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# Stay in the U.S. or Return Home: A Qualitative Examination of the Decisionmaking Process of Nigerian Doctoral Students and Recipients

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**STAY IN THE U.S. OR RETURN HOME: A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF THE  
DECISIONMAKING PROCESS OF NIGERIAN DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND  
RECIPIENTS**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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**SETON HALL UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
**OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE**

**Felix Kanyip Kumai**, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ph.D.** during this **Summer Semester 2017**.

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## ABSTRACT

Like many developing countries, Nigeria has suffered from an extensive “brain drain” as its most able young people, especially those at the graduate or doctoral levels, seek educational and career opportunities in the mature Western economies. While other developing nations, especially China, have taken concrete action to stem and even reverse their brain drain, Nigeria has been slow to act. This study sought to illuminate the situation of Nigerian doctoral students in the Diaspora in order to chronicle how they wrestle with decisions about returning to the homeland as a means of formulating effective strategies for repatriation or, at least, constructive engagement with the Diaspora’s human resources. Many Nigerian doctoral students are faced with the following questions: Where do I go for graduate education? What do I study that will set me up for success? Where do I go after graduation, and what do I do? What attracts skilled manpower to the U.S. and affects their decision to stay or leave the host country to start their careers upon graduation? This research examines the determinants of sixteen Nigerian doctoral students and recipients’ non-return and return intentions following the completion of their doctoral study in the U.S. Non-return is a type of brain drain.

This study explored the experiences of Nigerian-born nonimmigrant doctoral students and recipients in U.S. universities and how they decide on their school, location, and field of study. It included a review of previous research on factors that influence Nigerian students who came to the U.S. for higher education and the processes, content, and outcome of their decision to either remain in the U.S. or return to the homeland after completing their studies. It also examined the challenges and opportunities that informed their decisions. A summary of trends in stay rates, human capital theory, migration, and the application of the brain drain concept is provided. The study concludes by highlighting the factors that elucidate the reasons Nigerian nonimmigrants or temporary

residents migrate to the U.S. and decide to either remain there or return to their homelands after graduation.

**Keywords:** doctoral students and recipients (Ph.D. holders); students' migration and mobility; push and pull factors; decision-making; stay and return rates; brain drain; human capital; self-efficacy; expectancy; return readiness.

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Thanks to my late mom and dad for choosing the right to life and not the right to choice; for giving me the chance to be loved and to love; for giving me the chance to share in the life of God and for allowing me to receive the Sacred Trust and serve as a priest of God in the Order of Presbyters. May we never grow careless of this Consecrated Confidence reposed in us.

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## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to my mom and dad: Monica Ntin Mallam (born to eternity 13 July 1974) and David Kanyip Bakwaph (born to eternity 18 December 2001). Through the mercy of God, may their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, especially those most in need of mercy, rest in perfect peace. And for those of us who still have the business of living: May the Divine Assistance remain with us, now and forever. Amen!

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## **CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT**

### **Background and Justification of the Study**

Education, a viable means of preparing engaged citizens and of improving the general standard of living in a society, is also an investment that can promote the economic, political, sociological, and human development of the country (Ndiyo, 2007). Doctoral education in particular plays a pivotal role in developing human resources that are vital to a nation's growth. For example, doctoral educated scientists, engineers, researchers, and scholars discover new insights that contributes to the economic growth, cultural development, and enhancement of the standard of living (African Concept Note, 2007).

Formal investment in human capital is an indispensable tool necessary to improve productivity and economic growth. Human capital can be defined as knowledge, talents, and skills possessed by individuals and society (Becker, 1993). Human capital theory assumes that formal education is instrumental to increasing one's productivity, which, in turn, leads to greater earnings and increases the productive capacities of the workforce (Leslie & Brinkman, 1988). Therefore, investment in human capital is positively related not only to individuals' productivity but also to national output and growth. Investment in the human resources of a nation determines the character and pace of that nation's economic and social growth (Becker, 1993).

Strassner et al. (2003) have noted that Nigerians are migrating to North America to pursue advanced degrees and acquire the knowledge and skills needed for national development because of the vital role that that human capital plays in national development. The expectation by their sponsors—government, diocese, corporations, or family—is that they will return to Nigeria after attaining their doctorates. However, for assorted reasons—including economic

opportunity in the U.S. versus unsatisfactory job conditions such as high unemployment and a high rate of inflation in Nigeria—a growing number of students remain in the U.S. after the completion of their advanced degrees, thus deflecting the return of human capital to Nigeria (Anyamele, 2009).

Per the Institute of International Education (IIE) (2016), Nigeria is fourteenth among leading countries of origin that are sending students to the U.S. as undergraduate and graduate students. With the Nigerian student population being 14,986, 52.8% are undergraduates, 34.3% are graduates, 1.7% are other, and 11.2% are Optional Practical Training (OPT). There has been a gradual but significant increase in Nigerian students studying in the U.S. since the 1990s. Nigeria has replaced Kenya as the only African country among the top 20 places of origin that send graduate students to the U.S. This is consistent with the steady increase of doctoral students in the U.S. from 2000 to 2016 by 61%. One reason for this is that doctoral students are a highly sought-after group, especially those enrolled in subjects that are in high demand and are of importance to the prosperity of the country. Figure 1 shows the last five-years enrollment trend of the top five African countries that send their students to U.S. universities.

Table 1. Top 5 African Countries Graduate Level Students in U.S. and Place of Origin

Place of Origin	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Nigeria	2,522	2,551	2,771	3,339	3,803
Ghana	1,255	1,290	1,301	1,400	1,323
Kenya	1,216	1,117	1,018	995	909
South Africa	521	548	491	474	540
Ethiopia	497	462	444	431	442

Source: <http://www.iie.org/opendoors>

The National Population Commission (2010) stated that Nigeria has a population of about 160 million. Saint et al. (2003) have reported that, in Nigeria, there are 220 state, federal, and private tertiary institutions that enroll over 400,000 students, of whom 9% are in graduate programs. Maduewesi and Imhanlanhimi (2006) documented that over 65% of students who graduated from secondary schools do not gain admission to universities due to an insufficient number of university places to accommodate them. To make the distribution of educational opportunities across states more equitable and to address the issue of the high admission demand for higher education, educational policymakers implemented the quota system and catchment areas policy, which is not merit-based, in the late 1970s (Okoroma, 2008). Many qualified candidates who have been denied admission are left to find alternative ways to continue their educations by studying overseas (Reynolds, 2006). Figure 1 above shows the number of Nigerians studying in the U.S.

Hagher (2011) described the Nigerian Diasporas as people whose origin is Nigerian by birth but who now live outside the shores of Nigeria as permanent residents, citizens, or temporary visa holders, and yet who maintain ties with their homeland. The Nigerian Diaspora is a term that embodies all Nigerian-born individuals who settle outside of their land of origin. This study focused on those Nigerians who entered the U.S. for graduate education or to seek better career opportunities.

President Obasanjo inaugurated a Nigerians in Diaspora (NIDO) program in 2002 at the first Diaspora dialogue in Atlanta, Georgia to enhance Nigerians' connection with Nigeria; he appealed to graduates of American higher education to answer the country's educational, political, and economic challenges by averting what he called the country's *brain drain*, a phenomenon that represents the loss of skilled educated manpower and educational investment.

The Diasporas, in general, hold significant, under tapped potential for national development. Of the 227 Nigerians who graduated with doctoral degrees between 2002 and 2008, 79%, on average, had no intention of returning to Nigeria. The Nigerian doctoral recipients who remain in the U.S. after their degree completion join the association of Nigerians in Diaspora to interact, network, and support each other as well as to maintain ties with the homeland.

