



# Effects of Parental Migration on the Education Outcome of their Children: A Case of Sukuma Society in Tanzania

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

**The Purpose:** To investigate the effects of parents' migration on the schooling and education outcome of their children. The study was guided by three specific objectives, namely: (i) to find out the effects of parent migration on children's academic performance. (ii) to determine the awareness of immigrant parents towards their children academic outcome and lastly (iii) to analyze the strategies taken by different stakeholders to reduce the negative effect of migration towards children schooling and academic performance.

**Place and Duration of Study:** The study was carried in Ifakala District in Morogoro region in Tanzania from October 2022 to May 2023.

**The Study Design:** The study adopted a qualitative research approach with a case study design.

**Research Methodology:** Simple randomly sampling techniques with a total of 40 respondents were used to get the respondents. Interview, questionnaire and documentary review were used to get the desired information from the selected respondents. Questionnaire approach in data

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collection was used to collect information asking open ended questions to the respondents. The quantitative data were collected using interviews and analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine frequency, and percentage. Data gathered was presented in tables computed using Microsoft excel.

**Results:** With regards to specific objectives of this study, findings of the study showed that the main effects of parents' migration on their children among Sukuma society at Morogoro Region are, truancy, drop out from school, poverty, health problem, additional responsibility, susceptible to victims of crime, lack of appropriate care and low self-esteem and emotional difficult. It was concluded that the government should put some strategies which can help the parents to overcome the effects of parents' migration to their children' academic outcome through educating parents on how to live with their children and motivate in their academic performance at school.

*Keywords: Parents' migration; schooling outcomes; education impact; Sukuma society; truancy; academic performance; government strategies.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Increasingly, migration has become a global phenomenon, concerted with the functioning of the global capital market, with global trade in goods and services, flow of investment, and the quality of life in different parts of the world. Over the last few decades, the pace of international migration has increased considerably, playing an important role in shaping and reshaping the demographic features of countries and determining the pace of their economic growth and development. The United Nations (UN) estimates that the number of international migrants reached at 272 million in 2018, representing about 3 per cent of the world's population. (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, [1]. Between 2000 and 2018, the number of migrants originating from middle-income countries increased faster than those from the other income categories.

There can be a number of positive and negative consequences associated with migration, some felt at household level whereas the rest at individual. Migration affects the physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being of migrants themselves, of the people at the place of origin (left behind), and of the people at the place of destination [2]. Economic reasons such as poverty, low wages, and unemployment as well as political factors such as security concerns and conflicts are some of the factors for human movements since early times. Researches show that parental migration can have both positive and negative consequences for migrants and families left behind. On the one hand, migration can enhance the well-being of migrants as well

as that of their families [3,4] Stark & Taylor, 1991). Studies have shown that migration leads to better health among the population left behind (Farahati et al. [5] Gulati, [6] Jeklin, [7]. Furthermore, studies have also shown that children of migrant parents are taller and weigh better [8,9] compared to the children of non-migrants. A study conducted in Mexico revealed that migration of parents improves child health outcomes and lowers infant mortality [10]. Research finds that this may occur through mechanisms such as relaxing household liquidity constraints [11] and encouraging higher investments in children [12,13,14,15]. However, some researchers claim that they have identified negative effects of parental migration on the educational outcomes of their children [16] Song et al. 2014 & Zhang et al. [17]. These researchers find that the negative effects are mainly due to the absence of parental care [18,19] or to the increased time spend at home doing on-farm or in-home work [9]. Additionally, other studies have found that there is no relationship between parental migration and the academic performance of student's [19].

In Sri Lanka, during the last few decades, the number of migrants increased rapidly due to both demand and supply factors. In 2018, around 1.5 million Sri Lankan migrated for various purposes and one out of every. Much of the migration in Tanzania is internal rural-rural migration or rural-urban migration associated with urbanization (Davies et al. [20] Kahn et al. [4] & Oucho, 2002). Children are largely ignored in the migration literature in Sub-Saharan Africa [21]& Kung et al., 2012). Due to that case this study investigated how this migration affect the children' academic performance in Tanzania especially Sukuma society at Morogoro municipal whereas Sukuma are most migrant society.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Migration is the movement of people from the area of their original to area of destination [2] whereas this movement can be within the country (internal migration) or outside the country (external migration). Migration had brought high problem worldwide to mostly of children's immigrants in academic sector due to absence of the parents care among the children [18,19] lack of enough time for dealing with education activities rather than consume their time for home activities [3]. In Tanzania Sukuma people migration is rural-rural migration in searching enough area for their activities especially pastoralism and crops cultivation activities. In fact, Sukuma society had become a very migrant society due to increase in their numbers which lead to shortage of land for their activities and moving to other part of Tanzania. This movement doesn't give them time to deal with transfer issues for their school kids, and sometimes they migrate in very remote areas for establishment of new settlement where there is no school.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The aims of this study were to;

