

**EFFECTS OF HUMAN CAPITAL FLIGHT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA,  
2015-2023**

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**Abstract**

*Nigeria as a country has been grappling with challenges of economic development. These economic development problems include low standard of living, low rates of literacy, unemployment and poverty. However, the effect of flight of human capital on economic development has been a discourse of polemics. The study employed ex post facto employing document evidence and analysed using thematic approach. Human capital flight is a plague in Nigeria's economy. Its adverse effects on economic development is felt in two critical sectors-health and education. In scale of its effects, the medical institution is worst hit along which has invariably affected wellness and life expectancy. The study recommends that federal and state governments should work closely with the industrial unions of these professionals in health, education and other critical sectors to address priority needs and expectations of social welfare and conducive working environment for productivity and development of the economy.*

**Keywords: Capital flight, Development, Economy, Human and Labour Productivity**

**Introduction**

Economic development is undoubtedly the improvement of certain fundamentals that affect social welfare of a nation. The social welfare is seen in the adequacy of basic essentials like service and infrastructures (Taddy and Amstrong, 2021). Thus, the aim of economic development is to improve the material standard of living by raising the absolute level of per capita incomes. Raising per capita incomes is also a stated objective of policy of the governments of all developing countries. For policy makers and economists attempting to achieve their governments' objectives therefore an understanding of economic development especially in its policy dimension is important (Myint and Krueger, 2024). In this regard, the human resources become expedient to achieve the lofty ideals of economic development. As Achike (2020), observed that the exit of these resourceful persons to other economies has become topical in consideration of its affects on the economy. To this extent, the term, "human capital" illuminates.

Human capital flight is an interesting trend in the discourse of international political economic relation because of its gains and losses to both foreign and domestic economies (Carl, 2007). Human capital flight is peculiar to every country but in different dimension and scale of effects. It is observed that no economy boast of 100 percent concentration of its human resources in isolation of the motive to migrate to other economies (Omowumi, 2018). In a generic sense, Onwunyi etal, (2020) opined that migration of people has been a regular and common phenomenon of world history, whether as skilled or unskilled. In recent

time, migration of skilled labour popularly known as human capital flight or brain drain is widely discussed for its larger consequences and its impacts on developing countries. The inspiration of moving from one's home country to abroad is dynamic and cannot be generalized. The reason may be that the developed foreign countries encourage better opportunity than a home country can provide. These concerns underscore the strand of economic development studies related to domestic challenges.

Succinctly, it is germane to note that the main causes of migration are unstable political, social and economic conditions in the migrants' home countries. Other factors which can possibly cause migration are human rights violations, poverty, civil disorder, oppressive political dictator, widespread violence, unemployment, and increase in population. Push factors are caused by society's changes in the migrants' countries of origin and they are factors linked to conflicts and wars. They can include disintegration of the multicultural countries, natural disasters, economic situation, religious and ethnic 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.

Pertinently, the underlying question is the affinity between human capital flight and challenges of economic development. In this regard, scholars like Walter (2013), Mazada (2018) and Usman (2020) have respectively argued that human capital flight has negatively impacted on economic development of African countries while many other studies conducted on human capital flight and macroeconomic variables indicated significant correlation. For instance, Hoa and Lin (2016) found a negative relationship between human capital flight and macroeconomic variables, while Aderoju (2017) and Uguru *et al.* (2014) found a positive relationship. In addition, other scholars like Ezeora *etal* (2018), Edak (2018), Nwankwo and Odey (2019) have also respectively remarked that human capital flight has also impacted entrepreneurship and undermined growth projections of the sector in an unfavourable political climate and social environment.

A cursory view at the foregoing scholarly analysis illuminates gaps in the effects of human capital flight on economic development of Nigeria. This gap underscores the rationale for this study which aims to investigate the effects of human capital flight on economic development in Nigeria.