Generally, international students tend to remain in the countries in which they have studied at the completion of their studies. As Gribble (2008) noted, in the past, students who studied abroad and were sponsored by aid programs for public rather than private gain and who were expected to return to their homelands to become leaders of their countries often maintained close socio-political, diplomatic, and trade ties with the countries where they studied. However, the opposite is the pattern today, as many foreign students who have funded their own training are choosing to remain in the countries where they were trained (Gribble, 2008).

Given this socio-political problem, this study sought to understand why Nigerian doctoral students and doctoral recipients stay in the U.S. after completing their studies. The focus of this research was on doctoral students and doctoral recipients because they are catalysts for national development. As Gribble (2008) noted, many international students consider overseas studies as a stepping-stone to permanent residency in any country that offers a higher standard of living, better prospects for employment, and more research opportunities than provided at home. Thus, this study sought to discover whether Nigerian doctoral students and recipients initially saw their stay in the U.S. as temporary or as a springboard towards permanent residency and how that evolved over the course of their graduate studies. The study also explored the factors that might serve as incentives for these doctoral students and recipients to

return to Nigeria. For the doctoral recipients who remain in the U.S., this study sought to understand the evolution of their decision-making process.

According to Zweig, for years, the developing world could do little but watch as its most talented citizens either went abroad to study or, having been trained at home, migrated to the West where they could find larger remuneration, better working conditions, more stable political systems, and a more comfortable lifestyle (Zweig David et al., 2008). Nigeria in particular, has a problem attracting her best and brightest brains back home. Of 13,837 West African undergraduate and graduate students who enrolled in higher education in the U.S. in 2008, 6,256 were Nigerians, representing 45% of all West African students in the U.S. that year (Digest of Education Statistics, 2008/9, Table 234, p. 330). According to the Institute of International Education (2009), there were 6,568 Nigerian students enrolled in U.S. higher education in 2009 and, in 2010, there were 7,148, for an increase of 9%. Of those, 34% were enrolled in graduate programs in 2010; about 70% of those enrolled in doctoral programs did not return to Nigeria (NSF Survey of Earned Doctorates 2002-2008).

Finn (2010) examined the stay rates (those who choose to remain upon graduation for any reason) of foreign doctoral recipients in the fields of science, engineering, and technology from U.S. universities between 1993 and 2009. There was a steady increase through 2007, with the 2009 stay rate showing no increase but staying very close to the all-time high of 62% that was reached two years earlier. Finn has long tracked stay rates of foreign citizens who receive STEM doctorates in the U.S. His 2009 report (the most recent available) indicated that, of 9,223 foreign nationals who received science and engineering doctorates at U.S. universities in 1999, two-thirds were still in the United States 10 years later. His data show that about 85% of Chinese and 80% of Nigerian Ph.Ds. educated in the U.S. are still in the U.S. five years after receiving

their degrees. Table 2 shows doctoral recipients with temporary visas intending to stay in the U.S. upon graduation from 2010 to 2015, the most recent data available.

Table 2. Doctorate Recipients with Temporary Visas Intending to Stay in the United States after Doctorate Receipt, by Country of Citizenship: 2008–2014

Country	2008-2014	2010/11/%	2011/12/%	2012/13/%	2013/14/%	2014/15/%
Egypt	558/65	73/66	114/58	126/64	140/61	135/70
Ghana	295/72	65/65	55/71	55/67	58/71	62/77
Kenya	362/69	68/72	77/75	66/68	79/68	72/69
Nigeria	321/80	51/75	51/84	67/78	65/88	87/89
Other	1,252/60	220/60	214/57	258/66	270/60	290/57
China	21,735/83	3,744/83	3,988/82	4,222/83	4,798/82	4,983/76
India	11,073/85	2,142/83	2,165/85	2,248/86	2,206/84	2,312/86
S/Korea	6,968/62	1,381/62	1,445/60	1,472/61	1,384/59	1,286/61

Source: NSF, NIH, USED, USDA, NEH, NASA, Survey of Earned Doctorates. [Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities: 2014 | Arlington, VA | NSF 16-300 | December 2015](#)

The above data show doctoral recipients from four African countries and Other (representing all other African countries not listed) and from three Asian countries with temporary visas intending to stay in the U.S. after earning the doctoral degree. The first column shows the total from 2008-14 followed by five years of data. This is the most recent data given by [National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics \(NCSES\)](#). In Africa, Nigeria has between 10-20% stay intention rates compared to all other African countries. As Table 2 shows, in other words, 80% of Nigerians, on average, intend to stay in the United States after their studies. From 2008 to 2014, Egypt had 766 such students, representing 65% of recipients with doctoral degrees who planned to stay in the U.S. after

completing their programs; Ghana had a total of 417, representing 72%; and Kenya had a total of 489, representing 69%. The stay rate in Nigeria is almost at par with China or India and is higher than Kenya and Egypt, suggesting that the trend is in favor of these students remaining in the U.S. after graduating. This research examines how Nigerian doctoral students and recipients decide whether to stay in the U.S. or to return to their homeland after graduation. How can the intention to stay be reduced so that the brain drain can be minimized?

Much like Chinese and Indian doctoral students, the five-year stay rates of many Nigerian doctoral recipients increased 8% over the past eight years. However, the governments of China and India have programs in place that attract their students to return home after graduation for personal and social reasons (Alberts & Hazen, 2005). This is not the case with the Nigerian government. Nigerian students usually fend for themselves in terms of migrating to the U.S. in the first place and maintaining themselves as students with little or no financial support from the Nigerian government Hagher (2011). There are very few incentives created by the Nigerian government for individuals who went abroad for further studies to return and assist in the development of the country. Thus, Nigerian doctoral students and recipients tend to remain in the U.S. as Table 2 suggest.

China and India are countries of interest because they account for a large and growing share of new U. S. doctorate recipients (see Figure 4). Like these two countries, the Nigerian nation is searching for partnership with Nigerian professionals abroad, business men and women, and intellectuals in the Diaspora to assist in building a strong economy, a lasting democracy (unlike China in this respect), firm institutions, sustainable infrastructures, and a just and egalitarian society (Hagher, 2011). Between 2002 and 2008, out of 25,037 Chinese who earned doctoral degrees, an average of 90% of those with temporary visas intended to stay in

the U.S. after graduation. Within the same timeframe, 9,647 Indians with temporary visas planned to stay in the U.S. after completion of their programs. According to Zweig et al. (2008), those who do not return contribute to the economic development of their country of origin through the Diaspora option.

The Chinese policy of “wei guo fuwu” —that is, “serving the country” —evolved using the Diaspora option to bring business opportunities, exchange academic information, and encourage technology transfer from abroad to China. Through brain circulation, the Chinese government set up a bank of students abroad, established long-term stable exchanges with them, and collated their research achievements (Zweig et al., 2008) in recognition of overseas scientists and professors, offering incentives for them to come home and serve the country.

By the turn of the century, China was ready for a more deliberate policy focusing on the benefits of “brain circulation” rather than the costs of the “brain drain” (Richtel, 2002; Saxenian et al., 2002). Under this policy, Chinese citizens who chose to stay abroad were encouraged to let their organizations engage in seven types of activities: utilize the advantages of their professional bodies; hold concurrent positions in China and overseas; engage in cooperative research in China and abroad; return to China to teach and conduct academic and technical exchanges; set up enterprises in China; conduct inspections and consultations; and engage in intermediary services, such as run conferences, import technology or foreign funds, or help Chinese firms find export markets (*Chinese Education and Society*, 2003). Thus, economic, academic self-interest, and patriotism incentives all encouraged cooperation between the government and the people in the Chinese Diaspora.

