

Investigating the Influence of Student Mobility on Students Academic Motivation and Engagement in Kamonyi Public Secondary Schools

Jean Baptiste Gasigwa^{1*} , Evode Nahimana^{2,3} , Onesme Niyibizi⁴ 

¹Masters Student, University of Rwanda, College of Education, Rwanda

²Administrative Assistant at the Faculty of Education, Protestant University of Rwanda, Rwanda

³Student of International Master Program in Educational Quality, University of Bamberg/Germany

⁴Administrative Assistant of Graduate School, Protestant University of Rwanda, Rwanda

Abstract

Student mobility refers to the degree to which students change schools from one institution to another. The study in the Kamonyi district aimed to explore the link between student mobility and academic motivation and engagement in public secondary schools. This mixed-method research employed qualitative and quantitative approaches, focusing on four purposively selected schools. Data was gathered through questionnaires administered to four teachers in each school and semi-structured interviews with four head teachers, four deputy head teachers in charge of studies, and fifty-five mobile students. The collected data was then analyzed and interpreted using the respective instruments. The findings revealed that student mobility positively and negatively influences academic motivation and engagement, with a more pronounced negative impact. Based on these results, the researchers proposed several recommendations for students, teachers, parents, school staff, the Ministry of Education, and the government to mitigate the negative effects and enhance the positive aspects of student mobility.

Keywords: Academic Motivation, Kamonyi Public Secondary Schools, Student Engagement, Student Mobility.

* **Corresponding author:** Jean Baptiste Gasigwa: baptistegasigwa@gmail.com

Article information

Received: 22/03/2025;

Reviewed: 26/03/2025;

Revised: 27/03/2025;

Accepted: 30/01/2025

How to cite this article: Gasigwa, J. B., Nahimana, E., & Niyibizi, O. (2025) 'Investigating the Influence of Student Mobility on Student's Academic Motivation and Engagement in Kamonyi Public Secondary Schools', *Journal of Classroom Practices*, 4(1), pp. 38–57. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.58197/x37nf604>

Introduction

Globalization and internationalization are contributing to increased academic and student mobility, driven by advancements in Information Communication Technology (ICT) and the movement of people, ideas, and resources across borders. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in less affluent communities, where higher student mobility rates can disrupt educational progress and negatively impact student motivation and engagement. Schools face challenges in addressing the needs of highly mobile students, which can complicate efforts to improve educational outcomes. Research indicates that frequent school changes are associated with poorer academic performance and lower levels of student engagement, posing significant challenges to both students and educators. In Africa, including Rwanda, student mobility is common and influenced by factors such as parental decisions and regional stability. This highlighted the importance of examining the impact of student mobility on academic motivation and engagement to develop effective strategies for supporting mobile students and enhancing overall educational quality.

In today's educational setting, student mobility presents a significant challenge to academic achievement. When students transfer between schools, they often miss critical topics, necessitating that receiving teachers address these learning gaps. This process can slow down the academic pace, impacting the entire classroom. Higher levels of student mobility exacerbate this issue, affecting the learning experience for all students. Research underscores the detrimental effects of the student movement and highlights the complexity of this issue. For example, in Rwanda, formal education is structured across various levels, including nursery, primary, and secondary education, with specific national exams required for advancement. Policies governing student transfers emphasize the importance of efficient communication between school administrators and teachers to support student academic motivation and engagement. However, studies indicate a prevalent lack of effective communication within many schools, further complicating the issue of student mobility.

Additionally, student mobility's impact extends beyond academic gaps, influencing social and psychological aspects of students' lives. Frequent school changes lead to higher dropout rates, lower average achievement, and an increased need for remedial education. Socially, transferring students often face challenges in forming new friendships and integrating into the school community, which affects their academic success. Research in Rwanda's Kamonyi District reveals similar issues, with poor student motivation and engagement linked to high mobility rates in public secondary schools. Effective teacher-student relationships are crucial for raising student motivation and achievement, but these relationships take time to develop and are often disrupted by frequent student transfers.

As in other African and global contexts, Rwandan student mobility is shaped by economic, social, and policy factors, but it presents unique challenges within the country's structured education system. Compared to more developed regions where mobility is often linked to international study opportunities, the student movement in Rwanda is largely driven by parental decisions, economic poverties, and regional stability. Unlike in some African nations with more flexible transfer systems, addressing these challenges requires improved school coordination, better communication between stakeholders, and targeted interventions to support student engagement and motivation.

The main objective of the present study was to explore how the students' mobility influences students' academic motivation and engagement in Kamonyi District.

Related Literature

Schools are concerned about students changing schools since it is a significant event in their educational journey. Moving can result in curriculum coverage discontinuities as well as the need for students to adjust to a new learning and teaching environment, which takes time (Clemens et al., 2017; Mehana & Reynolds, 2004). Therefore, making new acquaintances is difficult for mobile students since it takes time. Some decide “to get out of [school] as quickly as possible and go on to something else,” which prevents them from forming any new friendships at all in their new school. Mobile students may become less engaged with their peers at school as they attempt to cope with these losses and social obstacles (Fantuzzo et al., 2012; Gruman et al., 2008). Mobile students typically have fewer friends than non-mobile students (Langenkamp, 2011; South et al., 2007). As well as friends who perform relatively poorly academically (South et al., 2007). They also tend to be less centrally located in peer networks, and participate in fewer extracurricular activities (Langenkamp, 2011). These characteristics may help explain why mobile students have lower grade point averages, are poorly motivated, and are more likely to drop out of school (South et al., 2007).

There is evidence that mobile students find it challenging to participate in classwork (Fantuzzo et al., 2012; Rumberger et al., 2019). These are probably caused by the social-emotional difficulties that come with the change, the incompetence of receiving schools to address curriculum modifications or the unique needs of new students, and the lack of cooperation between schools and the individuals involved in the children’s academic lives. Moreover, the movement of students may have repercussions for educational institutions and authorities. High student mobility can put more of a strain on schools and education authorities’ administrative, logistical, and instructional responsibilities, and if it is not performed well, the learner’s motivation and academic motivation can be reduced (Conger et al., 2007; Debson, Henthorne, & Lynas, 2000; Han, 2014; Mordechay, 2018; Rumberger, 2003). The order in which students’ movements are made can also affect variations in student outcomes. Partly, moving within a year and closer to exams, for instance, has been linked to lower student academic achievement, motivation, and engagement (Burkham et al., 2009; Hanushek et al., 2004; Leckie, 2009; Schwartz et al., 2009). This is probably because these move types are expected to cause more disruption (Welsh, 2017). However, Grigg (2012) found no statistically significant difference between movements during or between school years, rejecting the timing theory.

