

Chapter 9

The Nigerian Health Workforce in a Globalized Context

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ABSTRACT

Nigerian health professionals are impacted by several global forces bearing down on them, one of which is the positive economic prospects associated with emigrating to work abroad. This emigration is an aspect of increased global mobility which has had an adverse effect on the Nigerian health economy. This is important globally because countries with the smallest healthcare workforce capacities such as Nigeria have the poorest health outcomes. The emigration of health professionals from Nigeria will continue until domestic structures such as improved healthcare infrastructures, job security, and financial rewards change for the better. Thus, it is important that measures aimed at supporting the Nigerian health workforce be implemented with a focus on building and managing for sustainability within the context of international interdependency. Accordingly, this chapter is aimed at creating a theoretical framework for building capacities and managing the challenges of the Nigerian health workforce vis-à-vis the opportunities offered by globalization.

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization aids the integration of developing economies into world markets and institutions and increases economic and social interdependence (Labonté, 2018). In Nigeria, globalization is characterised by high mobility and economic interdependence (Markjackson, 2019). This became evident following the adoption of the Nigerian Structural Adjustment Policy in 1986 which abandoned policies on trade controls and indigenization (Nwagbara, 2011).

Nigerian health professionals are impacted by several global forces bearing down on them, one of which is the positive economic prospects associated with emigrating to work abroad (Fagite, 2018). This emigration is an aspect of increased global mobility which has had an adverse effect on the Nigerian health economy (Adeloye, 2017). This is important globally because countries with the smallest healthcare workforce capacities such as Nigeria have the poorest health outcomes.

It is widely believed that the emigration of health professionals from Nigeria will continue until domestic structures such as security and financial reward change for the better (Fagite, 2018). Thus, it is important that measures aimed at supporting the Nigerian health workforce be implemented with a focus on building and managing for sustainability within the context of international interdependency. Accordingly, this chapter is aimed at creating a theoretical framework underpinned by knowledge review for supporting the Nigerian health workforce in building capacity and managing the challenges congruent with globalization. The scope of this chapter is to explore the Nigerian health workforce in the context of globalization from the perspective of Nigerian health professionals with an emphasis on issues which they consider to be the drivers underpinning the emigration of health professionals from the Nigerian health economy.

This chapter thus situates Nigerian health professionals as the lens through which emigration is viewed. Accordingly, a convenient sample was used to evidence the lived experiences of Nigerian health care professionals who have practiced clinically for at least one year in Nigeria prior to emigrating to work outside the country. Following the analysis of these interviews, solutions are proposed along the lines of a mobility framework, policy changes and strengthening health systems through partnership and learning.

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