

## Human Capital, Brain Drain Syndrome and Its Implication on Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria: A Study of Lagos State (2015-2023)

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### **Abstract:**

*This study discusses the importance of investing in human capital for a nation's socio-economic development. It highlights how human resources are more critical to a country's growth than natural resources or physical capital. It is an asset that contributes to economic stability, growth, and worldwide recognition. Nigeria, with its abundant human and natural resources, has the potential for sustained economic progress. However, the country also experiences various forms of international migration, with many Nigerians migrating to other countries for education and work opportunities. The Diaspora community comprises a significant number of skilled professionals that contribute to the growth and development of their host countries. The objective of the study is to examine the nature and causes of the migration of human capital, and brain drain in Nigeria. The study adopts the push-pull theory that was propounded in 1966 by Everett Spurgeon Lee. Also, data was collected using qualitative method and 11 interviewees were interviewed while data were also collected from secondary sources. The result of the study reveals that the government's neglect of human capital investment has reduced economic growth and caused citizens to seek opportunities abroad. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for investment in human capital development through employment, training, healthcare, infrastructural development and technological advancement to eradicate brain drain and foster a more inclusive society. This study recommends the diversification of its economy, reduce corruption and invest in human capital development.*

### **Keywords:**

*Migration; syndrome; brain drain and development.*

## **I. Introduction**

Investing in human capital is a vital prerequisite for a country's socio-economic and political growth. The significance of human capital cannot be overstated as it is through these abilities and skills that an economy can prosper. One of the key contributing factors to the success of the economies in most developed and emerging countries is their remarkable commitment to investing in the development of their human capital (Sarah et al., 2015). A country's human capital is an investment and an asset that contributes to its economic stability, growth, and recognition around the world. The quantity and quality of human capital determine the socio-economic and political development of a nation. However, some countries with abundant natural resources and physical capital still fail to make good use of them. This may be because they lack highly trained workers to drive economic growth or the knowledge to prioritize and invest in their human capital. Therefore, investing in human capital is important for a country to fully realize its potential as valuable contributors to the

international system; their individuals accumulate knowledge, skills, and overall well-being throughout their lives (Sarah et al., 2015).

Nigeria has a population of over 225 million people and is rich in human and natural resources, including solid minerals, crude oil, petroleum, and natural gas. The country's mining activities are concentrated in specific regions, and trade is facilitated by the structure of material and human endowment. Nigeria's significant economic power and abundant resources make it a cause of rivalry among several other nations (The Guardian, 2018). According to Kwaku (2023) as cited in Phillip and Ana (2019), Nigeria has experienced an increase in international migration since gaining independence. A global attitudes survey conducted in 2018 shows that 45% of Nigerian adults plan to relocate to other countries within the next five years. The number of Nigerians residing outside Nigeria has significantly increased over the last three decades, with the US and the UK being the top destinations. As of 2015, over 15 million Nigerians were estimated to be living outside their home country, with the Diaspora community comprising a significant number of skilled professionals contributing to the growth of their host countries (Arhin-Sam, 2023; Owens-Ibie & Aondover, 2024). Lagos State is the commercial hub of Nigeria, with a thriving business sector and abundant mineral resources, including crude oil, bitumen, clay, glass sand, and gas.

The state has a population of 16,536,018 and is growing at a rate of 7.3% from 2023 (World Population Review, 2024). Many Nigerians migrate to Europe due to a lack of prospects and opportunities, unemployment, political neglect, and conflicts. Despite having many resources, Nigeria still faces economic and social challenges, including underdevelopment, corruption, and leadership deficiency. The mass movement of people due to these difficulties is causing a brain drain in the country, which is a major concern as educated and skilled individuals are essential for a nation's progress (Esther, 2019).

