

Brain Drain Syndrome and Educational Development in Nigeria

Mfon Effiong Asuquo

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Akwa Ibom State University

Email: mfonasuquo@aksu.edu.ng

Phone: +234 703 549 0011

Mfon Edet Thompson

Akwa Ibom State University of Education

Afaha Nsit

Email: mfonthompson84@gmail.com

Phone: +234 802 204 8155

Samuel Emmanuel Solomon

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Akwa Ibom State University

ORCID: 0009-0003-3218-4596

Email: samsolo0602@gmail.com

Abstract

Nigeria's education sector keeps losing its best hands. Every year, more than 5,000 lecturers leave the country. At the University of Lagos alone, about 60% of academic staff disappeared within five years. This is not just a staffing headache; it is an existential threat to higher education in Nigeria. This paper uses the Push-Pull Theory of migration to explain why this is happening. Drawing on policy documents, institutional reports, and scholarly literature, it identifies the major push factors—poor pay, bad infrastructure, and systemic instability and the pull factors that destination countries offer. The findings show a deepening crisis: worsening faculty-student ratios, threatened accreditation, falling research output, and a looming gap in academic leadership. Still, there are new policy responses, like the Diaspora BRIDGE Initiative and TETFund's strategic interventions, that could help turn brain drain into brain gain. The paper closes with practical recommendations for stakeholders.

Keywords: Brain drain, Japa phenomenon, educational development, migration.

Introduction

The international migration of skilled professionals has become one of the defining features of twenty-first-century globalisation. Brain drain—the emigration of highly trained individuals from developing to developed nations—represents a paradoxical flow of human capital. It benefits receiving countries while depriving sending nations of the very resource they need most for development. Globally, psychologists talk about the “law of positive reinforcement.” People naturally move toward environments with better rewards, stability, and opportunities for self-actualisation. The Internet has made global inequality impossible to ignore. A lecturer in Lagos

can see how a colleague in London lives. That comparison fuels migration. Citizens of developing nations now constantly measure their lives against those of peers in more organised, comfortable societies. Migration becomes more attractive by the day (Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, 2025).

Across Africa, brain drain has reached crisis level. Sub-Saharan Africa is hit hardest. Fragile institutions struggle to keep the talent needed for national transformation. An African Development Bank official once described institutions that were once “magnets for the continent’s brightest minds” as now dilapidated, underfunded, and unable to retain top people. Africa trains professionals who end up serving richer economies. It is a “real resource curse”—not oil or diamonds, but lost knowledge and innovation. That loss may be more damaging to long-term development than overreliance on raw material exports (Odeniyi, 2025).

Nigeria may be the most dramatic case in sub-Saharan Africa. The phenomenon is popularly called “Japa”—a Yoruba word meaning “to flee” or “to run away.” It has become part of the national consciousness and the professional dreams of young Nigerians (Atakpa & Akpan, 2022). The scale is staggering. According to the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), over 5,000 lecturers leave annually. More than 2,300 Nigerian academics have relocated to the United Kingdom alone since 2021. The health sector has been equally devastated. Tens of thousands of doctors have emigrated in the past decade to the UK, Canada, Saudi Arabia, and the United States (El-Yakubu, 2025). The economic dimensions are sobering. Between 2010 and 2020, Nigerians spent an estimated \$28.65 billion on foreign education. That money flowed abroad instead of being reinvested in local educational infrastructure.

At the institutional level, the numbers are stark. The University of Lagos (UNILAG) lost nearly 1,800 of its 3,000 academic staff—60% of its workforce—within five years. Only 1,200 lecturers remain to serve over 50,000 students across 250 programmes. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Folasade Ogunsola lamented that faculty-student ratios have ballooned to 1:60 against the global benchmark of 1:16. The institution now resorts to full virtual learning and heavy reliance on adjunct staff. The National Universities Commission (NUC) analysis reveals how systemic this is. Federal universities handle 58.3% of enrollment but employ only 17,836 lecturers. State universities manage 38.5% of students with merely 7,586 staff. Private universities serve 3.1% of students with 1,972 lecturers. The optimal staffing need nationwide, based on UNESCO ratios, is 34,712—a shortfall exceeding 7,000 positions. Annual retirements take another 20% from the senior cadre without adequate replacements (Lawal, 2025).

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria’s educational development stands at a precipice. The country is Africa’s largest economy and most populous nation. But its higher education system is in systemic collapse—not due to the usual industrial strikes, but due to a quiet, irreversible bleeding of its most vital asset: its intellectual capital (Lawal, 2025). The implications of this crisis go well beyond university campuses, and they demand urgent attention. They touch national development, economic competitiveness, and intergenerational equity.

