

## **Geographical Labour Mobility Among Teachers In Zimbabwean Schools**

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**Abstract:** *This study aimed at investigating the heads' and teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing the geographical labour mobility of teachers in schools in Chegutu District, Mashonaland West Province. The study adopted the descriptive survey design since it is the best design to use in the quest for respondents' perceptions or views. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered through the use of in-depth interviews and questionnaires. Out of a possible population of 246 prospective respondents, 50 made it into the sample that was obtained through stratified random sampling. The study established that the professional migration in schools was influenced by a number of social factors which include the need for spouses to stay together, poor social amenities in some schools and lack of information in some schools on what is happening in and around the country. Geographical mobility of labour was also caused by the need to seek better education for their children, unconducive environment for further studies and the unavailability of library facilities. Expensive goods in the some areas, higher incomes in form of school based incentives, earned by teachers in some schools and the inadequate allowances were some of the economic factors that gave rise to the migration of teachers from one school to the other. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Education Officers and heads of schools should place spouses at the same school to avoid staff turnover. School Development Committees (SDCs) and School Development Associations (SDAs) should improve the conditions of living in the schools under their jurisdiction. The SDCs/SDAs must talk to community elders so that they change their attitude towards teachers. Schools should make provisions in their budgets to subscribe with media houses so that daily and weekly newspapers can be provided for so that teachers are aware of developments in the country and abroad. Policies should be put in place to allow for highly skilled teachers to remain in their schools of deployment.*

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### **1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Issues of geographical labour mobility have become perennial in the civil service in Zimbabwe as teachers and other professionals try to position themselves strategically in duty stations most appropriate to them. The situation of high staff turnover has been very much defined in the rural schools where, according to Nyagura and Reece (1980), poorly qualified staff has continued to man the schools as those highly qualified teachers preferred to teach in well developed schools. The loss of employees who have relatively high human capital value who choose to leave an organisation can cause serious loss and difficulty, especially when the turnover numbers are on the rise (Zhang and Zhang, 2006). Of late, there has been a very noticeable trend in which the majority of highly qualified professionals in different stations have migrated to other centres causing a serious brain drain in some areas especially in the wake of the divisive incentives that have tended to be paid to teachers based on the affordability of parents to pay. In some cases, some schools have had to do with only one qualified and several temporary and untrained teachers. The staff migration in schools has not spared Chegutu district as professionals continue to drift from one school to the other. A significant number of teachers have transferred into either Norton urban or Chegutu urban and rural or are on the transfer waiting list in preparation to be transferred to any school of their choice.

Due to the unprecedented drift, government has had to come up with policy alternatives in order to lure teachers into the different geographical regions of the country. During the Zimbabwean

dollar era, government introduced a rural allowance for all civil servants based in rural areas. This was meant to cushion rural based teachers against the hardships they faced in the process of executing their duties. Furthermore, the rural electrification programme was introduced and the majority of schools now have electricity. With the assistance of donor agencies such as Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the European Union (EU), teachers' accommodation has been improved drastically. During the 2010-2011 academic year, a programme fully funded by the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), provided books to all schools so much that the pupil-textbook ratio is now one to one in all schools regardless of school location.

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MOEASC) has adopted a policy that all newly qualified teachers should be deployed to rural areas where they should serve for at least a year after which they can apply to transfer to towns. Promotion preferences used to be given to those with rural experience. It, therefore, implies that if one has not worked in a rural school before, he/she is advantaged when it comes to promotion for the post of deputy head or head. Some benefits for rural teachers orchestrated by government included the BACCOSSI programme where rural based civil servants have had access to cheap basic commodities. Feeding programmes have also benefited the rural teachers and their children, as they consume food at feeding centres for free. In fact, the rural schools have been tasked to implement the programmes by non-governmental organisations such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Concern. However, despite all these attempts, the internal brain drain continues unabated hence the need to carry out this investigation to establish the real reasons for migration of skilled teachers to urban areas.

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The geographical labour mobility in schools has had grave consequences for the education system in both in urban and rural areas. The staff migration has resulted in poorly qualified staff being retained in some schools with others getting the cream of highly trained manpower. Therefore, the question that needs to be addressed is: What then are the perceived factors that have given rise to the geographical mobility of labour among teachers in schools in Zimbabwe?

## **3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following sub-problems stood as research questions:

1. What are the social factors leading to the professional migration of teachers from school to the other?
2. Which educational factors give rise to the propensity to migrate from one school to another among teachers?
3. What are the economic factors paving way for geographical labour mobility the in schools by professional teachers?
4. What remedial action can be taken to curb the professional staff drift?

## **4. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The term geographical labour mobility has been called by various terms or names. Synonymous to the concept, are terms such as brain drain, staff turnover, mobility of skilled labour and migration of skilled manpower. For the purpose of this study all these terms are taken to mean the same but a distinction is presented between international brain drain and internal (rural-urban or urban to rural) professional brain drain. Internal professional migration, according to Waugh (1990), can be either a voluntary or involuntary (forced) movement of highly skilled personnel from one location or set up to another set up for a variety of reasons some of which could be social, political or economic reasons. The definition spells out two major issues. Professional migration could be either voluntary or involuntary (forced) Waugh(1990) goes further to assert that voluntary professional migration arises from migrant's choice, wish or desire to move whereas with involuntary migration, the prospective migrant leaves due to pressure mostly external and due to the dissatisfaction with the present situation. Therefore, unlike international labour mobility, internal professional migration entails a process whereby skilled personnel such as teachers, doctors, nurses and agriculture extension (AGRITEX) officers among others desert the areas of original deployment in preference to other work stations where conditions are attractive. This, therefore, is a form of brain drain from place to another, voluntarily or involuntarily.

## **5. THEORIES OF GEOGRAPHICAL LABOUR MOBILITY**

Quite a significant number of theories have been advanced by researchers and economists on the factors that are believed to give rise to geographic mobility of labour and this study explores those models propounded by Todaro and Lewis-Fei Ranis.

