
Review of the Effect of Brain Drain on Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Gregory Deborah Mallo¹, Eseyin Adekunle Benjamin² and Setiel Buba².

1. Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria.

deborah@fuwukari.edu.ng

2. Department of Educational Management, University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

eseyinwisdom@gmail.com and setielbuba@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The paper reviewed the effect of brain drain on tertiary education in Nigeria. Brain-drain is one of the key challenges Nigeria tertiary education is currently facing, a lot of tertiary institutions in Nigeria are losing their professors and senior academic staff day-to-day as a result of poor working conditions. This paper discussed the effects of brain-drain on the administration of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The concept of brain-drain was treated, the causes of brain-drain in the Nigeria tertiary institutions were identified to include poor salary, uncondusive work environment, poor staff development, inadequate infrastructural facilities, and frequent strike actions by both academic and non-academic staff of tertiary institutions, insecurity and inadequate funding treated. Types of brain-drain were also touched. The identified effects include; poor quality of education, high student-teacher ratio, shortage of experienced academic staff, poor research development and poor program development. In order to curtail the menace of brain-drain tertiary institutions and ensure the sustainability of Nigeria tertiary education, in the way forward the study recommended that government should increase the motivation of academic staff, implement any agreement reached with trade unions groups or civil society organizations in the country and ensure adequate life and job security in all tertiary institutions and provide more infrastructural facilities.

Keywords: Effect, Tertiary Education, Brain drain, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Global migration of skilled persons from Tertiary institutions in developing countries is on the increase. Flourishing Nations always focus on human growth and development within their Country but the dilemma of developing countries like Nigeria is the migration of advance and highly skilled individuals like scientist, doctors, information technology professionals to developed Countries with an increase trend, which is painful and hurting phenomenon, the Tertiary Education in Nigeria are worse hit by this wave. The tertiary education as defined by the National policy on Education is the education given after post basic education in institutions such as Universities, colleges of education, Monotechnics, polytechnics and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, School of health and technology and the National Teachers' Institute. Tertiary Education is meant to Contribute to national development through high level manpower training;

provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians (NPE, 2013). The realization of the objectives, goals and programme of the tertiary education hinges on the availability of human and materials resources. The human resource is one of the critical factor in the administration and management of the Tertiary institutions because they coordinate other resources in the realization of the objectives of Tertiary education. The human resources within the Tertiary institutions is grouped into two namely: academic and non-academic staff

The poor working condition in many Tertiary institutions in Nigeria is driving many academic and non-academic staff to leaving the Tertiary institutions. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has warned the Federal Government against encouraging brain drain with a nonchalant attitude towards the cravings of ASUU for better working condition. Many experienced academic staff, professors especially, have been moving out of Nigerian Tertiary institutions to developed countries. This is affecting the quality of teaching in the Tertiary institutions in the country. Abubakar (2020) observed that there are many problems facing universities administration in Nigeria. Some of these problems include; inadequate lecturers, inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, incessant strike actions by the universities unions, institutional corruption, insecurity problems, weak administrators and poor capacity development lecturer, political interference in the universities' administration, indiscriminate issuance of licenses for establishing new universities, universities autonomy dilemma and poor Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and brain-drain.

Based on these submissions, this paper will consider the following:

1. Concept of Brain-drain;
2. Causes of Brain-drain;
3. Effects of Brain-drain in the administration of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.
4. Consequences or effects of Brain Drain
5. Tertiary education in Nigeria experience of Brain Drain and
6. Way forward for sustainability of Tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

CONCEPTS OF BRAIN DRAIN

In simplest term, brain drain is the migration of highly trained or qualified people from a particular Country to other parts of the world where they felt the condition of their service will be better than their present location. The Britannica Dictionary defined Brain drain as a situation in which many educated or professionally trained people leave a particular place or profession and move to another one that gives them better pay or living condition.

Young J. (2023). Opined that Brain drain is a slang term that indicates a substantial emigration or migration of individuals, this can result from turmoil within a nation, the existence of unfavourable conditions within the migrant abode but favourable professional opportunities in other countries, or a desire to seek a Tertiary standard of living. She maintained that in addition to Brain Drain occurring geographically, it may also occur at the organizational or industrial levels when workers perceive better pay, benefits or upwards mobility within another company.

