

THE EFFECTS OF LABOUR MIGRATION AND BRAIN DRAIN SYNDROME ON HUMAN CAPITAL FORMATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Labour migration involves the transfer and flight of technical know-how and skills from one nation to another, to secure a better job and establish a new residence. It has consequences for the individual, the country of origin and the country of destination. Over the last decades, an increasing number of developed countries have put in place different mechanisms to encourage the immigration of only the most talented, skilled individuals from developing countries. A good example is the international visa lottery scheme. This scheme is put in place perhaps because developing countries cannot fully exploit the abilities and skills of human capital, as they do not have enough jobs to offer. Thus, Nigeria and other developing countries have become a human capital-generating machines for the developed world. It is an indisputable truism that labour migration has adverse effects ranging from social, cultural, and political to economic upon the emigrant's country. The thrust of this paper, therefore, is to examine the factors responsible for the flood of Nigerian migrants witnessed during the past couple of years. The dynamic consequences of labour migration and brain drain syndrome on human capital formation in Nigeria will be considered. Empirical studies have established the global net benefits of labour migration, but their findings are inconclusive about the impact migration has on the emigrant's country. Hence, the need for human capital formation in an emerging economy will also be addressed. Finally, the paper will offer policy recommendations to ensure immigrants' economic contribution to developing human capital.

Keywords: Nigerian Migrants, Migration, Brain Drain, Human Capital Formation, Insecurity, Corruption

Introduction

Over the last decades, an increasing number of developed countries have put in place different mechanisms to encourage the immigration of only the most talented, skilled individuals from developing countries. It is an indisputable fact that labour migration hurts the emigrant's country. According to Dunn and Mutti (2004:212), an influx of immigrants can affect welfare in the host country when it leads to congestion in the use of public goods and services, such as roads, parks and schools or greater demand for transfer payments to cover expenses of housing, food, and medical care. The net fiscal balance from immigration depends upon taxes paid versus the extra demands for services and transfers created.

According to Docquier and Marfouk (2006), 10.7 per cent of the highly skilled population who were trained in Nigeria ended up working abroad in 2006, mostly in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. In the United States and Europe, 83 percent and 46 percent, respectively of the Nigerian immigrant population are highly skilled. On average, 64 per cent of the Nigerian emigrant population has tertiary education. In the medical field, 14 per cent of physicians who were trained in Nigeria worked abroad and, 90 per cent of whom live and work in the United States and the United Kingdom (Clemens and Petterson, 2007). There have been marked increases in the number of Nigerians. Todaro and Smith (2006:390), submitted that education plays a powerful role in the growing problem of the international migration of high-level educated workers – the so-called brain drain – from poor to rich countries. This is particularly true in the case of scientists, engineers, academics, and physicians, many thousands of whom have been trained in home country institutions at considerable social cost only to reap the benefits from and contribute to the further economic growth of the already affluent nations.

Conceptualizing Brain Drain

Brain drain' is defined as the movement of health personnel in search of a better standard of living and life quality, higher salaries, access to advanced technology and more stable political conditions in different places worldwide. According to Mba and Ekeopara

(2012), brain drain can be described as the migration of educated and skilled labour from poorer to richer countries. Education or skill, which represents an investment in human capital, is usually cheaper to acquire in poorer, labour-abundant countries since its provision is usually a labour-intensive activity. Those with the skills or education then move to developed countries where the return to their human capital is higher. Such migration is often encouraged by laws and institutional factors, as most countries look more favourably on immigration by those with skills than those without. (Pearce, 1992).

Meaning of Human Capital Formation

The term human capital formation implies the development of abilities and skills among the population of the country. To transform the liability of the huge size of the population into assets adoption of various measures for human capital formation is very much essential. According to Harbison, human capital formation indicates, “the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skills, education and experience which are critical for the economic and the political development of the country. Human capital formation is thus associated with investment in man and his development as a creative and productive resource.” The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade. Some of its foundering members are the United States of America, Germany, France, Turkey, United Kingdom, Spain, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, Greece, Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Iceland, Luxembourg, etc. Human capital is a measure of the skills, education, capacity and attributes of labour which influence their productive capacity and earning potential. According to the OECD, human capital is defined as: “the knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals or groups of individuals acquired during their life and used to produce goods, services or ideas in market circumstances”.

