

Migration and Crisis in the Educational Development in Nigeria

By

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Abstract

The migration of human capital is a phenomenon that has been of concern to educationist and development practitioners for decades but unfortunately, there is no systematic record of the number of skilled professionals that many African countries have continued to lose to the developed world. Termed the "brain drain", it represents the loss of highly skilled professionals from a source country to a recipient country. Against this backdrop, this review paper examines Migration and crisis in the educational development in Nigeria. The researcher used the qualitative method research using secondary data comprising books and journals. The study briefly reviewed some factors behind brain drain including migration and its dimensions, crisis of the state and educational development; migration and the deepening crisis in education etc. The study relied on Ravestein's (1895), Pull theory. The study conclude that the causes of migration and crisis in the educational development in Nigeria include poor leadership of the country, poor salary and condition of service, mass unemployment, mass poverty etc.

Keywords: Migration, Brain drain and Development.

Introduction

Skilled manpower labour is an important asset for any nation e.g. Nigeria in its development process but this is gradually disappearing from many developing nations in the African continent into other parts of the world and concerns about this phenomenon have been expressed at various levels. Although some dimension of mobility is obviously necessary if African countries are to integrate into the global economy, the migration of huge numbers of students (which interlude Young school leavers, Fresh graduate and Postgraduate) and skilled

persons pose a challenge of a “brain drain” which can affect growth and development most especially the educational sector in Nigeria and the African continent at large. Furthermore, while there is little doubt that highly skilled workers are scarce in many developing countries, it is also true that many academics, scientists, engineers, medical doctors and other highly trained professionals from developing countries work in the developed world (Docquire, F. & Hillel, R. (2011).

During the last decades, many factors have contributed to the movement of skills and skilled persons in the world and those factors are economic problems, political instability, social inequality, civil wars, conflicts, globalization, unemployment and the development of market economy. The role of mass-media like television, radio, newspapers and internet (Facebook, twitter, foursquare, LinkedIn, Yahoo group, Skype etc) in the globalization of the world has been great. People in one part of the world are more aware of living standards, cost of living and lifestyles of people in other parts of the world. Global events get into people’s consciousness through mass-media, and this has reshaped the way people view the world. In some instances, television broadcasts the stories or the wealth of returning expatriates, which could motivate more people to migrate to secure a lucrative income and safeguard their future. Increasing international migration occurs as a result of globalization. Economic globalization available by modern media communication stimulate powerful push factors in the migrants’ home countries, such as increased poverty rates and economic difficulties (Stanojoska and Petrevski 2012).

Migration is caused by several factors which include unstable political, social and economic conditions in the migrants’ home countries. Other factors which include human rights violations, poverty, civil disorder, oppressive political dictator, widespread violence, unemployment, and increase in population. The concept of push factors are triggered by society’s changes in the migrants’ countries of origin and they are factors linked to conflicts and increase in population. The pull factors are opposite of push factors. They are positive factors.

They are social stability, positive economic variables, common language and lack of workers, democratic system, political and religious stability (Stanojoska and

Petrevski 2012). The inconvenience situations in some part of the world have resulted in a mass migration of skilled and professional labour across the globe. These factors are responsible for high cases of brain drain in the developing countries, particularly Nigeria.

Furthermore, every year, tens of thousands of highly specialized professionals and academics leave the developing world for what they believe to be a better quality of life in countries of the developed Nation. The majority – doctors, engineers, researchers and senior managers as well as students – are tempted by more attractive career opportunities, salaries and living conditions. A university degree is also the safest passport out of an unstable political environment.

The effects of this act often know as brain drain could be very difficult to measure. However, it serves a devastating blow to the economy of Nigeria in term of physical cash and most importantly the educational sector. Very similar to the above is the loss of investment of the country in education. Nigeria carries the burden of investing resources in education to produce skilled manpower needed in various sector of the economy but who instead end up benefiting the development of North America, Western Europe and other less developed nations of the world who do not pay for the education.

The United Nations Commission for Trade and Development estimated that each migrating Africa professional represents a loss of \$184,000 to Africa. Moreover, brain drain is a loss in term of money used to employ skilled manpower from developed societies to replace migrated manpower from underdeveloped countries.