The structural dimensions are just as alarming. Promotions in Nigeria take over a decade, while abroad it is five years. This disincentivises career progression. Chronic underfunding means education receives just 7% of the national budget (N3.52 trillion in 2025) against UNESCO's recommendation of 15–20%. This ensures poor infrastructure and poor research support (Leadership Newspapers, 2025). The federal hiring freeze of the previous administration worsened shortages, overloading the remaining staff and reducing teaching capacity (Lawal, 2025). The consequences cascade through the educational ecosystem. Student-lecturer ratios reach 1:200 in some departments—far above UNESCO's ideal of 1:20. Classes are rushed. Adjuncts are overused. Dropout rates hit 22%. Graduate unemployment stands at 35%. Some institutions resort to “accreditation tourism,” where lecturers move between universities simply to be physically present during NUC inspection periods. This shows how scarce talent has become and how cynical the system has grown.

Perhaps most troubling is the intergenerational dimension. With 20% of senior staff retiring annually and insufficient junior academics to replace them, Nigeria faces a looming leadership vacuum in academia. Each year, the country's 1.9 million Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination applicants vie for only 800,000 admission slots. This shortage worsens access inequality even as quality deteriorates (Lawal, 2025).

Amid this crisis, emerging policy responses offer potential pathways forward. The Federal Government launched the Diaspora BRIDGE (Bridging Research, Innovation, Development & Global Engagement) Initiative in July 2025. It represents a structured attempt to reconnect with Nigerian professionals abroad (Rapheal, 2025). TETFund's strategic reorientation, including the 2025 Special High Impact Programme focusing on medical education and the suspension of foreign scholarship components due to scholars absconding, reflects growing recognition that traditional approaches have failed (Emmanson, 2025). But whether these interventions can reverse the tide remains an open question.

Thus, the objectives of the study are to examine the root causes and contributing factors driving brain drain among academic staff in Nigerian universities; assess the multifaceted consequences of faculty emigration on educational quality, institutional stability, and national development; evaluate current policy responses; and propose evidence-based strategies for mitigating brain drain while harnessing diaspora contributions for educational advancement.

Conceptualising Brain Drain

According to Young (2026), brain drain is often described as the exodus of skilled professionals from one region or industry to another, posing significant challenges to both the source and destination regions. Frequently driven by political instability, economic hardship, or better opportunities elsewhere, this phenomenon leads to a loss of valuable human capital and reduces consumer spending in the areas they depart from. At the organisational level, similar movements occur when employees seek better pay, benefits, or career advancement opportunities beyond their current firms or industries. Brain drain occurs when people move from one region to another. It often occurs between countries and cities where there's a sharp discrepancy in available opportunities. People often move to find jobs or improve their quality of life. Brain drain can also

refer to the movement of professionals between corporations or industries for better pay or opportunities.

Brain drain causes countries, industries, and organisations to lose a core portion of valuable individuals. The term is often used to describe the departure of certain professionals, including doctors, healthcare workers, scientists, engineers, or financial professionals. The areas they leave suffer in two main ways: Expertise is lost with each emigrant, diminishing the supply of that profession and the economy is harmed because each professional represents surplus spending units. High-earning professionals leaving can reduce consumer spending in their region or even nationwide.

Young (2026) further explained the types of brain drain to include:

- A. Geographic Brain Drain:** This happens when skilled workers leave a country or region for better opportunities elsewhere. Several common causes can precipitate brain drain on the geographic level. They include political instability, poor quality of life, limited access to healthcare, and a shortage of economic opportunity. These factors drive skilled workers to leave their home countries for better opportunities.
- B. Organisational and Industrial Brain Drain:** This occurs when many skilled workers leave a company due to perceived instability or lack of opportunity. They may feel that they can realise their career goals more easily at another firm. Industrial brain drain happens when skilled workers exit not only a company but an entire industry.

