

THE SOCIAL MOBILITY REPORT

20
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Factors affecting Social
Mobility within Nigeria





What is Social Mobility?

Social mobility *“refers to the move of individuals or a person from one societal position to another as a result of a number of factors which include wealth, employment, power and influence.”*

Social mobility specifically highlights the movement of an individual to a social status differing from the one they were born into.

- **Horizontal mobility:** no social rise occurring as a result of a job change.
- **Vertical mobility:** an ascending/descending movement in social position; usually as a result of political, financial and/or social status.
- **Upward mobility:** transitioning from a current social position to a higher one.
- **Downward mobility:** transitioning from a current social position to a lower one.
- **Intra-generational mobility:** mobility occurring within an individual's lifespan (i.e., progressing over time from a steward to a professor).
- **Inter-generational mobility:** an entire generation changes their social position/class compared to the generation preceding them.

(Oyindo & Duru, 2019)



THE CHALLENGE

One in five of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria.

Approximately, *10.5 million children are out of school* despite the **1999 Universal Basic Education (UBE) program** detailing primary education as free and compulsory.

Among those enrolled, **nearly 70%** of primary and secondary schools lack sufficient infrastructure, resources, and qualified teachers, limiting students' access to quality education and, consequently, their social mobility.

Systemic improvements are crucial to empower students with the **skills needed for economic advancement.**

(Iwundu & Inko-Tariah, 2015; UNICEF, 2024)

Factors impacting Social Mobility

Quality of
Education/
Educational
Attainment

Skills and Training

Urbanisation/
Urban Migration

Modernisation/
Industrialisation

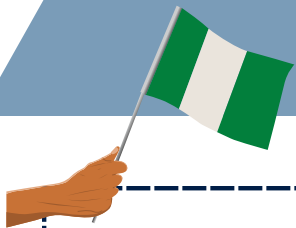
Student-teacher
ratio

Family
(i.e., parents'
occupation,
motivation/mindset,
intelligence)

Socio-economic
background

Factors inhibiting Social Mobility;

The Nigerian Context



Nepotism

Religion

Quota/Federal
character system

Ethnicity/Tribal
affiliation

Economy
(i.e., availability of
relevant employment
for graduates)

Family type
(i.e., nuclear, single-
parent, polygamous
homes)

Cross-state, social
policies

Gender

War/Conflict

The Impact of Education on Social Mobility

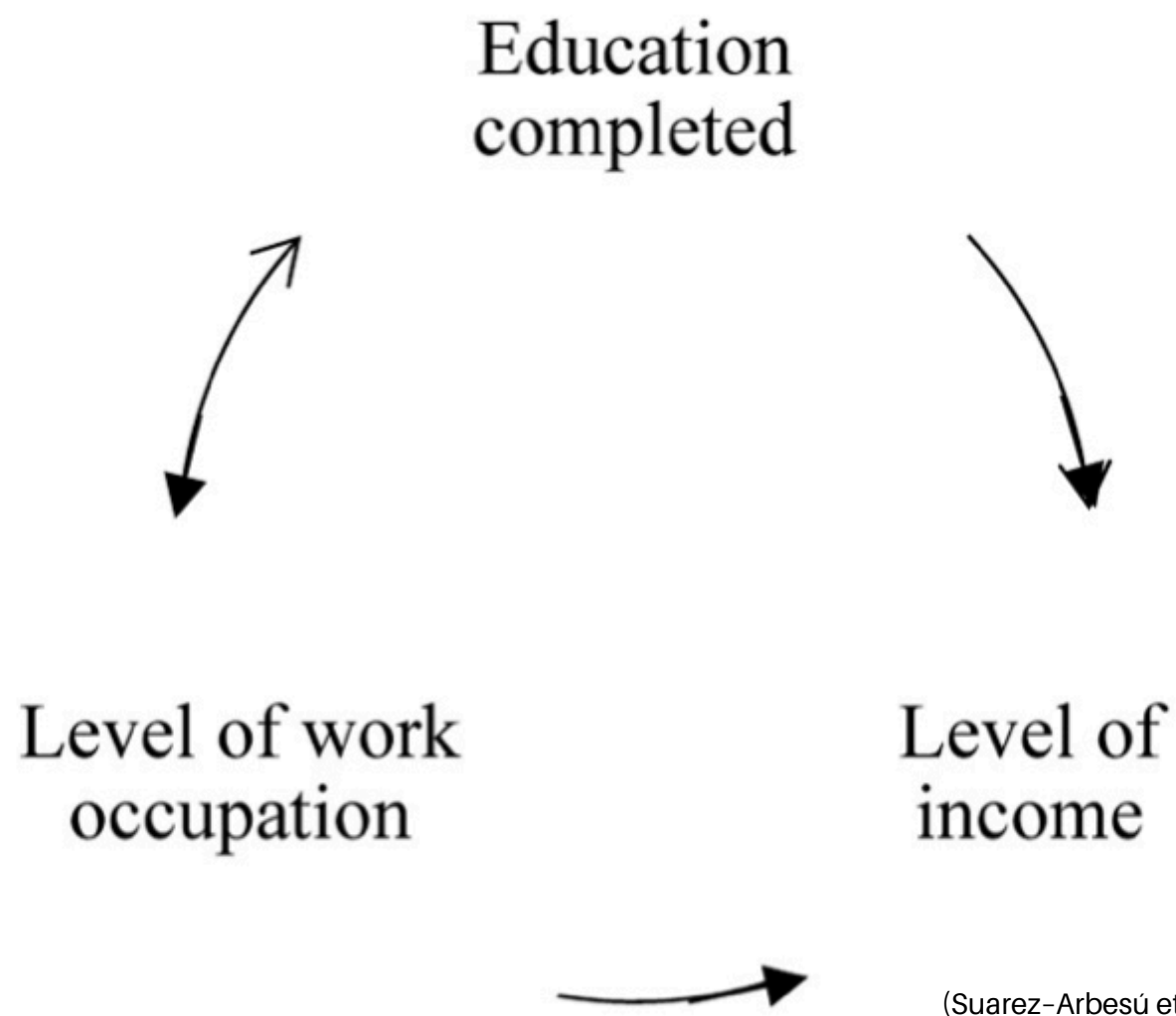
Table 6. Summary of intergenerational mobility in education: Transition matrices.