Unemployment, corruption, and over-dependence on crude oil are the major causes of brain drain in Nigeria. Despite the availability of human and natural resources, Nigeria's government has failed to direct its resources towards economic growth and development, leading to a growing rate of poverty and outflow of human resources (Aliyu et al., 2023). This has made Nigeria and other developing countries the primary supply of human capital to the developed world, which has detrimental effects on the emigrant's home country in social, cultural, political, and economic spheres (Egbule, 2023). The migration of Nigerian citizens to other countries due to limited opportunities and investment in human capital is a cause for concern. This human capital flight deprives the country of the much-needed skills and expertise required to drive growth and development. To ensure sustainable economic growth and development, the high rate of brain drain in Nigeria needs to be addressed. The government and other stakeholders must work together to create an enabling environment that promotes job creation, reduces poverty, and attracts and retains human capital. This study aims to examine the root causes of brain drain, particularly among Lagosians, and how it affects the country's development, and the migration of human capital in Nigeria. Additionally, the study will explore the nature of brain drain, and their implications on the socio-economic development of Nigeria particularly in Lagos state. It will investigate the major factors that contribute to the migration of skilled individuals, and the psychological effects of brain drain on people in Lagos state, while identifying the negative consequences of brain drain syndrome on Lagos state residents.

## II. Review of Literatures

### 2.1 Concept of Human Capital

The concept of capital refers to anything that provides value or advantage to its owners. Human capital is a form of intangible collective resources, including information, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intellect, training, judgment, and wisdom. It is a collection of qualities that a person gains through education and experience. Human capital is crucial for economic growth and must be effectively managed and developed to ensure optimal organizational and economic performance (Bernd, 2006; Hile et al., 2023). In the words of Marshall (2022), he explains human capital to be the intangible collective resources that individuals and groups possess within a specific population. It includes information, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intellect, training, judgment, and wisdom. Essentially, human capital is the collection of qualities that a person gains through education and experience. It is a form of wealth that governments and organizations can utilize to achieve their objectives. Similarly, Nkechi (2015) asserts that the presence of skilled and knowledgeable workers is crucial for the development of a nation's economy. Therefore, human capital development is essential, and amenities such as medical services, good schools, technological advancement, and industrialization should be put in place to achieve it. Every corporate organization/developing country or institution uses three types of capital: intellectual capital, financial capital (investments), and physical capital (factories, stocks, etc.)

Also, Titus (2023) is of the opinion that human capital is a part of intellectual capital, which includes human-related factors such as knowledge, skills, experience, business quality, employee relations, emotional intelligence, entrepreneurship, flexibility, employee loyalty, employee satisfaction, education, and creativity. In summary, human capital is vital for economic growth and must be effectively managed and developed to ensure optimal organizational and economic performance. The value of human capital in a nation's economic and political growth cannot be overemphasized (Itiafa et al., 2022). According to Uchechi and God's time (2014), the levels of socio-economic development between nations are more closely associated with the quality and quantity of human resources, rather than natural resources and physical assets. Developing human resources should be prioritized as they are essential to the growth process and not merely means to an end, but also the ends that must be achieved to attain economic progress.

However, Obho (2010) posits that the lack of investment in human capital development has led to slow economic growth and stagnation in Nigeria. Leaders have not prioritized the development of citizens, resulting in brain drain and a decline in production. Nigeria's development planning has focused on physical capital accumulation, neglecting the crucial role of human capital. As a result, highly skilled professionals are leaving Nigeria in search of better opportunities, which has devalued the economy and left no chance for economic and political development. Human capital development is a crucial factor in the economic growth of any country, involving recruitment, support, and investment in individuals through education, training, coaching, mentoring, internships, organizational development, and human resources management. Improving human capital leads to enhanced labor productivity, personal growth, empowerment, social inclusion, improved public health outcomes, innovation, and technological advancement. Nigeria must prioritize the development of its people to embrace the knowledge economy (Maikaba & Msughter, 2019). The indicators that measure human capital development in Nigeria include enrolment rates in secondary and tertiary schools and government expenditure on health and education. These indicators have a significant and positive impact on Nigeria's economic growth (Ogunleye et al. 2017).