The Root Causes of Brain Drain

Several underlying factors can lead to this phenomenon. They can vary based on the type of brain drain that occurs. Major reasons people leave their home countries or regions include:

- i. Economic opportunities, including new and better jobs, higher standards of living, access to housing and healthcare
- ii. Political strife and instability
- iii. Persecution based on religion, gender, or sexuality

Empirical Literature

Lydia (2026) examined how the “Japa” wave of emigration has affected the reconstruction of Nigerian education, with particular attention to the loss of academic talent and the consequences for schooling and university systems. The paper adopted a qualitative, policy-oriented review of migration and education evidence, drawing together documented patterns of academic mobility and their institutional effects. The analysis is framed around migration–development and educational reconstruction perspectives, with push–pull reasoning implicit in the discussion of why academics leave and what their departure does to the system. The study argues that Japa has depleted critical teaching and research capacity and has complicated efforts to rebuild Nigerian education, leaving institutions weaker and less able to reproduce themselves. It calls for retention incentives, improved working conditions, and planned diaspora engagement in education reconstruction. The paper addresses reconstruction broadly; however, this study narrows the lens

to how brain drain specifically shapes the future of educational development in Nigeria, with closer attention to institutional and policy responses over time.

Temilade and Adejumo (2024) investigated how the migration of skilled Nigerians affects development outcomes, including the education sector's capacity to produce and retain talent. It used a policy-review and secondary-evidence design to connect skilled migration with development outcomes across sectors. The paper draws on human capital and migration–development theories, treating skills as a national asset whose movement has consequences for domestic institutions. It found that skilled migration can generate remittances and diaspora benefits but also weakens domestic institutions when critical professionals leave, creating a net loss in some sectors. It recommended balancing diaspora engagement with stronger domestic retention and capacity-building policies. The study treats education as one development outcome among several, but this research places educational development at the centre and interrogates how brain drain affects its future trajectory, rather than examining development outcomes in general.

Udoh et al. (2025) examined the relationship between education funding and student outcomes in Nigeria, with attention to policy choices that weaken system performance. It adopted a policy analysis approach, drawing on documentary and secondary evidence to trace how funding decisions translate into outcomes. The paper is consistent with an education production-function and public-expenditure framing, in which inputs such as funding shape measurable results. The paper found that inadequate and poorly managed funding constrains student outcomes and system quality, and that policy incoherence compounds the problem. It recommended improved funding, accountability, and policy coherence in education. The paper treats funding mainly as a domestic policy problem, while this study links funding deficits to brain drain, showing how poor conditions push academics out and how that, in turn, undermines future educational development.

Umar et al. (2025) examined how political leadership shapes health-sector brain drain in Nigeria, asking why health professionals continue to leave despite policy attention. It used a policy-analysis design focused on leadership, governance, and health migration, drawing on documented policy and governance evidence. The paper draws on push–pull and health-systems governance perspectives, linking leadership failures to the conditions that drive emigration. The paper found that leadership failures, weak governance, and poor conditions contribute to the emigration of health professionals, weakening the health system in turn, and recommended stronger political commitment, better governance, and improved working conditions to retain health workers. The paper focused on health, while this study transfers the leadership–retention question to education and examines how political and institutional leadership affect the future of educational development through academic brain drain.

El-Yakubu (2025) argues that the recurring ASUU crisis requires a lasting policy solution from the Minister of Education. It highlights how unresolved university-sector disputes damage stability and staff morale, feeding into the wider problem of academic dissatisfaction, and urges decisive ministerial intervention and sustainable resolution of ASUU-related disputes. While it offers context rather than systematic evidence, this study uses such context while providing a more focused analysis of brain drain and educational development, supported by empirical literature.

Enibe et al. (2021) examined remuneration and working environment as determinants of brain drain in Nigerian universities, seeking to explain why academic staff leave. It adopted a survey-based empirical design focused on university staff, gathering perceptions on pay and working conditions. The paper is consistent with Herzberg's two-factor logic and push-pull migration theory, separating hygiene factors from motivators in explaining departure decisions. The study found that poor pay and adverse working conditions are significant drivers of academic emigration, with staff dissatisfaction translating into exit intentions and action. Recommendations: It recommends competitive remuneration, improved working environments, and better staff welfare. The study identifies determinants but does not fully project their consequences for the future of educational development, while this research connects these determinants to system-level educational futures, moving from causes to long-term implications.

Gregory et al. (2023) reviewed the effect of brain drain on tertiary education in Nigeria, aiming to synthesise what is known about academic emigration and its institutional consequences. It adopted a review-based design, synthesising existing literature rather than collecting new data. The paper is framed around human capital and push-pull perspectives, treating academic staff as a form of capital whose loss has systemic effects. It found that brain drain weakens teaching capacity, research output, and institutional continuity in tertiary education, with knock-on effects for students and programmes. It recommended retention strategies, improved conditions, and institutional reforms. As a review, the paper synthesises effects but does not develop a forward-looking account of educational development; thus, this study focuses specifically on the future dimension of the problem, asking what brain drain means for where Nigerian education is heading.