Over the past decade, Nigeria has been plagued by frequent political unrest. This political instability has generated negative effects on the education system. Although education had been in crisis for many years, the situation has recently been made worse by frequent strikes staged by students, faculty and teachers. Much of the difficulty lies in the fact that the sector is poorly funded. This result in shortages of material and human resources for education: lack of qualified teachers, a brain drain from the public sector, few instructional inputs, shortage of classrooms, and a host of other problems.

When professionals leave their country for developed countries after their education, Africa will lose not just the money spent on them but everything that goes with them. Apart from the loss of manpower in money, the most estastrophic consequences of brain drain in Africa is the shortage of manpower assets in all areas of human endeavours. The continuous outflow of skills labour from the continent contributes to a widening gap in science and technology between the continent and other parts of the world.

The shortage of manpower assets in the country is evident in education, mostly in areas of science and technology. Tertiary institutions in the country are in mess due to the inadequacy of competent lecturers. Most of the best scholars have migrated to developed countries. The enormity of the load that few ones left behind are shouldering in respect of lecturer/student ratio can't be overemphasized.

Due to brain drain, many institutions of learning are now producing half-baked graduates who are not able to deliver in their areas of specialization. Their impact on national economy in terms of productivity is generally below the required standard for an underdeveloped economy. As a result of lack of competent hands in the tertiary institutions, enrolment of post-graduate students has equally declined.

Thus, it is against this issues that this review article tends to answer the following question:

1. What is the migration trend and dimension in the education sector in Nigeria?
2. What is the nature of the crisis in the educational sector?
3. What is the effect of migration on the crisis in the educational sector in Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework

The Push-Pull theory is a core theoretical approach widely used to make sense of drain and migration in general. The debate on brain drain is essentially a question of whether the cost of brain drain outweighs the benefits and vice-versa. There are generally two opposing perspectives those who believe that brain drain is actually

beneficial (supporters of brain drain) and those who argue that brain drain not only presents negative consequences but also perpetuates inequality between the countries in the Southern and the Northern hemisphere (opponents of brain drain). It is important to note here that there are obviously more perspectives with varied accounts, but for the purposes of this section, these two main opposing views will be presented.

The predominant theoretical framework used to understand and debate the brain drain phenomenon is the push-pull theory. Central to this theory is the idea that poverty and underdevelopment motivate individuals to migrate (Portes & Borocz, 1989). Push factors are elements or circumstances within the source country that cause individuals to leave (Bach, 2006). Low standards of education, economic instability and political unrest are examples of push factors that encourage migration (Bach, 2006). Other factors include inadequate resources and facilities for the practices of one's profession and precarious working environments (Buchan, Parkin & Sochalski, 2003).

Pull factors on the other hand, are features of a country abroad that are economically and socially attractive and cause individuals to want to migrate (Bach, 2006). They are all of the factors that promise a better standard of living, opportunities for career advancement, better wages, safe and stable work environments, job flexibility and a balanced workload (Buchan et al., 2003). Labour shortages in Europe and North America also serve as an additional incentive or as a "pull" factor for immigration (El-Khawas, 2004). Many countries in the West are not reproducing at a rate fast enough to meet the demands of aging populations and a growing economy, particularly in the health sector (El-Khawas, 2004). Consequently, the European Union has implemented policies to facilitate the entry of highly skilled immigrants to help sustain its economy (El-Khawas, 2004). Another pull factor for immigrants looking to further their studies abroad is the availability of scholarship offered by the host country to finance their education (Ite, 2002). Thus, the analysis of migration vis-e-vis the push-pull theory forms the basis for understanding forces at play during migration. It has also given rise to much debate about the advantages and disadvantages of brain drain.

Adewusi (1997) argues that it is difficult for most governments in Africa to provide all their population “with the modern high educational needs, it must look outward to meet the contemporary challenges. In most African countries, university education is becoming highly expensive and beyond affordable for the majority of the citizens. Teferra and Altbach (2003) posit that the inadequacy in Africa’s higher education originated from the period of colonialism. Various colonial authorities in Africa deliberately embarked upon a policy of not encouraging higher education in the region. The colonial government adopted a policy of sending few individuals to their respective metropolis, notably, Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, German, Italy and Spain in order to acquire higher education. They were interested in training limited numbers of African nationals to assist in administering the colonies. Some colonial powers, notably the Belgians, forbade higher education in their colonies. Others such as the Spanish, French and the Portuguese, kept enrollments low (Teferra and Altbach, 2003:23), Slaughter & Rhoades, (2004:21) state that some view international students as revenue sources and cheap skilled labour particularly in the sciences and engineering. Meanwhile Maring and Carter (2006) developed a model for African students studying in England, in their study they found that decision by Africans to study abroad was very much influenced by the push and pull factors. The push factors concentrated on three important factor namely, policies, economy and home country capacity. The pull factors include international recognition of a UK degree, high quality education, safe environment, easy application process, marketability of courses applied and labour market viability thus this promoted migration and deepening the crisis in the education sector in most developing nations including Nigeria.