## Literature Review

### Conceptual Review

Human capital resonates from value of labour appropriated for growth and development. Furthermore, Adam Smith as noted defined human capital as one of the four types of fixed capital that were: (i) useful machines as instruments of the trade; (ii) buildings as the means of procuring revenue; (iii) improvements of land and (iv) human capital. It is "the acquired and useful abilities of all the inhabitants or members of the society. The acquisition of such talents, by the maintenance of the acquirer during his education, study, or apprenticeship, always costs a real expense, which is a capital fixed and realized, as it were, in his person. The improved dexterity of a workman may be considered in the same light as a machine or instrument of trade which facilitate and abridge labour, and which, though it costs a certain expense, repays that expense with a profit."(Smith,1968 cited in Okolo, 2012). In credence, human capital is the critical component of productivity and growth.

Furthermore, Human Capital is also known as the stock of skills and productive knowledge embodied in people. Adam Smith in *Wealth of Nations* identified the improvement of workers' skills as a fundamental source of economic progress and increasing human welfare (Offor et al, 2022). These improvements are achieved not only through education and formal training, but also, through learning by doing. From an individual's perspective investment in human capital is a life-long process. Knowledge embodied in a person

includes abilities for problem solving, command over relevant information, and technical, managerial, and entrepreneurial skills.

However, Wagle (2009) observed that phenomenal increase in the migration of skilled and educated professional workers in recent years, particularly from developing to developed countries causing depletion or loss of intellectual and technical personnel in the countries where the need is more acute has initiated new form of debate in recognizing human capital and its impact in the deployment process of the underdeveloped areas. Thus, this situation is appropriately contextualized as human capital flight. To this end, human capital flight is viewed as emigration of trained and talented individuals to other nations or jurisdictions. There are several arguments by many economists for and against such ‘drain’ and its impact in development. These arguments as observed formed the thrust of this study.

Human Capital Flight is therefore defined as the movement of highly skilled workers from one country to other countries in search for better standard of living, better quality of life, higher salaries, access to advanced technology and more stable political conditions. Interestingly, unlike actual brain drain, human capital flight intent is not explicit. It connotes large-scale movement or migration of top flight manpower from various developing countries (mainly African countries) to developed countries notably United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, France, Holland, New Zealand, Italy, United Arab Emirate, Australia, etc. As earlier noted, the main reason for this movement could be the quest for better opportunities (Etuk, etal 2023). Similarly, Adewumi, etal (2019), indicated that human capital flights imply refers to the migration of highly skilled or well-educated individuals for better opportunities. The benefits from skilled migration refer to as brain gain, and the cost is referred to brain drain. Human capital flight always involves the movement of skilled professionals from less developing countries to developed ones.

In a different perspective, Human Capital Flight is seen as a movement of highly skilled or professional people from their own country to another country where they can earn more money. The thought process of actualizing this is known as human capital flight intention. Thus, human capital flight intention refers to the likelihood of highly skilled workers or professionals to migrate. Human capital flight intention as the likelihood of highly trained and well experienced practitioners migrating from countries with poor conditions of service to those with better work conditions in search of greener pasture (Utile, 2008). This perspective undoubtedly elicits curiosity on what inform migration of skilled and experienced persons from their countries to other economies of the world.

Thus, in an illustrative sense, human capital flight is common amongst such skilled personnel as medical doctors, pharmacists, medical laboratory scientists, nurses, industrial chemists, and pilots. Others are computer scientists, engineers, university lecturers, researchers, technologists and lawyers. The term human capital flight originally referred to technological workers leaving a nation. Nowadays, its application or meaning has widened to include the migration of educated and professional people from one country, economic sector or field for another usually for better remuneration and/or living conditions (Merriam, 2010). Human capital flight is usually considered an economic cost on the part of the releasing countries. This is because migrants usually take with them the fraction of value of their training sponsored by governments or other organizations. It could be likened to capital flight which refers to the same movement of financial capital. The opposite of human capital flight is brain gain. As such, whilst developing countries from which trained personnel are migrating are suffering from human capital flight, developed nations are experiencing brain gain.

### **Empirical review**

#### **The Conditions Responsible for Human Capital Flight in Nigeria**

A cursory view of the literature revealed that scholars have written extensively on factors exacerbating human capital flight in Nigeria. In this vein, Tabassum *et al* (2017) opined that leadership failure to a large extent is the cause of brain drain from Nigeria. This assertion was corroborated by the findings from the study carried out by Omonijo *et al* (2011). To this extent, the outcome from the study showed a correlation between deficient leadership of the country and brain drain. Furthermore, subsequent studies revealed that many Nigeria students in foreign countries after their studies stayed back in a bid to familiarize themselves with advanced societies. Along with similar research thought, Ajide and Alimi (2018) observed that political instability was a leading cause of human capital flight and also influenced the level of remittances to African countries like Nigeria. The authors, thus, recommended the need for African political leaders to provide a stable environment, which is conducive for growth to take place and reduce human capital flight.