Imraan (2025) analysed the Japa phenomenon and its implications for national development, including the loss of skilled professionals. It used a critical policy-analysis approach, interrogating the drivers and consequences of emigration rather than relying on a single dataset. The paper is located within the migration-development nexus, treating migration as both an opportunity and a risk for sending countries. It argues that Japa produces both gains and losses, but that unmanaged skilled emigration threatens national development capacity, particularly where institutions cannot replace lost talent. It calls for managed migration, diaspora engagement, and domestic opportunity creation. The study treats education as part of national development, while this research isolates educational development and examines how brain drain affects its future, especially in universities and schools, giving the problem a sharper sectoral focus.

Akazeze (2024) examined how Nigerian universities respond institutionally to faculty migration, asking whether responses are strategic or reactive, adopting a qualitative institutional case-study or interview-based design, and focusing on how universities manage the loss of academic staff. The paper is consistent with institutional theory and organisational adaptation perspectives, treating universities as organisations responding to environmental pressure. The study found that institutional responses are often reactive, uneven, and limited by resource and governance constraints, leaving universities poorly positioned to manage migration. Recommendations: It recommends more strategic retention, succession planning, and institutional policy learning. Whereas the study centres on institutional responses, this research links those

responses to the wider future of educational development and the brain drain syndrome, asking what these institutional weaknesses mean for the system's long-term trajectory.

Asuquo and Ekanem (2023) examined corruption and economic growth from the perspective of Nigeria's education sector, asking how corruption within education affects broader economic performance. Adopting a quantitative or policy-analysis design based on sectoral evidence, the paper links corruption indicators to education and growth outcomes, framed around corruption-growth and education-quality arguments, and treating corruption as a drain on institutional effectiveness. It found that corruption undermines education-sector performance and, by extension, economic growth, weakening the system's capacity to deliver quality. It recommended transparency, accountability, and stronger education governance. The study connects corruption to growth, while this research connects corruption and governance failures to brain drain and to the future of educational development, showing how corruption drives talent away and erodes the system from within.

Asuquo et al. (2026) examined road construction and poverty reduction in Itu Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, asking whether infrastructure provision translates into local development gains, and adopting a case-study survey design to gather data on infrastructure and poverty indicators within the area. The paper is framed around development and poverty-reduction perspectives, treating infrastructure as a facilitator of economic access and activity. The study found that road infrastructure contributes to poverty reduction through improved access and economic activity, though the evidence is localised, and recommended sustained infrastructure provision and local development planning. This is only indirectly related to brain drain; this study differs by focusing on educational development and the migration of academic talent rather than physical infrastructure and poverty, though both speak to the broader question of national development.

Badmus (2023) examined talent retention strategies in Nigerian organisations using a multi-stakeholder lens, through a qualitative or mixed-methods study, drawing on experiences from Nigerian organisations. The paper, which is consistent with stakeholder theory and talent-management perspectives, emphasising shared responsibility for retention, found that retention improves when multiple stakeholders—management, government, and institutions—cooperate, and that fragmented efforts are less effective. It recommended coordinated retention policies, career development, and improved organisational conditions. Whereas the study focuses on organisations generally, this research applies the retention question to the education sector and asks how multi-stakeholder retention strategies can shape the future of educational development in Nigeria, giving the analysis a sector-specific and future-oriented focus.

Theoretical Framework

Push-pull Theory of Migration

The push-pull theory of migration holds that human movement results from the interaction of negative factors that repel individuals from a place of origin and positive factors that attract them to a place of destination. Its conceptual roots lie in the work of the German-British geographer Ernest Georg Ravenstein, whose two papers, "The Laws of Migration," were published in the

Journal of the Statistical Society in 1885 and 1889. Drawing on British census data, Ravenstein proposed empirical regularities - that migrants move chiefly over short distances, that migration proceeds step by step, that each migration current produces a counter-current, and that economic motives dominate. The explicit “push-pull” vocabulary was crystallised later by the American demographer Everett Lee in his 1966 article “A Theory of Migration,” published in the journal *Demography*, which reorganised Ravenstein’s laws into a systematic framework of origin factors, destination factors, intervening obstacles, and personal factors.