The Chinese government also recognized that the expertise that Chinese citizens studying abroad might have made these people too expensive for the Chinese state or for state-

run institutions under current conditions. Further, the state cannot afford all the technical infrastructure and equipment that they need to create new products. With a pool of human capital that large, there must be other ways than returning to help the motherland to develop. Academics and scientists employ certain strategies, while people in business employ others. Some solutions combine the two cohorts. For example, scientists at universities or laboratories who devise a new product may manufacture it on the mainland for export or for sale in the domestic market.

The Chinese government has a policy of selectively wooing exceptional researchers and entrepreneurial talents back to China (Chen et al., 2003). Analysts of the diaspora option have asserted that the home country must establish a strong network among overseas scholars if it is to incentivize them to consider returning (Song, 2003). According to data from the Science and Engineering Doctorate Awards, 2002, China produced twice as many science and engineering Ph.Ds. in the U.S. as its closest rival, Taiwan, comprising 47% of all foreign science and engineering students with firm plans to stay in America (SRS, 2003). However, many of these students are on postdoctoral fellowships and were more likely to return than if they had a secure job. Can the diaspora development/nurturance model designed by China succeed in Africa? It is important to compare Nigerians with their Egyptian, Kenyan, and Ghanaian counterparts because these are the only other African countries with available stay rate data. These comparisons are also important for understanding where Nigeria stands among African nations in terms of stay rates and the national government policy to attract back its U.S. educated doctoral students and recipients.

Olabisi Deji-Folutile (Jan 10, 2012) reported in the newspaper *Punch* that more Nigerian students are seeking higher educations abroad because degrees earned in American colleges and

universities are thought to be more valuable than those earned in Nigeria. As Table 3 shows, the trend from 2011 onward was toward a steady increase of male and female recipients of doctoral degrees, especially among those students with temporary visas (NSF, 2007). Women held the lead slightly in terms of students—whether permanent, temporary or unknown residents—earning doctoral degrees.

Table 3. Male and Female Doctoral Recipients and Citizenship Status

<b><u>Citizen Status Men</u></b>	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents	15,397	16,073	16,550	16,663	17,245
Temporary Visa Holders	9,179	9,556	10,103	10,207	10,413
Unknown Citizens	1,615	1,736	1,675	2,148	1,938
<b><u>Citizen Status Women</u></b>					
U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents	16,330	16,910	17,416	17,347	17,872
Temporary Visa Holders	5,056	5,224	5,571	5,633	5,742
Unknown Citizens	1,315	1,397	1,380	1,842	1,789

Source: NSF/HIM/USED/USDA/NEH/NASA, 2001-2008 Survey of Earned Doctorates.

As Table 4 shows, meanwhile, nearly 60 native Nigerians earned a U.S. doctorate in 2011. Assuming a basically stable rate, this translates into approximately 600 Nigerians earning U.S. doctorates over a decade.

Table 4. Countries of Origin of non-US Citizens earning Doctoral Degrees in US Universities

Country of Origin	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Egypt	114	124	140	135	129
Ghana	55	55	58	62	83
Kenya	77	66	79	72	58
Nigeria	55	67	65	87	84
China	3,977	4,217	4,798	4,983	5,384
India	2,154	2,236	2,206	2,312	2,230
South Korea	1,443	1,469	1,384	1,286	1,237

Source: NSF/HIM/USED/USDA/NEH/NASA, 2001-2008 Survey of Earned Doctorates.

### **Statement of the Problem**

To date, most research on the Nigerian Diaspora focuses on transfer of remittances and their potential effects on homeland development (Hagher, 2011). Nigerians who study and are working in the U.S. contribute financially to their homeland by providing much-needed financial support to family and communities, establishing small businesses, putting private commercial vehicles on the road, and stimulating new home construction and artisan enterprise development (Concept Note, 2007; Hagher, 2011). It is important, however, to look beyond this monetary remittance to investigate the social, political, economic, cultural, human capital, and technical potential of these professional Nigerians (e.g., serving as cultural ambassadors and helping to extend and maintain public infrastructure such as schools and hospitals) (Obasanjo, 2000). By understanding the plans of respondents about career choice and development, this study addressed such policy questions as what the Nigerian government and private sectors can do to improve conditions to attract their doctoral students and recipients to come back to, or otherwise share their human capital with, the homeland. What ways a doctoral educated

workforce helps their homeland, and how can the brain drain trend be reversed to promote Nigerians in the U.S. returning to Nigeria or contributing from the Diaspora in some capacity.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The goal of this study was to identify the tensions and fluidity in the decision-making process of Nigerians regarding whether to stay in the U.S. or return to their homeland. The research also sought to understand what motivated Nigerian doctoral students and recipients to come to the U.S. for graduate studies and what motivated them to persevere and persist in their chosen fields of study. To answer these questions, this study examined push factors identified in the extant literature described in Chapter 2; these factors are the conditions that influence or encourage people to leave a bad or unsafe situation and environment, such as violence, civil conflict, lack of job opportunities, poverty, corruption, lack of civil rights, and inferior research facilities. Pull factors, meanwhile, describe the conditions that influence people to go to new locations with better opportunities, such as job prospects, freedom and liberty, the chance for a better life or better education, or for family, love, and marriage.

The focus of this study was on the career choices and development of respondents at the micro-level (that is, individual students' perceptions of how they navigate the process of career choice and development while undergoing their doctoral studies) rather than on macro-level factors, such as socio-political and economic conditions and forces that drive migrants to stay or leave, although macro-level factors do affect individuals. Given that there have been few studies carried out on Nigerian graduate students' educational experiences in U.S. higher education (Anyamele, 2009; Offoha, 1989; Reynolds, 2002; Uwazurike, 2007), this study aimed to explore what the Nigerian doctoral students' intentions were for staying in the U.S. after graduation and how doctoral recipients from U.S. universities came to make the concrete

decision to stay in the U.S. or return to Nigeria after completing their degree programs. This study also aimed to understand how the decision-making process to stay or return evolved, changed, or was shaped during the various stages of doctoral studies, at the initial entry stage, while studying, and upon completion, which contributed to students' decisions to stay in the U.S. or return to Nigeria. The study also sought to understand more broadly how these doctoral students and recipients—beyond their stay or return decision—think about contributing human capital to their homeland.

The overall goal of this research was to understand how doctoral students perceive opportunities to stay in the U.S., how they perceive employment opportunities in their homeland, and under what conditions they might consider returning, in addition to how they think of giving back to their homeland. Since the doctoral student participants in this research were at various stages of their studies, the objective was to try to understand how their perceptions, intentions, and decisions developed and even changed over time. There is a need in Nigeria for students trained outside the country, especially in the U.S., to return and develop schools, run hospitals, and participate in nation building, or otherwise contribute to the homeland while living and working in the Diaspora.

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study included implications for practice, recommended change factors, decision-making modification measures, and recommended leadership strategies to create incentives for these students to return. This study also sought to provide policy-makers, parents, civil society, and the public with the distinctive contribution of understanding the decision-making process of graduate students so that these individuals can intervene at the appropriate stages. The findings of this study shed light on policy recommendations that can

help to enhance the development of education in Nigeria and encourage a doctoral-educated workforce abroad to return to their homeland through a series of interventions targeted at various stages in the decision-making process as it unfolds over time.