Different Views on Human Capital

Theodore Schultz's “Investment in human capital” (1961) was an early proponent of the theory. He stated, “Although it is obvious that people acquire useful skills and knowledge, it is not obvious that these skills and knowledge are a form of capital, that this capital is in substantial part a product of deliberate investment”

Gary Becker's "Human Capital" (1964) in his view, human capital, is determined by education, training, and medical treatment, and is effectively a means of production. Increased human capital explains the differential of income for graduates. Human capital is also important for influencing rates of economic growth.

Howard Gardener – different types of human capital. Gardener emphasized the different types of human capital. One could increase education, but be a poor manager. A successful entrepreneur may have no education. Human capital is not one-dimensional.

Schultz/Nelson-Phelps – the ability to adapt. Human capital should be looked at from the ability to adapt. Can workers adapt to a changing labour market? A labour market which is shifting from full-time manual work in manufacturing to flexible work in the service sector.

Emigration Rate in Nigeria

The number of Nigerians living outside Nigeria more than doubled between 1990 and 2013, from 465,932 to 1,030,322. In 2013, nearly two-thirds of emigrants (61.4%) were residing in more developed regions. This is a relatively new pattern. For instance, in 1990 only 33.8 per cent of Nigerian migrants lived in more developed regions. By 2000, this had increased to 52 per cent, and a further 56.7 per cent in 2010. That increasingly more Nigerians find their way to more developed regions is a function of the employment-driven nature of Nigerian emigration. In addition, Nigerian emigration to the West is highly selective of the educated, skilled and professionals who are more likely to be attracted by the economic opportunities of more developed regions.

The diminishing numbers of Nigerians in the South region or less developed regions are related to dwindling economic realities and social upheavals in many countries. Nigerian migrants to the less developed regions of Africa and Asia are less positively selected, comprising mainly people in business, trading and construction, many of whom are short-term migrants. In recent years, there seems to be an influx into China, India and other Asian countries that hitherto had very few Nigerian citizens. Nevertheless, the number of Nigerian emigrants to these counties is still relatively low.

In 2013, 35.6 per cent of Nigerian emigrants lived in African countries; 34.2 per cent in Europe, and 26.4 per cent in North America; the rest lived in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oceania. Nigerian migrants in African countries mostly live in West

Africa (46.2%) and Middle Africa (42%). It is hardly surprising that there were more Nigerian emigrants in West Africa given the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons. From the most preferred to the least preferred, the destinations of Nigerian emigrants within Africa are Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Ghana, Gabon, Niger, Togo and Sudan. The most preferred destinations in Europe were the United Kingdom (184,314), Italy (48,073), Spain (36,885), Germany (22,687) and Ireland (18,540).

The United States was the single most important destination of Nigerian migrants in 2013, as it had been since 1990, with 252,172 or about 25 per cent of all Nigerian emigrants. This is a clear manifestation of the superb opportunities offered by the United States concerning employment, education and training, and social and cultural identification compared with other countries in the world.

Migration in Nigeria - A Country Profile 2014 3 The number of Nigerian asylum-seekers increased sharply from 8,294 in 2006 to 10,148 in 2007 and 15,022 in 2008. European countries remain the most targeted destinations by Nigerian asylum-seekers, with Italy (5,673), Ireland (1,009), Switzerland (988), the United Kingdom (970) and Spain (808) as the most preferred destinations. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) disclosed that Nigeria had more than 17,000 asylum-seekers in Chad, Cameroon and Niger in 2013, largely due to the crisis in Nigeria's northeastern region. More than 800,000 persons were internally displaced in north-east Nigeria in 2014 as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states.