### **5.1 Todaro's Migration Model**

The model assumes that professional migration is an economic phenomenon while the individual migration is seen to be quite a rationale decision. The move therefore is seen as reason driven by, the teacher, for example. The move is also seen to be a response to the urban –rural differences, for example the existence of social amenities in urban areas. The model also assumes that differences in incomes between urban and rural pave way for the professional drift.

Todaro (1992) assumes that the worker compares expected incomes for a given time horizon in the urban area with rural incomes and therefore one may migrate if urban income gains exceed rural gains. Migration is seen therefore, as a result of individual considerations that are rational in terms of benefits and costs accrued due to the move as well as the psychological benefits to come due to the move.

However, the model may not be appropriate for the drifts in the least developed countries (LDCs) as some tend to seek employment in the rural sector where the cost of living is low. It therefore, fails to account for the reason why labour in LDCs still continues to drift to rural areas. Furthermore, the LDCs employment opportunities may be hard to come by in urban set ups hence the drift is inadvertent as personnel get placed in the rural sector.

However, the model may help answer the puzzle why some teachers in rural schools due to perceived gains in terms of the newly introduced teacher incentives (Director's Circular No. 2 of 2009) in which urban teachers have tended to benefit more than their rural counterparts particularly those in poor rural communities. These have failed to pay the teacher incentives even in form of agricultural produce or in kind and the then Minister of Education, Sport and Culture, Senator David Coltart advised that the incentives would soon be scrapped to avoid the disparities that have seen rural based teachers getting nothing (Sunday Mail (Zimbabwe) 22 November, 2009). However, it should be noted that some rural schools are paying more incentives than the urban schools. Take mission schools for example.

### **5.2 The Lewis-Fei Ranis Model**

The model postulates that any economic set up in underdeveloped countries, for which Zimbabwe is one, is characterised by two sectors which are traditional agricultural subsistence sector located in rural areas where there is always a surplus of labour and the modern urban industrial sector. In this sector there is high productivity and the surplus labour in agricultural subsistence sector gets attracted to this sector and gradually moves into the urban set up. The primary focus of this theory is the existence and growth of employment due to high productivity in industry and the manner in which the labour force gets attracted to the urban sector industry.

To some degree, the model may explain why some teachers get attracted to urban schools. Due to the existence of more resources in urban schools and the subsequent significant levels of academic achievement and pass rates, some teachers would therefore want to be associated with the high performing schools in urban schools, hence they transfer to such schools.

On the contrary, the Lewis–Fei Ranis Model may fail to justify the rural-urban mobility particularly given the fact that according to Lewis urban wages should have to be at least 30% higher than the average rural income to entice teachers to migrate to the urban school. This is because the Zimbabwe Public Service pay system is universal regardless of geographical location. As long as people are in the same job and grade, they receive the same salary. A further contradiction would be the more incentives paid to rural teachers and other civil servants in form of rural allowances. One would have thought therefore, that civil servants in rural areas would remain put due to those rural incentives that government used to pay before the introduction of the multi-currency system.

To add to the models of migration, motivation theories have also been advanced in attempt to answer the issue of staff turnover in schools, or example Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs

theory. This theory places employees' needs into five progressive categories, beginning with basic physical needs and progressing up to needs for personal growth and career development. Maslow claims that both administrators and employers must meet each level of employees' needs for employees to truly commit themselves to workplace goals. Failing to meet employees' needs at any level in the hierarchy can create a lack of fulfillment in employees' professional lives, causing them to eventually try to fulfill these needs on their own, possibly by finding a new place of work or better still, a new employer who provides better opportunities.

## 6. PREVIOUS RESEARCH STUDIES

Oyowe (1996) carried out a research in which European, Japanese, Canadian, American and Nigerian scientists were interviewed with the view to establish why they moved from one geographical area to another. The following factors were enumerated from the respondents:

- legitimate political or economic reasons particularly from the African respondents where wars were on-going;
- peace and security for respondents and their families;
- job satisfaction especially for respondents who had acquired higher qualifications;
- better pay and living conditions;
- higher standard of living with easy access to modern technological gadgets;
- unconducive environment to fill professional expression and satisfaction;
- unavailability of simple services such as electricity and water supply; and
- frustration due power failures.

WWW.netnative.com/news (2009) is in support of Oyowe (1996) by remarking in a research carried out in Iran that irresistible attractions elsewhere both inside and outside Iran compel professionals to move.

Oyowe (1996) further remarks that throughout history, centres of academic excellence which after attractive have received the largest numbers of transfers. Irungu (2007) in Kenya include low wages as people look for better salaries elsewhere as well as better working terms and abuse of human rights by the Kenyan rulers as they viewed some professionals as enemies of the state. Dilworth (2007) also established that the pull factors of higher salaries and better opportunities were contributory factors to rural-urban professional migration.

Hand in hand with the assumptions of the Expected Incomes Models of rural – Urban Migration are the findings of Kaempf and Singh (1987) in their research on, “ The brain drain problem: its causes, consequences, remedies and the role of UNESCO in this regard.” They established that living conditions were a major cause for the movement they remark that the decisions of a potential migrant on staying in or living a geographical area or country is influenced by the comparison between the living and working conditions at the current domicilium and the intended destination.

www.netnative.Comnews (2007) and Kaempf and Singh (1987) established that the level of education one had paved way for professional labour mobility. They argue that persons with higher education have in most cases the ability to be integrated efficiently into a receiving society. Bearing this in mind, the highly qualified professional therefore is bound to move. Todaro (1992) is in agreement with these findings through remarking that individuals with higher levels of educational certification tend to have a higher propensity to migrate than those with lower education. This therefore would probably answer the puzzle why most rural schools are manned by lowly and poorly qualified staff. Kaempf and Singh (1987) also established that family ties constituted a minor obstacle to migration for highly qualified personnel. In contrast to unskilled persons, they can mostly be accompanied by their families to the respective receiving society. However, this contradicts the findings of Irungu (2007), however, sees it from both sides as family bonds are seen and perceived as both stimulating movement at the same time inhibiting it.