This topic is important because there is little or no research focused on the stay rates of Nigerian doctoral students and recipients. Prior studies have examined post Ph.D. stay rates at the macro-levels—namely, the social, political, economic, and cultural. This study, by contrast, focused on processes at the micro-level, thereby making a distinctive contribution to the literature. The study examined the journey and lived experiences of these immigrant doctoral students and recipients born and bred in Nigeria and explored how a range of factors interacted in their decision-making process. The study was also significantly different from previous studies because both current students and doctoral recipients were included in the sample and were focused on an extended timeline in their lives.

This study also provided insight into the process of making the decision, as it evolves over time, to remain in the U.S., contributing to the brain drain discussion, or to return home. It will also improve networking and cooperation in terms of exchanging research ideas and findings among stakeholders, such as policymakers, government officials, and the public in both the U.S. and Nigeria. The distinctive contribution that this study will make is based on how Nigerian doctoral students and recipients, during the various stages of their studies, came to make the decision to stay in the U.S. or return upon graduation. This will contribute to understanding the processes that influence stay and return rates.

### **Research Questions**

The overarching research question central to this study is as follows: What factors influence the choice of Nigerian doctoral students or recipients to remain in the U.S. or return to their

homeland upon completion of their doctoral studies? How do factors related to field of study, family ties, and tribal affiliation help explain this choice? How does return readiness fit into the binary choice to stay or return? The secondary questions were as follows:

- What factors influence the choice of Nigerian doctoral students and recipients to come to the U.S. to study? How do they choose a location/university and field of study? How does expectancy fit into the decision to attend school in the U.S.?
- How did respondents persist in the doctoral program? How does self-efficacy fit into each stage of persistence?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The concept of return preparedness helps to explain why individuals choose to stay or return. Return preparedness refers to the process of preparing to return to the home country and having the ability to gather the needed resources to survive. It comprises the traits of free will and readiness to return. Return preparedness is a process that takes place in a person's life through time and that is shaped by changing circumstances—i.e., subjective experiences and contextual factors in sending and receiving countries. It is not only about preparing to return; it is also about having the ability, though not always the opportunity, to gather the tangible and intangible resources needed to secure one's return. Return preparedness is related to the development and change of expectations or perceptions as respondents prepare to come to the U.S. and to self-efficacy in the new country environment.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Although this study produced compelling research, using smaller, highly targeted samples, and was flexible and very focused, the approach is not without limitations especially being subjective. Perhaps the strongest objection is the built-in bias given that the quality of

the research depends greatly on the researcher. Because the researcher designed the type of questions asked, personal beliefs could have inadvertently influenced the results. Also, the process was time consuming given the volume of data that the researcher carefully pored over in detail while crafting analysis. Even after spending all this time and energy examining the transcribed interview data, there is no guarantee that everything was covered. This would make it extremely challenging for other researchers to replicate the study thereby making it hard to confirm or deny findings.

Because the study used a smaller, more targeted population (sixteen respondents), the research is not projectionable to a larger population. It uncovered perspectives, attitudes, insights and behaviors of how respondents felt about staying or returning without producing a definite conclusion. As noted above, the researcher's bias throughout the process could be problematic, as he typically tried working around the specific issue presented to uncover a certain point.

This study focused on student decision-making as a key factor in respondents' choice to stay or return, although this is only one facet of intention patterns. Clearly, other factors—such as bureaucratic barriers, legal restrictions on migration, and institutional incentives—also played part in explaining migration patterns, but these issues were beyond the purview of this study. The *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, published annually by the Institute of International Education, is the most extensive data set available on actual student numbers in the U.S., and it provides an important complementary source of information on student migrations. However, it does not provide information about return migrations or the motivations behind these migrations.

The data collection for this study was also limited. It relied exclusively on phone interviews. One of the interviews was only partially completed because of interruptions by other callers. Phone interviews also reduce social cues. The interviewer could not see the interviewee's body language, etc., so this could not be used as a source of extra information. The researcher's own status as a priest most likely increased the incidence of priests in the sample (1/4 of the total). This presented its own kind of bias. Further, cross-cultural experiences are riddled with subjective perceptions, which may be off the mark in terms of the reality of the situations in which respondents find themselves.

In summary, this study set out to understand the decision-making process of Nigerian doctoral recipients and doctoral students when they were choosing to come to the U.S. for graduate studies and what factors they considered. Its goal was to understand how respondents would perceive opportunities to stay in the U.S., how they perceived employment opportunities in their homeland, and under what conditions or factors they might consider returning, in addition to how they think of giving back to their homeland. The results of this study addressed Nigeria's educational, political, social, and economic challenges to avert the brain drain phenomenon, which represents the loss of skilled manpower and educational investment.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country with varied cultural diversities; it includes not less than 250 distinct ethnic groups and diverse indigenous languages in a population of about 160 million. There are three main regions (North, South, and West) with three major tribes: Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. There are myriad other tribes that are still in obscurity. Hausa (40% of the population) is the largest ethnic tribe or block; they are the major inhabitants of 12 states in the North out of the 36 that make up the nation. The Yorubas (21% of the population and located in the West) are the second largest ethnic group. The Igbos (18% of the population and located in the East) are third; they are Nigeria's industrialists. Northern Nigeria, mostly Islamic, is dominated by the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group. Southern Nigeria is more westernized and urbanized than the north, with the Yoruba in the southwest and the Igbo in the southeast. It is estimated that about half the Yorubas are Christian and half are Muslim, though many maintain traditional beliefs. The Igbo in the southwest tend to be Christian, mainly Roman Catholic.

The system of government in Nigeria is based on the U.S. model. The country has a federal government and 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory at Abuja. The nation's capital moved from Lagos to Abuja in 1991. The federal form of government and location of the capital seek to balance the power of the three major ethnic groups and subdue ethnic and regional conflict. However, the introduction of sharia (a criminal code based on Islamic law) in 12 northern states in 2000 provoked violence between Christians and Muslims, leading to thousands of deaths. Since the oil boom of the 1970s, Nigeria has had an unhealthy dependence on crude oil. In 2002, oil and gas exports accounted for 98% of export earnings, providing 83% of the federal government's revenue. Agriculture has suffered from years of mismanagement

and neglect, and the country's poor transportation infrastructure hinders its economic development.

Education in Nigeria is besieged with myriad problems. These include poor funding and poor infrastructures, inadequate classrooms, inadequate teaching aids (projectors, computers, laboratories, and libraries), a paucity of quality teachers, poor remuneration, and a poor/polluted learning environment. In addition to these inadequacies, the school system is plagued with numerous social problems, such as industrial unrest, indiscipline, examination malpractices, cultism, hooliganism, and corruption. In frustration, excellent brains and great minds leave to study overseas, resulting in brain drain.

Brain drain' describes a phenomenon in which people with an elevated level of skills, qualifications, and competence leave their countries to live abroad. A case of brain drain occurs when students from developing nations who are studying in developed countries decide not to return home after their studies. This study examined the reasons for students' inclination to stay in the U.S. from a sample of sixteen doctoral students and recipients who came to study. It was found that their degree of perceptions of ethnic differences and labor markets, their adjustment process to the host country, and their family ties in the host and home countries all affected their intention to stay. The rising U.S. tuition costs, vigorous recruitment activities by other English-speaking nations, and perceptions abroad that it is more difficult for international students to come to the United States' (Open Doors, 2005b) has led some authors to argue that these restrictions have not only altered the number of students coming to the U.S. in the first place but have also led to a higher percentage of students returning to their home countries.

