

**ACADEMIC IMBALANCE BETWEEN RURAL AND  
URBAN AREAS IN IMO STATE OF NIGERIA:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL EVALUATORS  
AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPERS**

---

---

*David Olugbade Ojedapo*

*Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling,  
School of Education,  
Federal College of Education (Technical),  
Omoku, Rivers State,  
Nigeria West Africa.*

And

*Dr. Kingdom C. Eke*

*Department of Curriculum and Instruction,  
School of Education,  
Federal College of Education (Technical),  
Omoku, Rivers State,  
Nigeria West Africa.*

**Abstract**

*The study investigated the rural-urban academic imbalance in Imo State of Nigeria and its implications for educational evaluators and curriculum developers. Questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect data from respondents from Owerri municipal council and Ikeduru Local Government Area, representing urban and rural schools respectively. The questionnaire was administered to 300 respondents and all were collected. The responses were carefully analyzed using mean statistical tool. Findings revealed that: teachers reject rural schools due to lack of necessities of life and social amenities, insufficient teachers are responsible for the academic imbalance in the rural/urban, also students of rural schools eschew hard working. Base on these facts, researchers made the following recommendations: government should help rural schools and rural area by providing social amenities, teachers must imbibe the spirit of hard work whether in rural or urban area, untrained teachers should*

*not be accepted in any rural school, and students should covert the spirit of hard work.*

**Keywords:** Academic Imbalance, Rural Area, Urban Area, Educational Evaluators & Curriculum Developers

Urban area, according to Agada (2004) is defined as a relatively large, densely populated agglomeration of heterogeneous individuals living under conditions of impersonal relations and indirect control. He continued to posit that urban area is a meeting point of different people from different cultural and ethnic background; as a result, it is a place of innovation, invention and research. Nnajiето (2006) said that urban area is a place that has all the good things that make life easy and meaningful. He therefore affirmed that in the urban centers, there is the availability of electricity, pipe-borne water, good roads, industries and many comfortable buildings.

Rural area on the other hand is the exact opposite of urban centers. Harold (1959) defined rural area as a place where local people live on dispersed farmlands or in hamlet and village less than 2,500 population that form the center of their common interest. In support of the above definition Nnajiето (2006) opined that a rural area is a settlement that has a population of less than 2,500.

Okon and Anderson (1982) define a rural community as a geographical settlement devoid of adequate social infrastructure though gifted with sizeable population of human beings, that are largely uneducated and destined to produce raw materials for the development of urban centres. In their own opinion Okon and Anderson (1982) opined that rural villages are characterized by a subsistence and mixed economy in which the villages engaged in various types of farming. Okon and Anderson (1982) observed that persistent rural-urban migration results to a continuous loss of both teachers and students by rural schools and ability to teach well, therefore valid and reliable test will be lacking in the part of teachers (Nkwocha 2015).

Wuche (1999) argued that the rural poverty constitutes about 80 percent of the population of the people living in each state in Nigeria. He opined that their characteristics are low economic activities, low standard of living, low or lack of access to gainful employment because they provide only unskilled labours, little or no access to formal education because they cannot afford the cost. Davidson (2007) opined that poverty of parents have elastic effects on children education as they lacked the resources to fund their education in good schools. They also lacked enough medical and social welfare care due to the parental poverty. It is revealed that the quality of parent's education and home background of a student goes a long way to

enhance his educational pursuit. Since the rural village is made up of illiterate and uneducated parents, it is bound to affect the academic performance of the child and this has great implications for educational evaluators and curriculum developers.

Akinyemi in Agada (2004) is of the opinion that a rural village in African context is a geographical setting without adequate infrastructures, public utilities such as good roads, good drinking water, electricity, facilities for amusement and relaxation. The rural area is deficient of all these facilities. Davidson (2007), in support of Akinyemi concluded that any rural village where these are lacking cannot retain or attract good and qualified teachers, such a school in the village will not be able to maintain and keep students and teachers population without seeking for a better place in the urban. This statement is supported by Kemjika (2011) who said that learning and assessment of students in rural area is always difficult.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is not surprising that many teachers in the urban schools are not only civil servants many are in the business of restaurant, boutique, super market / provision store, fashion designing, hair beauty salon etc. as a result, they always reject any posting to rural schools.

This has resulted in having few teachers in the rural schools. Sometimes, only one teacher will handle a particular subject from JSS1 to SSIII. Also this has resulted in leaving the qualified teachers in the urban and few unqualified in the rural areas leading to academic imbalance between rural and urban section.