Kaempf and Singh (1987) established the following findings as paving way for internal as well as international migration:

- Income differences: According to the research, wage differentials to a very large extent influence the decision to migrate.

- Internal migration of highly skilled personnel was a result of attraction of manpower to excellent centres as they searched for good working conditions.
- Absence of sufficient infrastructure for example libraries poor professional and technical conditions as well as poor career prospects for young highly qualified personnel induces the propensity to relocate.
- General political climate influences movement: Among these factors are included issues such as political oppression, violence and excessive violation of human rights which are common causes of a poor climate.
- Like the findings of Kaempf and Singh (1987) the 1976 Pakistan investigation revealed what it called 'prestige value' as a cause for not staying in rural as well as poorly developed areas. Kaempf and Singh (1987) referred this to as the 'I can't stay here with my level of education.'

Gitari (2003) established that low salaries, wars and political and social turmoil and poor incentives ranked high on causes of migration. Like other researchers Gitari (2003) also established that migration was taking place due to wars and political, lack of information and social turmoil. Chimankire (2005) found out that growing lawlessness and politically motivated violence particularly during the run-up to general elections and poor housing, medical services, education and a viable future for children paved way for geographical mobility.

Gerber, Nel and Van Dyle (1992) established that movement whether lateral or horizontal by an individual within the internal labour market may be due to the need to reduce or eliminate personality conflict within a particular institution or department. This goes hand in hand with the findings of Oyowe (1996) which attributed the staff turnover to uncondusive environment to full professional expression. Both instances reveal poor communication among members of the organisation resulting in conflict and friction. Despite the fact that the movement occurs without any change in skills level, responsibility, status or compensation it may be to the advantage of the psychological interests of transferring individual who avoids conflict situations for the betterment of the organisation (Gerber et al 1992).

### **7. POSSIBLE REMEDIES TO CURB THE PROBLEM OF PROFESSIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION**

Dilworth (2007) suggested that government and private sector should work together to ensure adequate investment in areas which are shunned by professionals Samuelson and Nordhouse (1985) support the remedy by remarking that a hospitable environment should be developed in especially in the remote areas of absolute rurality, to make them attractive. Ravenstein (1885) also concurs by stating that economies should increase counter currents against the drift by bringing at par the conditions obtaining in all geographical areas of the country. Dilworth (2007) further advocates for the bonding of professionals so that they work in one area for a specific number of years before they can transfer to other sites. This can be done through withholding of qualifications for teachers, according to Irungu (2007). However, Oyowe (1996) feels this is a violation of basic human rights to freedom of movement.

Irungu (2007) is also of the push and pull factors through improving conditions of work and understanding teachers' plight, wherever they might be. He also recommends an increase in the rural allowances and wages for rural based personnel. The Minister of Education in Botswana on Botswana Television on 26 July 2008 recommended that government should enhance remote area allowances and provide accommodation in rural schools for teachers. It was his view that people went to remote areas to take up posts of promotion and move back to well developed urban schools. On the other hand, Waugh (2002) advocates for the rural areas to be made locations of footloose industries to attract investment since economically and professionally skilled teachers prefer to live in urban areas therefore reducing the propensity to migrate because of their vicinity to modern services.

### **8. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted the descriptive survey design in an attempt to measure attitudes, perceptions and orientations held by teachers and heads on the factors influencing the rural to urban professional mobility. The study adopted the questionnaire, interviews and document analysis as data collection instruments. The questionnaires were used to gather from the teachers whereas

interviews were held with heads of schools. Documents that had to do with teacher mobility, such as requests for transfer and transfer waiting list were scrutinised to get a picture of the intensity or lack of it of teacher mobility in the district.

## 9. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

This research was interested in only the views and perceptions of qualified teachers who were on the transfer waiting list from 2006 to 2008. According to the Chegutu District Education transfer list, 180 teachers from 66 schools had applied to be transferred from their current stations for various reasons. The 66 heads of the schools from the schools where the teachers intended to transfer made part of the population. The population frame therefore, consisted of 246 prospective respondents. Out of the population of 180 subjects, only 40 teachers were sampled as respondents. Out of the 66 heads of schools, only 10 were sampled and this accounted for 15% of the population of heads. In all, 50(20%) respondents made it into the sample out of 246(100%).

## 10. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

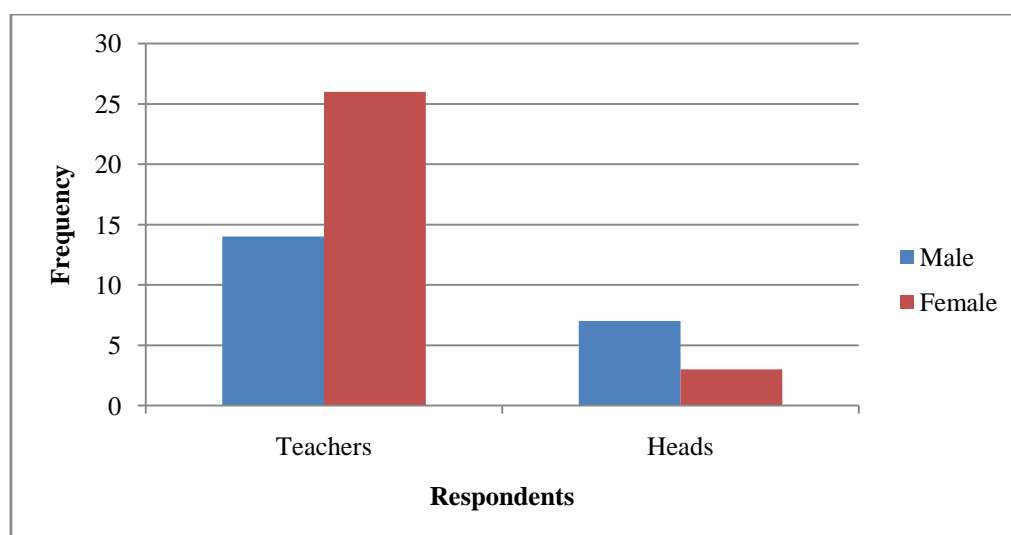


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by Sex

Figure 1 shows that there were more female teachers than males. Twenty-six (52%) were female while 14(28%) were male out of the total population of 50 respondents. It could probably be that most women wanted to transfer to schools where they could join their spouses. It could be probable that the spouses were employed and resident elsewhere hence the larger number of women in need to leave their present stations. Figure 1 also shows that there were more male heads than females. Females accounted for 3(6%) while there were 7 (14%) male heads.