Nigeria has implemented various programs in the past aimed at improving productivity and developing human capital. One of these programs is the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), which was established to alleviate the burden of out-of-pocket medical expenses on workers and enhance their productivity. The concept of human capital development involves evaluating factors such as education, health, and training to promote productivity. In this case, health and education are closely linked components that work in tandem to boost an individual's productivity. As a result, the NHIS is a crucial element of Nigeria's endeavors to improve human capital development (Msughter, 2017; Sunday, 2021). However, according to Solomon, 2017 the Nigerian economy's development is being challenged by issues in the education and health sectors, such as underfunding, inadequate infrastructure, corruption, exam malpractice, and Brain Drain. In the study conducted by Chikwe, Christian, Reuben, and Nwachukwu (2015), it suggests that the country needs to prioritize creating a balanced and progressive educational system and an environment that allows graduates to engage fully in society. The development of human capital in Nigeria remains a significant challenge, and the country's education system has not been able to adequately prepare individuals for competition on a global scale. Issues such as poor curriculum structuring and a lack of government support for comprehensive education make it difficult to develop globally competitive human capital.

According to a study conducted by Titius (2023) cited in CBN (2015), it can be seen that Nigeria has been investing only a small percentage of its financial resources in health and education, which has resulted in the country falling short of the standards set by the United Nations and the World Health Organization. Despite the WHO's proposal that countries spend 5% of their GDP on health, this recommendation has never been formally accepted and has little scientific support. Nigeria needs to increase its spending on health and education to achieve the UN's development goals and address the urgent needs of its population. The inadequate finance and administration of Nigeria's educational system have been bemoaned by the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), and the public schools are understaffed and lack the necessary classrooms for their student numbers. Developing Nigeria's human capital is vital, particularly considering that the country seeks to be one of the world's most prosperous nations by 2030.

## **2.2 Concept of Human Capital**

According to the World Bank (2013), being able to sustain development generally requires balancing the needs of present and future generations and this has become a rapidly growing global concern. Three critical factors -economic, ecological, and social; they take a central place in discussions of growth in the society and an enhancement in living. The government of New Brunswick (2009) opines that social sustainability is a critical aspect of achieving long-term development that significantly improves the lives of the world's underdeveloped people. Social development aims to enhance the quality of life for every person in society, enabling them to achieve their utmost potential. The prosperity of society is intricately connected to the welfare of each and every individual. They further explained that social development involves making investments in people; this necessitates the elimination of obstacles that hinder citizens from pursuing their aspirations with assurance and respect. On the other hand, in the words of Anon, 2023, he stated that the renowned American economist Walt Rostow developed a linear spectrum that illustrates the various stages of the economic development process. He proposed that every country is positioned at a certain level on the spectrum and progresses upward through each stage during the economic development process (Msughter & Idris, 2023). Rostow's economic development process consists of five stages: Traditional Society, Preconditions to Take-off, Take-off, Drive to Maturity, Age of High Mass Consumption.

Nonetheless, Economic and Social Development (2023) opines that there are indicators of economic growth and development that are used to measure the prosperity of nations. Economic development is usually measured by indicators such as the gross domestic product (GDP) and gross national product (GNP). Other measures, such as indicators of pollution levels, target the sustainability of that development or the quality of life, which includes social satisfaction, disposable income, and unemployment levels. However, in various newspapers, magazines, and other publications, we frequently encounter discussions about various socio-economic issues such as poverty, unemployment, infrastructure development including roads, bridges, as well as the availability of essential facilities like hospitals and educational institutions (Obasi & Msughter, 2023).

### 2.3 Concept of brain drain

Nwaogwugwu and Evans (2019) highlight that Nigeria is projected to become the world's third most populous country by 2050. The country has a population that presents a significant opportunity for economic development if effectively harnessed. However, Nigeria has not yet taken full advantage of this opportunity. The "Japa" syndrome, also known as brain drain refers to the mass exodus of youths, skilled workers and professionals from Nigeria, and is negatively affecting the country's workforce. However, some politicians and entrepreneurs view it as an opportunity for "brain gain" in the future. Bill Gates (cited by Olisah, 2023) in Afunugo 2023, stated that completely preventing people from leaving the country is unhealthy, and having a large Diaspora that includes people returning to business and government is beneficial for Nigeria. According to Gates, some of those in the Diaspora can raise money to establish businesses for their relatives in Nigeria. Chike and Gerald (2020) conducted research on the issue of brain drain in Nigeria, which has been a significant problem for the country for many years. The study highlights the reasons for brain drain in Nigeria, including the search for better job opportunities, environments that promote self-development, and higher living standards.