Burtler J, Francis J, Shinn J, (2022) stated that Brain Drain can be defined as the migration of professional from one nation to another, usually from a developing nation to a first class world country, people move in for the look of a better life or due to reason such as political stability. It is a departure of different professionals to another country in search of a better quality of life, high standard of living, better technologies, and more stable political condition.

Brain drain according to (Tapi, C (2022) is the process in which a country loses its most educated and talented workers to other countries through migration, which is considered a problem because the most highly skilled and competent individuals leave the country and contribute their expertise to the economy of other countries, this will cause the country they leave from economic hardship because those who remain don't have the 'know how' to make a difference.

Furthermore, Ogunode, Jegede, and Musa (2021) stated that Brain drain can be defined as the loss of the academic and technological labour force through the moving of human capital to more favourable geographic, economic or professional environments, which more often than not occurs from developing countries to developed countries or areas.

CAUSES OF BRAIN DRAIN

There are several causes of Brain Drain but they differ depending on the country that is experiencing it, Globally the main cause of brain drain includes seeking employment or Tertiary paying jobs, political instability and to seek better quality of life. In Nigeria, the most understanding causes of brain drain are poor leadership, corruption and mass unemployment which are the major factors leading professionals leaving the shores of Nigeria. It is found out that Nigeria students while in high institutions have interests in travelling to developed societies after completion of their studies in other to have a better living condition. The above can be categorized into *Push factor and Pull factors*.

a. **The push factors** - are the negative characteristics of the home country that form the impetus for intelligent people to migrate from lesser developed countries, in addition to unemployment and political instability, some of the push factors in Nigerian tertiary institutions include; absence of research facilities, employment discrimination, lack of freedom in the work environment, insecurity of tertiary education staff and students, insurgency, frequent abduction/ kidnapping of members of the tertiary education community and poor working conditions.

b. **The pull factors** - are the positive characteristics of the developed countries from which the migrants would like to benefit, they include; Tertiary paying jobs, better quality of life, superior economic outlook, prestige of foreign training, relatively stable political

environment, a modernized educational system to allow for superior training, intellectual freedom and so on.

TYPES OF BRAIN DRAIN

There are about three main types of brain drain

- i. **Geographical Brain Drain**; this is the migration of highly skilled professionals to other developing countries in search of better paying jobs. It is a situation whereby talented professionals flee one country to another in search of better pay and working condition, this makes emerging countries to struggle to grow since their best and brightest are leaving the workforce and it is difficult to stop the cycle of letting go of the finest employees, though it is argued that, this makes the developed economies to have more competent and educated workers in their workforce than developing economies.
- ii. **Organizational Brain Drain**; this refers to the departure of experienced and talented individuals from one organization to the other due to better work condition.
- iii. **Industrial Brain Drain** happens when skilled workers exit not only from a company but from the entire industry to another industrial sector of the economy, this usually a byproduct of a rapidly evolving economic landscape in which industries unable to keep up with technological and societal changes loss their best workers to those that can.

CONSEQUENCES OR EFFECTS OF BRAIN DRAIN

The effects brain drain in the home country are numerous both negative and positive effects, the negative effects include:

- a. Loss of potential future entrepreneurs
- b. Shortage of skilled workers
- c. Loss of tax revenue
- d. Shortfall in important skilled workers
- e. Loss of confidence in the economy due mass exodus of better hands.
- f. Loss of innovative ideas
- g. Loss of Country's investment in education.
- h. Loss of critical health and education services.

The positive effects postulated by some scholars include;

- a. It stimulates education as many will want to acquire necessary skill that will enable them be useful when they migrate to other countries.
- b. Induces remittance flows, since those who migrated to other countries are earning better pay, they still have some relations back home, who they will be sending money from time to time.
- c. Reduces international transaction costs
- d. Generates benefits in source of countries from both returnees and the diaspora abroad
- e. New skills and expertise learned from the migrated countries can be brought home to stimulate and develop the economy.

TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA EXPERIENCE OF BRAIN DRAIN.