At the graduate level, international students make up over 10% of the total student body, and this proportion is significantly higher for certain disciplines and professional fields, such as

engineering and computer science (Open Doors, 2004a). Foreign students received 49% of doctorates in engineering, 35% in the physical sciences (Borjas, 2002), and almost 50% in economics (Baker & Finn, 2003). Many international students choose to remain in the U.S. after completing their degrees, and opportunities exist for many to adjust their status from visitors to immigrants once they have completed their degrees. The decision to stay has implications on the brain drain discussion.

Finn (2010) examined the stay rates (those who choose to remain upon graduation for any reason) of foreign doctoral recipients from U.S. universities from 2002 to 2008 in the fields of science and engineering. The trend showed a steady increase through 2007, with the 2008 stay rate showing a decline but remaining very close to the all-time high of 62% that was reached two years earlier (Table 1). China and India are countries of special interest, meanwhile, because they account for a large and growing share of new doctoral recipients who stay back after graduation (Table 1). Like China and India, Hagher (2011) stated, the Nigerian government is searching for partnerships with Nigerian professionals abroad, business men and women, and intellectuals in the Diaspora to assist in building a strong economy, a lasting democracy (unlike China), firm institutions, sustainable infrastructures, and a just and egalitarian society.

To summarize, this study is significant because there is paucity of existing research focusing on the stay rate of Nigerian doctoral recipients in the U.S. The results of this study provided insight into the process, content, and outcome of Nigerian doctoral recipients making the decision to either remain in the U.S. or return home. Thus, it contributes to the brain drain discourse in extant literature and in future studies. The findings of this study may help to formulate policies that can take full advantage of the positive outcome of increased students'

mobility and, at the same time, limit the negative effects associated with the outflow of higher educated people in the globalized education and labor markets (Gribble, 2008). In addition, the findings of the study have implications for policy and practice that will help to enhance the development of education in Nigeria, decision-making modification, and effective leadership strategies to serve as incentives to motivate and encourage the doctoral-educated workforce abroad to return to Nigeria.

### **Review of Methods**

This section offers a review of studies of stay rates among Nigerian doctoral recipients from 2010-2016 to draw conclusions about how these groups of Nigerians come to make the decision to stay in the U.S. or return and how the Nigerian government and corporations can induce and/or lure them to come back to the homeland. The research procedure was conducted to understand the nature and quality of the contributions that prior studies made. The review gives an historical overview of how emergent concepts set the stage for themes on immigration, brain drain, and human capital and how China and India have provided the lead in this regard. Most of the articles discussed in this review are qualitative; they used phenomenology, focus groups, interviews, and participant-observers. There is little to critique about these approaches other than they all have their strengths and limitations. Data methods included observations, document reviews, recordings, and interviews. The interviews were semi-structured, face-to-face conversations between the researcher and key participating individuals. Telephone interviews were also conducted where face to-face interviews were not possible.

### **Limitations of the Review**

Quantitative data methods were also employed for this literature review. The dataset presented in tables 1 and 2 represents accurate quantitative data that has been assembled to date. The World Bank has explained that many developing countries, particularly African countries like Nigeria, are weak in statistical systems and differ from countries that, because they are authoritative, should be construed as setting trends (Oketch, 2006). Significantly also, this review did not measure and obtain data on variables or use survey instruments to collect data from subjects for statistical analysis, as would be done in quantitative study. While analysis of documentary evidence was also carried out, it should be noted that return migration is a scarcely studied topic due to a lack of data, which is usually collected within a country. Thus, the results may not be generalizable to the entire Nigerian population of doctoral recipients for two reasons: the sample size of sixteen interviewees reflects the lived experience of only those students, and Nigeria has 250 languages with varied cultures and traditions.

### **Criteria for Inclusion**

The criteria for including studies in this review were the following:

- Studies involving stay and return rates of Nigerian doctoral recipients in the last 15 years, although it considers an historical overview dating back to 1925;
- Studies that examined China's and India's models/programs, which were designed to benefit from immigration and brain circulation and to reverse the brain drain;
- Studies from any nation of the world, provided they were written in English; and
- The framework for this study is based on Human Capital Theory; broadly speaking, human capital corresponds to any stock of knowledge, skills, or competences, innate or acquired, that workers have that contribute to their being productive.

### **Procedure for Literature Search**

The review proposes to gather data from a wide range of academic disciplines and a significant amount of web and paper-based publications, including the following: Open Doors Institute of International Studies; National Science Foundation (NSF); National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which publishes comprehensive annual graduation figures for the U.S.; electronic searches of educational data bases such as JSTOR, SHU Libraries / dissertation, ProQuest, and Google Scholar (with specific articles that were purchased online). The researcher found 39 articles that met the criteria of inclusion. Of these, 26 were used in this review. The articles that appeared in the references not accounted for were cited within citations. The review method used is a best-evidence synthesis, which uses a systematic literature search, quantification of outcomes, and extensive discussion of the individual studies that meet the inclusion standards.

### **Historical Overview of Early Nigerian Response to US Higher Education**

According to the African Diaspora Policy Centre, the exact numbers of Nigerians in the Diaspora (which includes undergraduate and graduate students) is a matter of speculation, as there are no reliable or even approximate data on the number who are migrating out of the country. Despite a lack of reliable statistics on Nigerians residing abroad, OECD statistics suggest that 1.2 million Nigerians live abroad. The Nigerian Ministry of External Affairs estimates that there are 20 million Nigerians residing in U.S. and Europe, with 3.4 million living in the U.S. (Ogen, 2011). These figures, however, are unreliable.

Table 5. General Indicators: Nigeria

Population, total (millions)	155.2
Population growth (annual %)	1.93
Surface area (sq. km) (thousands)	923.8
Age Structure (% of total population) 0-14; 15-64; 65 and above	41; 55.9; 3.1
Median age (total population)	19.2
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	47.6
Literacy rate (% of total population)	68
International Migration Stock (% of population)	0.71
GDP (current US\$) (billions)	377.9
Expenditure on education (% of GDP)	NA
GDP growth (annual %)	8.4
GNI Atlas method (current US\$) (billions)	184.7
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	2500
Workers' remittances and Compensation (current US\$) (billion)	9.58
Foreign Direct Investment net inflow (current US\$) (billion)	5.80
Official Development Assistance (current US\$) (million)	1.66
Official Development Assistance per capita (current US\$)	10.7
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of adult population)	3.3

Source: World Development Indicators 2009 and 2010.

Nonetheless, it is generally acknowledged that there are a substantial number of Nigerians living outside of the country, the bulk of whom migrated from 1982 onwards because of the return of the military to power, the progressive deterioration of living conditions, and the collapse of the middle class. The military government's Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) saw the introduction of severe austerity measures, which pushed many Nigerian professionals to migrate out of the country and to market their skills internationally. Another wave of migration began in 1993 following the conclusion of the political transition program and the coming to power of an even more repressive and authoritarian military regime (African Diaspora Policy Centre). By and large, unemployment, violence, environmental degradation, lack of an enabling social infrastructure, political repression, and extreme poverty played significant roles in the mass exodus from Nigeria.

Subsequently, increasing numbers of Nigerians migrated to Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Italy, and Ireland, as well as to Ghana, Cameroon, Botswana, and South Africa. From available evidence, it is estimated that the bulk of Nigerians in the Diaspora are resident in Western Europe, the U.S., and Canada. For example, in 2002, about 125,000 highly skilled Nigerian professionals resided in various OECD countries (African Diaspora Policy Centre). According to the Nigerian National Policy on Health, more than 25,000 Nigerian professional health workers reside in the United Kingdom, with over 10,000 medical doctors resident in the U.S. It is estimated that about 26% of all registered medical doctors and 20% of all registered pharmacists in Nigeria work abroad, and there are more than 2 million highly educated Nigerian professionals living in Europe and the United States (Draft Migration Policy, 2007). Research shows that higher incomes, improved education, access to media and information, improved living standards, and reduction in violence all serve as attractions to study and, eventually, live in the U.S. According to Ogen (2011), most students, when they complete their studies, find ways to renew their visas, seek gainful employment, and become permanent residents.