The review also notes that Nigeria is losing some of its brightest minds to other countries, which is severely affecting the country's economy. Many Nigerian doctors, nurses, scientists, and technology experts are now employed in developed countries, where they can make a significant difference and work in a society that recognizes their contributions. The literature review also identifies the factors that contribute to brain drain in Nigeria, such as bad governance, corruption, tribalism, nepotism, and religious intolerance. These factors make the country unattractive and difficult to live in, prompting many citizens to migrate to other countries where they can have a better life. Additionally, the study highlights that brain drain also affects Nigeria's education sector, as corruption in the education system produces unqualified graduates (Yar'Adua et al., 2023a). According to Chike and Gerald (2020), Nigeria has experienced a significant number of emigrants who seek better opportunities abroad due to poor leadership, insecurity, unemployment, and a weak economy. The country's economic situation has deteriorated in the last five years, with an economic recession contributing to brain drain and emigration problems.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that brain drain has a psychological effect on individuals to the point where there is a group of people who believe that they cannot achieve success in Nigeria unless they migrate to other countries. They are convinced that their success lies only beyond the borders of Nigeria. This belief has been confirmed by the responses of some Nigerian students who were surveyed in the United Kingdom. According to the survey conducted by Okunade and Awosusi in 2023, there are various psychological effects of brain drain in Nigeria. One of the participants admitted to opting for the study route to move abroad more easily. He believed it was a means to an end, which in his case was

relocation. However, some participants gave reasons for their decision that were not justifiable for study purposes. For instance, one participant was desperate to leave Nigeria because his siblings were already living in America. After being denied multiple times by the US Embassy in Lagos, he switched to the UK, which was faster but more expensive (Yar'Adua et al., 2023b). This shows that for him, the UK provided an escape route. Furthermore, another participant said that he chose to study in the UK because of the opportunity to be in a multicultural environment. He believed that the diverse culture in the UK was important to him. Although he understood what he meant, it's unclear how this relates to acquiring an academic certificate. The analysis reflects the irrational mindset of certain Nigerian, which is a result of the current state of disorder prevailing in Nigeria. To them, the destination is not as important as the need to leave Nigeria. This mindset echoes the attitude of many Nigerian who are yet to leave the country.

As mentioned by Godstime Nwaeze (2024), there are three main sectors he focused on. In the health sector, he opined that there is an acute shortage of health workers in the country, and many doctors are leaving to work in other countries. This is a major problem for Nigeria as it represents a loss of expertise, and it also means that the country is losing the money it has invested in training these doctors. According to the MO Ibrahim Foundation, it costs between \$21,000 and \$51,000 to train a doctor in an African country each year. Nigeria has lost approximately \$2 billion since 2010 training doctors who later leave the country. The shortage of health workers is also having a severe impact on the quality of healthcare available to Nigerian citizens. For example, there are currently only around 125,000 nurses, midwives, and nursing associates in the country. This is far below the recommended number of 800,000, which means that many people are not able to access quality healthcare. Moreover, the shortage of medical facilities and specialists is encouraging medical tourism, which results in capital flight from the national economy. This is a major problem for a country where many people have a poor quality of life. He also asserts that in the educational sector, Students feel dissatisfied with the education system's inability to prepare them for global challenges. He went on to explain that Human resources are essential tools for effective educational administration.