There are many different circumstances and reasons why student’s schools may relocate (Burkham et al., 2009; Dobson et al., 2000; Rumberger, 2015). A child may relocate, for example, in order to attend a better school or, conversely, to avoid harassment or other unpleasant school-related experiences (Dobson et al., 2000; Rumberger, 2015; Welsh, 2017). Family situations and events, such as separation or divorce or, growth, a new work opportunity, or a job loss, can also cause school transfers; many of these may necessitate relocation and, consequently, a change in both housing and school (Lu & Rickard, 2016). Employment changes can result from a promotion or from losing a job. There were some relocations due to residential bankruptcies, and then students from families with lower socioeconomic status (SES) are more likely than those from higher SES households to undergo both general school adjustments and school changes coupled with home changes; moreover, Research findings suggest that specific student attributes are frequently linked to changing schools, especially for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnic minority groups (Jorgensen & Perry, 2021; Machin, Telhaj, & Wilson, 2006; Mehana & Reynolds, 2004; Stand & Demie, 2007).

Furthermore, the Pew Research Center (2021) asserts that the challenges for parents in certain types of communities whereby the rural-urban movements of parents and those with lower and middle to higher incomes changes and vice versa are more likely to affect their children's mobility than those with stable income and residence; and then, Additionally, parents may find it difficult to balance the demands of raising a family with their academic obligations because they are frequently unable to meet all of these demands. As a result, parents may be forced to move their children from more expensive schools to less expensive ones. Ultimately, though, this might have an impact on student's academic motivation and engagement (Van Engen et al., 2018; Harris et al., 2019). Moreover, Student's mobility may result from a variety of circumstances, such as issues with discipline, absenteeism, poor academic performance, and grade retention, among others; additionally, the study discovered that schools with high retention rates may also have higher student's mobility rates than those with lower retention rates (Rumberger & Thomas, 2020).

The research has often discussed in the previous literature that changing schools can impair a student's learning. Educators identified missing learning subjects and a lack of consistency as the main concerns when a student relocated while first addressing the issue (Sanderson, 2004). And it may also unusual that a mobile student's new school would arrange its curriculum in the same manner as their old one. Even institutions offering curricula at the same grade level varied in velocity and typically presented subjects out of chronological sequence. The risk associated with a pupil switching schools might be the disruption to their education (Bradshaw et al., 2010). The research also discovered that mobile students tended to have greater absenteeism than their non-mobile fellow peers. Naturally, this made the issue of interruption in schooling even worse (Walls, 2003). Sanderson (2004) found that motivation and engagement decreased as mobility increased. Numerous studies have demonstrated a link between discipline problems and student mobility (Engec, 2016; Honglund & Leadbeater, 2004), and according to Engec (2006), boys had a greater disciplinary effect than girls. Additionally, the study showed that guys were more impacted than girls in that when mobile boys moved into a neighborhood with a high crime rate, they became more hostile. Girls who moved into the same neighborhoods had less of an impact (Parente & Mahoney, 2009).

Several investigations supported their conclusion that a student's academic achievement, motivation and engagement suffer while mobile (Offenberg, 2004). Research conducted in 2003 by The Columbus Foundation also discovered that both stable students and teachers are negatively impacted/ influenced by student mobility. In addition, According to conventional belief among educators, switching schools has a negative effect on a kid's learning, and schools with large student mobility rates are particularly severely impacted. According to research by South et al. (2015), mobile students are more likely to be involved in dangerous behavior. This was associated with a larger propensity to begin associating with other students, in the new school that participated in risky behavior. In addition to this, another research discovered that schools with greater students' mobility had higher crime rates as well as higher rates of misbehavior in the classroom (Chem, 2008).

Gruman et al. (2008) discovered that student achievement, as well as student academic motivation and engagement among Secondary school students, was significantly impacted by student mobility; made an effort to account for the impacts of shyness, poor income, antisocial behavior, gender, and family stress. It was also discovered that each of these had a detrimental effect on students' performance and academic motivation. However, student mobility continued to have a strong impact on a student's academic performance even when the other characteristics were considered. In addition to this, it has

been founded that Secondary level transfers may have more negative effects than Primary ones (Kaase & Dulaney, 2005; Welsh, 2017). Strand and Demie (2007) suggested that the negative effects of mobility may be more pronounced during the secondary school stage (ages 11 to 16) than during the primary phase (ages 5 to 11).

Research indicates that moving during adolescence reduces the probability of attending a secondary school, regardless of whether the move is to a better or worse neighborhood school (Metzger et al., 2015). According to Hanushek et al. (2004), less fortunate students are also more vulnerable to the negative impacts of mobility and may see larger decreases. At least in the year immediately after moving. Partly, A student is frequently required to transfer schools when they move; the disruption of a student's local social networks can significantly impair their academic performance, motivation, and engagement. According to Gaertner et al. (2010), White pupils who moved had a tendency to attend better schools. Following a shift, black pupils typically joined a lower-quality school. According to Black (2006), many highly mobile students take four to six months to recover academically following a transfer. According to Kerbow et al. (2003), students who move schools may not receive all of the necessary instruction, making it more difficult to have a consistent education. In addition, As well as other outcomes like absences, exclusions, school dropouts, and behavioral issues, several studies have found a negative connection between student's mobility and student's academic motivation and engagement (Dobson et al., 2000; Engec, 2006; Mehana & Reynolds, 2004; Rumberger, 2003; Strand & Demie, 2007; Temple & Reynolds, 2000; Welsh, 2017).

