



Secondary School Learners' Migration Impact in Urban Schools in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the impact of learner migration in urban secondary schools of OR Tambo Inland District in the Eastern Cape Province, RSA. The study was triggered by the observation of increasing learner enrollment in urban schools whereas declining in rural schools. The study was grounded on the assumption that understanding the factors that contribute to learner migration will help to identify its impact and come up with ways of mitigating the situation. The study adopted an interpretive-constructive paradigm where a case study research design was employed. Verbatim accounts and natural meaning units were used to present and analyse data. The study found that there is an influx of learners from rural to urban schools. Learners migrate to urban schools in pursuit of better quality education in urban schools. This according to findings leads to overcrowded classes and shortages of resources in urban schools. The study recommended that attention be given to rural schools as they sometimes lack necessary resources like infrastructure and human resources. The study also recommended that urban school teachers be equipped with the necessary skills on how to deal with overcrowded classes. This research adds to the existing literature on learner migration.

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INTRODUCTION

Two urban secondary schools were investigated in the OR Tambo Inland District (ORTI) in South Africa to understand the impact of learner migration on urban secondary schools. There is an influx of learners from rural to urban schools in South Africa and this threatens the stability and quality of education. Researchers such as Epri and Neluvhola state that there is an influx of learners from rural to urban schools that continues unabated.¹ Chaskalson believes that this movement of learners causes the influx of learners in urban schools, while at the same time leaving rural schools empty.² This, therefore, results in urban schools having overcrowded classes and rural schools with Multi-grade

¹ Michael Epri, "A Case Study on the Impact of Large Classes on Student Learning," *Papua New Guinea: DWU Research Journal*, 2016; Neluvhola G. Tintswalo, "Education Management Implications of Learner Migration amongst Selected Secondary Schools in Limpopo" (University of South Africa, 2007).

² Julia Chaskalson, "Thousands of Gauteng Learners Still Have No School," GroundUp, 2017, <https://www.groundup.org.za/article/thousands-gauteng-learners-still-have-no-school/>.

classes and closure in some instances. Xin, Xue and Zhang believe that learner migration leads to overcrowded classes that are challenging for teachers to teach and manage.³ This learner migration phenomenon clearly puts a strain on the education system as schools that are in urban areas are increasing with overcrowded classes while the opposite happens in rural schools. Newly built schools in rural areas are empty while some schools in urban schools are using prefabricated classes due to an increase in enrolments.

The evidence suggests that learners migrate to urban schools as they believe that their standard of education is better than the one in rural schools. Opoku-Asare and Siaw argue that the urban school's education standard is better when compared with the one in rural schools and the learners often choose to migrate due to that.⁴ Lomoro and Leju also believe that the tendency for learner migration is often linked to the attainment of a better standard of education in urban schools.⁵ Mohyuddin also adds that the standard quality of education is the major reason for learner migration.⁶

Some reasons for learner migration are related to political and economic activities. Ouchu believes that in most countries, immediately after attaining independence, learners started to migrate from rural to urban schools.⁷ Ziduli on the other hand believes that parents use their political rights and economic status to enrol their children in schools of their choice.⁸ There are therefore clearly different factors that play a role in learner migration, but this study zoomed on education-related factors which according to the scholars above were related to the standard of education.

This phenomenon of learner migration is not new in South Africa and it has affected urban secondary schools as they are faced with overcrowded classes. There are limited studies that have been conducted on learner migration and they are also not current as this phenomenon is concerned. The available studies did not focus on the impact of learner migration on urban schools. This study, therefore, was specifically conducted to determine the impact of learner migration in secondary urban schools and identify possible solutions to mediating its impact. The study was aimed at investigating the impact of learner migration on urban schools in ORTI in South Africa. To fulfil the aim of this study research objectives were formulated, to identify the causes of learner migration, determine learner migration impact in urban schools, and what can be done to mitigate the situation.