According to Goodtime as cited in Ogunode et al (2020), teachers play a critical role in delivering teaching programs in educational institutions. They organize and deliver instructional resources to implement the curricula. However, Nigerian students have been increasingly opting for overseas education due to dissatisfaction with the current education system's ineffectiveness in preparing them for the challenges of the globalized world (Yar'Adua et al., 2023c). As a result, many academicians are leaving the country in search of better opportunities, making it difficult to manage schools and universities. The quality of the teaching staff is crucial for any educational system, and the higher the quality of the teachers, the better the quality of graduates who can excel in their various fields. Unfortunately, the "Japa syndrome" is causing a decrease in the intellectual resources necessary for quality education. This understaffing leads to poor research development and a high student-lecturer ratio. So also, in the petroleum industry, there are a significant number of foreign expatriates currently working in our energy sector, which has led to a shortage of local talent. This is one of the major challenges identified by the DPR. The Director of DPR pointed out that other African countries are hiring Nigerians as technical experts because of attractive salaries in dollars and long-term contracts. The workforce in the oil and gas sector is aging, making brain drain a more worrisome trend. The Director also noted that only Nigerians are working in one department of the Angola national oil company, indicating a lack of staff. This shortage is driving up wages in the industry (Godstime Nwaeze, 2024).

## 2.4 Brain drain syndrome in Nigeria

The phenomenon of brain drain, referred to as "japa" in Nigeria, is increasingly evident as many citizens seek opportunities beyond their borders. According to Godstime (2024), this trend reflects a profound dissatisfaction with the current state of Nigeria's economy, particularly its lack of adequate human capacity development. The continuous exodus of skilled labor threatens to exacerbate the country's already poor economic growth indices. Japa, derived from the Yoruba word meaning "to flee," is often celebrated by those who manage to leave, symbolizing a perceived escape from hardship. Statistics provide insight into the widespread nature of this "japa syndrome." In 2018, many Nigerians applied for Schengen visas to countries such as Germany, Hungary, and Spain, though nearly half were rejected. Since then, rejection rates have risen over 50%, limiting Nigerians' access to these destinations even further (Solomon, 2019; Yar'Adua et al., 2021).

In contrast, the number of Nigerians securing study visas to the UK and Canada has surged by 71% since 2019, with Nigeria ranking just behind India and China in terms of study visas granted (Samuel & Oladotun, 2023). The reasons for this surge are numerous. The EndSARS protests of October 2021 were a major factor, as young Nigerians demonstrated against police brutality, only to face a violent response from the government that culminated in the tragic Toll Gate Massacre. The event left many young Nigerians disillusioned and eager to seek safety and opportunities elsewhere (Okunade, 2021). The "japa syndrome" thus reflects the determination of many Nigerians to escape difficult circumstances in search of a better quality of life abroad. Throughout this document, "japa syndrome" is used interchangeably with brain drain (Nwaeze, 2023).

## 2.5 Sectorial analysis of the impact of japa syndrome

In his analysis of brain drain in Nigeria, Godstime Nwaeze (2024) highlights critical challenges in three major sectors: healthcare, education, and petroleum. In the healthcare sector, he points out a severe shortage of health professionals, as many doctors are emigrating for better opportunities abroad. This trend not only results in a significant loss of expertise but also represents a financial drain for Nigeria, which has invested between \$21,000 and \$51,000 annually to train each doctor, according to the MO Ibrahim Foundation. Since 2010, Nigeria has lost approximately \$2 billion due to the departure of trained doctors, which has adversely impacted the healthcare quality for Nigerian citizens. The current staffing of around 125,000 nurses, midwives, and nursing associates is drastically below the recommended 800,000, creating accessibility issues in healthcare and increasing reliance on medical tourism, which drives capital out of the national economy (Msughter et al., 2023).

In the educational sector, Nwaeze emphasizes widespread dissatisfaction among students regarding the education system's inability to adequately prepare them for global challenges. Teachers play a crucial role in educational delivery, but the "Japa syndrome" has seen both students and academics leaving the country in search of better opportunities. This has led to high student-to-teacher ratios and a reduction in intellectual resources, further compromising the quality of education and weakening research output. With an understaffed educational sector, Nigerian graduates often struggle to meet the competitive demands of a globalized world.

