for transferred teachers.	3.27*	0.68
5	Delay in replacing transferred teachers.	3.25*	0.63
6	Unsuitable replacement of transferred teachers.	2.89*	0.68
7	My school is rural with fewer teachers, hence I moved.	2.98*	0.78
8	Lesson flows were frequently disrupted by transfers.	3.27*	0.58
9	If I was to change schools, I would consider moving to a private secondary school.	3.23*	0.52
10	I moved because I was in a certificate class.	3.27*	0.50
11	I was afraid I would not pass my external examinations in my school, hence I moved.	3.43*	0.54
12	I was afraid my teachers would not assist me to pass my examinations. Hence, I moved.	3.42*	0.54

Source: Field survey 2019.

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

State	R	r ²	P
Delta State	-0.029	0.001	0.063

Source: Field survey 2019.

Table 5. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of the relationship between teachers' transfer and students' mobility from public to private secondary schools in Delta State.

State	R	r ²	P
Delta	0.460	0.212	0.435

Source: Field survey 2019.

III. RESULTS

Means and percentages were used to analyze the data. Table 1 shows that in 2015, the rate of teachers' attrition in Delta State was 4.16%. In 2016, the attrition rate was 9.95%. The rate dropped in 2017 to 3.24% and increased to 5.98% in 2018. It further dropped to 4.98% in 2019. The mean rate of attrition across the years of study in Delta State is 5.55%.

Table 2 shows that in 2015, Delta State recorded an 8.61% rate of transfer in 2015, 2.72% in 2016, 2.53% in 2017, 3.91% in 2018 and 18.99% in 2019. The mean transfer rate of teachers in Delta State per year is 7.26%. Between 2015 and 2019, four thousand one hundred and twenty-four (4,124) secondary academy teachers (36.31%) were transferred within the state-owned and operated secondary school system.

Table 3 shows the reasons students move to private secondary schools. A benchmark of 2.50 was used to accept or reject as significant the reasons students moved from public to private schools. Reasons with a mean score of 2.50 and above are accepted reasons for movement. Based on the students' view in Delta State, students are of the opinion that the high rate of teacher transfers (3.35); no teachers for more than four subjects that I offer (3.32); no replacement for transferred teachers (3.27); delay in replacing transferred teachers (3.25); unsuitable replacement of transferred teachers (2.89); and my school is rural with fewer teachers, hence I moved (2.98). Others are: My school is sub-urban with fewer teachers, hence I moved (3.09); lesson flows were frequently disrupted by transfers (3.27); if I was to change schools, I would consider moving to a private secondary school (3.23); I moved because I am in a certificate class (3.27); I was afraid I could not pass my external examinations in my school, hence I moved (3.43); and I feared my teachers would not assist me to pass my examinations, hence I moved (3.42) were reasons for students' mobility from public to private schools in Delta State.

Table 4 shows that in Delta State, there was a negative negligible link between teachers' attrition and students' mobility to private secondary schools in Delta State ($r = -0.029$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 5 shows that in Delta State, there was a non-relevant connection between teachers' transfer and students' mobility from public to private schools in secondary schools in Delta State ($r = 0.460$, $p > 0.05$).

IV. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study sought to find out teachers' attrition rates in Delta State public secondary schools for the 5 years between 2015 and 2019. The findings showed an average attrition rate of 5.55%. The records were higher in 2017 and 2018. This finding agrees with that of Meyer, Espel, & Weston-Sementelli (2019), who reported 12% attrition in state secondary academies in four states of America. Similarly, there was an alarming 23% in New Mexico (Learning Policy Institute, 2014). The rates reported in this present study in Nigeria are relatively lower than those in the U.S. The differences found may have been caused by disparities in the levels of societal development, which may have had a relationship with the economic status of the teachers.

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. It is both vital and necessary to note that between the years 2010 and 2019, the economy of Nigeria has been unstable with a growing inflation rate, crashing crude oil prices, currency devaluation, the falling value of money, the rising cost of living, falling standard of living, unemployment, and corruption that 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 jobs other than to remain in teaching. This is in line with the findings of the New Zealand Post Primary Teacher Association (NZPPTA, 2016), that alternative salaries in jobs outside teaching are part of the problem of teachers' attrition.

McDonald, Thorpe, & Irvine (2018) found that for many teachers, higher wages and easier work are available outside of teaching, accounting for up to 30% of the teacher quit rate. This is consistent with the finding (Mumtaz & Hasan, 2018) that lucrative job opportunities outside the school organization are a major distraction for teachers, especially the newly employed. This is the likely reason for the relatively low rate of attrition reported in this study.