Learner Migration

Songelwa defines learner migration as the movement of pupils from Rural schools (RSs) to Urban schools (UBSs) to pursue better quality education.⁹ The end of the apartheid system by the early 90s, led to the implementation of new policies in education and brought about the abolishment of admission boundaries in education which led to the freedom of school choice. Neluvhola states that the South African School's Act (SASA) no 84 of 1996 abolished educational boundaries, resulting in learner migration from disadvantaged RSs to UBSs.¹⁰ The act, according to Ziduli, allowed parents to

³ Dandan Zhang, Xin Li, and Jinjun Xue, "Education Inequality between Rural and Urban Areas of the People's Republic of China, Migrants' Children Education, and Some Implications," *Asian Development Review* 32, no. 1 (2015): 196–224.

⁴ Nana Afia Amponsaa Opoku-Asare and Abena Okyerewa Siaw, "Rural–Urban Disparity in Students' Academic Performance in Visual Arts Education: Evidence from Six Senior High Schools in Kumasi, Ghana," *SAGE Open* 5, no. 4 (2015): 2158244015612523.

⁵ Lomoro Alfred Babi Moses, Xiong Guogping, and Leju Celestino Ladu John, "Causes and Consequences of Rural–Urban Migration: The Case of Juba Metropolitan, Republic of South Sudan," in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, vol. 81 (IOP Publishing, 2017), 012130.

⁶ Adnan Jamil and Anwaar Mohyuddin, "Rural Urban Migration for Education.(A Case Study of District Bahawalpur, Pakistan)," *Sci Int (Lahore)* 27 (2015): 4819–24.

⁷ John Ouchu and Linda Adhiambo Ouchu, *Migration Urbanisation and Health Challenges in Sub Saharan Africa* (Nairobi: African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC), 2014), <https://www.africanportal.org/publications/migration-urbanisation-and-health-challenges-in-sub-saharan-africa/>.

⁸ Mlungiseleli Ziduli, "The Managerial Leadership Styles of School Principals for School Effectiveness: A Study of Six Secondary Schools of the Dutywa Education District" (Walter Sisulu University; Faculty of Education, 2016).

⁹ Songelwa Piliso, "Factors Contributing to Learner Migration from Rural to Urban Schools in the OR Tambo Inland District of Eastern Cape" (Walter Sisulu University, 2021).

¹⁰ Tintswalo, "Education Management Implications of Learner Migration amongst Selected Secondary Schools in Limpopo"; South African School's Act (SASA) no 84, "Government Gazette" (Cape Town, 1996).

send learners to any school of their choice.¹¹ This, therefore, resulted in many learners migrating from disadvantaged RSs to UBSs, some of them were previously known as Model C schools. The current government has made some strides to improve the situation, but the majority of rural schools remain poorly resourced and under serviced. Zide specifies that Eastern Cape is one of the provinces which is made up of mostly rural schools that are poorly resourced with poor quality education.¹² This according to Simelane influences learners to migrate to UBSs in pursuit of quality education which is offered in the UBSs.¹³ The movement of learners from RSs to UBSs results in a shortage of learning and teaching resources in UBSs which in turn affects them negatively. Luhanga believes that learner migration leads to increasing enrolment in urban schools and that results in overcrowded classrooms and affects departmental and school planning.¹⁴ As such, Epri states that UBSs are often faced with insufficient learning and teaching resources which affects the delivery of quality, teaching and learning activities in overcrowded classrooms.¹⁵

Causes of Learner Migration

There seems to be a relation between learner migration and the way schools perform as this markets or blackmails schools because learners are in pursuit of better education. Various scholars are of the view that the standard of the school either attracts students or causes students to migrate. These scholars include; Xin, Xue and Zhang who posit that the quality of education and the performance of schools plays a huge role in the phenomenon of learner migration from RSs to UBSs.¹⁶ Songelwa also mentions that learner migration is directly related to the learner's desire to attain or pursue better education in UBSs.¹⁷ Ziduli on the other hand believes that matric performance at the end of the year is used by the parents to judge the school's performance.¹⁸ Modiba concurs that excellent learner results market a school by attracting and keeping learners in one school other than migrating.¹⁹ O'Neill believes that schools with better average performance achievement often attract more learners.²⁰ Songelwa also concurs with the above scholars to say that, school performance plays a huge role in learners' migration from rural to urban schools.²¹

This means therefore that the way a school performs plays an important role in attracting or pushing learners to or away from schools. Therefore, a school needs to perform and provide quality education in order to attract learners as performance seems to play a huge role in learner migration. One of the reasons for learner migration mostly in African countries is directly linked to freedom or independence. There is an indication therefore that the independence or freedom of countries plays a bigger role in influencing learner migration this is the case even in South Africa. The policies that are

¹¹ Ziduli, "The Managerial Leadership Styles of School Principals for School Effectiveness: A Study of Six Secondary Schools of the Dutywa Education District."