Figure 2 shows that most respondents were clustered around the 20 to 40 years age groups. Six (15%) of respondents were aged between 20 to 30 years and all of them were teachers while 30(60%) were in the age range 31 to 40. Thirteen (26%) were between 41 to 50 years of age. The most represented age range was 31 – 40. These wanted to transfer probably due to their being an economically active age group and maybe found themselves with a lot of options in life. Only 1(2%) was in the above 50 years age group.

Table 1 shows that 10(20%) respondents were single while the majority 38(76%) were married. These probably wanted to join their spouses in the other stations in the district. One (2%) was divorced while another 1(2%) was widowed. Figure 3 shows that most respondents were highly qualified. The majority of the respondents, 26(52%) had Bachelor's degrees while 4(8%) had Masters' degrees. This hints probably why they wanted to migrate to other locations mostly likely urban schools. Six (12%) had Certificates in Education while 14(28%), all of which were teachers, had diplomas.

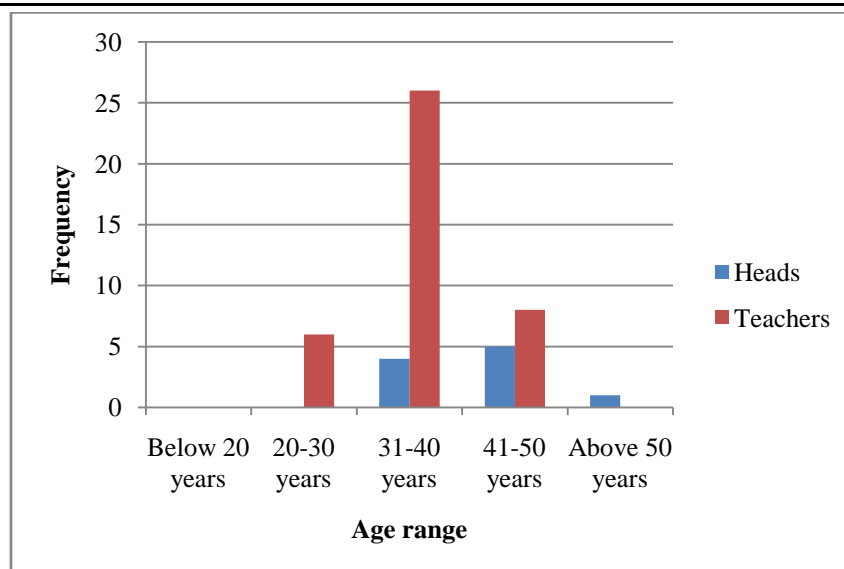


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by Age

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status. (N=40)

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	10	20
Married	38	76
Divorced	1	2
Widowed	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents 25(50%) were highly experienced heads and teachers who had served for between 11-16 years at their present stations while only 7(14%) had served for between 5-10 years. Ten (20%) had served for 17-21 years in the school. Some 6(12%) had been at their present station for over 21 years. This may be the reason they wanted to migrate to other schools.

Figure 4 shows that the majority of the teachers 27(%) wanted to transfer to urban school while 23(%) wanted to transfer to rural stations. The results go to show that not all teachers intend to migrate to the urban schools.

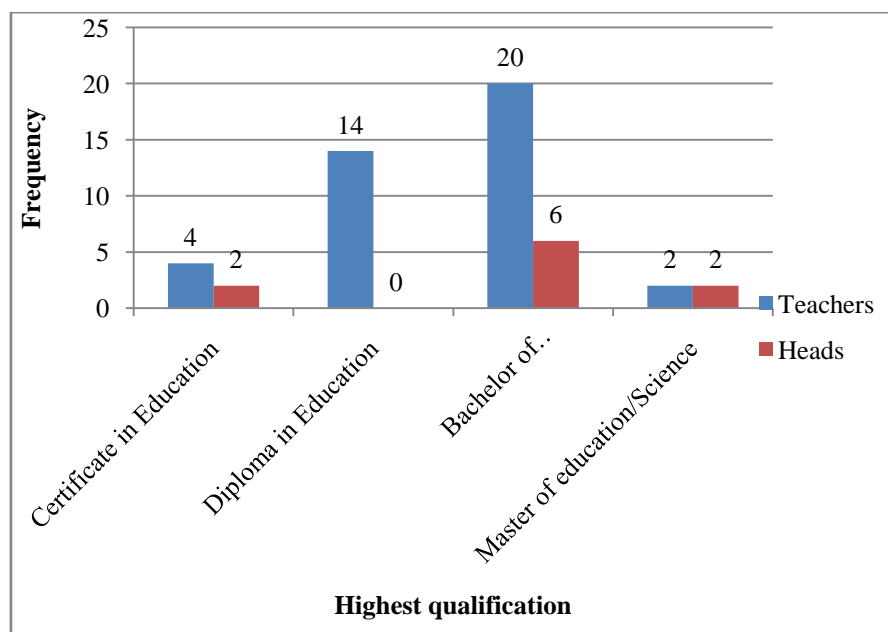


Figure 3. Distribution of Respondents by Highest Qualifications

**Table 2.** Distribution of Respondents by Number of Years at Present Station (N=40)

Range	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	2	4
5 – 10 years	7	14
11 – 16 years	25	50
17 – 21 years	10	20
Over 21 years	6	12
Total	50	100

## 11. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS FROM THE MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

This research sought to establish the perceptions of teachers on the factors influencing the geographical mobility of labour during the period 2006 to 2012. Five sub-problems stood as research questions. This part of the presentation presented the sub-problems, data obtained from the questions meant to answer each sub-problem as well as the discussion.