Migration and its dimensions

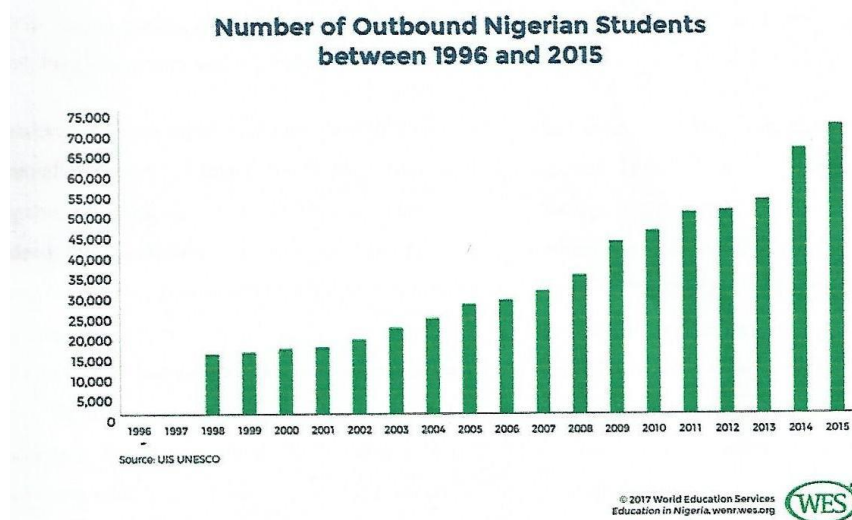
The United Nations (UN) defines as an international migrant a person who stays outside their usual country of residence for at least one year (IOM, 2014). According to that definition, the UN estimated that in 2005 there were about 200 million international migrants worldwide, including about ten million refugees. This is roughly the equivalent of the fifth most populous country on earth, Brazil. One in every 35 people in the world today is an international migrant.

Another way to put this is that only three percent of the world’s population today is an international migrant. But migration affects for more people than just those

who migrate – it has important social, economic and political impacts of home and abroad. According to Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, authors of the influential book *The Age of Migration*, 'There can be few people in either industrialized or less developed countries today who do not have personal experience of migration and its effects; this universal experience has become the hallmark of the age of migration'.

Trends and Dimensions in the Educational Sector

Nigeria is the number one country of origin for international students from Africa. It sends the most students overseas of any country on the African continent, and outbound mobility numbers are growing at a rapid pace. According to data from the UNESCO institute of statistics (UES), the number of Nigerian students abroad increased by 164 percent in the decade between 2005 and 2015 alone – from 26,997 to 71,351.



In the short term, Nigeria’s oil price-induced fiscal crisis is likely to affect outbound student mobility. As many as 40% of Nigerian Overseas students are said to rely on scholarship, many of which were backed by oil and gas revenues. The vast majority of these scholarship have been scaled back or scrapped altogether in the wake of the fiscal crisis. Further exacerbating the immediate

prospects of Nigeria's overseas students was a 2016 crash of the foreign exchange rate of Nigeria's currency, the naira. The crash increased costs for international students, and reportedly left large numbers of Nigerian overseas students unable to make tuition payments (Nnodim, 2013).

But for all the short-term upheaval, the push factors that underlie the outflow of students in Nigeria are fundamentally unchanged. These include:

- The failure of Nigeria's education system to meet booming demand.
- The often-poor quality of its universities.
- Rapid growth in the number of middle-class families who can afford to send their children overseas.

Given those drivers, it seems unlikely that the crisis will lead to a sharp and prolonged downturn of international student numbers.