This study was guided by two theories. The Push and Pull factors theory: This theory tries to provide an understanding of the factors and information for student's mobility, asserting that students can self-report to school administrators if they have been changing schools or not, which may facilitate the administrators to ask for factors influenced (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). Furthermore, A list of push and pull factors that act as incentives and deterrents to participating in mobility programs is provided by the majority of studies on student mobility (Van Mol & Timmerman, 2014; Caruso & de Wit, 2015; Beerkens et al., 2016, Gonzalez et al., 2011; Soutero Otero, 2008). Different studies examined mobile and stationary pupils' individual choices or viewpoints. A push and-pull framework is provided by a complex web of scholarly, political, cultural, educational, and economic influences (Caruso & de Wit, 2015). Some variables pulling this trend are the availability and quality of education, the likelihood of having many friends in different schools, financial support, political stability, economic growth, wage disparities, employment prospects, and immigration facilitation (Li & Bray, 2007).

On the other hand, unfavorable economic, political, and social factors such as social unrest, political instability, and economic recession force students to leave their schools (Kondakci et al., 2016). Motivational factors, including social, emotional, and functional elements, also impact students participating in school changes aspects and Along with functional aspects (facilities, infrastructure, schedules, etc.), social (relationships with instructors, students, social networks, etc.) and emotional components (having fun, feeling proud to participate, increasing confidence, etc.) also play a significant impact (Curras et al., 2015). Therefore, academic, cultural, and political factors influence the student's migratory flows. The Family Stress Theory: Wu and Xu (2020) suggested that different family stressors, such as marital conflicts or domestic violence, intensified parent-child relationship, and challenges in homeschooling, job and income instability may contribute to a sense of inadequacy in parenting, ineffective parenting practices, and mobility for students from one school to another. According to this Theory, families occasionally go through a period of stress due to a problem or encounter a crisis. When

a family lacks the means or coping mechanisms to handle the situation, a crisis is seen as an excessive reaction to the stressor (Hill, 1949; McCubbin & Patterson, 1982).

Certain reactions to stress can have detrimental effects, including spousal violence, abuse of children, and even student mobility (Fegert et al., 2020; Wu & Xu, 2020). It was also determined that a factor in family stress many times resulted in disciplinary cases from his research (Everson et al., 2013), co-parenting difficulties (Jamison et al., 2017), caregiver conflict (Simons et al., 2016), child behavioral issues (Farr, 2017; Schellinger et al., 2020; Simons et al., 2016), and parent-child conflict are some additional forms of stress that may also arise from family stress (Nievar et al., 2014; Schellinger et al., 2020; Valldorale-Griffin, 2014). Moreover, this theory tried to suggest different economic, social, physical, and mental health effects among other experienced almost mobile students and recommends searching for support from mental health specialists while dealing with mobile student's behaviors and different changes that result from school changes (Schellinger et al., 2020).

Methods

3.1. Research approach

The research methodology, which outlines the general plan for conducting the study, is the method used to carry it out. The most appropriate research approach will depend on the nature of the study and its objectives. Moreover, The type of study, the resources available, the objective of the investigation, the sensitivity of the topics being studied, the field of the investigation, and the individual experiences, abilities, attitudes, and interests of the researcher all influence the choice of research methodology (Grover, 2015). Therefore, within this study, the researchers used a mixed research approach.

3.2. Research design

The research, which was determined by what the researcher judged appropriate to this particular study, a mixed methodology was used; "Convergent parallel design"(this design involves simultaneously collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, merging the data, and then using the results to understand a research problem). The use of "what works" allows the researcher to address the questions being investigated without warning as to whether the questions are wholly quantitative or qualitative (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Therefore, the research research technique is referred to as the research design; it outlines the overall strategy for doing the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2012). The purpose of this research design was to outline the plan for conducting the scientific investigation to answer the research questions and make accurate findings. The term "credibility" refers to the outcomes demonstrating that reality is honest, knowledgeable, and reasonable. The control of extraneous variables and resource availability are all characteristics of good study designs (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009).

Therefore, the study used a mixed method to evaluate student mobility's influence on academic motivation and engagement. Therefore, this study was carried out in Kamonyi District of Southern Province in Rwandan country, whereby the researcher chose this District because it is a District which is located near Kigali City of Rwanda and faces a lot of population movement from Kigali as a result of residential change accompanied by students mobility. The researcher used a purposive method that emphasizes the investigator's judgment by choosing the research population, and this helped the researcher to choose four selected public secondary schools in Kamonyi District, which were used in the data collection of this study.

3.3. Population, sample, and sampling techniques

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2012), a population is a large group of elements that share particular traits and to whom the research intended to apply the findings. The targeted population in this study was all mobile secondary students, secondary teachers, and school administrators in four selected public secondary schools named (A, B, C, and D), and this provided a total number of 197 population, including Headteachers, Deputy head teachers, secondary teachers, and mobile students. The sample size for this study was also taken into consideration. Therefore, a sample is considered necessary because it is not possible to investigate the whole population due to insufficient resources, like time, money, etc. (Williams and Grinnel, 1990). Since all targeted populations couldn't be investigated, a certain group was chosen to get a wide understanding on the subject matter. The researcher, with the guidance of non-probability and purposive sampling techniques, selected a sample for the study, and by choosing the sample size, the researcher used the formulae of JAVEAU (1985), which emphasized that $(n = N \times 20\%)$, whereby the sample represented by “n” can be 20% or more of the whole population which is represented by N (Javeau, 1989). This means that the researcher has a sample size of 79 participants, including eight school administrators, 16 teachers in secondary schools, and 55 mobile students in four selected public secondary schools in the Kamonyi district.

Table 1: Distribution of population and sample size

School	Population size			Sample size		
	Mobile Students	School leaders	Secondary teachers	Mobile Students	School leaders	Secondary Teachers
School A	42	3	15	15	2	4
School B	46	4	18	17	2	4
School C	18	3	14	11	2	4
School D	19	3	12	12	2	4
Total	125	13	59	55	8	16

Source: Primary data, August 2023

The study utilized a purposive sampling technique, which was appropriate for selecting participants with specific characteristics relevant to the research, but the sample size of 79 participants across four schools was quite small. This limitation reduced the findings' generalizability, as it did not fully represent the broader population of mobile secondary students, teachers, and school administrators. Clearer justifications for the small sample size and a more detailed explanation of the purposive sampling process strengthened the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions.