¹² Lulama Zide, "Pedagogical Practices of Teachers in under Resourced Schools. A Case Study of Two Rural Schools in Mqanduli District of the Eastern Cape Province" (University of Fort Hare, 2013), <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/145053651.pdf>.

¹³ Ishmael Chibelihle Simelane, "Learner Migration and Its Impact on Rural Schools: A Case Study of Two Rural Schools in KwaZulu-Natal." (2014).

¹⁴ Peter Luhanga, "South Africa: Learner Migration Leads to Overcrowding at WC Schools," July 28, 2009, <https://allafrica.com/stories/200908040681.html>.

¹⁵ Epri, "A Case Study on the Impact of Large Classes on Student Learning."

¹⁶ Zhang, Li, and Xue, "Education Inequality between Rural and Urban Areas of the People's Republic of China, Migrants' Children Education, and Some Implications."

¹⁷ Piliso, "Factors Contributing to Learner Migration from Rural to Urban Schools in the OR Tambo Inland District of Eastern Cape."

¹⁸ Ziduli, "The Managerial Leadership Styles of School Principals for School Effectiveness: A Study of Six Secondary Schools of the Dutywa Education District."

¹⁹ Solomon. N. Modiba, "Lack of Service Delivery in the Form of Quality Teaching and the Secondary School Learner Migration" (SAAPAM (South African Association of Public Administration and Management), 2016), <http://ulspace.ul.ac.za/handle/10386/1644>.

²⁰ Shirley O'Neill, *Effective Teaching. The Government of Western Australia* (SAGE, 2017).

²¹ Piliso, "Factors Contributing to Learner Migration from Rural to Urban Schools in the OR Tambo Inland District of Eastern Cape."

adopted and implemented by the ruling parties influence the migration of learners and this is evident in Brazil, South Africa and other Middle Eastern countries.²² Ajaero and Onokala have stated that independence in African countries allowed or opened the doors for the movement of learners to any school of their choice.²³ They are of the view that the independence of countries gave rights to the learner to move to their school of choice. Ziduli also believes that freedom allowed parents to enrol their children in schools that they perceive to be performing well.²⁴ Ouchu and Ouchu concur with Ajaero and Onakala that in Sub-Saharan countries, immediately after independence, learners started to migrate from rural to urban schools.²⁵

The Impact of Learner Migration on Rural Schools

Learner migration decreases rural school enrolment and this affects them negatively. Rural schools are forced to release teachers, combine classes or close down schools. It has been observed that the decrease in the enrolment of learners in rural schools leads to multi-grade and or closure of schools and the transfer of teachers.²⁶ Also, the migration of learners from farm and rural schools results in multi-grade teaching and the closure of some rural schools.²⁷ This creates an undesirable situation where resources have to be moved from one school to another, and teachers and principals are not certain about their future.²⁸

Rural schools lack necessary resources as schools are resourced as per the number of learners they have. This means that rural schools have unequal teacher-pupil ratios, tight budgets and lack of or poorly maintained infrastructure.²⁹ Jakubiec, Kooymans, and Preston posit that teachers in rural schools struggle with a heavy workload as there is a decrease in teachers, a lack of resources and poor infrastructure.³⁰ They also depict an image that learner migration leaves rural schools with serious problems. The problems among other things include the decrease in the number of teachers which leads to a heavy load on teachers. Teachers have to teach many classes and many subjects which are not even their subject specialisations.

Learner Migration and its Impact on Urban Schools

Urban schools are growing gradually as a result they are usually larger in size as learners migrate from rural to urban schools in numbers.³¹ According to O'Neill as enrolment numbers grow, more teachers are hired and more classrooms are needed.³² The enrolment increases which helps in creating more jobs for teachers and an increased resource allocation such as funding, but this also means that

²² Nadir Zago, "Rural-Urban Migration, Youth, and Higher Education," *Revista Brasileira de Educaç o* 21 (2016): 61–78; Tintswalo, "Education Management Implications of Learner Migration amongst Selected Secondary Schools in Limpopo."