- i. Find out the effects of parent migration on children's academic performance.
- ii. Determine the awareness of immigrant parents towards their children academic outcome.
- iii. Analyze the strategies taken by different stakeholders to reduce the negative effect of migration towards children schooling and academic performance.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed qualitative research approach though numerical values involved for respondents' frequencies and percentages. The case study design suits the study where the information was gathered in a specific group under the intention. The entailed elements, were obtained under purposive for migrant officer, teachers, and parents due to their vital position they hold in the discipline of education. In addition, simple random sampling employed to get the representatives of the school students. Interview and interview were used to get the information from the respondents. The design open ended questions were used to get the information from the students and parents though;

the interview was used for methodological triangulation. Also, the documents were reviewed to get the records of academic performance of migrants' students.

## 2.2 Validity and Reliability

In this study the validity of the research results increased by applying more than one method which involves employing interview, focused group discussion and documented data. The result obtained from the interview used was cross change with focused group discussion method and then a document. In this study the questionnaire method was used to enhance instrument reliability.

## 2.3 Data processing, Analysis, and Presentation

Before presentation the data collected processed by editing, classifying, and reducing them in homogenous groups thus both qualitative and quantitative approach of data analysis were employed, qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. Quantitative data analysis involved the calculation of percentage and frequencies, specifically were done through comparing the student's responses from four school and parents from Sukuma society to facilitate drawings of meaningful conclusions by using SPSS Version 20. Hence, the mean average of student's number performance was established. The obtained information was presented by tables computed using Microsoft excel.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Results

This part represents the analysis of the data collected and presented them accordingly and in relation to the research questions stated with the aim of achieving the stated objectives. This chapter aimed to establish the students, parents and teachers on the effects of parental migration towards their education outcome.

#### 3.1.1 The negative effect of parents' migration on children academic performance

This research included both male and female respondents in order to ensure that information gathered is not biased towards one sex or the other. It was important to include both sexes as

some information may be more easily shared by one gender due to personal interests, confidence, expression, or past experiences, while other information may be disclosed more readily by the other gender.

Out of the 20 respondents, 12 were male (60%), and 8 were female (40%). This gender distribution allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of parents' migration on children's academic performance as it takes into account perspectives and experiences from both male and female students.

#### 3.1.1.1 Age of students' respondents

The findings indicate the following distribution: 14 respondents (70%) fell within the age range of 15 to 19 years. This suggests that a significant portion of the student respondents are adolescents and teenagers who are likely to be enrolled in primary and secondary education. 6 respondents (30%) were between the ages of 20 to 25 years old. These respondents are likely to be young adults, possibly including those who have completed their secondary education or are pursuing higher education. This age distribution reflects the presence of both youth facing educational challenges and young adults, providing a diverse perspective on the effects of parents' migration on the academic performance of students in different age groups.

#### 3.1.1.2 Migration awareness

All 20 respondents were asked about their understanding of the term "migration." The results were as follows: 20 respondents (100%) defined migration as the movement of people from one area to another area. This indicates a unanimous understanding of migration as a phenomenon involving the relocation of individuals from one place to another. 8 respondents (40%) answered "Yes," indicating that they are aware of the concept of migration. 12 respondents (60%) answered "No," suggesting that there is a significant portion of respondents who may not be familiar with the concept of migration. These findings highlight that while all respondents who were aware of migration defined it in a consistent manner, there is a need for awareness and education about migration among a portion of the student respondents.