Tertiary education in Nigeria is defined by the National policy on education as the education given after senior secondary Education in institutions such as Universities, National Institute

of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI) (NPE, 2013). The goals of Tertiary Education is to: Contribute to national development through high level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction (NPE,2013)

Tertiary Educational institutions shall pursue these goals through: Quality student intake; quality teaching and learning; research and development; high standards in the quality of facilities, services and resources; staff welfare and development programmes; provision of a more practical based curriculum relevant to the needs of the labour market; generation and dissemination of knowledge, skills and competencies that contribute to national and local economic goals which enable students to succeed in a knowledge-based economy; a variety of flexible learning modes including full-time, part time, block release. day-release, and sandwich programmes; access to training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund); Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) that is well structured, coordinated and supervised; maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate regulatory agencies; an all-inclusive credible admissions policy for national unity; supporting affordable, equitable access to tertiary education through scholarships and students' loans; inter-institutional co-operation and linkages; and dedicated services to the community through extra-mural and extension services (NPE, 2013).

The human resources within the Tertiary institutions is grouped into two namely: academic and non-academic staff. The issue of brain drain is more pronounced among the academic staff. The poor working condition in many Tertiary institutions in Nigeria is driving many academic and nonacademic staff to leaving the Tertiary institutions. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has warned the Federal Government against encouraging brain drain through nonchalant attitude towards the yearnings of ASUU for better work environment. Ehichoya and Ogunode (2020) noted that many experienced academic staff, professors especially, have been moving out of Nigerian Tertiary institutions to developed countries like USA, Germany, UK etc. for better offer. This is affecting the quality of teaching in the Tertiary institutions in the country. For effective teaching to take place, there is need for adequate professional and experienced lecturers in every Tertiary institution. It is observed that there are many problems facing universities administration in Nigeria. Some of these problems include; inadequate lecturers, inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, incessant strike actions by the universities unions, institutional corruption, insecurity problems, weak administrators and poor capacity development lecturer, political interference in the universities' administration, indiscriminate issuance of licenses for establishing new universities, universities autonomy dilemma and poor Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and brain-drain.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR BRAIN-DRAIN IN TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The main cause of brain drain in Nigerian Tertiary institutions include: poor salary, unconducive working environment, poor staff development, inadequate infrastructural facilities, strike actions and insecurity.

Poor Salary

Poor salary is one of the key cause of brain-drain problem in the Nigerian Tertiary institutions. The monthly salaries that academic staff are receiving is less compare to what other academic staff are been paid in other countries across the World.

Unconducive Working Environment

Unconducive working environment is another major factors responsible for massive movement of academic staff from the Tertiary institution in the country to other part of the world. The working environment constitutes in majorities Tertiary institutions in Nigeria is not conducive for effective service delivery. The working policies, administrative bottleneck, leaderships, quality of supportive services like internet facilities, light and academic freedom is not encouraging in motivating professional to stay and develop their career.

Poor Staff Development

Poor staff development programme is a very big problem responsible for why academic staff are leaving the Nigerian Tertiary institutions to other countries that has better career development opportunities for their academicians. In Nigeria Tertiary institutions, it is difficult for an academic staff to obtain study leave to pursue Tertiary degrees whereas this incentive is available to all academic staff outside the country. The tertiary institution academic staff who are desirous to grow will prefer leaving the country with opportunity of travelling with the entire family.

Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facilities are another major factor causing brain-drain in the Tertiary education system in Nigeria. According to Ogunode & Agwor (2021) school infrastructural facilities refer to social capital within the school environment. They include school buildings/complexes such as classrooms, tables, exam hall, chairs, auditoria, desks, staff offices, seminar/conference/board rooms, laboratories, workshops, studios, farms, gymnasia, central libraries, specialized/professional libraries, faculty libraries, departmental libraries, etc., Institute/centers', specialized facilities e.g. ICT infrastructure, special laboratories, conference facilities, etc., and Boards e.g. interactive, magnetic, screen and chalk, etc., ICT that is computer laboratories and services, network connectivity, multi-media system, public address system, slide, and video projectors, and Ergonomics furnishing in laboratories, libraries, and lecture rooms/ theaters, moot courts, and studios, etc. Students' hotels or accommodation; municipal/physical infrastructure i.e. power supply, water supply, good road networks, sports, health and sanitation, staff schools, security facilities, etc. many academic staff share offices and some do not even have, many academic staff do not have constant light in their offices and internet services to support their online teaching programme. Office accommodation is inadequate in all tertiary institutions. About three to four lecturers share offices in some of the institutions. The offices are not comfortable, and hence hinder effective performance of staff, especially the teaching (academic) staff. This is often occasioned by inadequate funding, corruption, and increase in population, poor infrastructural planning, poor maintenance culture and uncompleted projects as the causes of

shortage of inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities, the end result is staff leaving the institutions or country for places with better infrastructural facilities. Many academic staff in Nigeria Tertiary institutions are moving out of the institutions frustrating the efforts of the administrators and managers to provide quality education. Mass movement of academicians from the Nigerian public universities is affecting the administration of the universities because academic staff are very important for the implementation of universities' programme. Inadequate funding, corruption, increase in population, poor infrastructural planning, poor maintenance culture and uncompleted projects as the causes of shortage of inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities.