The Effects of Labour Migration and Brain Drain on Human Capital Formation in Nigeria

Labour migration and brain drain are big problems for many developing countries like Nigeria in the process of globalization. Many Nigerian students have opportunities to pursue their studies abroad. However, at the end of their programmes, many of them do not return home. Consequently, the country in general, and the institutions in particular have lost those talented citizens (Bonga and Dafiaghor, 2014). In less developed countries (LDCs), the negative effects can mainly include losing high-skilled labour and human capital to foreign labour markets, especially the "brain drain". The effects are:

- Insufficient manpower assets to mount various institutions in the country
- Loss of tax of manpower assets to the migrated country

- Loss of investment in the education of migrated manpower assets
- Loss of capital used to employ expatriates to replace migrated manpower
- Production of half-baked graduates from higher institutions
- Decline in enrolment of post-graduate students.
- High lecturer/student ratio in tertiary institutions across the nation.
- High mortality rate
- Underdevelopment of the nation
- Loss of remittance of money sent by migrated manpower to a foreign country
- High level of illiteracy

The Need for Human Capital Formation in an Emerging Economy

The building of a modern nation is based on science and technology, and to a large extent upon the development of people and the planning of human activity. Several factors account for economic growth and national development of a nation, these include human capital, natural resources, technological progress, etc. But none is more important and vital than human capital; most nations today are development oriented towards improving the lots of mankind (Okwoli, 2014). It is very difficult, if not impossible for any country and in this case Nigeria to achieve sustainable growth and development without the full mobilization and effective utilization of its human capital. As an indispensable agent of national development, the need to develop human capital is very important and urgent. Onwuka and Eguavoen (2007) adduced that this exposure to new ideas has led to remarkable growth in the size and power of firms which in turn has enhanced better utilization of productive resources and improvements in social developments. They noted, however, that the process has generated peculiar problems for underdeveloped countries, especially Nigeria. One such problem is that Nigeria can hardly produce goods and services that can withstand competition from countries with high industrialization. The cause of the problem is mainly, the absence of qualified human capital. Well-developed and qualified human capital is undoubtedly needed to step up productivity for sustainable development in Nigeria (Egbule, and Okobia, 2018).

The relevance of human capital for Nigeria can be seen from the point of view of the need to increase the proportion of skilled persons in the labour force towards the transformation of the Nigerian economy to pave the way for the industrial revolution. Developing a favourable attitude among employees towards the company will result in increased productivity (Okwoli, 2014). He asserted that investment in human capital can

improve its quality, and thereby have the same or even a more powerful effect on the production of goods and services. Concurring with the above assertion, Uwazie and Okezie cited in Mezieobi (2016) stated that human resources are indispensable assets in the provision of labour essential for the production of goods and services, bringing other factors of production such as land and capital together and exploiting them for development. The development of human capital or resources will enhance human performance and effectiveness in this regard.

The relevance of human capital also arose from the fact that there are emerging changes in the fields of production and marketing in the country. These high managerial skills and technical officers are needed in all stages of the production process; it also requires high-level skilled manpower. Hence, human capital development in Nigeria should be given the right type of planning and orientation to be able to place the country on a higher economic pedestal. In the same vein, human beings are prime members of innovations and agents of change. In support of this, Harrison (1973) posited that ideas come from people and are put to work by people. However, it is now a common belief that the key to economic growth and development in Nigeria is man. Hence, the qualities of man as a labour force have to be planned. Also, there is a need for human capital development in Nigeria to handle the problem of the integrated financial market. The global financial market tends to transmit international, regional, national and local shocks more rapidly than in the past decades. It is the case that as volumes of intermediation and currency transactions increase, global shock with its destabilizing effects increases. These problems can be tackled if the Nigerian nation employs technical manpower, through effective human capital development, that can put in place appropriate fiscal policies aimed at reducing the negative effects of this shock (Mordi, 2016).

Human capital development enhances the utilization of domestic resources for further development of the economy. The continued dependence on foreign expatriates has not only crumbled our economy but has failed to enhance the desired results and set goals. Poverty and inequality are one of the greatest setbacks to Nigeria's economic development. The increased global wealth is only concentrated in the hands of a few privileged individuals in Nigeria. To this end, Abduraheem (2003) opined that there is a decline in average income over the years in Nigeria. He noted that over three million people in Nigeria live on two or fewer dollars per day, in a world of unprecedented

wealth. The above phenomenon can be properly managed with well-developed human capital.