3.4. Data collection instruments

An effective measurement increases trust in the exactness of the findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The study employed a quantitative methodology to achieve its purpose, which was measured using a closed-ended questionnaire. Closed-ended surveys are less costly and time-consuming to administer to large groups of individuals simultaneously than other assessment tools. This study used a questionnaire to collect quantitative data from secondary teachers regarding their perceptions of how student mobility influences student's academic motivation and engagement. The Likert-type questionnaire items were also developed in order to portray the data correctly. It has been observed

that the Likert scale is the most effective instrument for assessing perceptions. This is because it gives respondents the opportunity to indicate how strongly they concur with a set of statements regarding a specific issue. Because of how easy it was to administer, score, and develop, it gained popularity very fast.

Additionally, the questionnaire was selected over other tools due to its advantages, which include a high participation rate. It also facilitates the data-analysis steps even if it may allow respondent to provide incorrect answers. This research study also used interviews to collect qualitative data from school head teachers, deputy headteachers, and students. According to Adams (2015), a semi-structured interview is one in which the interviewer asks only a few pre-planned questions. In order to fully comprehend the case and respond to the study questions, the researcher employed a semi-structured interview style (Marczyk, 2005). The researchers asked questions to know how student's mobility impacts student's academic motivation and engagement, Social and moral changes for mobile students, and suggested strategies that may be used to solve academic problems caused by student's mobility. Each interview lasted 25 minutes for school administrators and 15 minutes for students, and the researchers took short notes of data while the interview was on.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the items were carefully developed based on existing literature and were reviewed by experts in education and research methodology before administration. Additionally, the semi-structured interviews followed a predefined set of guiding questions that aligned with the survey topics, allowing for a deeper exploration of participants' perspectives, and the responses were analyzed in relation to the survey data to identify consistent patterns and insights.

3.5. Data analysis

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), data analysis is interpreting and giving meaning to the gathered data by combining, condensing, and interpreting what respondents have stated or demonstrated. The objectives of the research provided direction for the data analysis; when the researchers had completed gathering the information, the following step was to sort and decode all of the instruments holding the data. SPSS software was also utilized to input the data coding sections created using those instruments. When necessary, frequency distribution and percentage distribution of the respondents' responses are summarized using tables and charts. Frequency analysis and percentages were utilized to ascertain the percentage of teachers who selected each alternative response to each question in this study. Pie charts, frequencies, percentages, and averages were employed to analyze quantitative data. Thematic analysis involved grouping qualitative data into relevant themes based on the study questions.

3.6. Validity and reliability of the study

According to Kalu (2005), validity is an instrument's suitability for measuring the things it is designed to measure. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), validity is the degree to which scientific theories and explanations accurately reflect reality. Validity for this study, with the help of a supervisor, checked how the objectives were formed and if the research objectives related to the research question. The research supervisor also helped the researcher check the research instruments before the respondent used them. The reliability emphasizes whether the same results would be gained for another group of participants. The reliability of the questionnaire can be monitored by asking similar questions in different parts to check the extent to which respondents are consistent in their answers. Reliability for this study was calculated on the results of a pilot study. By this, the researcher used different groups within the pilot study and final research data collection, which helped him evaluate the study's reliability.

Questionnaires and interview guides were also checked by the researcher, supervisor, and finally, the expert panel members in education for their analysis before they were used.

3.7. Ethical considerations

Research in education focuses mostly on human beings. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the researcher to protect the rights and welfare of the participants in the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In order to conduct the current study, the participants agreed to sign the consent form and participate in this research voluntarily, hoping to ensure that the information they provided would not be shared with others. All information acquired for this study was kept private. Data was collected, handled with privacy, and stored safely at every level of the investigation. The names of the participants were not indicated on the instruments.

Results and discussions

Demographic information of the participants

The identification of teachers (16), students (55), and school leaders (8) across various parameters was critical in understanding the broader context of student mobility and its impact on academic motivation and engagement.

Student's mobility on student's academic motivation and engagement

Perception of school leaders

The objective was aimed at knowing the context by which the students' mobility influences student's academic motivation and engagement, for instance, to know whether the student's mobility highly impact student's academic motivation and engagement positively or negatively. The four interviewed head teachers confirmed that the student's mobility has a link with student's academic motivation and engagement by saying that it may affect academically in a negative or positive manner but especially in negative aspects; all interviewed head teachers said that the student's mobility is a problem on student's academic motivation and engagement, and highly this occurs in negative way, by saying that mobile students sometimes bring cases of indiscipline and influence other students within a school. Some of them gave examples of some indiscipline cases that they highly faced with the different mobile students, such as drug consumption, alcohol, absenteeism, lateness, disobedience, stealing, damaging properties, etc. In addition, they said that mobile students' performance often appears in low level because of their different characteristics like absenteeism, lateness, change of teachers, classmates, school administrators, and school environment. One head teacher reported;

“As a head teacher, I have observed that students who frequently move from one school to another often struggle academically” (Head Teacher 2).

The four interviewed deputies in charge of studies said that student mobility impacts/influences student's academic motivation and engagement in negative and sometimes positive ways, but especially in negative way, by saying this, three among four interviewed said that mobile students have different characteristics from non-mobile ones, like: absenteeism many times at school, coming later to school many times, disobedience, poor participation in the classroom, among others, and these characters sometimes affect non mobile students at school; then after the fourth one said that mobile students have no many different characters from that of non-mobile ones, and also added that the students' mobility impact/ influence student's academic motivation and engagement negatively. One DOS reported;

“As a DOS, I have observed that students who frequently move between schools often face challenges that differ from their peers who have a stable school life. These mobile students are more likely to be

absent multiple times, arrive late to school, and show signs of disobedience” (DOS 3).

Perception of students

Among the 55 students interviewed, nine students said that they faced no change to their academic performance, motivation, and engagement academically due to their school change, 39 students said that their mobility impacted their learning negatively because their performance has been reduced, which also discouraged their academic motivation and engagement while other seven students said that mobility impacted/ influenced their academic motivation and engagement positively, because of their performance increased compared to that of before changing the school. The findings from the students showed that 16% of students represented by nine mobile students said that there are no effects/ influence of student's mobility on student's academic motivation and engagement; 71% of students represented by 39 mobile students said that student's mobility impact/ influence student's academic motivation and engagement negatively. This means that student mobility reduces student's academic motivation and engagement; then 13% of students represented by seven mobile students showed that student mobility positively affects academic achievement. Therefore, Student's mobility increases student's academic motivation and engagement. One student reported;

“As a student, mobility disrupted my learning significantly. Each move meant adapting to new teachers, curricula, and classmates, which negatively affected my performance. The constant changes left me feeling disoriented and less motivated to engage academically” (Student 12).

