

Antecedents and Impacts of Human Capital Flight in the Sub-Saharan Africa with Specific Reference to the Higher Education Sector: Conceptual Model

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Abstract : The aim of this paper is to critically examine the factors contributing to academic brain drain in the Sub-Saharan Africa with specific reference to the higher education sector. Africa in general and Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, in particular, are experiencing an exodus of highly trained, qualified and competent human resources to other developing and developed countries thereby threatening the overall development of the relevant regions and impeding both public and private service delivery systems in the nation states. The region is currently in a dire situation in terms of health care services, education, science, and technology. The contribution of SSA countries to Science, Technology and Innovation is relatively minimal owing to the migration of skilled professionals due to both push and pull factors. The phenomenon calls for both international and trans-boundary, regional, national and institutional interventions to curb the exodus. Based on secondary data and the review of the literature, the article conceptualizes the antecedents and impacts of human capital flight or brain drain in the SSA countries from a higher education perspective. To this end, the article explores the magnitude, causes, and impacts of brain drain in the region. Despite the lack of consistent data on the magnitude of academic brain drain in the region, a critical analysis of the existing sources shows that pay disparity between developing and developed countries, the lack of enabling working conditions at source countries, fear of security due to political turmoil or unrest, the availability of green pastures and opportunity for development in the receiving countries were identified as major factors contributing to academic brain drain in the region. This hampers the socio-economic, technological and political development of the region. The paper also recommends that further research can be undertaken on the magnitude, causes, characteristics and impact of brain drain on the sustainability and competitiveness of SSA higher education institutions in the region.

Keywords : brain drain, higher education, sub-Saharan Africa, sustainable development

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