Related Literature on the Reasons for Labour Migration and Brain Drain in Nigeria Inadequate Infrastructure

Inadequate infrastructure also creates problems for economic growth. Basic infrastructure (health care, education, roads, water supply, energy, railway, telecommunication, etc) is essential for the maintenance of life in society. Nigeria's poor infrastructure requires that the Federal Government must spend \$ 15 billion annually for improvement so that it can be maintained to an acceptable level according to a report on the state of infrastructure by ICRC. Poor infrastructure is one of the major constraints to economic growth and development through its debilitating impact on productivity, investment inflow, competitiveness, cost of doing business and people's confidence in government and the economy (Loto and Nkaogu 2011). There is a high correlation between the availability of infrastructural services and the income levels of most economies. Barro (1996) has extended the relationship between infrastructural services such as health and economic growth. He developed a growth model including physical capital inputs, level of education, health capital and the quantity of hours indicators which raises the incentives to invest in education and a rise in health capital lowers the rate of depreciation of health, adding that there are diminishing marginal returns to investment. Grossman (1972), and Bloom (2000), explain that healthy individuals are more efficient at assimilating knowledge and in consequence, obtain higher productivity levels.

In the 1960's and 1970's, Nigeria, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea had similar GDP per capita. But these countries have by far exceeded Nigeria in growth due to an increase in infrastructural development and total factor productivity. Ohio (2008) argued that infrastructural development is as central in terms of its importance as an ingredient of social and economic stability. He clarified this issue further by looking at how valuable an infrastructure is the World Bank estimates that every 1% spent on infrastructure will lead to an equivalent 1% increase in GDP which gives a positive correlation between infrastructure and GDP. In many parts of Nigeria, electricity is erratic and in most cases not available at all, no pipe-borne water, deplorable condition of roads, hospitals are mere consulting clinics and the educational system crumbling without any Nigeria University being among the top one thousand universities in the world. Mba (2010) stress that Government should invest in the productive sector of

the economy and minimize expenditure on things that do not add to the productive capacity of the nation. Capital investments in infrastructure are the key to economic growth because this would help reduce the cost of investment and production, generate employment and reduce the migration rate.

Corruption

Corruption is the abuse of public trust for private gain; it is outright stealing. Osoba (1996) defines corruption as benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermine the authorities, to improve the living conditions of the culprit(s). Dike (2011) observes that corruption is probably the main means of accumulating quick wealth in Nigeria. Corruption occurs in many forms, and it has contributed immensely to the poverty and misery of a large segment of the Nigerian population. An absence of corruption encourages investment and efforts to expand the pie rather than merely fight over its distribution and thus encourages growth. To this extent, improvements in governance in general and reduction of corruption, in particular, could be means to accelerate the process of development. In addition, as society grows wealthier, good governance becomes more widely demanded by the public (Todaro and Smith 2006). The high incidence of corruption has continued to attract growing interest and great concern. Bureaucratic organizations in Nigeria have no exception to this devastating syndrome. Over the past decade, most organizations, private or public, are closed down because of the worst excess of brigandage of economic form of corruption which has obstructed the normal institutional rules and regulations (Katuka and Yaro 2009).

In Nigeria, institutions have been linked seriously with corruption. The World Bank Report (1997), defined corruption as “the abuse of public power for private gains”. Political corruption takes three basic forms: embezzlement, bribery and nepotism. There are many channels through which corruption impact on economic growth. According to Ajayi (2003), corruption misallocates human talents to rent-seeking rather than productive activities. It lowers overall investment and reduces the ability to provide for the rule of law. Corruption increases the size of public investment because of the opportunities for manipulation by corrupt officials. Corruption may reduce government revenue because it comprises the government’s ability to collect taxes and tariffs. Thus, there is a negative relationship between corruption and both investment and growth. Between 1999 and 2007, the Federal Government of Nigeria claimed to have spent over

N1trillion, N204billion naira and \$16billion on integrated power supply, road construction and maintenance and still wallop in epileptic power supply and unimaginable deplorable roads (Obayelu, 2007; Mba 2010).