Perception of teachers

The 16 selected teachers tried to express their perceptions about how the student's mobility impact/influences student's academic motivation and engagement differently. Four types of questionnaires were used for teachers namely: 1. strongly agree, 2. Agree, 3. Disagree, 4. strongly disagree. Findings showed that 7 teachers strongly agreed that the student's mobility negatively impacts or discourages student's academic motivation and engagement, 6 teachers also agreed that students' mobility negatively or reduce student's academic motivation and engagement, while three teachers disagreed. Through the SPSS, software analysis, the percentage also shows that 43% of Teachers strongly agreed that the student mobility negatively impacts academic achievement. Of students' academic motivation and engagement, 37% of teachers agreed that student mobility negatively impacts academic achievement and influences students' academic motivation and engagement. In comparison, 18% Disagreed with this and said that student mobility does not negatively impact academic achievement nor negatively influence student's academic motivation and engagement, as shown in the following pie chart.

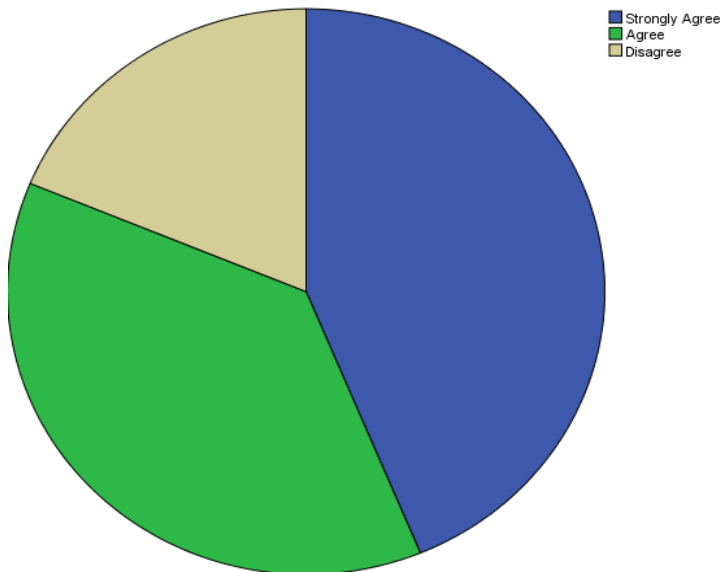


Figure 1: Student mobility negatively affects academic motivation and engagement

Source: Primary data, August 2023

The above pie chart illustrates the perception of teachers for the percentage mentioned above. In addition to this, 6 teachers strongly disagree that the student mobility impact academic achievement positively, and positively influence student's academic motivation and engagement, 7 Teachers disagree with that the student mobility impact academic achievement positively in relation to its influence on student's academic motivation and engagement, while 3 Teachers agreed that the student mobility can impact academic achievement positively, and positively influence student's academic motivation and engagement. This also has been analyzed and shown that 37% of teachers strongly disagreed with a positive impact/ influence of student's mobility on academic achievement, and student's academic motivation and engagement, 43% of teachers also disagreed for a positive influence of student mobility on academic achievement, and student's academic motivation and engagement, while 18% Agreed that sometimes student's mobility positively impact/ influence academic achievement and student's academic motivation and engagement. The following Pie chart shows how teachers perceive on this statement, by considering the numbers of teachers for their ideas and their percentage.

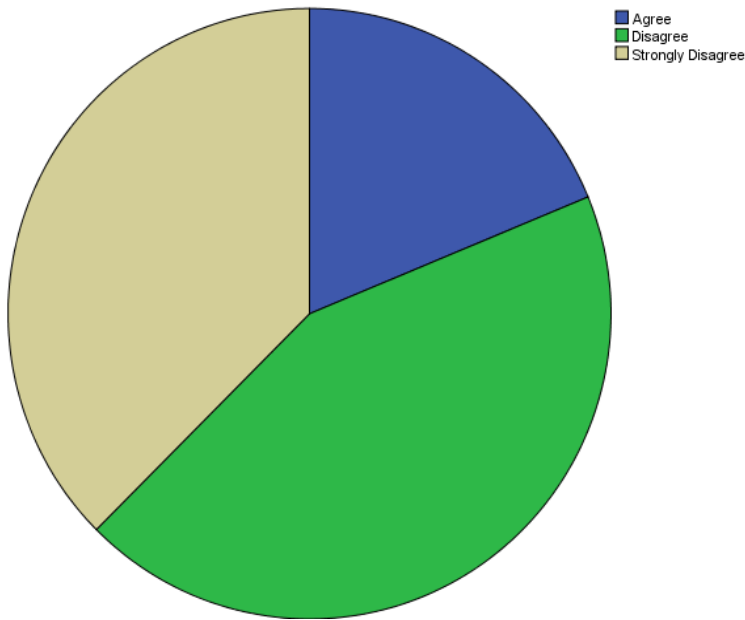


Figure 2: Student mobility positively affects academic motivation and engagement

Source: Primary data, August 2023

Teachers also showed their perception about how the student's mobility impact/ influence academic achievement and student's academic motivation and engagement by showing that through the different circumstances, the teaching and learning activities do not succeed effectively due to the negative effects of student's mobility. For this idea, 57% of teachers within four selected schools strongly agreed that teaching and learning success can be affected/ influenced by student's mobility, while 43% of teachers also agreed that teaching and learning success can be affected by student's mobility and this also can directly or indirectly influence student's academic motivation and engagement within the positive or negative aspect.