### 11.1 Sub-problem I was stated as follows: What are the social factors leading to the professional migration of teachers from one station to the other?

In order to help answer this sub-problem, the following questions and data on the table are shown. The data in the tables were provided by the teachers. The results from the interviews with heads are provided after analysis of each table for the verification of the teachers' responses.

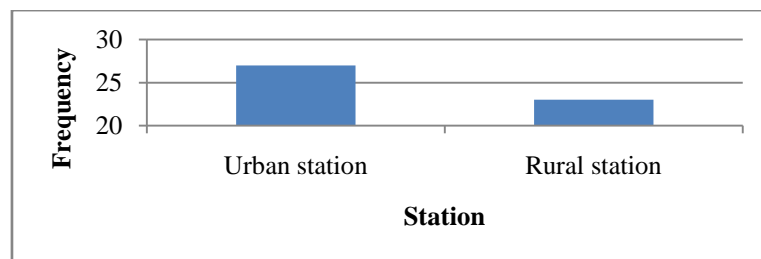
Table 3 shows that 32(80%) indicated that they wanted to stay in town with their spouses and families while only 8(20%) indicated that this was not true of them. The majority 37(93%) indicated they had no intention to move on medical grounds serve for 3(7%) who said they needed urgent medical attention. Furthermore, the table shows that all 40(100%) teachers said they wanted to enjoy the social amenities enjoyed by other teachers elsewhere. While 28(70%) teachers indicated that they were poor staff relations at their schools only 12(30%) disapproved of this. On the need to migrate due to technological disparities between the rural and urban areas 30(75%) teachers said this was true while only 10(25%) disagreed. On lack of information on what is happening in the country, 38(95%) teachers said this was a cause for their intention to move while only 2(5%) thought otherwise. On cheap commodities as a cause for the drift all 40(100%) agreed that goods were cheaper in town hence their desire to move. Finally, the table shows that 26(65%) respondents decided to seek transfer because of hostilities by the local communities.

**Table 3.** Teachers' views on social factors leading to the geographical mobility of labour (N=40)

Variable	True		False	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. You want to stay with spouse and family elsewhere.	32	80	8	20
2. You have a medical problem needing urgent attention from doctors.	3	7	37	93
3. You want to enjoy social amenities such as entertainment, health care, electricity and sanitation.	40	100	0	0
4. There are poor staff relations at the school.	28	70	12	30
5. Technological disparities between school set-ups have a positive push on your desire to migrate.	30	75	10	25
6. Lack of information on what is happening in and around the country is a cause for the professional drift.	38	95	2	5
7. You want to access cheap commodities in some areas.	40	100	0	0
8. Hostile communities are always threatening teachers with violence.	26	65	14	35

Asked to indicate other factors that they attributed to their intention to move, the majority 30(75%) indicated that thefts were rampant in their schools and some teachers had lost a sizeable quantity of household property through burglary. Some 15(38%) indicated the unfriendly attitude of the communities as motivating factor to migrate. Some few women respondents, 5(13%) indicated that their spouses were at risk of being won over by local girls hence the need to move away. The responses are supported by those provided by heads of schools in the interviews. According to majority of the heads, most teachers at their schools had applied for transfers or had not applied but had expressed the desire to move. One of the heads remarked:





**Figure 4.** *Distribution of Teachers by Area of Interest*

We do not have electricity here and there are perennial water problems. Teachers view this situation as uncomfortable. There have been continuous burglaries in the school. Two of the teachers have had their houses burgled into twice and on both occasions quiet a sizeable amount of household property has been lost.

The findings of this present study are more or less comparable to the findings elsewhere. Chimanikire (2005) established that the availability of better social services in urban centres was a factor in favour of the transfers. This present study has established the same as 40(100%) of the respondents indicated they were transferring because they wanted to enjoy the social amenities in town such as entertainment, sanitation and electricity. The findings by Oyowe (1996) also show that unavailability of simple services as electricity and water supply were a militating factor. In some instances, Oyowe (1996) asserts that frustration brewed because of power failures in some schools.

The findings of this present study agree with those of Goddall and Livingstone (1985). While the two established that the urban working class could amass modern gadgets due to the existence of electricity, 30(75%) teacher respondents thought it worthwhile to migrate due to disparities in these technological gadgets such as refrigerators, television sets, stoves and computers which their counterparts in urban school possessed. When disparities on ownership of the modern day technologies existed, some teachers in rural areas therefore felt inclined to move to urban schools with the hope of amassing the same. Oyowe (1996) further supports the findings of this present study by remarking that the higher standards of living with easy access to modern technological gadgets influence highly skilled personnel in rural areas to migrate to towns. Kaempf and Singh (1987) concur.

Lack of information on what is happening in and around the country also received an overwhelming majority 38(95%) to 2(5%) as a cause for the migration. These findings replicate those by Gitari (2003). Teachers feel isolated or marooned hence are deprived of current affairs because on the unavailability of radio sets and access to the print media. The head of one of the schools also admitted that newspapers were rarely available in their area. If the newspapers were there, they had to be those aligned to the state; otherwise the private media was banned in their area. It is therefore, according to the findings of this study and of those by Gitari (2003) that lack of information paved way for teachers to transfer to other schools where they could access news in a variety of ways.

The findings of this research on access to cheap commodities by teachers as a factor giving rise to staff mobility has been established in a number of researches. Goddall and Livingstone (1985) reveal that there are shopping precincts in towns where goods are available cheaply. Russell (2002) talks of more reliable and cheaper sources of food supply in urban areas. The assumption made is therefore, that if foods are expensive and in short supply in some areas, then there is a drift towards where these can be obtained. It is not surprising therefore, that the teachers in Chegutu schools sought to transfer to other schools in the same district. On the contrary, from the situation in Zimbabwe it would appear that in good seasons, the staple food is always available in rural areas and at cheap prices thus attracting teachers to stay. However, coupled with the high rentals and rates in the urban areas, some teachers were inclined to transfer to rural schools where they could get cheap if not free food from an accommodative community.