Subsequently, Faggian *et al* (2017), however, opined that the role of innovation in the development of the local economy is colossal to reduce the likelihood of migration. Indeed, the endogenous growth model of the 1980s placed much emphasis on the role of innovation. Also, other factors have also been identified in the literature. Yamin and Luna (2016) opined that push factors such as infrastructure, lack of job opportunity, unavailable higher education facilities among other factors “push” migrants out of their home country. However, the study by Popogbe and Adeosun (2020) revealed that increased population growth rate and poor life expectancy increases the likelihood of migrating out of Nigeria. Indeed, Adeosun and Popogbe (2020) affirmed that the increasing population has always been to the disadvantage of the Nigerian economy. This is because although the population has spiraled over the years, human development utilization is very poor. This is shown in the high rate of unemployment and level of education. The study by Tabassum *et al* (2017) again affirmed that in Pakistan, a high rate of unemployment led to labor migration which negatively impacted the economy.

Again, Ahmed and Yusufu (2019) in their survey study on human capital flight on economic growth in Nigeria discovered that the migration of skilled individuals to developed economies has indeed undermined prospects of growth indices. Subsequently, the study found out that the most Nigeria skilled personnel seek for foreign work visa because of gloomy condition of the economy. In other words, the interest in foreign public service is influenced by poor handling of the economy which has created widespread hardship and poverty. The study advocated for appropriate and specific economic policies to harness potentials of human capital development for economic growth and curtail incidences of flight skilled labour to advanced economies.

Similarly, Akidi (2019) in his study, Human Capital and National Development stressed that leadership failure contributed enormously to the crises of human capital development in Nigeria. Through survey methodology, the study concludes that once leadership problem is fixed through transparent recruitment process where people’s will triumph then plausible measures will be initiated towards rechanneling potentials of human capital to national development. In a similar sense, Onwunyi, et al (2020) through documentary research remarked that economic and demographic pressures which can be seen as the need to satisfy economic needs coupled with the need and quest to stand counted in the society are factors propelling migration of skilled persons to foreign industrialized countries.

More succinctly, Dare et al (2011) carried out a study on the topic “understanding the escalation of brain drain in Nigeria from poor leadership point of view”. The objective of the study was to find out if there was a relationship between poor leadership in Nigeria and the escalation of brain drain. Sample percentage and ranking method were used to analyze the data. Chi-square was used to test its hypothesis and the result indicated that there is a relationship between poor leadership of the country and brain drain. It equally revealed that students were interested in travelling out of the country to developed societies after their

studies. The findings of the study further identified some causes of brain drain which included mass unemployment, poor salaries and poor conditions of service, mass poverty, religious and communal crises. Solutions proffered included: good leadership, improved salary structure for workers and good conditions of service.