This section reviews and analyses the history of Nigerian doctoral students and recipients' experiences, career paths, and the impacts of the original initiative on all stakeholders. The U.S. doctoral program serves as a model to the entire world (Nerad, 2004). One might assume that many of the initial Nigerian Diasporas came to the U.S. in the various academic fields to obtain doctoral degrees with no intention of remaining in the country for the remainder of their lives. However, according to Uwazurike (2007), it is unlikely that African scholars whose hearts tell them to relocate to their homelands will follow through to make the transition back home.

After World War II, there was a period marked by the desire for mass higher education in the U.S. The U.S. and Nigeria began to form an alliance of educational exchanges between the two countries. Nongovernmental organizations facilitated interactions between Nigerian youths who were hungry for higher education and American schools, colleges, and universities. According to Owoeye (2004), an important outcome of this was that Nigerians, who benefited from higher education in the U.S., struggled to implement the American model of adaptability to the needs of their homeland. One such beneficiary of American education was Nnamdi Azikiwe, a Nigerian Nationalist who later became the Governor General at Independence in 1960 and the First President when Nigeria became a Republic in 1963.

The pioneering effort on behalf of U.S. education began with Nnamdi Azikiwe, alias “Zik” of Africa. He was described as an ambitious and adventurous African who came to the U.S. in 1925. He later inspired and recruited other Africans, such as Kwame Nkrumah (the first Prime Minister and, later, President of Ghana) to join him for higher education in America (Ojiaku & Ulansky, 1972). Zik returned to Nigeria in 1934 with a B.A. *cum laude* and an M.A. in philosophy and anthropology from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, where he also taught political science. Upon his return to Nigeria, he was an accomplished journalist, businessman, and politician. He paved the way for making American university education the dream of a generation of Nigerian students, especially Ibos/Igbos, in the 1930s and 40s. Azikiwe, thus, became a hero and a symbol of hope to numerous sectors of the population. He inspired his audiences, mainly Nigerians and the Gold Coastians (now Ghanaians), with a dream of America and its educational opportunities for Africans.

Azikiwe came to the U.S. for higher education because of the limited higher education opportunities in Nigeria and other West Africa colonies. (The smart individuals used to attend

Fourah Bay in Sierra Leone.) Also, his job as a high school graduate was not well remunerated. He began his education at Storer College in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and he later attended Howard University. The tuition problem forced Zik to Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in the fall of 1929/30, where he completed his undergraduate and graduate degrees. According to Nwachukwu (2004), some of the following factors influenced Zik to obtain an American education: Dr. James Kwegyir Aggrey, a Ghanaian of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, discussed with Zik the importance of education for Africans and lauded U.S. education compared to British education. Zik read the biographies of Presidents Garfield and Lincoln, both of whom overcame social and economic obstacles to achieve the highest political office in America. Zik realized that opportunities existed in the U.S. for those who had dreams and the will to excel in any field. America also represented, for Zik, the ideals of nationalism and democracy and anti-British colonialism, as a country that had freed itself from the jaws of British colonialism (Franklin, 1994).

Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania each employed Zik as a faculty member while he pursued graduate education in Religion and Anthropology. At Lincoln, Zik introduced African history into the curriculum. This was a major intellectual legacy that he left behind in Lincoln (Nwachukwu, 1994). Zik also embraced the spirit of philanthropy, having been a beneficiary of tuition assistance at Lincoln. Later in his writings, Zik emphasized that higher education is human capital, and that it enables one to discover oneself and a means of social progress and development (Azikiwe, 1965). Bond (1976) concluded that Lincoln University was Zik's benefactor, the place that taught him to be bold and relentless in the search for freedom, democracy, and justice. One can infer from Zik's experience that U.S. exposure to higher education awakened other Nigerians to pursue higher education in the United States.

Some Nigerians and other Africans founded organizations, such as the African Students Association of the United States and Canada (A.S.A) in 1941 and the American Council on African Education (A.C.A.E.) in 1944, to promote and facilitate the admission of Nigerians and other Africans into American schools and colleges and to protect the welfare of their members (Nwachukwu, 2004). Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe, a Nigerian who was also educated at Lincoln University, had a strong conviction that there should be an organization to provide a meeting ground for mutual exchange of views between the peoples of America and Africa. Hence, the African Academy of Arts and Research (A.A.A.R) was founded in New York in November 1943, primarily with the aim of positively projecting African culture and facilitating educational and cultural exchanges between Africa and America. Other objectives of the A.A.A.R. included promoting research, information, and news to educate Americans about African culture and promote African Independence. As part of its exchange program, the A.A.A.R. sought to secure scholarships in American schools for African students and promote the exchange of teachers between Africa and the U.S. (Uwazurike, 2007).

How did these early pioneers finance their education? Owoeye (2004) concluded that private sponsorships, scholarships, and bursaries provided by well-to-do parents, social clubs, and other ethnic community groups helped to contribute to the development of access to higher education. According to historians, the Yorubas of the coastal area sent their children to England and Ireland while the Ibibio and Ibo/Igbo sent their children/wards mostly to American universities. The extant literature shows that Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ozunba Mbadiwe, and Nwafor Orizu all sponsored and/or encouraged groups of students to study in the United States in the 1930s and 40s. According to Babs Fafunwa (1988), “This was the era of the golden fleece

which witnessed intensive competition for higher education by diverse groups especially in Southern Nigeria” (p. 122).

### **Obstacles to Early Nigerian Pioneers to Higher Education in the U.S.**

From 1925 to 1940, Nigeria had only one institute of higher education, Yaba Higher College, Lagos. This was considered inadequate. Yaba Higher was founded in 1930 and became a local university in 1934. Many young people were unhappy with this institution because it was an affiliate of an English university, “with miniscule annual admission, narrow curriculum that trained Nigerians to fill only vacancies determined by the British colonial administrators’ needs rather than students’ preferences and aptitude, and the degrees awarded were considered inferior to Oxford, Cambridge or London Universities” (Ojiaku & Ulansky, 1972). Nigerian youths with the ambition to further their educations went to Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, Achimota University in the Gold Coast, Ghana, and British universities and colleges for higher education.

The colonial masters did not encourage education outside of Nigeria because doing so could have led to job rivalry and pro-independence agitation. In addition to experiencing lack of sympathy and support from the colonialists, Nigerians lacked the financial means to embark on an academic venture (Nwachukwu, 2004). In the face of these discouraging facts, American education was relatively unknown and disregarded among British colonial officials, but Nigerians preferred American colleges and universities to the long-established British institutions (Ojiaku & Ulansky, 1972). To answer this question, Damachi (1973) has submitted that British and Nigerian education was selective and elitist and weak in professional training. U.S. education was perceived to be creative, culture centered, and pragmatic (i.e., applying science and technology to solve social problems). Also, U.S. education is accessible and its

intellectual processes and wide-ranging libraries and laboratories all facilitate research. These facilities appealed to those Nigerian pioneers who were motivated by a spirit of pure scholarship (Ikeotuonye, 1961).