On poor staff relations at the school, 28(70%) respondents were affirmative. This agrees with findings by Gerber et al (1992) and Oyowe (1996). All the three findings reveal poor and strained relationships and poor communication as contributing towards the need to transfer. Where there is

conflict the teacher finds him/herself working under an uncondusive environment and the friction, according to the findings, pushes some to move. The move may therefore, eliminate the personality conflict in the school. Gerber et al (1992), while acknowledging the weakness of the solution, remark that avoiding conflict through transfer is for the betterment of the organisation. In some instances, heads remarked that both staff relations and staff community relations were poor. One head said that the locals targeted teachers who drank into the night and these got waylaid. A number had been beaten and others threatened with death on accusations of ill-treating school children.

The present research's findings also share common ground with those by Irungu (2007) and [www.netnative.com/news](http://www.netnative.com/news) (2007) who established that family ties bonded spouses and relatives to stay together. This investigation found out that the propensity to move was motivated by the desire to join one's spouse in elsewhere, thus supporting the findings by Irungu (2007) who established that in Kenya skilled people opted to stay put and stay with family rather than move and break the family bonds. In other words, when one's spouse is located away from the other, there is the desire to join each other, but when together, regardless of location, whether urban or rural; the desire to move by either of the spouses is curtailed. However, Kaempf and Singh (1987) established that families constitute a minor obstacle to migration by highly skilled labour. This follows therefore, that one can decide to migrate leaving the family behind as long as there is a benefit to the family brought about by the move.

Hostile communities were found to be a factor also giving rise to the professional drift. The majority of teachers, 26(65%) felt threatened by the communities around them. In the words of one school head, "The community is just not forthcoming. They try by all means to beat the teachers even where there is no reason to do so. One teacher was beaten aboard a bus from town. Fortunately, the culprits were arrested and the teacher has since left the school."

Other researches elsewhere have established the same. Social turmoil in rural set ups caused teachers to be scared especially if there were poor relations between the school and community. The teachers therefore, felt exposed and insecure hence the need to transfer (Oyowe, 1996; Irungu, 2007). This is the insecurity that is referred to by Maslow in his Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Teachers need the physiological needs such as security and peace to stay in the organisation but when their peace is compromised; they seek alternative places of habitation. Therefore, the theory propounded by Maslow to a large extent helps to show why some teachers decide to leave some schools for the others.

### **11.2 Sub-problem 2 was stated as follows: Which educational factors give rise to the propensity to migrate from one school to another among teachers?**

Table 4 below presents the questions set to help respond to sub-problem 2 and the data gathered from teacher respondents.

Table 4 shows that all 40(100%) respondents needed to accord their children better education which could only be obtained other schools elsewhere. These were probably concerned about the poor state of affairs in their present schools where they taught. All the 6 heads of schools were in concurrence as they remarked that their schools were not equipped to provide the education that they expected their children to go through. They remarked that most teachers sent their children to other affluent schools where there was better quality education. Twenty-eight (70%) indicated that they needed to further their studies but this was a problem at their current schools while 12(30%) were not affected by the problem. This might be due to the fact that they are not involved in studies of any sort. The majority of the teachers were involved or wanted to take up studies through distance education and block release programmes with higher and tertiary education institutions scattered throughout the country, but with the location of the school and the available resources, this was not possible.

Table 4 also shows that 28(70%) respondents, the same number that had earlier indicated that it was problematic to study while in their current schools, indicated that time was inadequate for studies. This can be attributed to the fact that some schools spent the whole day engaged in formal learning as opposed to the other schools which had double sessions. The same number of respondents 28(70%) wanted to access library and internet facilities for their studies but these

## Geographical Labour Mobility among Teachers in Zimbabwean Schools

could not be obtained in their present schools. Only 12(30%) disagreed since these had earlier on indicated they were not studying.

Asked whether or not they wanted to transfer to other schools because those schools were better equipped, the majority 38(95%) said yes while only 2(5%) disagreed. Those who wanted to migrate for this reason could have thought that better equipment made it easy and efficient to execute their duties. The teachers were asked if it was the case that with the qualifications and special flares they had they felt that they were being under-utilised, in their current schools, 30(75%) said yes while only 10(25%) said no. From the demographic data obtained through document analysis, 20(50%) teachers had majored in technical subjects such as Fashion and Fabrics, Food and Nutrition and Mechanical Engineering. Some 2(5%) had Masters' degrees and one had a Bachelor of Commerce in Human Resources Management, hence they might have seen that they were being under-utilised since the majority of their subjects are not offered in their present schools. The 30(75%) who said they were better qualified to be in towns also indicated that they could not see themselves being wasted in the present schools but 10(25%) disagreed.

**Table 4.** Teachers' views on educational factors influencing geographical labour mobility among teachers (N=40)

Question	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Your children need better education that can only be obtained in schools elsewhere.	40	100	0	0
2. Furthering your own studies is a problem at your present school.	28	70	12	30
3. There is inadequate time to study for degrees at your present school.	28	70	12	30
4. You want to have access to library and internet facilities for further studies which are only obtainable in other areas.	28	70	12	30
5. Schools elsewhere areas are better equipped to the extent that you execute your duties effectively.	38	95	2	5
6. With the qualifications and other special flares you have, do you feel under-utilised at your present school?	30	75	10	25
7. It is your feeling that with the level of education you have acquired you cannot be seen to be wasting away at your current station school.	30	75	10	25
8. Are you attracted by the fact that most teachers elsewhere have sufficient time for private business?	40	100	0	0

The respondents were asked whether they were attracted by the fact that their counterparts in other schools had ample time for their private business, all 40(100%) said yes. They probably saw the gap between them and their colleagues in other schools widening in terms of the standard of living, hence the need to migrate to those schools.