In a more generic perspective, Onwunyi, et al (2020), identified globalization and knowledge-based economy as drivers of migration of highly skilled labour to advanced economies. Globalization offers opportunities for amelioration of the pace of brain drain and the sources of additional pressures for emigration of skilled manpower from poor developing countries. The intensification of globalization has lowered the impediments to mobility of all forms of capital, accelerated the standardization of knowledge requirements, made production by multinationals more foot loose, and enhanced the scope for private sector growth. On the upside, the phenomenal growth and easier mobility of private capital opens up opportunities for engaging professionals in their home countries and at higher returns based on increased productivity. This is by no means trivial, particularly, for countries in Africa, where most professionals have been engaged in the public sector at typically very low wages. Global knowledge sharing arrangements, through partnerships and networking, is also expanding the scope and capacity available to poor countries for production and more effective application of knowledge. A particular development in the global production system is that of production sharing arrangements across countries by multi-nationals. They can be said to account for over 30 percent of global production. Although such arrangements are still predominantly among industrial countries, increasingly developing countries are partaking in them, initially based on their low wage comparative advantage, raising opportunities for enhanced use of local skilled workforce. The comparative advantage of low wage in developing countries, however, can be nullified by low productivity partly due to the scarcity of complementary professional skills. Although the wages per hour may be low, the wages per unit of output could be high due to low productivity. Surveys of investors show that labor is not cheap where productivity is low. Productivity in turn is influenced, not only by the quantity and quality of capital stock, but also quality and quantity of know how (knowledge). Also, the emergence of a knowledge economy opens up new windows of opportunities for late comers to achieve faster productivity-based growth. This is partly because new technologies allow "leap frogging" for those countries that do not carry the inertia from the previous industrial structure. The challenge to developing countries, however, relates to the fact that information and micro electronics, the core of the knowledge economy, aids human mental effort. To meet this challenge poor countries have to position themselves well in terms of human competencies and capability of firms to work with this technological revolution. Opportunities for "leap frogging" and threats from marginalization are strong motivators for seeking and retaining knowledge.

Emphatically, Godwin and Akindele (2016) also observed through qualitative method the inability of Nigeria government to absorb the teaming professionals is the cause of the out flux of human capitals. It has become a daunting challenge that most Nigerian graduates and highly trained professionals indifferent fields find it convenient to leave the country in search for good life. Hence, unemployment is the most daunting factor responsible for migration of educated and skilled people to developed economies.

### **Effects of Human Capital Flight on Economic Development in Nigeria**

Arguably, Oduba (2000) stressed that effects of skilled labour migration from developing countries can be viewed as either positive or negative, depending on what school of thought one adheres to. Advocates of the neo-classical school argue that skilled labour migration from developing countries is a result, and not a cause, of lack of job opportunities in developing countries and recognize 'brain over flows' rather than 'human capital flight. From this standpoint, international migration actually reduces excess supply of skilled workers in developing countries and ensures optimal allocation of previously unused or under-utilized human resources, to the gain of the world economy. Investment in the education and training of skilled workers by developing countries is more in the nature of a sunk than an actual cost. Human capital management in the underdeveloped sectors, retaining of it is probably the biggest challenge. Inappropriate

education system blinds the person about even apparently existing potentials at the local level. Higher wage levels in the developed countries, language advantage was provided in the interest of those countries by wrong orientation of education system and seemingly lack of opportunity at local level work as push factors to human capital flight.

Human capital flight indeed can have a range of social, cultural, political and economic effects. In 2021, the migration rate in Nigeria stood at -0.29 percent per 1, 000 population. This means that the number of people leaving Nigeria is slightly higher than that of those entering the country. From 2015 to 2021, human capital flight rate stood at negative in 2015 it was -0.34, -0.33 in 2016, -0.32 in 2017, -0.31 in 2018, 0.3 in 2019, -0.3 in 2020 and -0.29 in 2021 (Sasu, 2022). In fact, between 2000 and 2021, the migration balance stayed negative. Human capital flight on effects on socio-economic development made Nigeria to loose the capacity and capability of attracting people from other countries due to economic crisis and poverty. The effect of human capital flight is also not limited to remittances and cash inflows alone. It includes a wide range of development issues, governance and legal protection, employment and social protection, health services and education, tertiary education, knowledge and skills development, economic growth, financial services and growth, agriculture and rural infrastructural development, and environmental issues (Obani and Odalonu, 2023).

It is therefore undeniable fact that brain drain occurs when significant numbers of highly skilled nationals leave their countries of origin to seek employment or establish businesses abroad. It has a negative effect on the economies of developing countries, because the skills of those remaining may not be able and sufficient to develop the economy considering the population.