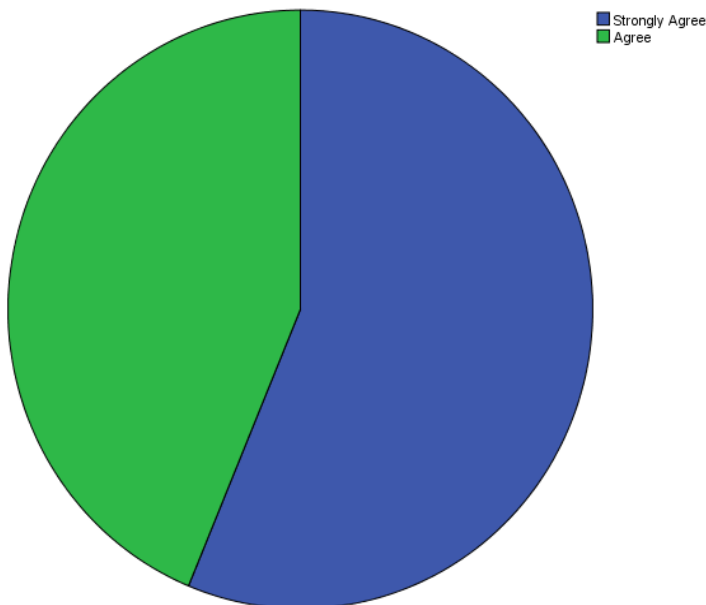


Figure 3: Perception of teachers on teaching and learning

Source: Primary data, August 2023

In addition to this, teachers also confirmed the above information, by showing that student's mobility challenge them while teaching classrooms belonging mobile students, this was shown by answers that they provided on this question, whereby 26% of 16 questioned teachers strongly agreed that they faced challenges while teaching classroom belonging mobile and non-mobile students, 62% Agreed with this statement while 6% of teachers represented by one teacher disagreed with this statement, and 6% represented by one teacher also Strongly disagreed this by saying that he didn't face a challenge in teaching mobile and non-mobile students. This question also became very important for this research because of as the research has been shown that the teacher is one among the most important motivational factor for student, meanwhile if a teacher witness challenges while teaching, may became a burden and a big barrier for a teacher to motivate students.

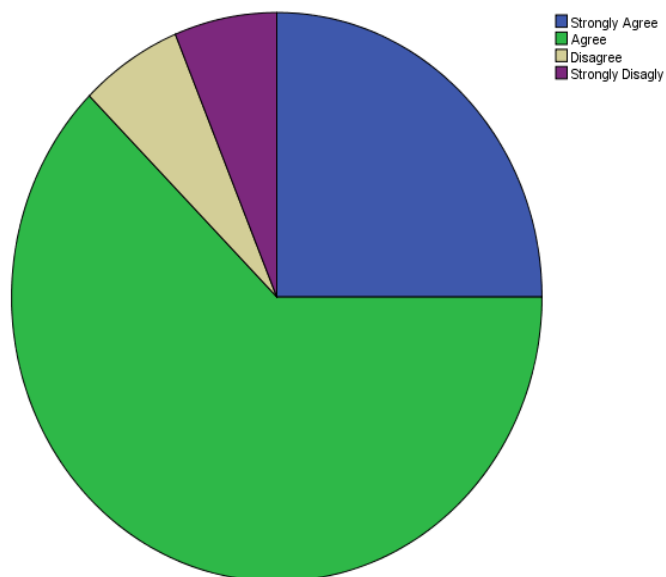


Figure 4: Student's mobility on teachers and teaching

Source: Primary data, August 2023

The present results align with Clemens et al. (2017), who found that moving can result in discontinuities in curriculum coverage. This disruption often necessitates that students adjust to a new learning and teaching environment, which takes time and can hinder their academic progress. The transition to a different curriculum may leave gaps in the students' knowledge, making it difficult for them to keep up with their new peers. Consequently, the adjustment period can impact their academic performance and overall learning experience. Similarly, the present results align with Rumberger et al. (2019), who highlighted mobile students' challenges in participating in classwork. These students often struggle to integrate into new classroom dynamics and may feel isolated or disconnected from their peers and teachers. The frequent changes in school environments can disrupt their sense of stability and continuity in learning, making it harder for them to engage actively in class activities. This lack of participation can further exacerbate their academic difficulties and negatively affect their educational outcomes. Furthermore, the present results are consistent with findings from the Pew Research Center (2021), which identified challenges for parents in certain types of communities, particularly those involving rural-urban movements and income changes. The study indicated that parents moving between rural and urban areas, or those experiencing shifts in income levels, are more likely to affect their children's mobility. These socioeconomic factors can create additional stress and instability for families, further complicating the educational experiences of mobile students and potentially hindering their academic success. Moreover, the present results echo Welsh (2017), who found that secondary-level transfers may negatively affect student motivation and engagement. Transferring during these critical years can disrupt students' social networks and support systems, making it harder for

them to stay motivated and engaged in their studies. The loss of familiar teachers and friends and the challenges of adapting to a new school environment can significantly impact their enthusiasm for learning and overall academic performance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of student mobility on academic motivation and engagement in Kamonyi public secondary schools in Rwanda. The research found that mobility negatively affects students' motivation and engagement, affecting their peers, teachers, and the school environment. The study highlighted the need for stakeholders to address issues related to student mobility to enhance academic success in Kamonyi public secondary schools.

Recommendations

Student mobility should occur at the start of the academic year to minimize disruptions and reduce academic setbacks. Students should follow the rules for promotion and repetition, and teachers should implement remedial programs for underperforming students. Parents should engage in discussions about mobility and its impact on academic achievement. School and government policies, such as establishing internal regulations and rewarding high-performing students, are crucial. Support for improving school quality across regions and addressing socioeconomic disparities can also help mitigate mobility. However, the study acknowledges limitations and calls for broader research with non-mobile students and larger sample sizes.

References

- Adams, W. C. (2015) 'Conducting Semi-structured Interview.In:.. In J. S. Wholey, H. P. Harty, K. E. Newcomer, & Eds., *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*', San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Arlestig, H. (2008) 'Structural prerequisites for principals and Teachers communication about Teaching and Learning Issues', *SAGE PUBL*, 11,189-203.
- Audrey. (1989) '*Methodology of Educational Research*', Delhi: USB Publishers Distributors.
- Black, S. (2006) 'Stabilizing schools with kids on the move', *Education Digest*, 72,(3),46-51.
- Bowker, J. C., Rubin, K. H., Bushkirk-chohen, A., Rose-Krasner, L., & Booth-Laforce, C. (2010) 'Behavior changes predicting temporal changes in perceived popular status', *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 31,126-133.doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2009,10,002.
- Bradshaw, C. P., Sadhinaraset, M., Mmari, K., & Blum, R. (2010) 'School transitios among military adolescents:A qualitative study and coping', *School Psychology Review*, 1,84-105.
- Brodkin, A. (2005) 'This year my room has a revolving door', *Instructor*, 114(5),Ja/F2005.
- Burkham, D., Lee, V., & Dwyer, J. (2009) 'School mobility in the early elementary grade:Frequency and impact from nationally Representative data. Washington DC: Paper presented at national academies

workshop on the impact of mobility and change on the Lives of young children schools and neighborhoods’