		Respect to fathers			Respect to mothers		
		Sons and daughters			Sons and daughters		
			Daughters	Sons		Daughters	Sons
Nigeria	<i>Upward mobility (%)</i>	18.5	21.5	17.2	18.9	19.9	17.9
	<i>Zero mobility (%)</i>	62.5	62.4	62.5	72.9	72.3	62.4
	<i>Downward mobility (%)</i>	19.0	16.1	20.3	8.2	7.8	19.7

Using a parent sample size of 116,321, most individuals had intermediate levels of education (i.e., junior/senior secondary school).

The study showed that over 50% of children showed **zero mobility**; thus, reflecting the same educational levels of their parents.

(Suarez-Arbesú et al, 2024)



Research Gap: exploring the effect of family structure on social mobility in Nigeria

The Impact of Peer Pressure on Social Mobility

During adolescence, young people tend to:

1. Spend less time with family, and more time with friends,
2. Try different situations/roles to figure out who they are/where they fit in,
3. Move towards more mutual support groups and away from parents; usually perceived as authoritarian.

“The desire to feel accepted and to fit in is one of the strongest forces in adolescence; this can lead teens to do things they know are wrong, dangerous, or risky.” (p. 190)

The shift in emotional dependence from parents to peers increases the susceptibility of young people to peer pressure during adolescence.

(Oni, 2010)

The Impact of Peer Pressure on Social Mobility

The level of susceptibility amongst students to peer pressure is impacted by the following factors:

(Research Archives, 2024)

Age

Students from
non-nuclear family
structures

Gender

Peer pressure is shown to influence the following behaviours of students:

*(*secondary school focused)*

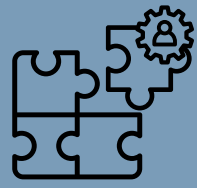
(Oni, 2010; Evelyn et al, 2023)

Uptake of
drug abuse

Self esteem/ambition in
educational attainment

Sexual
behaviour

Being popular in friendship school groups



The Nigerian Economy & University Graduate Skills

What happens when an individual attains a higher education certificate...only to continue the struggle in finding employment....

- The employment prospects of Nigerian university graduates has worsened over time.
- The unemployment rate for university graduates is approximately 22%.

Equally, employers express the following challenges:

1. University graduates are unproductive and poorly trained for the required job
2. Graduate skills have steadily deteriorated over the past decade;
3. Graduates tend to have deficiencies in oral/written communication, and in applied technical skills.

(Dabalen et al., 2001; Okolie et al., 2019)

Research Gap: exploring the link between low-economic background students attending university and their future employment outcomes in Nigeria

Where Social Mobility is unattainable, the ‘Japa’ Syndrome arises!

‘Japa’

Origin: the Yoruba language

Meaning: *‘to break loose or run as quick as possible’*

Approximately, 50,000 people migrate from Nigeria to developed economies annually.

*“In Nigeria, limited social mobility has fettered access to opportunities, constrained the productivity of individuals, and **has given rise to repressed economic growth thus continually widening the gap of inequality.**”*

*“In 2018, **Nigeria ranked 157th among countries for social mobility on the United Nations Human Development Index (UNDP’S HDI), and in 2020 it will not be among the 82 countries whose social mobility was ranked in order of improvement by the World Economic Forum (WEF).**”*

(Shuaib, 2023)



OUR SOLUTION!!

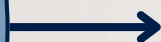
Career focused
Student Workshops

School Management
Support

Life skills
Student Programmes

School Curriculum
Development

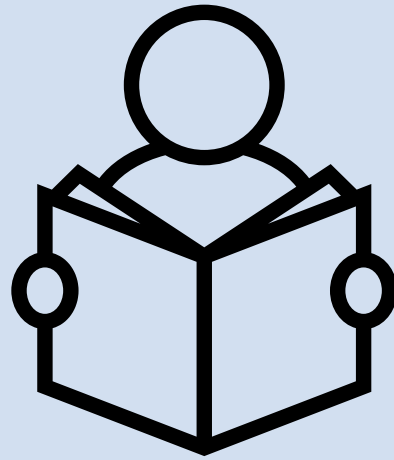
Staff Teacher
Training
Programmes; i.e.,
*Transcend's '500
Teachers Project'*



Transcend Education has so far delivered free British-standard CPD training to over 350 teachers across 15 schools serving low-income communities.

This initiative means:

- 1. 500 individuals empowered*
- 2. 500 individuals making a difference*
- 3. Over 10,000 children impacted*



Keep your eyes peeled for **Transcend Education's upcoming report on Social Mobility**; addressing Disadvantaged Communities in Nigeria!