Strike Actions

Strike actions in the Nigerian public universities is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The Nigerian public universities are known for continuous strike actions by different union groups in the public universities. The continuous strike actions by these different union groups are frustrating the administration of public universities in Nigeria and forced many talented professionals to leave the country to other countries where they will be meaningfully engaged. It is observed that many academic staff cannot function or discharge their responsibilities whenever there is strike actions either by the NASU, NAAT or ASUU, so some will decide to leave to place where there is strike. The implications of the continuous strike actions on the public universities include; disruption in the academic programme, poor quality of education, bad image for the universities, poor ranking internationally and poor patronage of public universities in Nigeria.

Insecurity

Insecurity problem is one of the major problems facing both the academic and non-academic staff of the public universities in Nigeria. Nigeria is facing insecurity challenges which are affecting all public institutions especially the Tertiary institutions in the country. Many public universities administrators have been killed and kidnapped within the universities staff quarters and this has put fear in the surviving ones and the only alternative migrate to other peaceful country. The insurgency, frequent kidnapping and adoption of students and their lecturers in some part of the Country has put fear in both the students and their lecturers in going to school in those areas and this leads to the popular "*japa*" phrase which means to have run out of the Country. Off course this has increased the brain-drain in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Inadequate Funding

Funding is very vital for the administration of Tertiary institutions. Adequate funding of Tertiary institution will guarantee quality education. Inadequate funding is one of the major problems facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The annual budgetary allocation for the administration of universities in Nigeria is grossly inadequate. The inability of the federal government to stick to the UNESCO 26% of national budget for education is affecting the management of Nigerian universities. This and many other factors are responsible for brain-drain in the Nigerian public tertiary institutions. Abubakar, (2020) observed that the budgetary allocation for the administration of public universities in Nigeria is not adequate to implement the programme of universities in Nigeria. The university system requires a lot of funds for effective administration to be able realized it goals. The annual budgetary allocation for the administration of universities in Nigeria is grossly inadequate. Many Tertiary institutions administrators in Nigeria do not have adequate funds to procure

and purchase the educational resources to adequately implement the Tertiary institutions. Due to poor funding, salaries are not paid until, infrastructural facilities are not adequate and benefits of academic staff are not paid, the implications of underfunding of the public universities include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, poor quality of education, strike action and brain-drain.

EFFECTS OF BRAIN-DRAIN ON THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA.

The effects of brain-drain on the Tertiary institutions administration; frustrating the administration of Tertiary institutions, poor quality education, high student-teacher ratio, shortage of academic staff, poor research development and poor programme development.

Frustrating Administration of Tertiary Institutions

One of the resources needed for effective school administration is human resources especially the academic staff. School administrators cannot do anything without the availability of right qualities of academic staff. The reduction in the number of academic staff due to brain-drain problem is frustrating the administration of many Tertiary institutions in the country. Ahaotu and Ogunode (2021) noted that Administrators of Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are struggling with the issue of brain-drain in their respective institutions. Many academic staff in Nigeria Tertiary institutions are moving out of the institutions frustrating the efforts of the administrators and managers to provide quality education.

Poor Quality of Education

Poor quality of Tertiary education in Nigeria is also linked to the problem of mass exodus of professors out of the Tertiary education system to other part of the world due to poor motivation. Academic staff are the main determinant of quality education in Tertiary institutions. One of the factors reducing the number of academic staff in Nigerian Tertiary institutions is the problem of brain-drain. To achieve quality education in Tertiary institutions, there must be adequate academic staff with other infrastructural facilities in right quantities and qualities. The poor quality of education in majority of Tertiary institutions is due to inadequate academic staff and shortage of other resources. One of the factors reducing the number of academic staff in Nigerian Tertiary institutions is the problem of brain-drain