The findings showed an average transfer rate of 7.26% for Delta State. The transfer rates were higher in 2015 at 8.61% and the highest in 2019 at 18.99%. The Institute for Statistics (UNESCO, 2016) reported earlier that the rate of teacher transfers was very high. This is not in agreement with the findings in the present study. The UIS added that up to 24.4 million teachers are required for the UBE programme.

Table 4 showed that the connection between teachers' attrition and students' mobility to private secondary academies was not remarkable. 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; Okoye, & Onwuzuruoha, 2020). Furthermore, inadequate public schools may be the reason for students' mobility, as found by Martinez-Vazquez & Seaman (1985) and Hamilton & Macauley (1991), who revealed that when communities of various populations have comparatively few public schools, there is a high marginal propensity for the emergence of more private schools. These studies show that when public school performance is poor, private enrollment increases. This means greater numbers of investors in schools provide more exit opportunities for requesters.

It is reasonable to consider moving schools lacking adequate tutors. However, moving to a worse school with fewer qualified tutors and inadequate material resources in certificate classes is questionable. Students' mobility from better state schools to poor, ill-equipped private secondary schools with poorly paid teachers negated 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 & Ajidagba, 2011; Onyedinefu, 2019; and Okoye & Onwuzuruoha, 2020), they reported the manifestation of syndicates with innovations in fraudulent and criminal techniques for examination malpractices across the country called Examination Miracle Centre. 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. Instead of enrolling in public schools, they prefer to enroll in private schools that charge exorbitant fees for guaranteed success, dubbed "miracle centers" in local parlance. This is in order to engage in examination malpractice to guarantee success.

Table 5 shows the relationship between teacher transfers and student mobility from public to non-state secondary schools in Delta State. The relationship was irrelevant. The r^2 value of 0.212, on the other hand, indicates that teachers' transfers influenced students' mobility from public to private secondary schools by 21.2%. In support of the findings of this study (Taniguchi, 2017), findings averred that school-related factors like insufficient academics and constant teacher transfers additionally predict students' mobility. The previous finding reflects a departure from studies that found that early-career academics are at a higher risk of transferring schools.

The findings revealed a non-significant relationship between teacher transfers and students' mobility to private secondary school facilities in Delta State, with 21.2%. This is so because students switch to private schools that run Miracle Examination Centers during SSCE and NECO registrations (Onyedinefu, 2019). This situation exerts an unfortunate impact on the education sectors of affected states (Adnot, Katz, Dee, & Wyckoff, 2017). Similarly (Mack, Johnson, Jones-Rincon, Satenawa, & Howard, 2019), they found that high transfer rates among state school tutors undermine school stability, impede educational reform, and harm student achievement.

In agreement with the findings of this study, Taniguchi (2017) averred that school-related factors like insufficient academics and constant teacher transfers additionally predict students' mobility. Adnot, et al., (2017) reported that prime transfers among teachers of state school classrooms wear away school stability, hinder academic reform, and hurt student achievement. This negates the report of Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, & Osher (2020) that good schooling permits continuity in links, consistency in practices, and predictability in routines that scale back anxiety and support engaged learning; and relative trust and respect between and among workers, students, and parents. A system wherein academics are deficient and are frequently transited cannot assure meaningful learning. Learners in this condition are prone and susceptible to moving schools. Wever, Taniguchi (2017) did not find any connection between students' mobility arising from the desire to pass examinations in private secondary schools. This may be as a result of low examination malpractice in Kenya unlike Nigeria where it is fast rising (Okoye and Onwuzuruoha, 2020).

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the rate of teachers' attrition and transfer of teachers varied with time and year, and it has been increasing over the years. Hence, it is anticipated to shoot up in the upcoming years. Teachers' quits had a non-outstanding negative influence on students' mobility from public to private secondary schools in Delta state, Nigeria. The rate of scholars' mobility from the state to non-state secondary schools varied and was not remarkably influenced by teachers' attrition and transfer rates. However, it is primarily driven by the guaranteed success promised by some private secondary school operators in the studied state.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Delta State government should employ teachers annually with regard to subject area vacancies.
2. Transfers should be done by the transfer units of the secondary school boards in such a way that no school will be disadvantaged.
3. Transferred teachers should be replaced immediately by the school management board.

4. The state government should take private secondary schools' examination supervision and invigilation very seriously. This would discourage students' mobility to private secondary schools for the purpose of passing external examinations.

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