The petroleum industry, according to Nwaeze, is also struggling with brain drain, as foreign expatriates dominate technical positions due to a shortage of local talent. The Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) notes that Nigerian professionals are increasingly being recruited by other African nations offering attractive dollar-based salaries and stable, long-term contracts. This trend exacerbates the problem of an aging workforce in Nigeria's oil

and gas sector, driving up wages and highlighting a shortage of young talent within the industry (Msughter, 2019).

## **2.6 Drivers of human capital in Nigeria**

Nigeria is poised to become the world's third most populous country by 2050, presenting a significant opportunity for economic development if it can effectively leverage its youthful population of 226.2 million (Statista, 2023). However, the mass exodus of skilled workers and professionals, termed the "Japa" syndrome, poses a challenge to the workforce, though some see it as a potential for "brain gain." Bill Gates (cited by Olisah, 2023) suggests that a robust Diaspora could benefit Nigeria, enabling returnees to invest in local businesses. Supporting this view, Peter Obi, as cited by Oluwasanjo (2023), argues that the current brain drain may transform into future brain gain if governance improves, similar to examples seen in China and India.

However, critics argue that this perspective is overly optimistic, as changing migration mindsets is challenging, and it is unnecessary for all citizens to leave to effect change. Igbinedion emphasizes that Nigeria can offer better opportunities if the government improves infrastructure, including roads and power supply. The ongoing economic instability, rising unemployment, and increasing crime rates further contribute to the push for migration. Since President Buhari's administration began in 2015, inflation and joblessness have persisted, compounded by agricultural crises. Umana (2018) identifies economic, political, social, and psychological factors driving human capital flight, exacerbated by Nigeria's poor economic state and low industrialization (Aondover et al., 2022).

Key drivers of human capital loss include mass poverty, poor leadership, inadequate salaries and working conditions, ongoing crises, and insufficient infrastructure. These persistent issues contribute to Nigeria's regression from being one of the richest countries in the 1970s to one of the poorest by the early 21st century (Anetoh & Onwudinjo, 2020). Without addressing these challenges, brain drain is likely to continue, hindering Nigeria's development, which has lagged since independence in 1960 compared to other nations that invest in human capital and infrastructure. Corruption and poor governance remain critical barriers to progress in the country.

## **2.7 Consequences of brain drain in Nigeria**

Brain drain is a significant challenge facing Nigeria, impeding the country's growth and development, as highlighted by Ighoshemu and Ogidiagba (2022). This phenomenon involves the migration of skilled professionals to other countries, resulting in a decline in the quality of services in crucial sectors such as healthcare, education, and research. The authors attribute brain drain to poor governance, insecurity, and inadequate infrastructure, which diminish investment in essential facilities for a good quality of life. The exodus of competent individuals directly affects the services available to the public, exacerbating Nigeria's economic issues. Conversely, developed countries like Canada, the U.S., and the U.K. benefit from this migration by filling labor shortages without incurring the costs of education. Additionally, brain drain stifles technological development in Nigeria, as its skilled personnel seek better opportunities abroad, leaving the nation at a disadvantage despite their expertise being recognized in foreign countries.

## **2.8 Psychological effect of brain drain in Nigeria**

A growing number of Nigerians believe that their success can only be achieved by migrating abroad, a sentiment echoed by responses from Nigerian students surveyed in the United Kingdom. A 2023 survey by Okunade and Awosusi highlights the psychological effects

of this belief, revealing that many see relocation as a vital step toward achieving their goals. One participant admitted to pursuing studies in the UK solely as a pathway to relocation, rather than for academic advancement. For him, education was a means to an end—relocating outside Nigeria. Others in the study had similarly compelling motivations for leaving, though not always academically grounded. For instance, one participant’s primary reason for leaving was to reunite with siblings already residing in the United States; after multiple failed attempts to secure a U.S. visa, he turned to the U.K., where the process was more accessible but also more costly. To him, the U.K. became an escape route.