American institutions also offered advanced degrees in numerous non-traditional disciplines such as government, public and business administration, economics, education, journalism and engineering, which had higher cash value in the job market (Ojiaku & Ulansky, 1972). The U.S. work-study structure was also a pull factor to those Nigerians who did not have government or family financial backing. The presence of blacks in the U.S. was another pull factor that inspired Nigerians to enroll in American institutions of higher learning. The pioneers who benefited from American higher education believed that American education provided the tools and concepts that best suited Nigerians agitating for independence (Ojiaku & Ulansky, 1972).

### **Interaction between Nigeria and America and Brain Drain, Gain, or Circulation**

Nigeria has seen four prominent “brain migration” phases that are typical of international brain mobility in what Uwazurike (2007) estimates as five modes of intellectual interaction between Nigerians and Americans. The first was the pioneering effort described above by Zik and his cohort. The lure of possessing several degrees, the romance of overseas education especially in America, and the belief that America was the historic home of the "Fathers of Democracy" all spurred Nigerian youths to apply to U.S. colleges and universities (Ojiaku & Ulansky, 1972).

According to Uwazurike (2007), the second generation of Nigerians who came to the U.S. for higher education was not equipped to major in science and engineering programs because the British colonial masters did not encourage them to study these subjects. Uwazurike

refers to the second group that came to the U.S. in the 1940s as the Argonauts—about two dozen students who were all inspired by Zik. These included notables like K.O. Mbadiwe and Mbonu Ojike, J.B.C. Okala, and Francis Kwame Nkrumah, who would become major political leaders. Edward Blyden IV, a future dean, Abyssinia Akweke, Nwafor Orizu (later, the Nigerian Senate President), F. O. Odumosu (who ran a major printing plant), Okechukwu Ikejiani (who became Zik’s physician), and the musicologist, Babatunde Olatunji, of Olatunji Drums of Passion. Olatunji was the renowned entertainer who provided the musical tribute for Nnamdi Azikiwe.

The third generation of Nigerians came to America for higher education in the 1960s. Uwazurike (2007) stated that most of them were beneficiaries of scholarships from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford and Carnegie foundations, among other sponsors. The State Department, as well as individual states and hundreds of universities, also provided tuition assistance. With adequate funding, these students could enroll in the sciences, medicine, agronomy, and various doctoral programs. The Nigerian civil war, from 1967 to 1970, disrupted this promise, as some questioned whether Nigeria could exist as a rational nation state. Therefore, many who had returned to Nigeria from overseas in the mid-1970s and who had helped to create the sense of boom, prosperity, and progress across Nigeria went into self-exile to the U.S. This group of Nigerians had no guarantee of jobs because a respectable number of them were already middle aged (Uwazurike, 2007).

The fourth generation of Nigerians who came to the U.S. in the 1970s, which Uwazurike refers to as a reverse journey, constitutes the true brain drain. This group of Nigerians, instead of returning to Nigeria, chose to become American citizens. These Nigerians had been in the U.S. for a decade or more and had little or no daily interactions with Nigeria. Consequently, they lost much of their cultural affiliation with their home country. They came to stay in the

U.S. Other factors that contributed to self-exile and Nigerians delaying returning home included dysfunctional and hostile political climate and politics, totalitarian military regimes, the rising crime rate, crumbling infrastructures, and the devaluation of the local currency. Another emerging reality is the rise of a new generation: U.S.-born Nigerian-American youths who have dual citizenship. These young people are in law schools and PhD and MBA programs. They think big, act continental, and invest globally (Uwazurike, 2007). Uwazurike concludes by underscoring the potential of a fifth intellectual movement evolving. These are career-minded Nigerians who pick and choose where to sojourn.

In summary, the attractive pull factors of U.S. higher education include but are not limited to favorable portraits of U.S. higher education by Nigerian pioneers who were inspired by Zik of Africa: U.S. higher education is broad, comprehensive, and practical compared to conservative British education, which was perceived as merely academic; U.S. higher education is accessible and provides wide-ranging opportunities to beneficiaries; and U.S. higher education translates philosophies into pragmatism.

Arguably, British universities also produced intellectuals that made a significant difference in the evolution of Nigeria. These include notables like Chief Awolowo, Akintola, Herbert McCauley, and Fumilayo Kuti, most of whom were lawyers, and Pa Enahoro, a journalist. Like their American counterpart, these nationalists all returned to Nigeria at the completion of their studies. One of the key limitations of this study is that it does not discuss key Nigerian players who were educated in Britain and other parts of Europe.

## **Push and Pull Factors**

### **Push Factors**

What motivates individuals to travel overseas? Altbach (2004) has suggested that because of the lack of space and, sometimes, because of very competitive entry requirements, many qualified students are denied admission into local universities, and such candidates find it easier to gain admission into foreign schools. In addition, the world's brightest seek admission overseas because there are few world-class institutions that offer specialized courses. Altbach also mentioned social and political forces that push students out of their home countries. Gribble (2008) added that many international students fund themselves and, although some return home to make positive contribution to their homeland, the indications are that many choose to stay back.

The push factors from sub-Saharan Africa include “poor economic performance caused by drought, poorly developed infrastructures, lack of human and physical capital, bad governance, political violence and ethnic wars, and diseases such as HIV AIDS, and such external factors as economic policies of the industrial nations of the North—which, through subsidies, make it difficult for exporters of primary commodities in Africa to effectively compete within the international market” (Oketch, 2006). Policies by the IMF tended to undermine the ability of sub-Sahara Africa to participate effectively in the global economy (Oketch, 2006). The shortage of food in sub-Sahara Africa, the inability to provide basic needs like universal primary education and good health care and to control crime rates, render the clear majority of the citizenry impoverished, malnourished, and facing an uncertain future (Oketch, 2006).

Gribble (2008) suggested three policy options for the sending countries: *retain* students at the tertiary level to minimize students leaving; encourage students who go abroad to *return* by promoting their home coming; and *engage* those students who will not return after graduation through policies that facilitate their contribution from wherever they sojourn. The problem is how to acquire accurate and comprehensive data and how specific countries are responding to in-depth analyses of their students abroad. This study will help fill this gap.

### **Pull Factors**

The international student market for many developed countries is a critical source of revenue and also a way of addressing shortages in crucial areas (Gribble, 2008). The U.S. provides the strongest pull factor for foreign students who graduate and then decide to remain (Gaillard & Gaillard, 1998). Generally, the U.S. is considered the world's best academic system, with students feeling that a degree from America is greater than one from the local university (Altbach, 2004). Indeed, U.S. academic and research systems remain the strongest in the world (Altbach, 2004).

An under supply of university places also leaves many students with no choice but to go overseas for graduate education (Gribble, 2008). Families and students in developing countries expect that education abroad will confer professional and business advantages (Gribble, 2008), and the loss of students to the developed economies is perceived as detrimental to the sending country, as it represents a potential loss of talent (Gribble, 2008). This trend gained momentum in 1965, when the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) Amendment were enforced. This amendment aids the movement of qualified persons to the United States. Since then, there have been voices accusing the U.S. of stealing the best minds around the globe to create its wealth (Gaillard & Gaillard, 1998).

Again, the U.S. government's policy to grant permanent residency status to all children of immigrants who were in the U.S. as of April 1990 have caused scholars to submit that if staying in the U.S. had been made more difficult, more people would have returned to their homelands (Zweig, 1997). These policies encourage immigrants to stay in the U.S. Altbach (2004) stated that the U.S. attracts more foreign students than its three largest competitors (the U.K., Germany, and France) combined. According to Altbach, these international students not only fill seats, but some are the best talents from other countries and they contribute to U.S. global competitiveness by swelling the numbers of highly trained people in key disciplines. Borjas (2002), however, has disagreed with this argument. He sees the foreign students program as not beneficial to the U.S. and a failure of immigration policy, arguing that foreign-born teaching assistants have lowered the quality of undergraduate education because of their poor English.