In credence, scholars have researched and written extensively on the effects of human capital flight on the economy and development of Nigeria. In this vein, the massive loss of human capital bedeviling Nigeria has become a source of worry and a cog in the wheel of development of the country (Onwunyi, et al, 2020). Report of United Nations (1998), documents that the greatest challenge facing Nigeria as it concerns development emanate from the effect of human capital flight. Human capital flight no doubt has financial, institutional and societal costs in Nigeria (Ezeh, 2008). From the financial front, most of the resources that were expended in the course of training these migrated professionals constitute large financial losses to Nigeria. This is because their services are no longer channeled to Nigeria's development and her social needs. On the other hand, most Nigeria's social institutions now rely on expatriates since they have all lost the indigenous competent hands due to human capital flight. The cost of recruiting and sustaining these expatriates in Nigeria as alternative manpower are usually too excruciating due to financial depletion of Nigeria mostly occasioned by the fluctuations of oil prices. This has become a serious problem to Nigerian development as resources are annually expended in the training of professionals who will within few years of gaining expert is emigrate to other countries leaving its home country to suffer human capital losses (Onwunyi, et al, 2020).

In a specific sense, Etuk, et al (2023), also noted that human capital flight intention has a huge negative effect on the sourced country, yet there exist few empirical studies on such devastating phenomenon. It is imperative to note that few empirical studies that considered the effect of working environment on human capital flight intention, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, none has been carried out to assess its effect on medical doctors' performance in a developing economy like Nigeria. Similarly, it is not uncommon to observe that in most Nigerian public health care institutions, certain policies, work procedures, management actions and in actions may compel medical doctors to organize and interpret their sensory impressions negatively about their workplace. These actions and inactions are expressed through; neglected health care system, insufficient provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), poor funding, poor remuneration, underequipped facilities (especially before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic). Others include; unsatisfactory working conditions characterized by heavy workloads, obsolete facilities and limited access to professional development opportunities. This has led to incessant industrial actions and threats of strikes by medical doctors.

In a more specific sense, as the most populous country in Africa with about 214 million people, Nigeria simply does not have enough healthcare practitioners to serve its population. Adeloje, et al (2017) estimated that there are 1 healthcare practitioner for every 1000 Nigerian citizens, which is far less than what is recommended by World Health Organization, WHO. The World Health Organization recommended ‘‘1 Medical doctor for 60 patients’’. The emergence of brain drain in Nigeria has hindered the development of the medical infrastructure to the standards of other comparable developing countries such as Ghana. Brain drain also increased medical tourism in Nigeria, especially among the upper echelon of society (Orekoya and Oduoye, 2018). The emigration of highly skilled healthcare practitioners is at an all-time high and therefore depleting Nigeria of its healthcare worker talents that could help build the Nigerian health care sector. It is miserable situation which had adversely affected the adequacy of population of health practitioners in Nigeria’s primary, secondary and tertiary health institutions (Obinwanne, 2019).

In a broad perspective, the effect of the human capital flight leaves Africa in a state where there is low education quality and lack of skilled professionals to ensure sustainable economic development in the continent. This results in the continent importing expatriates from the brain drainer-countries which costs the continent a massive amount of money. An estimated 40% of the Africa's top professionals live abroad, costing the continent over USD4 million per year in consultancy and expatriate (Oduba, 2000). These expatriates are expensive as they are paid in hard currencies and in many circumstances, the African government do not have a say in the condition of employment. Using the services of foreign experts often form part of the conditions of foreign aids that African government receives from the developed countries (Onwunyi, etal 2020 and Emenike and Aydi 2018).

Schneider (2003) and Ajayi (2005) thus, conclude that the level of human capital flight in the country has led to political instability, hate speeches, agitations, increased crime rates, militancy, terrorism, and banditry over the years, and all these have become a serious problem in Nigeria. Thus, human capital flight has resulted in wastage of economic resources over the past three decades. Economic resources lost through this medium are thus not available for the enhancement of domestic activities or the social welfare of residents. Therefore, the lost human resources would have otherwise been vital for sustaining economic growth and development as well as served as capital investments in such an economy. Investments in a particular country have a strong connection with the economic development of that country. Nevertheless, in countries with poor capital organization or poor investment policies by the government, human capital absconds, thus endangering such countries to social hardship, high poverty, high crime rates, and poor status of financial institutions (Otene and Edeme, 2012).