On according their children better education as a factor giving rise to the teachers desire to migrate, the findings are in agreement with the theories by Waugh (1990), Munowenyu and Pritchard (2004) and Russell (2002). These established that poor educational facilities in some areas were a contributory factor for staff turnover for the highly qualified professional resident in some schools. The professionals therefore, would not be enticed to stay where the education of their children was being negatively affected.

Like the findings by Kaempf and Singh (1987), this present research established that the majority of teachers were furthering their education or they wanted to, but found it a problem to do so in areas where time and facilities were inadequate. This study established that 28(70%) had no adequate time for study and the same number had no libraries nearby. In the words of one of the heads.

The facilities we have around here are not conducive to further studies. We do not have libraries in the schools for use by the teachers who need to further studies. If we had a reliable bus service it could be possible to visit libraries elsewhere. The teachers also do not have time because we work until five o'clock in the afternoon. They therefore, have genuine reasons to transfer so that they can further their education and provide their children with better quality education.

Kaempf and Singh (1987) found out that the absence of sufficient infrastructure, for example libraries induced the propensity staff turnover. Teachers therefore, felt inclined to stay in the vicinity of libraries and other facilities that would pave way for their academic as well as professional development.

Todaro's (1992) migration theory postulates that higher levels of educational certification tend to stimulate a higher propensity to migrate. This research has also established the same. Thirty (75%) respondents indicated that with the level of education they had they could not stay put in schools which had little to offer for their high qualifications. The same number 30(75%) said they could not stay where they were wasting their qualifications. Kaempf and Singh (1987) concur by remarking that some of their respondents even indicated they would not like to stay there with the level of education and prestige value. As indicated by the heads, this was also one of the reasons for the teacher turnover in schools in Chegutu District. This was mostly to do with those who held the Master of Education degrees and others who held degrees that required that they be stationed elsewhere where their knowledge could be put to use.

**11.3 Sub-problem 3 was stated as follows: What are the economic factors paving way for the geographical labour mobility by professionals?**

In order to help answer the sub-problem, six questions were asked and these and their responses are presented in table 6.

**Table 5.** Teachers' views on the economic factors giving rise to geographical mobility of labour among teachers (N=40)

Question	Agree		Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Goods are very expensive in some areas.	38	95	2	5
2. The rural allowance is enough to entice you to stay at your present station.	0	0	40	100
3. Parents are not paying incentives enough to make you stay.	40	100	0	0
4. Colleagues in urban schools are earning more through the teacher incentives donated by parents.	28	70	12	30
5. Colleagues in some schools have more income through extra lessons and teaching part time in private colleges.	40	100	0	0
6. A sizeable number of urban teachers engage in some business such as trading in commodities that enticed you to join them.	10	25	30	75

Table 5 shows that 38(95%) respondents remarked that goods were really expensive in some areas while only 2(5%) disagreed. Forty (100%) respondents disagreed to the question on whether the rural allowance paid in Zimbabwe dollars prior to the introduction of the multi-currency was enough to entice them to stay at their stations. None therefore, felt that it was adequate. On the issue of incentives, 40(100%) agreed that parents were not paying incentives enough to make them stay. As was the case with the responses on rural allowances, no respondent disagreed to the inadequacy of the incentives. Two of the heads were in concurrence with these responses from the teachers. The heads remarked that the issue if incentives had created a lot of problems in schools. Depending on the ability of the parents to pay, incentives had created inequalities among teachers in different schools. According to one head, the most qualified teachers were deserting their schools for those which were paying better incentives.

Furthermore, all the 40(100%) respondents perceived colleagues in some schools elsewhere as having more income through extra lessons and teaching at private colleges. To add onto the income earned by other teachers, 28(70%) felt that their counterparts elsewhere earned more because of the teachers incentives donated by the parents. Twelve (30%) disagreed. Asked if they thought a sizeable number of teachers, particularly in urban schools, who engaged in private business to boost income enticed them, only 10(25%) agreed while the majority 30(75%) disagreed. This could be a result of the fact that some teachers while getting incentives from parents and having extra lessons and teaching at private colleges might have felt satisfied by the

income. However, this also fails to answer the question why some teachers in the urban areas have applied to transfer to rural schools.

While admitting to the fact that some teachers elsewhere, especially in urban areas were involved in private businesses, heads of schools interviewed were in agreement that in their areas, teachers were free to farm on small pieces of land allocated to them by the SCDs and some were getting a lot of income from the venture. Others were involved in poultry while some who could afford to travel around the communities were selling different wares to augment their salaries.

Asked to state other economic reasons that prompted their desire to migrate from one school to another, 33(83%) indicated the expensive transport costs to and from areas where they purchase their monthly groceries and make withdrawals of their monthly salaries from banks. Five (13%) who intended to transfer into urban schools, indicated that their urban counterparts made extra cash in being engaged in national exercises such as the census, constitution making process as well as voting exercises. These argued that preference was given to urban based and servants.

Going by the data obtained from the respondents, it is beyond doubt that the results obtained in this current study agree to a greater extent, on economic factors leading to the geographical mobility of labour in schools, with those of other researchers and they also agree with a number of theories. As shown by the results on Table 5, income in some schools is low as compared to the expected income in other schools. Of particular interest was the fact that most rural based teachers indicated that their colleagues in urban stations earned more through a number of initiatives such as teacher incentives donated by parents, engaging in extra lessons and teaching part time in private colleges. This is exactly one of the assumptions of the Expected Incomes Model of Rural-Urban migration which postulates that there is a high correlation between the expected rural-urban migration and economic returns accruing because of the migration. Those teachers intending to migrate to urban schools first have to weigh the economic benefits they expect to gain in urban areas before making a move. The data obtained and presented in Table 5, therefore, shows that teachers' intentions are based on the expected benefits. To the contrary, though, some boarding, private and church related schools in the rural areas have been reported to be paying handsome incentives to the teachers. This is indication as to why some teachers felt comfortable to transfer to rural schools where these incentives were better off than in urban schools. One head summarised the economic reasons for the geographical mobility as follows.