²³ Chukwuedozie K Ajaero and Patience C Onokala, "The Effects of Rural-Urban Migration on Rural Communities of Southeastern Nigeria," *International Journal of Population Research* 2013 (2013).

²⁴ Ziduli, "The Managerial Leadership Styles of School Principals for School Effectiveness: A Study of Six Secondary Schools of the Dutywa Education District."

²⁵ Ouchu and Ouchu, *Migration Urbanisation and Health Challenges in Sub Saharan Africa*; Ajaero and Onokala, "The Effects of Rural-Urban Migration on Rural Communities of Southeastern Nigeria."

²⁶ Chaskalson, "Thousands of Gauteng Learners Still Have No School."

²⁷ Sekolo Hendrick Maponya, "An Investigation of Learners' Enrolment in Bela-Bela Farm Schools: A Perspective in Education Management" (University of South Africa, 2010).

²⁸ Masuku Sne, "City Migration Means 300 KZN Rural Schools Face Closure -," October 8, 2018, <https://insideeducation.co.za/city-migration-means-300-kzn-rural-schools-face-closure/>.

²⁹ Maponya, "An Investigation of Learners' Enrolment in Bela-Bela Farm Schools: A Perspective in Education Management."

³⁰ Jane P. Preston, Brittany A. E. Jakubiec, and Robin Kooymans, "Common Challenges Faced By Rural Principals: A Review of the Literature," *The Rural Educator* 35, no. 1 (November 14, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v35i1.355>.

³¹ Sitoza Menzani, "Teaching Experiences in Overcrowded Classes in Secondary Schools of One Education District in South Africa" (2018).

³² O'Neill, *Effective Teaching. The Government of Western Australia*.

infrastructure upgrades and other related resources are needed. This affects planning as budgets, infrastructure, and other learning and teaching materials are required.³³

Maqoqa has noted the negative impact learner migration has on urban schools when arguing that due to alarming problems of learner migration, classes are overcrowded, which makes it difficult for teachers to attend to all learners and also for learners to learn.³⁴ Learner migration leads to overcrowding in urban schools, and this directly affects teaching and learning.³⁵ Hence, urban schools are overcrowded because of an increased population that is from rural schools and this affects teaching and learning in urban schools as classes are overcrowded.³⁶ Overcrowded classrooms have a negative effect on the performance of both learners and educators as it hinders the progressive activities in classroom teaching learning processes.³⁷ This has led to shortages of the necessary resources such as stationery, learning and teaching support material (LTSM), infrastructures and human resources.³⁸ This, therefore, means that effective teaching and learning is compromised in urban public schools as classes are overcrowded because of the shortage of infrastructure and other materials needed for effective. This can also mean that in some instances the performance of learners and the schools are affected. Accordingly, overcrowded classrooms bring an enormous challenge in obtaining suitable or conducive learning environments for effective teaching and learning in schools.³⁹ As the enrolment increases in urban schools, the classes are becoming bigger and the more they get bigger, the more they negatively impact effective teaching and learning. School and class environments play important roles in maintaining effective teaching and learning in a school.⁴⁰ Hence, overcrowded classrooms in urban schools significantly affect effective teaching and learning and it can only be guaranteed in a conducive environment where there are well manageable classrooms and sufficient infrastructure.

Learners are migrating from rural to urban schools with some even going to the provinces that are mostly made up of urban schools. The number of schools in provinces like Gauteng and Western Cape has gone up in the previous years while the provinces like Eastern Cape Limpopo, have decreased.⁴¹ This shows that learners are moving from rural schools, and this leads to rural schools shutting down while urban schools receive more learners and need increased infrastructure. This according to Chaskalson leads to teachers leaving rural schools for urban schools and this means in some instances, good teachers moving to urban schools. It has been argued that learner migration leads to urban schools having huge numbers of teachers as teachers are allocated as per the number of learners.⁴² This is a challenge to some parents who have to spend money by sending learners to urban schools while paying for their rent, transport even school fees with some learners spending much of their time on the road. Thus, learners and parents are going deep in their pockets for rent and transport expenses from rural to urban schools.⁴³

³³ D Grant, "Learner Migration into the Western Cape" (Media release by the Minister of Education of the Western Cape, 2014), <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/news/learner-migration-western-cape>.