### **Methodological Discourse**

This study adopts ex post facto design utilizing documentary evidence and analysed qualitatively. Theoretically, this study adopts push pull theory. Push-Pull Theory as expounded by Ravenstein (1889) and advanced by Lee(1966) is one of the appropriate frameworks in this study. In a generic perspective, the theory explored factors or conditions that motivate and sustained migration of persons from a country to other countries. What is essential in the theoretical framework is push-factor and pull-factor analysis. Succinctly, Ravenstein (1889) cited in Etim (2012) further explained that push-factor revealed several factors or conditions that pushed people out of their home country. These push-factors include oppressive laws, unfavorable climate of work, and over-taxation. On the other hand, the pull-factor explained that there are factors which influenced the desire to move to another country where labour is needed to develop industry, commerce, or land.

The mass movement of highly skilled and seasoned academics and medical practitioners from Nigeria’s tertiary institutions (particularly universities) and hospitals to overseas countries for greener pasture has certainly adversely affected the quality of outputs from the institutions (Emeghara, 2013). However, the

effects of these incidences on economy and development formed the thrust of this discourse. In other words, the effect of incessant migration of professionals from critical sectors of the economy is basically the essence of this research study. To this extent, it is pertinent to examine the assumptions of another scientific framework on effects human capital flight on economic development.

### **Discussion of Result**

As earlier noted, social well being and labour productivity are indicators of economic development. Hence, social well being reflecting in access to quality medical care, teaching and learning, adequacy of energy supply, portable drinking water, infrastructure, telecommunication, transportation services are viable indicators of human development index of every economy otherwise known as economic development. Similarly, labour productivity illustrated in knowledge (science), tools (technology) are viable indicators of productivity as a driver of development of the economy. Flight of trained professionals in our public health facilities is one of the reasons for poor clinical services which are other factors or variables contributing to poor medical services in our public health institutions. In other words, Oyede (2019) asserted that flight of highly skilled professionals in health related issues to other countries has undermined services and created chaos of uncertainties and fatalities in public hospitals. Again, there have been cases of enormous plights of patients looking forward for the indulgence of consultants for treatment.

Furthermore, it is argued that the health sector has witnessed the ingenuity of Nigerians in America and United Kingdom, aside the many medical specialists that have migrated to these countries, notable among them is Benneth Omalu, a forensic pathologist, and neuropathologist who was the first to discover and publish findings of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) in American football players while working at the Allegheny County coroner's office in Pittsburgh. He later became the chief medical examiner for San Joaquin County, California, and is a professor at the University of California, Davis, department of medical pathology and laboratory medicine (Laskas, 2015). Because of his exploit, a movie titled *Concussion* (2016) was done, with Will Smith playing the major character. Furthermore, brain drain and migration has caused a high level of shortage of important, skilled workers across different sectors in Nigeria. This also results to a reduction in the quality of service due to the absence of skilled personnel in Nigeria (Ogbenika, 2019).

In this vein, Nwadike (2018), posit that the flight of high-profile consultants to other countries has over the years and decades affected the morale and drive of many resident doctors and health workers across tertiary, secondary and primary health institutions in Nigeria. This unpleasant development has terribly affected the much anticipated output in clinical and sundry health services offered to our people. It is a national problem that requires adequate attention and effective strategic plan to tackle for the health safety of Nigerians. Despite shortfall in health personnel, many still believed that low morale among practitioners in our hospitals and poor medical attention which often result to fatalities and death can be attributed to other factors not necessarily gaps created by the flight of health workers to other developed countries of the world.

To underscore the imperatives of academic resources in tertiary institution, Yohanna and Simon (2013) observed that the place of academic staff in any academic institution cannot be overemphasized. The academic staffs of any University are equally the intellectual resource pool of the University. Of course, no University is superior to its teaching staff. The type, quality, and quantity of lecturers in the nation's University system for the achievement of its goals and objectives are very crucial to its success. In particular, the higher the quality, the better the graduates who are often than not better equipped and more likely to excel in their chosen careers. To achieve quality education in higher institutions, there must be adequate academic staff with other infrastructural facilities in right quantities and qualities. The poor quality of education in the majority higher institutions is due to inadequate academic staff and shortage of other resources. One of the factors reducing the number of academic staff in Nigerian higher institutions



is the problem of brain-drain. Subsequently, Ogunode and Atobauka (2022), noted that shortage of academic staff is responsible for the acute shortage of academic staff in many higher institutions in Nigeria. NEEDS Report (2014) submitted that the data available on teacher' shortage revealed that at the Colleges of education, 95 public colleges of education with population of students of 338,237 and teaching staff of 15,344 and teacher-students ratio of 1:22. For Polytechnics, there 45 public polytechnics with students enrolment of 166,121 and teaching staff of 5,636 while there are 37,504 teachers in the nation's public universities with a student enrolment of 1,252,913, representing a teacher-to-student ratio of 1:33. Ogunode and Adamu (2021) identified; brain-drain, inadequate funding, lack of strategic manpower planning, poor motivation, uncondusive working environment and corruption as the reasons for shortage of academic staff in the Nigerian higher institutions.