As there are no recreational facilities and public utilities in the rural areas, the teachers took to indifference attitude in handling and attending classes. The immediate result becomes poor performance in internal and external examinations.

Since the population of the rural schools is very-low, the government and educational planner care not to cite something like public libraries to assist schools that are far behind, many buildings are decaying while some are no more habitable, majority have no fence and this has helped to endanger the security of the students and teachers.

Since these students have not been able to form the habit of extensive reading and studying, they took to juvenile delinquencies such as smoking of hard drugs, cultism, bullying one another, stubbornness and disobedience to school regulations being the order of the day.

### **Purpose of Study**

The main purpose of this study is to assess the academic imbalance between urban and rural schools in Imo State. The study is undertaken with a view to adequately achieve the following specific objectives.

1. To identify why teachers reject posting to rural schools.
2. To examine the effect of teacher rejection of posting to rural schools on the academic performance of the rural students.
3. To find out if rural students' attitude to learning contributes to the academic imbalance between rural and urban students.
4. To examine whether teachers in the rural schools are as qualified as those in the urban schools.

### **Research Questions**

1. Why do teachers reject postings to rural schools?
2. What are the effects of teachers' rejection of posting to rural areas?
3. To what extent does attitude of rural students to learning contribute to academic imbalance between rural and urban students?
4. To what extent are teachers in the rural schools qualified as those in the urban areas and how does it lead to academic imbalance between rural and urban students?

### **Methodology**

Survey research design was used by the authors for the work. The areas of study were Owerri municipal council and Ikeduru Local Government Area, representing urban and rural schools respectively. The population consisted of 650 teachers in the area used. The number is made of 505 and 145 in Owerri municipal council and Ikeduru Local Government Area respectively. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 300 respondents from the population.

Questionnaire was major instrument used to collect data for the work. 20 questionnaire items were developed for four research questions posed. The questionnaire was structured in terms of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

The instrument was validated by experts in the field of measurement and evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed using test-retest and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Technique. The coefficient of temporal stability of the instrument stood at 0.76.

Copies of questionnaires were directly administered by the authors and their assistants. Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) was used as descriptive statistic to answer four research questions posed. Any item with mean of 2.5 and above was considered agreed by the

respondents, while any item with mean of 2.4 and below was considered disagreed by the respondents.

**Result:**

**Research Question One: Why do teachers reject postings to rural schools?**

**Table 1: Questionnaire items that answered Research Question One**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision	
1	Lack of social amenities makes teachers reject positions to rural schools.	180 720	76 228	24 48	20 20	1,016	3.39	Agreed	
2	Teachers in the rural area have no opportunity for private practice like their counterparts in the urban.	150 600	80 240	37 74	33 33	947	3.16	Agreed	
3	Some rural dwellers are hostile to teachers posted to their schools.	101 404	107 321	52 104	40 40	869	2.90	Agreed	
4	Poor transport facilities in the rural area make teachers trek long distance to school.	166 664	89 267	45 90	- -	1,021	3.40	Agreed	
5	Most rural schools are too remote that teachers feel isolated and forgotten.	122 488	78 234	62 124	38 38	884	2.95	Agreed	
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>							$\sum \bar{x} =$ <u>15.80</u> 5	<b>3.16</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

**Research Question Two: What are the effects of teachers' rejection of postings to rural schools on the academic performance of students in the rural areas?**

**Table 2: Questionnaire items that answered Research Question Two**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision	
6.	Many subjects taught in the urban schools are not being taught in the rural schools.	146 584	87 261	36 72	31 31	948	3.16	Agreed	
7.	Most rural schools perform poorly in SSCE and other external exams.	114 456	86 258	59 118	41 41	873	2.91	Agreed	
8.	Rural students cannot complete favourably with their counterparts in urban schools.	193 772	58 174	30 60	19 19	1,025	3.42	Agreed	
9.	Insufficient teachers in the rural schools helped to increase the workload on the few hands available.	123 492	91 273	54 108	32 32	905	3.02	Agreed	
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>							$\sum \bar{x} =$ <u>12.51</u> 4	<b>3.13</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

**Research Question Three:** To what extent does attitude of rural students to learning contribute to academic imbalance between rural and urban students?