High Student-Teacher Ratio

Another effect of brain-drain on the administration of Tertiary institutions in Nigeria is that it results to high student-lecturer ratio. According to National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) of 2007 stipulated the following teacher/students ratio: 1:20 in science; 1:15 in Engineering and technology; 1:10 in medicine, veterinary medicine and pharmacy, 1:15 in agricultural and environmental sciences and 1:30 in education, management science, social sciences, law and arts. Due to shortage of lecturers in many universities, the policies are violated by many universities and what we have is high number of students to a lecturer in many public universities across the country. NEEDS (2014), observed in its report that the faculty-to-student ratio is very low in many Nigerian universities. Nigerian academic staff are teaching large classes and this is affecting their performance, which is direct consequences of brain drain

Shortage of Academic Staff

The rate at which academic staff are leaving the Tertiary institutions to other institution like the banking sector, oil industry and aviation is responsible for the acute shortage of academic

staff in many Tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Brain-drain, inadequate funding, lack of strategic manpower planning, poor motivation, unconducive working environment and corruption as the reasons for shortage of academic staff in the Nigerian Tertiary institutions. The resultant effect is poor academic performance of the student because the academic staff are not enough to effectively supervise their academic work.

Poor Research Development

Poor research development in many Tertiary institutions in Nigeria is as a result of limited academic staff with experiences in carrying out research. Research is one of the key programme of Tertiary institutions. Research is one major indicators used for ranking Tertiary institutions performance. Conducting quality research demands experiences researchers and academician. It is unfortunate that many Tertiary institutions in the country do not have these qualified researchers and professors due to brain-drain problems. There is diminishing scope of mentoring junior researchers by seasoned and senior researchers due to brain drain.

Poor Programme Development

Many Tertiary institutions in the country are losing their academic programme due to shortage of academic staff which is caused by brain-drain. In Nigerian Tertiary institutions, Commissions are saddled with the responsibilities of accrediting programmes in different Tertiary institutions. Programme accredited by these commissions implies that the departments met the standard set. One of the factors that determine accreditation of academic programme is adequate academic staff and other listed resources. Accreditation programme are done every five years depending on the institutions. Research has it that departments are losing their accreditation due to shortage of academic staff resulting from brain drain

Conclusion / Recommendations

Brain-drain in the Tertiary institution refer to the mass movement of academic and non-academic staff form Tertiary institutions due to poor motivation to other institutions or travel abroad for a better working condition. The identified causes of brain-drain in the Nigerian Tertiary institutions to include; poor salary, unconducive working environment, poor staff development, inadequate infrastructural facilities, strike actions, insecurity and inadequate funding. Also, poor quality education, high student-teacher ratio, shortage of academic staff, poor research development and poor programme development as the effects of brain-drain on the administration of Tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In order to ensure Tertiary institutions sustainability in Nigeria, it is recommended that the; government should increase the motivation of academic staff, implement all reached agreement with union groups, ensure adequate security in all Tertiary institutions and provide more infrastructural facilities.

WAY FORWARD

In order to ensure tertiary institutions sustainability in Nigeria the following should be urgently considered:

- a) Government should increase the motivation of academic staff,
- b) implement all reached agreement with union groups,
- c) ensure adequate security in all Tertiary institutions and
- d) Provide more infrastructural facilities.

References

- Ahaotu G, N. & Ogunode N, J. (2021). Challenges Facing Administrators of Public Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria and the Ways Forward. *Central Asian Journal of Literature, Philosophy and Culture*, 2 (2)
- Burtler J, Francis J, Shinn J, (2022) Pindus *Journal of Culture, Literature, and ELT ISSN: 8(1) Pp 56-70* <https://literature.academicjournal>.
- NEEDS (2014). *Needs assessment in the Nigerian education sector*. International organization for Migration, Abuja, Nigeria. Pp 65-71
- Ogunode N.J., Jegede & Musa, A. (2021) Problems Facing Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities and the Way Forward. *International Journal on Integrated Education*. 4, (I) Pp 109-111
- Ogunode, N.J., Jegede, Abubakar, M, & Martina, U. (2020) Challenges Facing Non-Academic Staff of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria and the Way Forwards. *GBS*, 3(5) Pp 87-90
- Papi Carl (2021). *Everything you need to know about brain drain* [https://www.linkedin.com/carl tapi](https://www.linkedin.com/carl-tapi) (2)41 Pp112-114
- Young J (2023) Brain Drain, A substantial emigration or migration of individuals: investopedia