- Chem, G. (2008) ‘Communities, Students, schools, and school crime’, *Urban Education*, 43(3),301-318 doi:10.1177/004.
- Clemens et Al. (2017) ‘Educational stability policy and the interplay between child welfare placements and school moves’, *Children and Youth Services Review*, 83,209-217.
- Columbus Foundation. (2003) ‘Columbus public schools student mobility research project report. Columbus,OH: The Columbus Foundation Community Research Partners’
- Conger et al. (2007) ‘Immigrant and native-born differences in school stability and special education evidence from New York city’, *International Migration Review*, 41(2)403-432.
- Debson, J. M., Henthorne, K., & Lynas, Z. (2000) ‘Pupil mobility in schools: Final report. *Migration Research Unit*’
- Drewry, J. A., Burge, P. L., & Driscoll, L. G. (2010) ‘A tripartic perspective of social capital and is access by high school dropouts’, *Education and Urban Society*, 4,499-521.doi:10.3102/00346543072001031.
- Eckholm, E. (2008) ‘To avoid student turnover, parents get help with the rent. New York,NY P.A.15: New York Times’
- Engec, N. (2016) ‘Relationship between mobility and students performance and behavior’, *The Journal of Educational Research*, 99(3),167-178.
- Fantuzzo, J., LeBoeuf, W. A., Chen, C. C., Rouse, H. L., & Culhane, D. P. (2012) ‘The unique and combined effects of homelessness and school mobilityon the educational outcomes of young children’, *Educational Researcher*, 41,393-402.
- Fowler- Finn, T. (2001) ‘Student stability vs mobility school Administrator’, 58(7),36-40.
- Grigg, J. (2012) ‘School enrolment changes and student achievement growth:A case study in educational disruption and and continuity’, *Sociology of Education*, 85(4),388-404.
- Grover, V. (2015) ‘Research aproach: An overview.golden research thoughts’, *International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 4(8),1-8.
- Gruman et al. (2008) ‘Longitudinal effects of student mobility on three dimentions of elementary school engagement’, *Child Development*, 79,1833-1852.
- Gruman, D. H., Harachi, T. W., Abbott, R. D., Catalano, R. F., & Fleming, C. B. (2008) ‘Longitudinal effects of stdent mobility on three dimentions of elementary school engagement’, *Child Development*, 79(6),1833-1852.

- Han, S. (2014) 'School mobility and students' academic and behavioral outcomes', *International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership*, 9(6),1-14.
- Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., & Rivkin, S. G. (2004) 'Disruption Versus Tiebout improvement: the costs and benefits of switching schools', *Journal of public economics*.
- Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., & Rivkin, S. G. (2004) 'Disruption versus Tiebout improvement: the costs and benefits of Switching schools', *Journal of Public Economics*, 88,1721-1746.
- Hartman, C. (2006) 'Students on the move', *Educational Leadership*, 63(5),20-4.
- Hirsh, A. R. (2003) 'Second thoughts on the second ghetto', *Journal of Urban History*, 29,298-315. doi:10.1177/0096144202250385.
- Honglund, W. L., & Leadbeater, B. J. (2004) 'The effects of family, school, and classroom ecologies on changes in children's social competence and emotional and behavioral problems in first grade', *Developmental Psychology*, 40,533-544. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.40.4.533.
- ICEF Monitor. (2013, 7 19) 'A closer look at African student mobility. Retrieved from ICEF Monitor. *a- closer-look-at- african- student- mobility*'
- Javeau, C. (1989) 'Enquête Par Questionnaire. Bruxelles: 3ème Edition'
- Jorgensen, C. R., & Perry, T. (2021) 'Understanding school mobility and mobile pupils in England', *British Educational Research Journal*, 47(5),1139-1157.
- Kaase, K., & Dulaney, C. (2005) 'The impact of mobility on academic achievement: A review of the literature Evaluation and Research Department Report No.04.39. Research Watch wake country public school system'
- Kalu, O. (2005) 'Research Methodology', UNR-Butare (Course notes)
- Kerbow, D., Azcoitia, C., & Buell, B. (2003) 'Student mobility and local school improvement in Chicago', *The Journal of Negro Education*, 72(1),158-164.
- Kingery, J. N., Erdley, C. A., & Marshall, K. C. (2011) 'Peer acceptance and friendship as predictors of early adolescent's adjustment across the middle school transition', *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 57,215-243. doi:10.1353/mpg.2011.0012.
- Kirshner, B., Gaertner, M., & Pozzoboni, K. (2010) 'Tracing transitions: The effect of high school closure on displaced students', *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 32,407-429 doi:10.3102/0162373710376823.
- Langenkamp, A. G. (2011) 'Effects of Educational transitions on students' academic trajectory: A life course perspective', *Sociological Perspectives*, 54,497-520 doi:10.1525/sop.2011.54.4.497.

- Law, K. M., Geng, S., & Li, T. (2019) 'Student enrollement, motivation and learning performance in a blended learning environment:The mediating effects of social,teaching,and cognitive presence', *Computers& Education*, 136,1-12.
- Leckie, G. (2009) 'The complexity of school and neighbourhood effects and movment of pupils on school differences in models of educational achievements', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society-Series A*, 172(3),537-554.
- Lee, M. (2011) 'Researching sicial capital in education:some conceptual considerations relating to the contribution of network analysis', *British Journal of Sociology Inquiry in Education*, 31,779-772 doi:10.1080/01425692.2010.515111.
- Lu, L., & Rickard, K. (2016) '*Mobility of students in NSW government schools*', Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation.
- Machin, S., Telhaj, S., & Wilson, J. (2006) 'The mobility of English school children', *Fiscal Studies*, 27(3),253-280.
- Mao, M. X., Whitsett, & Mellor, L. T. (1998 and Revised in 2008) 'Student mobility, academic performance, and school accountability', *ERS Spectrum*, 16,3-15.
- Maxwell, L. (2008) 'Student mobility in N.Y.C', *Education Week*, 27(32),5.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. V. (2010) 'Research methodology. *Educational Research*'
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. V. (2012) 'Educational research design and population', *Journal of Education*.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. V. (2014) '*Research in education:Evidence-Based Inquiry*. (7 ed.) Pearson Education'
- Means, D. R., & Pyne, K. B. (2017) 'Finding my:perceptions of institutional support and belonging in low-income,First generation,first-year-college students', *Journal of College Student Development*, 58(6),907-924.
- Mehana, M., & Reynolds, A. J. (2004) 'School mobility and achievement: A mete analysis', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 26(1),93-119.
- Mehana, M., & Reynolds, A. J. (2004) 'School mobility and achievement: Ameta-analysis', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 26,93-119.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016) '*Qualitative research:A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco: CA:Jossey Bass'
- Metzger, M. W., Fowler, P. J., Anderson, C. L., & Lindsay, C. A. (2015) 'Residential mobility during adolescence:Do even "upword" moves predict dropout risk? ', *Social Science Research*, 53.218-230.