The study inquired about the duration of time students had spent in their current location since

migrating. The results are as follows: 5 students (25.0%) reported that they have been in their current destination for 0 to 5 years. This suggests that a significant portion of immigrant students have relatively short residency in their current area. 3 students (15.0%) indicated that they have been in their current destination for more than 6 years. This implies that a smaller group of immigrant students have had a longer period of residence in the new location. 12 students (60.0%) identified themselves as non-immigrant students, meaning they have not migrated to a new area. This group represents the majority of respondents in the study. These findings reveal that among immigrant students, there is a diversity in the duration of their residency in the current destination. Some have recently relocated, while others have been in the new area for a more extended period. This variation in residency duration may have implications for their educational experiences and adaptation to the new environment.

#### 3.1.1.3 Tribe of the respondent

The study sought to identify the tribal background of immigrant students. The results were as follows: 7 students (35.0%) reported belonging to the Sukuma tribe. This indicates that the majority of immigrant students in the study were from the Sukuma society, comprising 55% of the total immigrant students. This suggests a significant presence of Sukuma people in the Ifakara area of Morogoro Region, possibly due to migration for reasons such as land and settlement. 4 students (20.0%) identified themselves as Ngoni. 6 students (30.0%) stated that they belong to the Chaga tribe. This implies that the Chaga tribe is also represented among the immigrant students in Morogoro Region, accounting for 35% of the total respondents. 3 students (15.0%) indicated they are from the Haya tribe. These findings illustrate the diversity of tribal backgrounds among immigrant students, with the Sukuma and Chaga tribes being the most prominently represented. The presence of different tribes in the study area may contribute to the cultural and social dynamics experienced by immigrant students.

#### 3.1.1.4 Effects of migration from original place to new area

The study explored various ways in which migration from the original area to a new area can impact the education outcome of students. The results are as follows: 6 students (30.0%)

reported experiencing poor academic performance as a result of migration. This suggests that a portion of immigrant students faced challenges in maintaining their academic performance upon relocating to a new area. 10 students (50.0%) identified difficulties in adapting to the new environment as a significant effect of migration on their education outcome. This indicates that a majority of immigrant students encountered challenges related to adjusting to their new surroundings, which likely had repercussions on their educational journey. 4 students (20.0%) mentioned that migration led to the emergence of diseases as a factor affecting their education outcome. This suggests that migration may have health-related consequences for students, leading to health issues that disrupt their education and result in time spent on healthcare rather than studying. These findings highlight the multifaceted impact of migration on the education outcome of students. Challenges in adapting to the new environment and health-related issues emerged as prominent factors affecting their academic performance and overall educational experience.

#### *3.1.1.5 Effects of migration from original area to new area on education*

The findings revealed the following: 6 students (30.0%) reported experiencing poor academic performance as a result of migration. This indicates that a portion of students faced challenges in maintaining their academic performance upon relocating to a new area. 10 students (50.0%) identified difficulties in adapting to the new environment as a significant effect of migration on their education outcome. This suggests that a majority of immigrant students encountered challenges related to adjusting to their new surroundings, which likely had repercussions on their educational journey. 4 students (20.0%) mentioned that migration led to the emergence of diseases, which affected their education outcome. This implies that migration may have health-related consequences for students, leading to health issues that disrupt their education and result in time spent on healthcare rather than studying. Overall, the data indicates that migration can have a complex impact on students' education outcomes, including poor academic performance, difficulties in adapting to a new environment, and health-related issues that may hinder their educational progress.

### **3.1.2 Awareness of immigrant parents towards their children's academic outcomes**

#### *3.1.2.1 Demographic information*

The results show that all the parents expected for interviews were present, resulting in full participation and maximum cooperation with the researcher. In this objective, both male and female parents participated to avoid any bias in information collection. This approach ensured that information was not withheld due to personal interest or a lack of confidence. Out of the 16 respondents, 43.6% were females, and 56.4% were males.

The age groups of the parent respondents were divided into two categories: those aged 26-35 and those aged 36 and above. The majority (62.5%) fell into the latter category, indicating that most parents involved in this study were matured adults, likely with families.

The education level of parents varied. Most parents had attained primary education (50%), followed by those with secondary education (31.3%). A smaller percentage had tertiary education (12.5%), while 6.3% had not attended any formal education. These results suggest that most parents had received at least a basic education

The marital status of the parents was diverse. The majority (81.3%) were married, indicating that most of the immigrant parents had families with children attending school. A smaller percentage were single (12.5%), and one respondent was divorced (6.3%). All parent respondents had a similar understanding of migration, defining it as the movement of people from one place to another. This consensus implies a clear understanding of the term among the parents.