**Table 3: Questionnaire items that answered Research Question Three**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision	
10.	Most rural students are not hard working like their counterparts in the urban schools.	106	154	29	11				
		424	462	58	11	955	3.18	<b>Agreed</b>	
11.	The attitude of most rural students to their studies shows that they are yet to understand the importance of education.	111	102	52	35				
		444	306	104	35	889	2.96	<b>Agreed</b>	
12.	Most rural students love deviant and delinquent behaviour.	119	80	80	21				
		476	240	160	21	897	2.99	<b>Agreed</b>	
13.	Most rural students are so much affected by the socio-economic conditions and illiteracy of their parents.	157	53	43	47				
		628	159	86	47	920	3.07	<b>Agreed</b>	
14.	Most rural students lacked good parental upbringing and home training.	147	93	34	26				
		588	279	68	26	961	3.20	<b>Agreed</b>	
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>							$\frac{\sum \bar{x} = 15.40}{5}$	<b>3.08</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

**Research Question Four:** To what extent are teachers in the rural schools qualified as those in the urban areas?

**Table 4: Questionnaire items that answered Research Question Four**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision	
15.	Most rural teachers don't teach with instructional materials in the classroom.	120	62	50	68				
		480	186	100	68	834	2.78	<b>Agreed</b>	
16.	Most rural teachers do not apply teaching methods while teaching.	147	70	31	52				
		588	210	62	52	912	3.04	<b>Agreed</b>	
17.	Some rural teachers do not teach their subjects as experts in the field.	155	59	59	27				
		620	177	118	27	942	3.14	<b>Agreed</b>	
18.	Most rural teachers are on part time employment.	135	61	73	31				
		540	183	146	31	900	3.00	<b>Agreed</b>	
19.	Most rural teachers are not products of teachers training colleges.	129	80	72	19				
		516	240	144	19	919	3.06		
20.	Most rural teachers do not prepare lesson note and lesson plans for their classes.	161	54	45	40				
		644	162	90	40	936	3.12	<b>Agreed</b>	
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>							$\frac{\sum \bar{x} = 18.14}{6}$	<b>3.02</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

### **Discussion of Findings**

It was discovered that poor conditions of the rural areas make teachers reject postings to rural schools. These poor conditions include lack of social amenities, lack of transport facilities such as taxi cabs and bus services, and other rural environmental hazards. It was also found that many rural schools are remote, even in some places rural dwellers hate and quarrel with school teachers and these make them feel reluctant accepting rural postings.

This is in line with the findings from table one from data analysis and result. It showed that  $\sum \bar{x} = 3.16$  agreed with the decision. This is in line with Apia (2003) who emphasized that poverty of the rural environment scare away teachers from accepting postings to rural schools.

It was found that the effects of teachers' rejection of postings to rural schools are enormous on the academic performance of the students. Many subjects like science and computer education have not commenced in many rural schools, it was also discovered that few teachers in the rural schools are carrying the whole workload, all these culminated to poor performance of students in rural schools in SSCE and other exams.

The data administered and collected for research question two (2) shows  $\sum \bar{x} = 3.13$  and is agreed as decided based on the above reasons, Mugisha (2006) highlighted that effects of teachers rejection of postings to rural schools include, recruiting and hiring of unqualified teachers without experience, being burdened with heavy workloads, rural students have fewer opportunities to take certain courses which also limits their ability to pursue certain areas of education and finally students move from rural to urban migration in order to achieve academic excellence.

Most rural students are lazy; this laziness contributes to carefree attitude towards their studies. Since many rural students are yet to understand the importance of education, the saying goes that "an idle mind is the devil's workshop" therefore, the only alternative is to join bad gangs and become hoodlums and delinquents while in secondary school.

It was discovered that there are those who were mostly affected by their socio-economic background and the illiteracy of their parents, while the rest were seen as not having a good parental upbringing and home training. That means that right from home; they had no mentor, no role model and may be no sponsor.

The information gathered from the data administered and collected from table three (3) above, shows  $\sum \bar{x} = 3.08$  and agreed as decided.

Nosiri, Nwagbo, Osuji and Ebiringa (1999) are of the opinion that other attitudes of students that causes academic imbalance are truancy, inability to take note, absenteeism, sleeping during lesson, etc. They averred that these behaviours hinder rural/urban students from performing well.

What makes a teacher qualified is when he is able to apply teaching methodologies in the classroom with acceptable instructional materials, than when he teaches as an expert in the fields.

It is unfortunate, most rural teachers are in part time employment, others were not product of teachers training colleges and are not professional teachers, how then can such a teacher be able to know how to prepare lesson plans and notes of lesson? In line with this Mugisha (2006), supported that rural schools don't have enough qualified teachers because most of them are on part time, others teach more than four subjects out of their subject areas.