- MINEDUC. (2020) 'Ministerial instructions regulating the promotion, repetition, Dismissal and Transfer of Pupils and Students. Kigali: Rwanda Ministry of Education', p1-30.
- Mordechay, K. (2018) 'The effects of the the Great Recession on the School mobility of youth', *Education and Urban Society*, 50(7),595-616.
- Offenberg, R. M. (2004) 'Inferring adequate yearly progress of schools from student achievement in highly mobile', *Journal of Education for Stusents placed at Risk*, 9(4),337-355.
- Parente, M. E., & Mahoney, J. L. (2009) 'Residential mobility and exposure to neighborhood crimes:Risks for young children's aggression', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 37,559-578.doi.101002/jcop.
- Pribesh, S., & Downey, D. B. (1999) 'Why are residential and schol moves associated with poor school performance? ', *Demography*, 36,521-534.
- Reynolds, A. J. (2008) 'Early schooling of children at risk', *American Educational Research Journal*, 28(2)392-422.
- Rhodes, V. L. (2008) 'Learning on the go:voice of highly mobile urban students', *Learning Inquiry*, 2,113-125 doi:10.1007/S11519-008-0029-1.
- Rumberger, R. W. (2003) 'The causes and consequences of student mobility', *Journal of Negro Education*, 72,6-21 doi:10.2307/3211287.
- Rumberger, R. W. (2015) 'Student mobility: causes, consequences, and solutions', National Education Policy Center.
- Rumberger, R. W., & Larson, K. A. (2018) 'Students' mobility and high risk of school dropout', *American Journal of Education*, 107(1),1-35.
- Rumberger, V. F., & Thomas, H. (2020) 'Mobility of Students in Schools and related outcomes', *Journal of Educational Research*, 87(3) 453-487.
- Rwandan Education. (2018, 06 29) 'Law Determining the Organization of Education', *Official gazette no 39*. Rwanda: MINEDUC.
- Ryan, A. M., & Shim, S. S. (2008) 'An exploration of young adolescent's social achievement goals and social adjustment in middle school', *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100,672-687.doi:10.1037/0022-0663.100.
- Sanderson, D. R. (2004) 'Tranciency test scores and the public:One school district's story', *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 30,225-236.doi:10.1016/j.stuedue.2004.09.001.
- Schachter, V. (2004) 'Student mobility and academic achievement', *Journal of Educational Progress*.

- Schafft, K. A. (2005) 'The incidence and impacts of student transiency in upstate New York's rural school districts', *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 20(15),1-13. Retrieved from ERIC database.(EJ722347).
- Schafft, K. A., & Prins, E. S. (2009) 'Poverty, residential mobility and persistence actors urban and rural family literacy programs in pennsylvania', *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal Retrieved from ERIC database*.(EJ836281), 3(1),3-12.
- Schwartz, A., Stiefel, L., & Chalico, L. (2009) 'The multiple dimensions of student mobility and implications for academic performance', *Education Finance Research Consortium*.
- Smith, J. M., Fien, H., & Paine, S. C. (2008, Apr) 'When mobility disrupts learning', p. 65(7)Apr.
- Sorin, R., & Lloste, R. (2006) 'Moving Schools: Antecedents impact on students and interventions', *Australian Journal of Education*, 50,227-241.
- South, S. J., Haynie, D. L., & Bose, S. (2007) 'Student mobility and school dropout', *Social Science Research*, 36(1),68-94.doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2005.10.001.
- Stand, S., & Demie, F. (2007) 'Pupil mobility, attainment and progress in secondary school', *Educational Studies*, 33(3),313-331.
- Standstorm, M. J., & Cillesson, A. H. (2006) 'Leakeable vs.population:Distinct implications for adolescent adjustment', *International Journal Development*, 30,305-314.doi:10.1177/0165025406072789.
- Strand, S., & Demie, F. (2006,2007) 'Pupil, attainment and progress in secondary school', *Educational Studies*, 33(3)313-331.
- Temple, J., & Reynolds, A. J. (2000) 'School mobility and achievements:Longitudinal findings from an urban cohort', *Journal of School Psychology*, 37,355-377.
- Theriot, M., & Drupper, D. R. (2010) 'Student discipline problems and the transition from elementary to middle school', *Education and Urban Society*, 42,205-222.doi:10.1177/0013124509349583.
- Titus, D. (2007) 'Strategies and resources for enhancing the achievement of mobile students', *NASSP Bulletin*, 91(1),81-92.
- Tu, K. M., Erath, S. A., & Flanagan, K. S. (2011) 'Can socially adopt friends protect peer.victimized early adolescents against lower academic performance?', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 33,24-30.doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2011.09.002.
- Tuazan, A., & Padiernos, M. (2016) 'Communication satisfaction and working relationship between public Heads and Teachers Prims 2016,21,49-59'
- UNESCO Institute for statistics. (2009) 'GLOBAL EDUCATION DIGIT 2009. Comparing Education statistics Across the world', UNESCO intitute for Educational Statistics.

- Veronneau, M. H., & Dishion, T. J. (2011) 'Middle school friendships and academic achievement in early adolescence:A longitudinal analysis', *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 31,(1)99.
- Walls, C. A. (2003) 'Providing highly mobile students with an effective education', *Retrieved from ERIC database*, ED482918.
- Welsh, R. O. (2017) 'School hopscotch: A comprehensive review of K-12 student mobility in the United States', *Review of Educational Research*, 47(3),475-511.