“Teachers, like any other human being need to live a decent life. With disparities in the incomes among the schools, the teachers are leaving. There are greener pastures elsewhere. They see others earning more in some areas through activities they cannot do here. They see their colleagues teaching in their spare time and offering extra lessons. The differences in monthly incomes have caused this exodus we are experiencing today.”

To support these present findings, however, the Production Factors Theory assumes that the driving force for professional migration is the degree of attraction of the labour market. Forty (100%) respondents indicated that their colleagues in schools elsewhere earned more through incentives, extra lessons and private tutorials. This therefore, makes some schools attractive labour markets hence the teachers' desire to migrate. Faced with reality of poverty, whereby parents struggled to pay levies, where incentives were drawn from, 28(70%) teachers felt they could not stay put as their fellow workers made headway on income levels. It therefore, follows that wherever incentives and chances for extra cash existed the teachers were willing to take up posts, whether in rural or urban areas.

The findings of this present research are also consistent with those by Oyowe (1996), Chimanikire (2005) and Kaempf and Singh (1987) who established that income differences between geographically dispersed professionals paved way for one group to drift towards the other where there is an incomes gap. Kaempf and Singh (1987) remark that wage and incomes differentials influenced to a large extent, decisions to move, hence the staff turnover in most schools.

However, as found out by Irungu (2007) and Oyowe (1996) political pressures unlike economic benefits, tended to be more potent in the movement of highly skilled professionals who feared for their lives and those of their families. Despite this fact, the majority of the teacher respondents still contended that economic disparities were an equally potent driving force, hence the decision to move.

#### 11.4 Sub-problem 4 was stated as follows: What remedial action can be taken to curb the professional staff drift?

The sub-problem had only one open ended question to help answer it. Teachers were asked to enumerate the remedies they thought would help solve the problem of professional drift. Heads of schools were asked what they were doing to entice the teachers to stay put at their schools. Table 7 presents the findings from the teachers' perspective.

Table 6 shows that 12(30%) respondents were in favour of bonding whereas 33(83%) favoured the increase of school based allowances as a means to attract teachers to the schools as well as retain those already there. Apparently heads were not convinced that bonding was the most appropriate option. Ten (25%) favoured the creation of service centres next to the schools so that all services could be obtained within their vicinity. Thirty (75%) advocated for the provision of accommodation, running water and electricity while 39(98%) wanted to see improved conditions of service in schools. Some of the heads indicated that the electrification of their schools was in progress and this could at least help reduce the brain drain.

**Table 6.** Teachers' suggestions on remedial action to help the problem of professional migration (N=40)

Solution	Number	%
1. Bonding teachers in their present stations	12	30
2. Increase school based incentives	33	83
3. Create service centres to provide commercial and social services at affordable costs	10	25
4. Provide accommodation with running water and electricity	30	75
5. Improve conditions of service in all areas	39	98

The idea of bonding teachers to schools is the same one as that found out and advocated for by Dilworth (2007) who suggested that staff should serve a specific number of years in certain areas before migrating. However, Oyowe (1996) feels this is a violation of human rights since the teachers have freedom of movement. What is also of interest is to note that 12(30%) respondents advocated for bonding and yet they wanted to go to other schools where incomes were higher. The results on the increased school allowances serve to augment the suggestions made by the Botswana Minister of Education on Botswana Television on 28 July 2008. The minister advocated for an increase in the remote area allowances as well as the provision of accommodation in rural schools, which also was among the suggestions by the respondents. Thirty (75%) wanted accommodation to be improved.

Results on the suggestion that authorities need to create service centres, advocated for by 10(25%) seem to agree with the theory by Waugh (1990) who says that all areas where there are human beings must be made locations of footloose industries to attract investments which will eventually result in the semi-urban settlements in the vicinity of the schools. However, with the economic problems in Zimbabwe at the moment to the extent that even the big urban centres are failing to provide essential services to the urban dwellers, one wonders how feasible the suggestion is.

Heads interviewed indicated that a number of measures were being considered to stop the drift. They indicated that a lot of fund raising activities could be undertaken to raise funds for the teachers' incentives. Heads were asked if they had any policy options to make teachers stay. Prevalent among the responses were the scrapping of the divisive school based incentives and deployment based vicinity to spouse which has been overlooked over the years.

## 12. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn from the above findings.

- Social factors which include the need for spouses to stay together, poor social amenities in some schools, lack of information in some schools on what is happening in and around the country causes skilled manpower to drift to schools with more access to information.
- Geographical mobility of labour among teachers has also been caused the need to seek for better education for children, conducive environment for further studies and the availability of library facilities.
- The high skills possessed by some teachers also make them want to migrate to other schools where their services are much sought after.

- Expensive goods in the some areas, higher incomes earned by teachers in some schools and the inadequate allowance are some of the economic factors that have given rise to the migration of teachers from one school to the other.

### 13. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above conclusions it is recommended that:

- The MOEASC in conjunction should place spouses at the same school to avoid staff turnover.
- SDCs/SDAs should improve the conditions of living at the schools under their jurisdiction. Other government and quasi-government institutions must help to provide services needed to improve the quality of facilities in all schools.
- All schools make provisions in their budgets to subscribe with media houses so that daily and weekly papers can be provided for. A school can also purchase a radio set for the teachers and have television sets in common rooms established at the schools.
- The SDCs/SDAs must talk to community elders so that they change their attitude towards teachers. Hostilities may cease after such meetings.
- The SDC/SDA, government and local authorities must create attractive environments in all schools by for example, twining schools with those from developed countries.
- Government should make distance education affordable and accessible to all teachers wherever they are to avoid transfers.
- Government, through the assistance of non-governmental organisations, should establish libraries in schools that should be equipped with internet services to allow for professional development of all teachers.
- Policies should be put in place to allow for highly skilled teachers to remain in their schools of deployment, for example, the once muted parallel progression policy.
- School based incentives should be abolished and alternatively government must provide a meaningful allowance for all teachers.

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