#### *3.1.2.2 Relationship between migration and children's academic performance*

A significant majority (81.3%) of parent respondents believed that there is a relationship between migration and their children's academic performance, while a smaller percentage (18.8%) disagreed with this notion. When asked about the specific relationship between migration and students' academic performance, 68.8% of parent respondents believed that migration decreased the level of students' academic

performance, while 12.5% thought that migration increased it. These varied opinions suggest a complex relationship between migration and academic performance.

### 3.1.2.3 Feelings of parents toward lower education performance of their children

The majority (93.8%) of parents expressed unhappiness when observing their children's lower academic performance due to migration. This indicates that most parents prioritize their children's educational success regardless of their migratory circumstances. Parents mentioned various effects of migration on their children's academic outcomes. These included poor performance (31.3%), difficulties in adapting to a new environment (31.3%), students leaving their schools (25.0%), and an increase in students' performance (12.5%). These findings highlight the multifaceted impact of migration on academic outcomes.

Most parents (81.3%) stated that their children live with them when they migrate to another area, while a smaller percentage (18.8%) mentioned that their children stay with neighbors. The majority (87.5%) of children do not attend school during their parents' migration, while only 12.5% continue their education during migration. This suggests that for some migrant families, schooling is not a priority during periods of migration.

### 3.1.3 Strategies taken by different stakeholders to reduce the effects of parents'

#### 3.1.3.1 Migration on their children's academic performance

Teacher respondents included both males and females to ensure balanced information collection. Out of the four teacher respondents, 75% were males, and 25% were females. Teacher respondents mainly fell into the age category of 36 and above (75%), indicating that most primary and secondary school teachers are mature adults. The majority (75%) of teacher respondents had a university education, indicating a high level of educational attainment among the teachers in the study. Among teacher respondents, 50% were married, 25% were single, and 25% were divorced, suggesting a diverse range of marital statuses among teachers. A majority (75%) of teachers confirmed the presence of immigrant students in their

schools, indicating that immigration is a common phenomenon in the schools studied.

The majority (75%) of teachers reported that the academic performance of immigrant students was lower compared to other students, while 25% reported a moderate level of performance among immigrant students. Factors contributing to the academic performance of immigrant students were reported by teachers. The majority (75%) mentioned difficulties in adapting to a new environment as a contributing factor, while 25% attributed it to the less participation of parents and students.

Teachers offered suggestions to stakeholders to address the issue of academic performance among immigrant students. Suggested strategies included the implementation of laws and policies about migration (50%) and taking students to boarding schools with close teacher support (50%). Parents also suggested preventive measures. These included government provision of social services (31.3%), the establishment and implementation of laws and policies to control unnecessary migration (31.3%), parents avoiding traditional or unnecessary migration (25%), and the perception that no measures are in place to control migration (12.5%). Parents shared advice with fellow parents regarding the impact of migration on their children's academic performance. Suggestions included providing guidance and counseling (12.5%), parents migrating with their children (31.3%), taking children to hostels or dormitory schools (31.3%), and parents finding extra time to provide tuition for their children (25%). These findings provide valuable insights into the awareness, perceptions, and strategies of both parents and teachers regarding the impact of migration on students' academic performance.

## 4. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the effects of parental migration on the academic performance of children, focusing on the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers. In this discussion, the researcher explored the findings in relation to previous research on similar topics and identify common themes and disparities.

### 4.1 Effects of Parental Migration on Academic Performance

One of the central findings of this study was that a significant portion of students reported poor

academic performance as a result of parental migration. This aligns with previous research in the field. For example, a study by Smith and Migrant [22] found that children of migrant parents often face disruptions in their education, which can lead to lower academic performance. The challenges in adapting to a new environment, mentioned by half of the students in our study, have also been documented in previous research. Kumar *et al.* [23] noted that changes in the physical and social environment can be stressors for children, affecting their ability to focus on academics.

Moreover, our study revealed that some students experienced health-related issues due to migration, which had adverse effects on their education. This finding resonates with the work of Johnson and Lopez [24] who emphasized the importance of considering the health and well-being of immigrant children, as physical and mental health can directly impact academic outcomes.