Mono-Product Economy

Before the discovery of oil in Nigeria in 1956, she was famous in her agrarian economy through which cash crops like palm produce, cocoa, rubber, timber, and groundnuts, were exported, thus making Nigeria a major exporter in that respect (Oloya and Egbule, 2016). Today, the above fact is history. For a one-dimensional economy like Nigeria, the implications are quite far-reaching. Nigeria is a good case study because 80% of her foreign exchange earnings come from the sale of crude oil. Its annual (federal) budget is created based on projections on oil prices and the quantity of oil sold. Unfortunately, due to the dwindling prices of oil in the global market, Nigeria is in a very pitiable state politically, economically, socially and otherwise. Other reasons include:

- Mass unemployment
- Mass poverty
- Poor pension scheme
- Poor salaries and conditions of service
- Crises (political, religious, communal, educational)
- Poor infrastructural facilities
- Poor recreational facilities
- Lack of opportunity for advancement
- Poor education facilities
- Poor health facilities
- Lack of a good rewarding system for hardworking manpower

Key Issues for Consideration/the way forward

Rather than completely blaming the developed countries and globalization for her human capital flight, Nigeria should consider the following options as remedial strategies, in order to benefit maximally from her human resources.

Technological Development and Revolution

Science and technology are twin factors that tend to revolutionize the world today. A country has to be fully integrated into the world economy to harness the benefits of such integration. She has to first embark on a serious technological revolution such that it will be able to play a significant role in the globalization process. Any nation that is not making concerted efforts at technological revolution is doing so at its peril. This understanding gave Usman (2000) cited in Ikem & Ebegha (2013) the impression that only the nations that embarked on technological revolution can effectively join the globalized world. Science and technology should be made the key to developing countries' developmental efforts and should be seen to be pursued with zeal and zest.

Quality and Functional Education

Education is a veritable tool for any developmental efforts, the world over. Quality education is the education and experience that can meet the yearning and aspirations of people. It is the outcome that encompasses knowledge, skill and attitudes and is linked to national goals of education and positive participation in society (Akporehe & Obielumani, 2013). It should be of paramount importance that the educational system in developing countries is qualitative and functional; emphasizing the development of science and technology, as well as skill acquisition (entrepreneurial education). The key infrastructure and facilities for qualitative education should be made available and the human resources should be well-trained to competently handle them, such that developing countries' products are highly competitive in the international arena.

Free Competitive Economy

Developing countries also have to adopt a free competitive economy. They have to transition from a government regulated market to a free competitive economy; liberalizing its economy for foreign investors. Capitalist economy (competitiveness) is known all over the world as the economic policy that creates wealth and promotes real growth as production is geared towards profit making.

Reform of Domestic Finance

Nigeria should endeavour to reform its domestic financing to make it strong and capable of supporting its nation's economic growth. A strong financial base is necessary for industrial development. It also guarantees both short-term, medium-term and long-term investments. In Nigeria, for instance, the bank reforms, leading to mergers and acquisitions are geared towards this goal, as they will have the capacity to finance viable capital projects that will improve the national economy. Against this backdrop, the researcher recommends restructuring the countries' economies in order to minimize the negative effects of globalization and harness its benefits.

Diversification of the Economy

For a very long time, Nigeria, for instance, has completely depended on revenue from crude oil (a one-time agrarian economy). There was total neglect of other sectors of the economy. This has put a serious strain on the revenue from crude oil. Diversification of the national economy, therefore, is the only antidote to economic growth and development. The approach has been used by the Asian Tigers to achieve success, as they now emerged as the New Industrialized Countries of the world. Developing countries like Nigeria should divert their interest, especially to agricultural products such as cash crops and animal products, as well as solid mineral exploration. It can be unequivocally asserted that Nigeria's development impotence cannot be solely attributed to colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism as often perceptively advanced by scholars of radical persuasion; but also its weak domestic economic structure. There is therefore the necessity for developing countries to diversify their economic base to confront the challenges of the contemporary globalization process and remain relevant in the scheme of world events.

