



Ascertaining The Factors Determining Brain Drain Among Final Year Medical Students And House Officers In Tertiary Institutions In South-South Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Brain drain (BD) is the movement of healthcare professionals from a country of poor standard of living to a country with high or better of living. In Nigeria, brain drain among healthcare professionals is on the increase and this is affecting the healthcare sector by creating a vacuum or caused shortage of manpower in the sector. Brain drain is an important issue that the government must give attention to the determining factors in order to curtail future occurrence. The aim of this study is Ascertain Factors Determining Brain Drain Among Final Year Medical Students and House Officer in Tertiary Institutions in South-South Nigeria. This was a cross-sectional study involving 350 (final year medical students 200 and house officers 150). A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. The study lasted for a period of 2 months. Exclusion criteria were those medical students who were not in final year and doctors that were not house officers. Inclusion criteria were final medical students and house officers. This study used a simple random sample of 200 participants, calculated using the Taro Yamane formula, and data were analyzed with SPSS version 25.0. The results of the study shows that 57.1% were final year students while 42.9% were medical officers. The study revealed that 71.4% of the House Officers do not enjoy their profession and 85.7% are planning to leave the country, 71.4% said working environment favourable, 80.0% have bad working relationship with your consultants, 85.7% said no automatic job and 71.4% find difficult in passing primaries. The research shows that 85.7% of the final medical students faced tough academic environment.

Keywords:

Ascertain, Factors, Determining, Brain Drain, Medical Students, House Officer

Introduction

Brain drain (BD) is the movement of highly educated individuals or professionals from a low socio-economic country to a more advanced socio-economic country for a greener pasture or professional opportunities and this has engulfed the health sector where its negatively affects healthcare delivery (Gbaranor et al, 2025).

Young, well-educated, healthy individuals are most likely to migrate, especially in pursuit of higher education and economic improvement (Meji'a, et al., 1979; Awases, et al., 2003). The distinction between 'push' and 'pull' factors have been recognized (Bach, 2005). Demotivating working conditions, coupled with low salaries, are set against the likelihood of prosperity for themselves and their families, work in well-equipped hospitals, and the opportunity for professional development (Narasimhan, et al., 2004). Migrant health professionals are faced with a combination of economic, social and psychological factors, and family choices (Connell and Brown, 2004), and reflect the 'push-pull' nature of the choices underpinning these 'journeys of hope. The role

of governments and recruitment agencies in systematically encouraging the migration of health professionals increases the pull (Bach, 2005). Migrant health professionals are faced with a combination of economic, social and psychological factors, and family choices (Connell and Brown, 2004), and reflect the 'push-pull' nature of the choices underpinning these 'journeys of hope. Continuing disparities in working conditions between richer and poorer countries offer a greater 'pull' towards the more developed countries. The increasing demand for health care in the higher income countries is fueled to a large extent by demographic trends, e.g. the ageing of the baby-boom generation (Stilwel, et al., 2004).

Materials and Method

This was a cross-sectional study involving 350 (final year medical students 200 and house officers 150) who were within the age of 18 to 47 years. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. Each participant had one questionnaire to fill appropriately and independently after instructions were given to them by the Research Assistants. Data collection took place over two months, from March 1st to April 30th, 2024.

Results

The results shows that 71.4% of the House Officers do not enjoy their job (Table 1), 85.7% intend to leave Nigeria for greener pasture (Table 2). Participants gave various reasons for leaving the country for a greener pasture: 29.0% attributed it to poor healthcare facility, shortage of healthcare provider (8.6%), poor remuneration (71.4%) (Table 3), 71.4% of the House Officers said no good working environment (Table 4), 80.0% of the House

Officers do not have good working relationships with their consultants (Table 5), 71.4% of the House Officers find it difficult to pass primaries (Table 6). The research shows that 85.7% of the final medical students faced tough academic environment, 85.7% of the final year medical students do not have class room for study, 94.3% says no functional cybercafe, 85.7% says long duration of study, 97.1% says no adequate facilities for study and 93% attributed it to incessant ASUU strike.