In support of the above findings in table four, which shows that  $\sum \bar{x} = 3.02$  which agreed as decided.

### **Conclusions**

The following conclusions have been reached by the authors based on the findings:

- Lack of social amenities in the rural areas: This is a crucial factor that makes teachers reject postings to rural schools.
- The authors also discovered that the effects of teachers' rejection of postings to rural schools cannot be over emphasized. Most students in the rural school, as a result perform poorly in SS 3 and other external exams.
- From the work, it was also discovered that the attitudes of most rural students to learning is not encouraging. They are not hard working; they don't understand the importance of education rather some resorted to deviances and delinquencies.
- It was also found that most rural teachers are not qualified when they go to classroom to teach they don't prepare instructional materials, many do not know the application or teaching methodologies, in the classroom, and they can't teach or perform as experts in the field.

### **Educational Implications of the Study**

The following are educational implications of this study. The study unveils the problems inherent in rural areas and rural schools. No government or educational



planners can feign ignorance any more on the disparities between the urban and rural schools. The study will assist supervisors, educational planners, educational evaluators and curriculum developers to know the various needs of the rural schools and devise a means of arresting them.

The study will enable educational planners to make sure quality and enough teachers of every subject are posted to the rural schools.

The study will also enable Secondary Education Management Board, principal of schools and all the institutions involved to plan and motivate rural teachers by way of seminars, workshops, incentives and allowances so that they can put in their best.

The study will also assist the government and educational policy makers to introduce subjects like sciences in the rural schools where they are lacking. Finally, the study exposed certain deviances and delinquent behaviours in some rural students, hence there is need for guidance counselors in the schools to help motivate and counsel students on the importance of education.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the above findings, the authors recommend the following:

1. Teachers must imbibe the spirit of hard work, whether in the urban or rural area and eschew laziness, which make them reject rural postings.
2. Students should avoid laziness and welcome hard working spirit, because it is the only quality that can bring someone to lime light.
3. Educational policy planners should not make any mistake to allow an untrained someone to enter classroom in the name of teaching because unqualified teachers will only give poison and not knowledge.
4. Teachers should understand that some students in the rural schools have no mentors, role models or sponsors, therefore should help and assist them properly.
5. Teachers should not reject postings to rural schools bearing in mind that these rural students are leaders of tomorrow. If they are well taught they become good leaders.
6. Government should make it compulsory that every teacher must serve at least 17 years in the rural area and may be 18 years in the urban if he/she is to serve for 35 years. That is to say that half of his full service year will be in the rural and urban areas respectively.
7. Again, the government at all level should do their best to bring rural area to the standard of urban by setting up some social amenities so that the population of rural schools will not be diminishing due to student's rural-urban migration for academic excellence.

8. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should lunch their assistance more on rural area instead of concentrating in the urban centres.

### References

- Agada, J.C. (2004). *Basic Concepts in Sociology of Education*. Owerri: Divine Mercy Publishers.
- Aphia, B. (2003). *Action Week Exposes Disparities in Education*. <http://www.ibisivesfafrica.com.nv/news.php>. Retrieved Jan. 19, 2010.
- Davison, P.L (2007). *Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Students' Academic Performance in Nigeria*. /[www.thefreelibrary.com/socio-economic factors](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/socio-economic-factors). Retrieved April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016.
- Harold, B. (1959). *Dictionary of Education*. New York: MC Graw Hill Book Company.
- Kemjika, O.G. (2011). *Continuous Assessment in Nigerian Education*. Onitsha: Fabson Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Mugisha, C.H. (2006), *Lesson in Learning: The Rural-Urban Gap in Education*. <http://www.cclcca.ca/ccl/reports/lessons/learning/lili/htm>.
- Nkwocha, P.C. (2015). *Basic of Educational Measurement and Evaluation*. Owerri: Mercy Divine Publishers.
- Nnajieta, C. C. (2006). *An Introduction to Sociology of Education*. Owerri: Divine Mercy Publishers.
- Nosiri, C.P; Nwagbo, D.E; Osuji, H.G.N and Ebiringa, G.A.O (1999) *Administrative Functions of Primary School Teachers*. Owerri: Cajec Publications Ltd.
- Okon, E. and Anderson, A.L. (1982). *The School and Nigerian Society*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press Ltd.
- Wuche, U.W.D (1999). *Education for the Neglected People in Nigeria*. A Textbook for Tertiary Institution. Owerri: Cajec Publication Ltd.