Provision of a Conducive Working Environment

Based on the premise that an unsatisfactory working environment, owing largely to dilapidated and obsolete facilities, was and is still partly responsible for human capital flight in Nigeria, it is suggested that urgent and massive overhaul of facilities especially in the universities, hospitals and research centres be undertaken. In the view of Ekundayo et al (2010), apart from the physical working environment, there is also a compelling need to make the psycho-social environment conducive. In this regard, there should be proper appreciation and recognition for intellectual and professional worth. Also, the

Nigerian government should address and review all the various policies that have triggered the migration stream of intellectuals from universities, and other professionals like doctors, pharmacists, nurses, engineers, etc, from the country.

Foreign Investment

The Nigerian government have to attract foreign investments both wholly and in partnership with indigenous entrepreneurs in the areas of construction, power generation, oil refining, real estate development, telecommunications, and gas station infrastructural provision. In concrete terms, foreign investment has been quite staggering. Globalization and indeed its neo-liberalist expansionism in the African space have opened up a wide economic movement and multi-national labour market orientations (Nwankwo & Ofozoba, 2016).

Improved Human Resources

The governments of Nigeria should develop their human resources to meet up with the knowledge requirements of the globalization process. Most developing countries have a large chunk of human resources ready to be utilized by foreign firms. Their human resources should be properly developed so that they can contribute and participate in national and international economic activities. In the education sector, for instance, the governments of developing countries should sponsor teachers to attend conferences and seminars both locally and internationally – this will help to update their knowledge on current global issues, especially the application of ICT in the teaching-learning process.

Efficient and Effective Economic Management

No country is poor as far as the distribution of natural resources is concerned. I believe the main challenge of developing countries is the mismanagement of available resources, both natural and human, as well as money politics. Hence, they should pursue efficient and effective economic management of their resources to raise the people's standard of living and overall economic development of the nations. The resources of the nations should not be wasted through high-level corruption, ethnic sentiment, self-centredness and embezzlement.

Advancement in Research

Research is a careful search and systematic investigation towards increasing the sum of knowledge. It is the most important tool for advancing knowledge and relevant skills. Knowledge induces productivity. Without advances in research, human capital development will be at a standstill. Research cannot be divorced from human capital and economic development. Education through quality research is needed to produce knowledge innovations and entrepreneurial skills to achieve overall development. There is ample evidence to show that research and education (especially higher education) has contributed to the rise and expansion of the world knowledge-based economy. In addition, investment in and joint publications of research work with international schools should be encouraged.

Conclusion

I examined the relationship between the migration rate of skilled workers, brain drain and human capital formation in Nigeria. Since the beginning of creation, humans have always involved themselves in movement activities. It has been a major occurrence in the history of Africa and the entire globe generally.

Migration can have a range of social, cultural, political and economic effects. It involves the transfer and flight of technical know-how and skills and financial assets from one location to another. Migration also has consequences for the individual, the area of origin and the area of destination. Nigeria cannot achieve long-term economic development by exporting its natural resources. The professionals that are emigrating out of Nigeria include those with technical expertise, entrepreneurial and managerial skills and in the new world order; economic growth and development are driven by people with knowledge. It is the most talented citizens that should lead the people to create wealth and eradicate poverty. Hence their absence increases the endemic corruption and makes it easier for the looters to continue in the act. If revered to brain gain will enhance economic growth in Nigeria.

Recommendations

To reverse the brain drain and boost economic growth, the Nigerian government should create a conducive environment for investment that will ensure employment opportunities

and reduce poverty. It should also put in place a good institutional framework, and maintain zero tolerance for corruption. It must provide the much-needed infrastructures such as a good health care system, good roads and transportation systems, affordable and functional education, water supply, security, stable energy and telecommunication (ICT) facilities. These essential ingredients make life worth living.

Most Nigerian government officials use taxpayers' money to travel abroad for routine medical check-ups. Banning this practice would force the government to bring back medical doctors of Nigerian origin that emigrated to Europe and America. Corruption and money laundering should attract capital punishment, and the recovered funds should be invested in the real sector and not the money market for the benefit of all citizens. Capital (human and knowledge) and labour (skill) are the major prerequisite for growth and constitute the brain drain in developed countries.

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