Additionally, a participant cited the appeal of a multicultural environment in the U.K. as a reason for his move, viewing cultural exposure as an important factor, though the relevance to his academic pursuits was unclear. The responses illustrate a mindset among some Nigerians that prioritizes leaving the country above specific destinations or clear academic objectives. This inclination reflects a broader feeling of disillusionment within Nigeria, where many feel that opportunities for success are limited within national borders, fueling an “anywhere but here” attitude among those who remain in the country.

## **2.9 Gap in Literature**

Existing research on Nigeria’s brain drain highlights several drivers of skilled migration, including safety concerns, dissatisfaction with corruption, and better opportunities abroad. For instance, Jessica (2010) identifies internal and external factors leading Nigerians to settle in industrialized countries, where they develop family and business ties, often deterring their return. Human Resource for Health (2023) reports that over 9,000 Nigerian doctors migrated between 2016 and 2018, especially to the UK, USA, and Canada, exacerbating issues in Nigeria’s healthcare sector. Benedict and Ufuoma (2022) attribute the outflow of talent to poor governance and high unemployment.

However, while these studies provide insights into general drivers and effects, they lack focus on Lagos and the specific motivations behind migration, particularly how Nigerian migrants contribute significantly to Western economies. This study will address these gaps, examining key factors driving skilled migration from Lagos from 2015 to 2023 and exploring balanced migration benefits for Nigeria.

## **2.10 Theoretical framework**

The study adopted the push-pull theory that was propounded in 1966 by Everett Spurgeon Lee, a Professor of Sociology at the University of Georgia. According to the push-pull theory, push factors are circumstances that force individuals to relocate, while pull factors draw them to particular areas. Push factors include a lack of employment opportunities, poverty, overpopulation, poor living conditions, fear of political persecution, and natural disasters. Pull factors include better employment opportunities, living conditions, access to land for farming, political and religious freedom, healthcare and education systems, communication and transportation infrastructure, stress-free environment, and security (Everett Lee, 1966 & Rashid Faridi, 2018).

# **III. Research Methods**

This study adopted a qualitative research design using primary and secondary method as sources of its data collection. The primary sources were gathered from oral interviews, where 11 people were interviewed and their responses informed the findings of the study. Other secondary sources were retrieved from books, journals, unpublished essays, and the internet.

## IV. Conclusion

Number of Proposed Sample	Number of Valid Respondents	Number of attention given
12	12	11

Source: Field work, 2024

### 4.1 Nature of human capital and brain drain and its implications on the socio-economic development of Nigeria especially in Lagos state

The study reveals that brain drain significantly hampers the socio-economic development of Nigeria, particularly in Lagos state. This is rooted in the relationship between human capital and development; investments in human capital are essential for enhancing competitiveness and growth (Sodirjonov, 2020; Oleh et al., 2020). High rates of migration among skilled professionals, as noted by Young (2024), lead to a loss of expertise and talent, resulting in stagnation and diminished national capacity. Respondents indicated a willingness to leave Nigeria for better opportunities, citing the lack of basic amenities and government support as primary motivators. Some expressed reluctance to migrate, fearing loss of identity and treatment as second-class citizens abroad, emphasizing the importance of impact at home. The desire to migrate is often directed towards countries in Europe and North America, where basic needs are met and opportunities abound. Respondents highlighted the detrimental effects of brain drain on critical sectors like healthcare and education, where professionals seek better working conditions and compensation. Overall, the consensus among respondents is that the ongoing loss of skilled individuals through brain drain adversely affects Nigeria's socio-economic landscape and hampers its development efforts (Sodirjonov, 2020; Godstime, 2024).

### 4.2 Major factors influencing the migration of human capital and the psychological effect of brain drain on migrants in Lagos state.

The analysis of the relationship between human capital, brain drain, and socio-economic development in Lagos State reveals several key factors influencing migration and its psychological effects on migrants. Respondents identified several key issues, including job insecurity, poor working conditions, inflation, and ineffective government policies that create unfavorable financial conditions, as noted by Respondent One. Respondent Two highlighted insecurity, inadequate healthcare, unemployment, and police brutality as critical contributors to migration. Respondent Three emphasized underpayment, a lack of personal improvement opportunities, and insufficient funding for businesses as significant barriers.