³⁴ Maqoqa Thozama, "Experiences of Teachers in Large Classes in Selected Schools in the Libode Education District of South Africa" (Walter Sisulu University, 2017).

³⁵ Jehangir Shah and M Inamullah, "The Impact of Overcrowded Classroom on the Academic Performance of the Students at Secondary Level," *International Journal of Research in Commerce, Economics and Management* 2, no. 6 (2012): 141–53.

³⁶ Parveen Khan and Mohammad Iqbal, "Over Crowded Classroom: A Serious Problem for Teachers," 2012.

³⁷ M. G. Matshipi, N. O. Mulaudzi, and T. S. Mashau, "Causes of Overcrowded Classes in Rural Primary Schools," *Journal of Social Sciences* 51, no. 1–3 (December 2, 2017): 109–14, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2017.1305568>.

³⁸ F O Olaleye et al., "Impact of Overcrowded Classroom on Academic Performance of Students in Selected Public Secondary Schools in Surelere Local Government of Lagos State, Nigeria," *International Journal of Higher Education and Research* 7, no. 1 (2017): 110–32.

³⁹ Petro Marais, "'We Can't Believe What We See': Overcrowded Classrooms through the Eyes of Student Teachers," *South African Journal of Education* 36, no. 2 (2016): 1–10.

⁴⁰ Emmanuel Makabu J Tamanja, "Child Migration and Academic Performance: The Case of Basic Education in Ghana," *Journal of Education and Practice* 7, no. 15 (2016): 109–20.

⁴¹ Chaskalson, "Thousands of Gauteng Learners Still Have No School."

⁴² Matshipi, Mulaudzi, and Mashau, "Causes of Overcrowded Classes in Rural Primary Schools."

⁴³ Vanessa Wiener, "Experiences and Perceptions of Learner Migrants of Commuting to and from School: A Case Study of Learners at Two Schools in Cape Town, 2013-2015," 2017.

Strategies for Mediating Learner Migration Urban and Rural Schools

There is a belief that every problem has a solution. Therefore, something can be done to counter or mitigate the effects of high learner migration from RSs to UBSs and its impact on teaching and learning. In Simelane's view, learner migration impact can be mitigated, and all stakeholders must be involved, by holding parent and community meetings, fundraising and promoting extracurricular activities.⁴⁴ Neluvhola on the other hand recommends that all school stakeholders must ensure that the teaching and learning culture is the core existence of all schools by conducting capacity-building workshops for school management teams and educators.⁴⁵ Quality teaching and learning in public schools can play a huge role in curbing learner migration.⁴⁶

Strategies for Teaching and Learning

Nqabeni believes that effective teachers must adopt innovative teaching strategies to meet learners individual needs.⁴⁷ He, therefore, suggested the following strategies: inquiry-based instruction, behaviour management, differentiation, visualization, cooperative learning, incorporating technology, and professional development.⁴⁸ In addition to these strategies, O'Neill suggests the following teaching techniques for effective teaching; having high expectations, acknowledgement of individual learner differences, building positive relationships, implementing a range of pedagogies, boosting student responsibility, mastering teaching content, ensuring a safe environment, monitoring progress and providing necessary feedback.⁴⁹

METHODOLOGY

The population selected for this study was six participants with three School Management Team (SMT) members and three post-level 1 educators. Three secondary urban schools were selected in one education district in the Eastern Cape Province in the Republic of South Africa. A case study research design was employed to collect data from individual participants that were selected using a purposive sampling method in three schools located in urban areas that were identified as relevant for this study. Three female and three male participants were selected and interviewed. The open-ended individual interview schedule for data collection was used as an instrument. The purpose and procedures of the study were clarified to all participants in order to avoid any confusion and to achieve desired outcomes. Consent was sought in writing and obtained from all individual participants before the inquiry commenced. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms in the transcription of the interviews. Participants were guaranteed that the researcher adheres to ethical research procedures and report on the research findings in a professional and accountable manner. Reliability is the extent to which results can be consistent when tested over time and can be able to produce similar results under similar conditions repeatedly.⁵⁰ To ensure reliability, pilot interviews were used for data collection and were tested during a pilot study and corrections were made.

DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

Causes of learner migration

The study has revealed that parents take their learners to UBSs as they believe that UBSs are better than RSs and they are well resourced in terms of infrastructure, LTSM and human resources. Parents

⁴⁴ Simelane, "Learner Migration and Its Impact on Rural Schools: A Case Study of Two Rural Schools in KwaZulu-Natal."

⁴⁵ Tintswalo, "Education Management Implications of Learner Migration amongst Selected Secondary Schools in Limpopo."

⁴⁶ Modiba, "Lack of Service Delivery in the Form of Quality Teaching and the Secondary School Learner Migration."

⁴⁷ Nozuko Nqabeni, *Effective Teaching of Algorithms of Fractions in the Foundation Phase in the OR Tambo Inland District of South Africa* (Mthatha: Walter Sisulu University, 2021).

⁴⁸ Nqabeni.

⁴⁹ O'Neill, *Effective Teaching. The Government of Western Australia*.

⁵⁰ Kobus Maree, *First Steps in Research* (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 2007), <https://worldcat.org/title/155837980>.

believe that urban schools offer better quality education than schools that are in rural areas. Parents also believe that teachers are doing their work better in urban schools compared to rural schools. The following are responses of participants from a voice recorder.

A participant from school A responded, *According to my understanding parents believe that when comparing urban schools and rural schools, urban schools are more advanced than rural schools. They believe that in town schools, there is an emphasis on communication in English more than in rural schools. They prefer that their children go to well-resourced schools rather than rural schools.*

Another participant from the same school stated, *I think there is a belief from parents that when learners are schooling in urban schools, there is better education.*

One participant from school B said, *I think parents believe that comparable with rural schools, urban schools perform better.*

The evidence, therefore, suggests that learners migrate to urban schools with the belief of getting Better Quality Education (BQE). Simelane believes that urban schools offer BQE more than rural schools hence learners migrate to urban schools.⁵¹ Ziduli believes that it is parents that exercise their rights and take their children to schools perceived to be producing BQE and performing well.⁵² Opoku-Asare and Siaw concur with both scholars and state that parents send their children to urban schools as they offer BQE.⁵³

Does learner migration impact teaching and learning in urban schools?

For a deeper understanding of learners migrating to learning and teaching in urban schools, the researchers looked at the impact of overcrowded classes which negatively affect teaching and learning. The study found that migration of learners leads to the increase of learners in classes which leads to overcrowded classes, and also it affects teaching and learning as it disrupts the effectiveness of relations between teacher and learners. The following were some of the responses from the participants who have this understanding.

Participant 1 from school A responded, *As I have said in the previous question it leads to overcrowding and when the school is overcrowded we even lack resources. You will find out that there are learners without furniture because the classes are overcrowded.*

Participant 2 from school A responded, *Learner migration has a negative impact on effective teaching and learning as it leads to overcrowding. When learners migrate from rural to urban schools, they leave space in rural areas to occupy the few spaces in urban schools. This overcrowding is exhausting to teachers as they will have to spend more time trying to engage and mark learners and give feedback. It becomes difficult for learners to learn as it becomes difficult for teachers to teach effectively. It affects the effectiveness of teaching and learning. You can try to teach but sometimes learners are not learning as some are playing because the class is overcrowded.*

Participant 3 from school B responded, *It has a negative impact because the teacher is unable to reach out to all these learners. You will find out that a teacher will notice on the third or*

⁵¹ Simelane, "Learner Migration and Its Impact on Rural Schools: A Case Study of Two Rural Schools in KwaZulu-Natal."

⁵² Ziduli, "The Managerial Leadership Styles of School Principals for School Effectiveness: A Study of Six Secondary Schools of the Dutywa Education District."

⁵³ Opoku-Asare and Siaw, "Rural-Urban Disparity in Students' Academic Performance in Visual Arts Education: Evidence from Six Senior High Schools in Kumasi, Ghana."

fourth week of teaching that there is a learner who cannot write in the corner but because there are many because you cannot attend them one day.