The mechanics of the theory rest on a balance sheet of perceived advantages and disadvantages. In Lee’s formulation, every prospective migrant evaluates a set of plus, minus, and neutral factors at both the area of origin and the area of destination. Push factors are the negative conditions at the origin - unemployment, low wages, drought, famine, war, political persecution, religious discrimination, landlessness, or natural disaster that motivate departure. Pull factors are the positive conditions at the destination - higher wages, employment opportunity, better education and healthcare, political stability, security, and the presence of established kin or community networks that draw migrants in. The decision to move emerges when the net evaluation of the destination exceeds that of the origin by a margin sufficient to overcome the friction of moving.

Lee added two refinements that distinguish his version from a simple two-pole model. First, between origin and destination lie intervening obstacles - physical distance, the cost of transport, immigration laws, border controls, language barriers, and family ties - which must be surmounted and which weigh differently on different individuals. Second, personal factors such as age, education, stage in the life cycle, awareness of conditions elsewhere, and individual temperament mediate how objective conditions are perceived. The same wage differential will move a young unmarried labourer but not an elderly landowner. This insistence that it is the perception of factors, not their objective reality, that governs behaviour anticipates later behavioural and aspirations-capabilities models of migration.

Research Methodology

Brain drain is a complex social phenomenon, and a qualitative research design with a case study approach is suitable for this study. This is because depth is needed, not breadth, to understand the meanings, motivations, and contextual factors that shape human behaviour. The design adopted a thematic synthesis of academic literature and document analysis of current sources. This method allows the triangulation of data.

The study employs a purposeful sampling technique to select sources that are relevant to the research questions.

Triangulation of data was done through the analysis of available sources, such as:

1. Institutional papers: Institutions such as the University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, amongst others, published reports on staffing levels, recruitment constraints and accreditation status.
2. Federal Ministry of Education, TETFund Policy Statements, National Universities Commission Analysis, Regulatory and Governmental Documents, etc
3. Academic materials: Peer-reviewed journal articles and publications on brain drain in Nigerian tertiary institutions of learning and healthcare.

4. News media reports: up-to-date reports on policy changes and institutional responses from Nigerian publications like The Guardian, Daily Trust, The Punch and Leadership.
5. Statements of the professional bodies: Publications of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, Nigerian Medical Association, and ASUU

Results and Discussion of Findings

1. The Interlocking Crisis: Understanding Systemic Failure

Nigeria's academic brain drain is not merely a staffing problem. It is a symptom of systemic failure in the production and retention of knowledge workers. The exodus of faculty represents an existential threat to the quality and legitimacy of Nigerian higher education programmes. It reflects and reinforces deeper dysfunctions in the national project.

The Push-Pull theory illuminates how individual migration decisions aggregate into systemic crisis. At the micro-level, each academic's choice to emigrate is rational. Faced with deteriorating conditions at home and compelling opportunities abroad, leaving represents sensible career and family planning. Yet these individual rational choices produce collectively devastating outcomes: institutions stripped of their most experienced scholars, students denied quality education, and a nation deprived of the human capital necessary for development. The theory also reveals how push and pull factors interact and reinforce each other. Poor funding pushes academics out; well-funded foreign institutions pull them in. Dilapidated facilities at home push; state-of-the-art laboratories abroad pull. Stalled promotions push; clear career pathways pull. Each push factor has a corresponding pull that amplifies its effect, creating a magnetic field of attraction toward destination countries while repelling talent from Nigeria. What makes the Nigerian case particularly concerning is the acceleration evident in recent years. UNILAG's loss of 60% of academic staff in five years represents a pace of deterioration that outstrips institutional capacity to adapt. When senior faculty depart at a rate exceeding 20% annually, the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and experience collapses. Young academics lose mentors. Departments lose institutional memory.

2. The Vicious Cycle: How Brain Drain Perpetuates Itself

The findings point to a self-reinforcing dynamic that perpetuates and deepens the crisis. Brain drain leads to increased workloads for remaining faculty, as fewer academics serve the same or growing student populations. Increased workloads reduce time for research, diminish job satisfaction, and accelerate burnout; reduced research output and job satisfaction become additional push factors, prompting more academics to consider emigration. Those who leave often serve as anchors for subsequent migration, sponsoring family members or colleagues once established abroad. This creates migration chains that amplify initial departures. Simultaneously, the departure of experienced faculty degrades the quality of graduate training, producing PhD holders less prepared for academic careers. Reduced quality of new PhDs, combined with shortages of qualified applicants, leads institutions to hire less-qualified faculty or leave positions vacant. Lower faculty quality further degrades educational outcomes, reducing graduate employability and perpetuating the cycle.