However, data on immigrants are in Nigeria for studies are scares. However, the 1991 Annual Summary of International Migration Statistics reported 29,800 foreign students in Nigeria, which represented about 6.3 percent of the total foreign population (NPopC, 1991). Indeed, foreign students are visible in many Nigerian institutions of higher learning, especially those who pursue post-graduate studies. It is hardly surprising that foreign students do come to Nigeria to pursue education given the large number of tertiary institutions in the country. 129 universities, 81 polytechnics and 83 colleges of education (IOM, 2014), as well as the relatively low cost of tertiary education in Nigeria. A large number of these students come from Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Liberia; also, many American and European students come for short-term exchange programmes and for research leading to higher degrees.

Crisis of the state and educational development

Nigeria's education system encompasses three different sectors: basic education (nine years), post-basic/senior secondary education (three years), and tertiary education (four or six years depending on the program of study), (Osaba, 1984). According to Nigeria's latest National Policy on Education (2004), basic education covers nine years of formal (compulsory) schooling consisting of six years of

elementary and three years of junior secondary education. Post-basic education includes three years of senior secondary education.

At the tertiary level, the system consists of a university sector and a non-university sector. The later is composed of polytechnics, monotchnics, and colleges of education. The tertiary sector as a whole offers opportunity for undergraduate, graduate, and vocational and technical education.

The academic year typically runs from September to July. Most universities use a semester system of 18-20 weeks. Others run from January to December, divided into 3 terms of 10-12 weeks.

One of the most pressing problems for Nigeria's higher education system remains the severe underfunding of its universities. The Federal government, which is responsible for sustaining public universities, has over the past decade not significantly increased the share of the government budget dedicated to education, despite exploding student numbers. Between 2003 and 2013 education spending fluctuated from 821 percent of the total budget in 2003 to 6.42 percent in 2009, and to 8.7% in 2013. In 2014, the government significantly increased education spending to 10.7 percent of the total budget, but it remains to be seen if this share can be maintained following the oil price-induced fiscal crisis. Okeke (2015) suggest that current spending levels have already decreased well below 10 percent.

Due to funding constraints, most of Nigeria's public universities are in deteriorating condition. And while efforts at increasing capacity by building new universities have generally been positive for access in absolute terms, they have also created issues related to instructional quality. Nigeria's institutions and lecture halls are severally overcrowded, student to teacher ratios have skyrocketed, and faculty shortages are chronic. Lab facilities, libraries, dorms and other university facilities are often described as in being in a state of decay. A large proportion of lecturer at universities are assistant professors without doctoral degrees. Report from 2012 suggested that only 43 percent of Nigeria's teaching staff held Ph.D degrees and that Nigeria had one of the worst lecturer-in-student ratios in the world. The university of Abuja and Lagos State University, for

example, reportedly had lecturer to student ratios as high as 1:122 and 1:114 respectively (Osipian, 2013).

Although rankings are a notoriously poor proxy for university quality, they do provide the best relative guide available. It's thus worth noting that, in 2017, only one of Nigeria's universities is currently listed among the top 1,000 in international university ranking in the Times Higher Education ranking-the University of Ibadan at 801. Universities from other African countries like South Africa, Ghana, and Uganda are ranked considerably higher (Orgu, 2012).

Over the past decade, strikes have become an almost ritual occurrences at Nigerian universities, disrupting lectures, causing delayed graduations, the loss income for university staff, and further eroding the already low trust in the education system. In 2013, 60 public universities were paralyzed by strikes for more than five months over demands for funding increases and better employment benefits for university staff. In 2016, strikes, likewise, disrupted classes at 10 federal and state universities.

While corruption is a cover activity that is difficult to measure, Nigeria scores low on the global "Corruption Perceptions Index" published by the organization transparency international. The 2010 report places Nigeria at 136th place among 176 countries.

Nigeria's education sector is particularly vulnerable to corruption. As corruption scholar Acarat Osipian noted in 2013, "Limited access to education (in Nigeria) has no doubt contributed to the use of bribes and personal connections to gain coveted places at universities, with some admission officials reportedly working with agents to obtain bribes from students. Those who have no ability or willingness to resort to corruption face last opportunities and unemployment". In 2013, transparency international reported that about 30 percent of Nigerians surveyed said they had paid a bribe in the education sector.