Participant 4 from school B responded, *Yes, it has an impact on learner performance as not all learners can be given the special attention they need in order to perform in class. There are some learners that need special attention for them to perform well. You will find out that if those learners are not given much attention they are not going to progress well. The teachers do not have enough time as they must cover their work schedule on time.*

The above findings as backed by Epri, who indicates that due to the impact of migration, urban schools are faced with shortages of resources to support learning and teaching as enrolments are increasing and classes are overcrowded.⁵⁴ Akech concurs that there is a negative impact on learner migration in urban schools as it results in overcrowded classes that make it difficult for teachers to attend to all learners and also for learners to learn effectively.⁵⁵

Ways of Mediating the Impact of Learner Migration in Urban Schools

There is a need for teachers to develop, learn and adopt a variety of teaching strategies to mediate the impact of learner migration. This study has identified the learner grouping strategy as the most common teaching strategy that is currently implemented by most teachers dealing with overcrowded classes in order to teach and allow learners to work or teach one another. This style is therefore complemented with more extra classes arranged and one on one follow-up sessions where there is a need. These teachers according to one participant use a teaching strategy known as the Socratic or lecture method. This finding is based on the following responses from the participants.

Participant 1 from school A responded, *Mostly because of the numbers it's not easy to use any other strategy, but I will refer to the most commonly used strategy which is the Socratic method in most classes the lecture method. For the progress of the classes' sake, the teacher has to apply that. It is not serving the purpose much because we believe that in this new age, it has to be inquisitive teaching and learning.*

Another Participant from the same school responded, *I group learners according to their abilities and performance as a teaching strategy. For those I know who quickly learn, I will make group leaders so that they can assist struggling learners in their groups. I also have individual time with individual learners so that I can understand why the learner is or not performing.*

A participant from school B said, *To mention the few that I see teachers do especially in grades 8 and 9 that are always a problem, teacher group learners into small groups that are manageable in order to allow them to teach one another where possible.*

Another participant from school B said, *I normally group my learners so that I can be able to attend to all of them. I do extra classes like morning, Saturday, and afternoon classes.*

The study found that teachers are not getting enough support from the Department of Education and other relevant stakeholders to overcome challenges that are due to learner migration. The participants indicated that they need support more especially from the department, LTSM must be delivered on time or schools must be allowed to order on their own. This will according to participants will ensure learners have enough LTSM on time. These findings are based on the following responses.

⁵⁴ Michael Loh Epri, "A Case Study on the Impact of Large Classes on Student Learning," *Contemporary PNG Studies* 24 (2016): 95–109.

⁵⁵ Philip Eric Akech, *The Impact of Over-Crowded Classrooms to Teachers and Students: Interaction in the Process of Teaching and Learning in Selected Primary Schools in Arusha City Council, Tanzania* (GRIN Verlag, 2017).

Participant 1 from school A indicated, *It is there, but it is not sufficient, the subject advisors I doing little they would only come for compliance. Hence, I am saying it is not sufficient it is because even if the subject advisors would come, they will advise based on a perception of a normal sized class not of an overcrowded class.*

Participant 2 from school A stated, *Where I am, the support is given by, the SMT, the principal, and the SGB. They motivate us to try and do everything we can to ensure that the learners are getting the knowledge that they deserve.*

One participant who is from school B responded, *As the school management we do support but we don't get maximum support from the Department of Education because you will find out that when we request more furniture, and more books because the learner even lack textbooks, the department delays. It takes years to order just a few. The SMT supports the teacher and tries by all means that teachers must photocopy and we go to borrow textbooks from other schools.*

There are suggestions on what to be done in order to counter the challenges that are due to learner migration. According to participants, there must be a focus on developing rural schools. Government must provide the required resource in rural schools which are found in urban schools. Government must build appropriate schools in rural areas with enough human resources so that there will be no lack of teachers in rural schools. The study established that the DoE must find possible ways to attract good teachers to rural schools so as to upgrade rural education standard schools. Lastly, the study identified a need for training or learning of teachers in order to enable them to deal better with overcrowded classes. The following responses from the participants support those findings;

One participant from school A suggested, *The government must provide resources that are in urban schools in rural schools by building appropriate schools in rural areas and providing sufficient human resources.*