3. Disciplinary Variations and Strategic Priorities

Particularly noteworthy is the discovery that nearly 30% of senior faculty members have left the fields of medicine, engineering, computer science, and specialised sciences. These are the exact fields that are most important for both technological advancement and economic growth. Because of their passing, Nigeria will not be able to produce the doctors that its people require, the engineers who could construct infrastructure, or the computer scientists who could spearhead digital transformation.

The Association of Provosts of Colleges of Health Technology and Nursing Sciences warns that the seven-year ban on establishing new polytechnics will create “an intergenerational gap of at least seven years in terms of shortage of health and medical manpower.” When a nation cannot produce enough healthcare workers to serve its population and loses many of those it does produce, the consequences are measured in preventable deaths and diminished quality of life. The health sector crisis highlights the stakes, as tens of thousands of doctors are leaving Nigerian hospitals, facing severe shortages, long wait times, and higher patient mortality. The Association of Provosts of Colleges of Health Technology and Nursing Sciences warns that the seven-year ban on establishing new polytechnics will create “an intergenerational gap of at least seven years in terms of shortage of health and medical manpower.” When a nation cannot produce enough healthcare workers to serve its population and loses many of those it does produce, the consequences are measured in preventable deaths and diminished quality of life. The health sector crisis highlights the stakes, as tens of thousands of doctors are leaving Nigerian hospitals, facing severe shortages, long wait times, and higher patient mortality.

Conclusion

This study has examined the brain drain syndrome afflicting Nigeria’s educational sector and its implications for the future of educational development. The findings paint a sobering picture: over 5,000 lecturers emigrating annually, institutions losing 60 per cent of academic staff, faculty-student ratios ballooning to 1:60 against global benchmarks of 1:16, accreditation status threatened, research output plummeting, and graduate quality deteriorating. The crisis cuts deepest in precisely those disciplines medicine, engineering, and computer science most critical for national development. The push-pull theory explains how a number of factors come together to cause emigration, including inadequate pay eroded by inflation, outdated facilities and excessive workloads, stalled promotions and few career opportunities, systemic instability and frequent strikes, insecurity, and low quality of life. Strong incentives for leaving are created when these push factors combine with attractive pull factors from the destination countries, such as five to ten times higher salaries, well-equipped laboratories, clear career pathways, and stable institutions. The ramifications have catastrophic effects on the educational ecosystem. It is impossible to replace the decades of research experience, institutional memory, and supervisory ability that departing professors bring with them. The remaining faculty members are unable to maintain quality due to their heavy teaching loads. Insufficient preparation for students is evident in the 35% graduate unemployment rate. The intergenerational transfer of knowledge collapses, threatening Nigeria’s capacity to produce future scholars and professionals. With concerted effort

addressing root causes while leveraging diaspora connections, Nigeria could yet transform brain drain into brain gain, building the educational system its people deserve and its future requires

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders at all levels:

- i. Government needs to move beyond the usual promises. The current 7% budget allocation is nowhere near UNESCO's 15–20% benchmark, so a phased plan to close that gap within five years should be laid out, with clear public reporting on what is spent and where. Pay is another sore point: academic salaries have been eaten up by inflation, so automatic cost-of-living adjustments and a serious push toward parity with political office holders would help restore dignity. Security matters too—improved policing, community engagement, and tackling the root causes of conflict would make staying home less risky. And policy somersaults have damaged trust; mechanisms for continuity across administrations and transparent monitoring would give people reason to believe the system can work. Research support needs real money; it should help with grant applications and international partnerships. Hiring and promotion should be transparent, with fewer bureaucratic delays and stronger accountability. High-performing faculty should be offered retention packages—research support, housing assistance, and clear career paths. Digital infrastructure and training for virtual learning can help cushion staffing shortages, even if it is not a complete fix.
- ii. ASUU and similar organisations should continue to advocate, but this cannot be resolved by protests alone. They can combine collaborative engagement and specific proposals with advocacy. Academic life in Nigeria would be more rewarding with networking opportunities, research grants, and continuing education. Members of the diaspora should have organised ways to participate, such as visiting appointments, online instruction, and research cooperation
- iii. Rather than funding scholarships that facilitate emigration, development partners should invest in Nigerian institutional capacity, laboratories, libraries, and faculty development that addresses root causes. Destination countries should adopt recruitment practices that do not actively deplete Nigerian healthcare and education systems. Programmes supporting joint research, visiting fellowships, and knowledge transfer would help transform brain drain into brain gain.

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