While Respondent Five acknowledged that Lagos offers more opportunities than other Nigerian states, they pointed out that underpayment for skilled professionals' remains a critical deterrent. Respondent Four focused on the poor distribution of resources and bureaucratic inefficiencies, which hinder business development and contribute to the migration trend. Psychologically, migrants face challenges including homesickness and estrangement, as described by Respondent Two, who highlighted a longing for familiar aspects of Nigerian culture. Respondent One noted feelings of loneliness, depression, and experiences of racism as psychological effects. Respondents Four and Five discussed culture shock and identity shifts, emphasizing the struggle for a sense of belonging and experiences of imposter syndrome as migrants adjust to new environments. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of brain drain in Lagos State, indicating that addressing both the socio-economic and psychological dimensions is crucial for understanding and mitigating its impact.

### 4.3 What are the consequences of brain drain syndrome in Nigeria especially in Lagos state?

The increasing trend of skilled workers leaving Nigeria for opportunities abroad raises significant concerns regarding the country's socio-economic landscape. According to Nairametrics (2023), many of these individuals are graduates from Nigeria's subsidized universities who take their acquired knowledge and skills to countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. This brain drain is particularly alarming for sectors such as healthcare and financial services, which are already facing challenges. Respondents emphasized a concerning mindset among students, noting that many view Nigeria primarily as a training ground, intending to migrate once they complete their education. This attitude, especially prevalent among tertiary institution students, undermines national pride and patriotism. While there are benefits to migration, such as external capital repatriation, the respondent called for a balance between leveraging these advantages and fostering a sense of commitment to Nigeria. Overall, the departure of skilled workers poses a threat to the nation's development, highlighting the need for policies that encourage retention and enhance opportunities domestically.

### 4.4 Summary of findings

The study's findings reveal that Nigeria's brain drain syndrome has had a significant negative impact on socio-economic development, particularly within Lagos State from 2015 to 2023. The high rate of migration among skilled professionals has led to stagnation in essential sectors like healthcare and education, resulting in a struggling socio-economic landscape. The research identifies both positive and negative factors influencing the movement of human capital. Positive factors, such as conducive working environments and infrastructural development, tend to attract and retain talent, while negative aspects, including high unemployment rates, lack of infrastructure, and security issues, push skilled workers to seek opportunities abroad. These findings are consistent with the push-pull theory, as migration decisions are influenced by factors that either attract individuals or compel them to leave.

## V. Conclusion

The study concludes by stating that the study of human capital, brain drain syndrome, and its implications on socio-economic development in Nigeria, specifically focusing on Lagos State from 2015 to 2023, underscores the persistent need to invest in Nigeria's human capital to reduce the high rate of brain drain and retain skilled workers to achieve a stable and growing socio-economy. The nature of human capital, brain drain, and its implications on socio-economic development was found to be negative and symmetrical. The relationship between the variables is negative, as the high rate of brain drain has led to the stagnation of socio-economic development. According to the push-pull theory, brain drain is influenced by both positive and negative characteristics: negative aspects tend to repel people, while positive factors retain individuals or attract them from other locations.

Based on the study on human capital, brain drain syndrome, and its implications on socio-economic development in Nigeria, specifically focusing on Lagos State from 2015 to 2023, the following recommendations are proposed;

1. There is a need to increase investment in local infrastructure and basic amenities. The government should prioritize improvements in essential services such as healthcare, education, and general infrastructure.
2. Establishing incentives for skilled workers to remain in Nigeria is crucial. Offering competitive salaries, career advancement opportunities, and benefits like housing or tax

breaks, especially in critical sectors like healthcare, technology, and education, could encourage professionals to stay.

3. Promoting research and development (R&D) initiatives within Nigeria is another vital strategy. By investing in innovation hubs and supporting local R&D, professionals can advance their skills and careers domestically rather than relocating.
4. A safer environment, coupled with expanded job prospects, reduces the push factors that drive skilled individuals to migrate. Creating secure, stable, and prosperous conditions within the country supports the socio-economic development of Nigeria's skilled workforce.

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