Australian scholar Tracay Bretag summarized the conditions when describing Nigeria as a country where "academic fraud is endemic at all levels of the... education system, and misconduct ranges from... cheating during examination to

more serious behaviours, and as impersonation, falsifying academic record, paying for grades/certificates with gifts, money or sexual favour, terrorizing examiners and assaulting invigilators”.

The West African Examination Council (WAEC) has deemed it necessary to start using biometric, fingerprint technology when admitting students to SSC examination. In 2015, WAEC stated that Nigeria had the highest number of cheating of all five countries in which the Council operates the following year, WAEC ceased recognizing 113 Nigerian secondary schools implicated in examination malpractice, and annulled the results of some 30.654 candidates who sat for the 2012 SSC exams. The extent of fraud in university applications has caused the Council to develop an elaborate scratch card system that utilizes an online pin-code verification method to verify the authenticity of exam results. Nigeria is also home to a substantial number of diploma mills and institutions of dubious quality in Nigeria.

Migration and the deepening crisis in education

The deepening education sector crisis must be considered a cause for serious concern because of the great value attached to education worldwide. It is widely acknowledged that education has social, economic, political and security benefits for an individual, for a society and for a country. Education is almost everywhere considered as the key to economic prosperity and a vital instrument for combating disease, tackling poverty and supporting sustainable development.

At the international level, “Education for All” (EFA), an initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, was launched in 1990. Twenty-two years later, UNESCO’s parent organization, the United Nations, launched “Education First Initiative” that seeks to unite businesses, governments, nongovernmental organizations, teachers, parents and pupils in a 1,000-day campaign to get every child into quality education by the end of 2015. Former British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, who is UN special envoy for global education, put the case for the new Initiative as follows: Under current trends, 50 million children worldwide will be out of school in 2025, and in 50 years education for all will remain a hollow dream... the cause of educational opportunity is the civil rights issue of our generation. Extending educational

opportunity is a moral, economic and security imperative. In-between these two initiatives, there was the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 that included education as one of Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Specifically, according to MDG 2 the goal is to “attain universal primary education in all countries by 2015” and the Target is to “ensure children of both sexes everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling”. Nigeria joined 189 other countries world-wide to endorse the Declaration. While there is broad agreement in the literature on education that it benefits both the individual and society, there is contestation on whether governments should pay more attention to primary education whose benefits to the society as a whole are very substantial than to tertiary education with huge benefits for the individual. As will be demonstrated later in this Lecture, the argument over the relative benefits to individuals and to society is akin to the chicken and egg debate: without the quality products of tertiary education, quality primary education is unachievable and vice versa. (Ajibode, 2012).

Conclusion

Indeed, poor leadership is the single most important factor responsible for brain drain in Nigeria which has led to the crisis in the educational sector. The causes of brain drain in Nigeria include poor leadership of the country, poor salary and condition of service, mass unemployment, mass poverty etc.; and effects of brain drain in Nigeria include, backwardness of the nation in the comity of nations, shortage of manpower to mount various institutions in the country, loss of tax of migrated manpower to developed countries, loss of tax of migrated manpower to foreign countries. It is ironical that many custodians of knowledge, who could transform Nigeria are scattered all over the world due to the menace of brain drain. Thus, to create the future that Nigeria deserves, our elites need a huge shift in thinking, values, and action.

Furthermore, lack of secure and respectable environments do act as a push factor to move from the home country to other parts of the world. Moreover, political climate, discrimination in the merit system and incapable leadership is very unfavourable to provide justice for all those learned brains and thus they move on by leaving their country.

From the review on the study on the Migration and Crisis in the educational development in Nigeria, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Government should set up a reintegration program which will encourage returnee prior to return and upon arrival in the home country is key. Mentorship programs can be established where returnees partner with fellow citizens in their field of expertise to help returnees' network with others, get reacquainted with their surroundings and familiarize themselves with the local system of operation. Attention must also be given to immigrants returning with children to ensure that they also become well adjusted.
2. The Federal governments can also create incentives through offers of employment, health benefit packages and other allowances to attract this class of immigrants back to their home countries.
3. Push factors of migration are very strong variable with a very strong appeal. The Nigerian government should provide the needed support highlighted above to dissuade brilliant scholars from migrating abroad and this will help in putting to an end the increase cases of brain drain from the Nigerian educational system.
4. The Federal Government should put in place a logical framework providing security awareness and trainings that aim at procuring societal peace with clear indications.

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