Consequently, Okoli, *et al* (2016) observed that, there is diminishing scope of mentoring junior researchers by seasoned and senior researchers due to brain drain. Poor research development in many higher 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 higher institutions. Research is one major indicators used for ranking higher institutions performance. Conducting quality research demands experiences researchers and academician. It is unfortunate that many higher institutions in the country do have these qualified researchers and professors due to brain drain problems. Subsequently, the mass movement of highly skilled and seasoned academics from Nigeria s tertiary institutions (particularly universities) to overseas countries for greener pasture has certainly adversely affected the quality of outputs from the institutions (Emeghara, 2019). As Yesufu (1996) aptly observes the quality of graduates is so poor that their impact on the national economy in terms of productivity is generally below the required standard for a developing economy .Corroborating the above view, Oni (2008) avers that the mass movement of academics from the nation s universities to other countries has invariably taken its toll on the quality of outputs produced from the system.

Again, Akindele (2017), further remarked that tremendous reduction in the quality of skilled manpower in Nigeria's tertiary institutions, teaching hospitals and research Centres. Akin to the issue of fall in standard of education is that of reduction in the quality of skilled manpower in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Ipso facto, there is mass exodus of seasoned intellectuals from these institutions (especially the ivory tower) to other sectors of the economy within the country or other countries for greener pasture. It is hardly surprising, that the quality and quantity of academic staff will be considerably reduced. In this perspective, Mbanefo (2012) aptly observed that today the Nigerian university system continues to suffer from intellectual haemorrhage created by the problem of brain drain . This, according to him, is more so in the very critical fields of human medicine, pharmacy, computer science and engineering. Similarly, in the words of Adebayo (2010), it is stressed that many hospitals and research centres in Nigeria were without specialist and consultants in the 1990s, whilst many higher education institutions (HEIs) were left hollow and shallow. The clear implication of this development is that as a result of migration of technological know-how, the economy cannot grow.

Hence, that wellness and life expectancy which are critical variables of economic development have been grossly militated by short-fall of health personnel and poor service delivery in public medical institutions in Nigeria. In addition, the adverse effects of brain drain in public tertiary institutions are mostly felt in low knowledge production (science) and technological innovations as drives of economic development. To this extent, the hypothetical assumption that flight of health workers and academics has undermined social wellbeing and labour productivity in Nigeria is tested and established.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Human capital flight is a plague in Nigeria's economy. Its adverse effects on economic development is felt in two critical sectors-health and education. In scale of its effects, the medical institution is worst hit along

which has invariably affected wellness and life expectancy. Sadly, government's failure in policy and drive to ensure conducive working environment and meaningful reward system amid other factors are conditions exacerbating brain drain in Nigeria. Despite efforts initiated, the unpleasant situation persists in alarming scale as many Nigeria professionals are immigrant passport holders looking for brighter opportunities in industrialized economies.

This unpleasant development therefore underscored the need for collective approach beyond government's clumsy efforts to mitigate the flight of Nigeria professionals to the economies of advanced countries of the world. This is further embellished in the recommendations below.

### 5.3. Recommendation

The following recommendations are made in credence to the findings:

1. The federal and state governments should work closely with the industrial unions of these professionals in health, education and other critical sectors to address priority needs and expectations of social welfare and conducive working environment for productivity and development of the economy.
2. The management of the public health facilities and tertiary institutions should be more creative to engage the private sector and international humanitarian agencies to respond to its statutory expectations and plights through career advancement, infrastructural development etc.
3. The fund such as Tertiary Education Fund designated for career development should be effectively explored to abate flight of professionals to other countries of the world.

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