Another participant from the same school suggested, *Take teachers that are good to rural areas so that they teach there and there would be no need for parents to decide to take their kids to urban schools. If the quality of education in rural education was the same as in urban education, parents would not take their kids to urban schools. That means we must try to mitigate and equalise the education standard so that teachers in rural schools will have to work hard to make sure that learners are not leaving them.*

One participant from school, B responded, *I think teachers should be trained by the Department of Education on how to deal with overcrowded classes or more learners.*

The following scholars support these findings on the mitigation of the impact of learner migration in schools. Simelane recommends some possible actions to be considered to mitigate the learner migration impact; involve all stakeholders, mobilise learners, organise fundraisers and encourage extracurricular events.⁵⁶ Neluvhola also believes that ensuring and sustaining a good learning and teaching culture through managing and monitoring all schools can curb excessive impact learner migration.⁵⁷ Modiba also suggests that offering BQE rural schools is a possible solution to learner migration.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Simelane, "Learner Migration and Its Impact on Rural Schools: A Case Study of Two Rural Schools in KwaZulu-Natal."

⁵⁷ Tintswalo, "Education Management Implications of Learner Migration amongst Selected Secondary Schools in Limpopo."

⁵⁸ Modiba, "Lack of Service Delivery in the Form of Quality Teaching and the Secondary School Learner Migration."

SUMMARY

This paper examined three aspects of learner migration, which are, learner migration causes, its impact as well as possible ways of mediation. The researchers aimed at determining the causes of learner migration, the impact of learners' migration on urban secondary schools, and determining ways in which its impact can be mediated. The findings indicate that parents take their learners to UBSs because they believe that they are better than RSs as they are well resourced in terms of infrastructure, LTSM and human resources. Parents believe that urban schools offer better quality education than schools that are in rural areas. They also believe that urban school teachers are doing their work better than teachers in rural schools. Findings clearly show that learner migration results in an increased number of learners in urban classes, which leads to overcrowded classes; and this affects teaching and learning as it disrupts the effectiveness of relations between teachers and learners.

The study also provided ways in which the impact of learner migration can be mediated, these may include developing, training and supporting the teachers by the Department of Basic Education. Secondly by making sure that the teachers and schools get all necessary resources like stationery, LTSM and human resources on time. Thirdly by adopting different teaching strategies, for instance, the study found that most teachers group their learners as a strategy to best manage their class in order to teach and allow learners to work or teach one another. They also conduct extra classes to enable them to reach the maximum number of learners and finish the syllabus on time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings made above the authors of this paper have made the following recommendations: The Department of Basic Education (DBE) must attend to the influx of learners in urban schools which has resulted in overcrowded schools and classrooms. Overcrowded classes are challenging the delivery of effective teaching and learning as they are not a conducive environment for such. Teachers in urban schools must be trained, developed and equipped in order to enable them to deal better with overcrowded classes. This can be done by among other things conducting workshops, departmental training sessions and if possible encouraging and supporting teachers to attend colleges or universities for their development. Teachers must learn and adopt different and relevant teaching strategies.

The Department of Basic Education must support the schools to ensure that LTSMs arrive on a timely basis and are sufficient. Government must provide the required resources in rural schools just as are found in urban schools through the building of appropriate schools with enough human resource. The DBE must attract good teachers to rural schools by offering rural incentives and other possible means in order to improve rural school education standards and performance. This therefore means that the DBE must assist UBSs with all means necessary to meet the changing demands caused by increasing enrolments as this affects effective teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the impact of learners' migration and determined possible ways to mediate its impact in the urban secondary schools of OR Tambo Inland Education District in South Africa. The study established that there is an influx of learners in urban schools that leads to overcrowded classes. These overcrowded classes are not conducive for effective teaching and learning and often lack sufficient learning and teaching support material. This influx is exacerbated by the learners who migrate from RSs to UBSs in pursuit of better quality education that is found in UBSs that perform better when compared to RSs.

The authors of this study believe that developing, equipping and supporting urban school teachers can help them deal better with overcrowded classes that are a result of learners' migrating to urban schools. This can be achieved by among other things, conducting workshops, departmental training sessions and if possible encouraging and supporting teachers to attend colleges or universities for their development. Lastly, the DBE and other stakeholders must pay enough attention to rural schools in order to enable them to deliver better quality education so as to attract back learners to rural schools.

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