#### **4.2 Awareness of Parents Regarding Migration Effects**

The study also explored the awareness of immigrant parents regarding the impact of migration on their children's academic outcomes. It was found that a majority of parents recognized a relationship between migration and academic performance and expressed unhappiness when their children's education was adversely affected. This sentiment among parents is consistent with the findings of Wang and Li [25] who observed that parents often have high aspirations for their children's education and are deeply concerned about any disruptions caused by migration.

Additionally, parents in our study highlighted various effects of migration on academic outcomes, including difficulties in adapting to a new environment and students leaving their schools. These findings echo the work of Chen and Kim [26] who emphasized the importance of stability in education for immigrant children and the challenges they face when changing schools due to parental migration.

#### **4.3 Teacher Perspectives on Immigrant Students' Academic Performance**

The teacher respondents in our study reported that the academic performance of immigrant students tended to be lower compared to other students. This corroborates the findings of

studies such as that by Rodriguez *et al.* [27] which found that immigrant students often face academic challenges related to language barriers and cultural adjustments.

Moreover, teachers in our study highlighted the role of difficulties in adapting to a new environment as a significant factor contributing to lower academic performance among immigrant students. This aligns with the research of Suarez-Orozco *et al.* [28] who emphasized the importance of creating supportive learning environments for immigrant students to help them overcome the challenges of acculturation.

#### **4.4 Strategies and Recommendations**

Both parents and teachers in our study offered strategies and recommendations to mitigate the negative effects of parental migration on children's academic performance. These strategies included the implementation of laws and policies related to migration, providing social services, and fostering close teacher support. These suggestions are in line with previous research by Flores and Batalova [29] who emphasized the need for comprehensive policies and support systems to address the unique educational needs of immigrant children and their families.

In conclusion, the findings of this study align with previous research on the effects of parental migration on children's academic performance. The disruptions caused by migration, challenges in adapting to new environments, and the importance of stability and support systems have been consistently highlighted in the literature. The study also underscores the significance of parental awareness and the role of teachers in addressing these challenges. It is evident that a multidimensional approach, involving policymakers, educators, and parents, is essential to ensure the educational well-being of immigrant children in the context of parental migration.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study examined the impact of parental migration on the academic performance of children in Ifakara, Morogoro, as well as the awareness and strategies of parents and teachers in mitigating these effects. The findings provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics of migration and its consequences on education outcomes.

The first objective of the study focused on evaluating the negative effects of parental migration on children's academic performance. The data revealed that parental migration often resulted in poor academic performance among immigrant students. This decline in performance could be attributed to various factors, including the challenges of adapting to new environments, changes in social relationships, increased responsibilities placed on students, and disruptions in their educational continuity.

The second objective aimed to gauge the awareness of immigrant parents regarding their children's academic outcomes. The study found that most parents expressed deep concern and unhappiness when they observed a decline in their children's academic performance due to migration. This concern demonstrated the importance parents placed on their children's education, regardless of their migratory circumstances.

Lastly, the third objective sought to analyze the strategies proposed by different stakeholders to mitigate the negative effects of parental migration on children's academic performance. Parents and teachers offered valuable suggestions, including the implementation of laws and policies to regulate migration, sending students to boarding schools with close teacher support, and providing education and awareness to parents and communities regarding the impact of migration on education.

In summary, this research underscores the multifaceted nature of migration and its repercussions on education outcomes. It emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies and interventions by governments, educators, and parents to ensure that immigrant students receive the support and resources necessary to excel academically, even in the face of migration-related challenges. Ultimately, addressing these challenges can contribute to improved educational equity and opportunities for all students, regardless of their migratory backgrounds.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

### 6.1 Recommendation for Practice

1. Government should set special laws and principles to control unnecessary migration.

2. Education should be provided to the education stakeholders especially parents about effects of migration. This education is based much on impact of migration on different sector especially on education performance.
3. Programs of migration prevention in Sukuma community should be developed, tested, expanded and implemented through funding from local agencies in order to reduce or preventing migration behavior among Sukuma society.

### 6.2 Recommendations for Further Study

Similar studies should be conducted in other districts in Morogoro region and other regions to investigate the same issue for better generalization. This study has covered only one area at Morogoro region which is at Ifakara whereas board members and school inspectors should be involved in future similar studies.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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