Table 1: Participants who enjoyed their profession

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
House doctors who enjoyed their job	100	28.6
House doctors who do not enjoyed their job	250	71.4
Total	350	100.0

Table 2: Participants (HO) who intend to leave Nigeria for greener pasture

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
House doctors who intend to leave Nigeria	300	85.7
House doctors who do not intend to leave Nigeria	50	14.3
Total	350	100.0

Table 3: Reasons for Leaving Nigeria

Response	Frequency (%)
Reason(s) for Leaving Nigeria	
Poor healthcare facility	70(29.00)
Shortage of healthcare provider	30(8.57)
Poor remuneration	250(71.43)
Total	350(100.00)

Table 4: Working environment favourable

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Participants who says working environment was favourable	100	28.57
Participants who says no favourable working environment	250	71.43
Total	350	100.0

Table 5: Working relationship with consultants

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who have good working relationship with their consultants	70	20.00
Participants who not have good working relationship with their consultants	280	80.00
Total	350	100.0

Table 6: Passing of Primaries

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
House Officers who find it difficult to pass primaries	250	71.4
House Officers who do not find it difficult to pass primaries	100	28.6
Total	350	100.0

Discussion

Brain drain (BD) is the movement of healthcare professionals from a country of poor standard of living to a country with high or better of living. In Nigeria, brain drain among healthcare professionals is on the increase and this is affecting the healthcare sector by creating a vacuum or caused shortage of manpower in the sector. Brain drain is an important issue that the government must give attention to the

determining factors in order to curtail future occurrence.

The study revealed majority (71.4%) of the House Officers do not enjoy their job and this may be due to negative factors making them to show lack of interest and thus 85.7% of them intend to leave Nigeria for greener pasture. This plan by majority of the doctors to leave the Nigeria is to secure a good job that is well paid to improve standard of living. These doctors have given various reasons why they want to

leave Nigeria for another country who have good working conditions and these reasons are 29.0% attributed it to poor healthcare facility, shortage of healthcare provider (8.6%), poor remuneration (71.4%). The study shows that majority (71.4%) of the doctors (House Officers) revealed that there is no good working environment and when the working environment is not conducive, it affects productivity and when productivity is affected, revenue can not be generated. Good working environment is pivotal for any business institutions to strive.

Again, majority (80.0%) of the House Officers do not have good working relationships with their consultants and this is an important factor that must be addressed. When the younger doctors do not have a good working relationship with their consultants, they will not be comfortable at their work place and they can not learn new skill from their consultant and thus they will not like to come to work. Also, 71.4% of the House Officers find it difficult to pass primaries so that they can start their residency and because they could not pass their primaries, most of abandon it and enrolled for plabb and then leave the country.

The research revealed that brain drain (BD) which involves the movement of skilled professionals from one country of low working conditions to another country with good working conditions and this are determined by certain factors such as economic factors like low salaries and underemployment, political instability, career growth and development, cultural and social factors, safety and security and educational opportunities.

However, on the final year medical students, the study revealed that 85.7% of them faced tough academic environment, 85.7% do not have class room for study, 94.3% attributed their leaving to lack of functional cybercafe. When these reasons or factors are not corrected, the students may decide to leave the country as soon as they complete their medical school. Again, 85.7% of the final year medical students frowned at long duration of study and this long duration of study gives the students apathy towards the completion of their medical career. The research revealed that 97.1% of the medical

students attributed their leaving the country as soon as they complete their medical school to inadequate facilities for study, lack of electricity and poor hostel environment. Majority (93.0%) of the medical students also consider incessant ASUU strike as one of the determinants why they are planning to leave Nigeria for greener pasture.

Conclusion

The research revealed that brain drain (BD) which involves the movement of skilled professionals from one country of low working conditions to another country with good working conditions and this are determined by certain factors such as economic factors like low salaries and underemployment, political instability, career growth and development, cultural and social factors, safety and security and educational opportunities. The study revealed that majority of both the House Officers and the Final Year Medical Students are planning to leave the country for a greener pasture.

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