A study conducted by Duke University professor and Harvard researcher Vivek Wadhwa titled "Losing the World's Best and Brightest: America's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs, Part V" surveyed 1,224 foreign nationals currently studying in U.S. institutions of higher learning or who had graduated by the end of the 2008 academic school year (Chellaraj et al., 2008). She found that foreign students receive nearly 60% of all engineering doctorates and more than half of all mathematics, computer sciences, physics, and economics doctorates awarded in the United States. Wadhwa opined that these foreign nationals end up creating rather than taking away jobs. They also bring insight and fresh ideas into growing global markets. Research has shown that they even end up boosting innovation by U.S. inventors, the loss of whom is an economic tragedy (Chellaraj et al., 2008).

According to Chellaraj et al.'s (2008) findings, very few foreign students would like to stay in the United States permanently—only 6% of Indian, 10% of Chinese, and 15% of Europeans consider doing so. Further, fewer foreign students than the historical norm expressed interest in staying in the United States after they graduate. Only 58% of Indian, 54% of Chinese, and 40% of European students wish to stay for several years after graduation. Previous National Science Foundation research has shown that 68% of foreigners who received science and engineering doctorates stayed for extended periods of time, including 73% of those who studied computer science. The five-year minimum stay rate was 92% for Chinese students and 85% for Indian students (Chellaraj et al., 2008). Altbach (2004) argued that the U.S. is a major academic attraction “because of its large and diverse economy, the willingness of the employers to hire well-qualified foreigners, and the high salary available in many fields” (p. 79). The next section reviews how push and pull factors contribute to the concept of the place of human capital in the brain drain.

### **Brain Drain and Human Capital**

This section briefly reviews the issue of brain drain, brain gain, and/or brain circulation and human capital in the extant literature. Brain drain refers to the flight of skilled workers and well-educated professionals from developing countries to developed countries (Beine et al., 2008). “Basically, the brain drain entails the transfer of human knowledge, experience, skill, and expertise from one area, country or geographical location to another” (Sefa Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2002, p. 631). This phenomenon can also be referred to as capital flight, which impoverishes the countries that are losing their educated nationals to developed countries.

Education is a form of human capital investment, and human capital is about developing people through education for productivity. According to Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008),

education is an agent of change, and the development of skills as a capital good relates to the concept of human capital. It is generally assumed that education improves individuals and uplifts a population's standard of living. Human capital represents investments made in people to enhance their economic productivity and efficiency. According to Kjelland (2008), education endows individuals with productivity-enhancing human capital, which leads to increased earnings in the labor market. Human capital produced by formal schooling is a prerequisite for, but cannot by itself lead to, economic development (Oketch, 2006). Both human and physical capital investment are needed if Africa is to attain an industrial level of development (Oketch, 2006).

The main issue is that the pace of international migration from poor to rich countries has accelerated in the past decades, whereby developing countries have been losing their best and brightest to developed countries, which has been unambiguously detrimental for those left behind (Lodigiani, 2009). If doctoral recipients had returned home, being educated overseas would have represented a net gain for their countries of origin. However, if they do not return home, then doctoral holders would represent a net loss to the countries of origin. According to Lodigiani (2009), skilled migrants immigrate to six major destination countries: the U.S. (51.41%), Canada (13.45%), Australia (8.10%), the United Kingdom (6.09%), Germany (5.04%), and France (3.01%). Location choices depend on historical ties, past colonial links, geographical distance, and cultural and linguistic considerations.

According to Sefa Dei and Asgharzadeh (2002), the brain drain in Africa occurs in two phases: individuals who are educated in Africa in the fields of science, engineering, medicine, health workers, and entrepreneurship but who migrate for assorted reasons; and students who graduated overseas, find employment, settle down, and become permanent residents and

citizens. Sefa Dei and Asgharzadeh (2002) believed that the immediate challenge for African governments was to create a favorable environment for those trained at home to be contented and to excel and to find ways to persuade those trained overseas to return home.

For Nigerians who migrate to the U.S., higher education and professional development and practice are the motivating factors that they can use to build up personal capital. They engage in professional occupations such as research science, physicians, civil engineering, teaching, university professors, accountants, bankers, management consultants, lawyers, and entrepreneurs (Reynolds, 2002). Reynolds concluded that those who earned their higher education degrees in the U.S. tended to fare better financially and to have a higher employment profile than those in Nigeria. This encourages them to stay in the U.S. Indeed, according to Prescott (1998), the typical worker in a rich country such as Switzerland or the United States is 20 or 30 times more productive and, therefore, richer than the typical worker in a poor country such as Haiti or Nigeria. Endowments, natural resources, capital per worker, and usable knowledge all account for these differences in productivity and income. This shows that investment in education and training brings about growth in productivity.

The migration of skilled workers from developing countries will ultimately lead to human capital loss and the growth of the stock of human capital in the sending countries (Stark, 2004). On the other hand, the aggregation of all potential benefits of skilled migration—such as remittances, return migration with the consequent acquired skills, the facilitation of trading networks by migrants, technology transfer, and individual freedom—all lead to a brain gain (Easterly & Nyarko, 2008). This claim is rather controversial, however, and merits further inquiry. While brain drain is a major problem for developing countries such as Nigeria, this study's findings suggest that the non-return of Nigerian doctoral students and recipients is a

grave concern that needs to be addressed. The next section reviews stay and return rates and how they help us to understand the decision-making process and to formulate the open-ended interview questions.

### **Stay and Return Rates**

For many students, returning home is a prospect that they cherish and one that sustains them during their stay overseas. Ties with the home country, even if they are strained, keep this aspiration alive. Recently-arrived students, or those arriving under temporary programs, lend themselves naturally to these return dynamics. Some will return home and others will not; some will move on to new destinations, while others will be caught up in a cycle of circular migration (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2007). What is the scope and nature of returning home? Are young people, women, or skilled workers more likely to return home? Why do some students settle permanently in the host country while others choose to stay only a brief time?

Dumont and Spielvogel (2007) offered four main reasons to explain why people return to their home countries: failure to integrate into the host country; individuals' preferences for their home country; achievement of a savings objective; or the opening of employment opportunities in the home country as the result of experience acquired abroad. Moreover, migrants are likely to adjust their objectives over time and to consider immigration policies in the host country.

Despite the variety of host country initiatives, programs for assisting with voluntary return have only a limited impact, at least if they are evaluated considering the numbers involved in comparison with the total returnees. This reflects the fact that return is only an option if the political, economic, and social situation in the home country is stable and attractive. The contribution of migrants to the development of their home countries results from a

combination of the resources (human, financial, and social capital) that they transfer before and at the time of their return and the returns of those resources.

According to Cassarino (2008), return stands high in the hierarchy of priorities identified in the current top-down structure of international migration. Returns have been defined narrowly as the fact of leaving the territory of a destination country. A return is also an “integral part” (European Commission, 2005, p. 2) of the instruments aimed at dealing with unauthorized or “illegal” migration and at protecting the integrity of the immigration and asylum systems in most destination countries. Since the early 2000s, the return policies of the EU and its Member States have been viewed as instruments for combatting unauthorized migration, while they define a return as “the process of going back to one’s country of origin, transit, or another third country” (European Council, 2002, p. 29). “Return” has also been euphemistically used as a synonym for readmission or expulsion. A return merely refers to the act of removing unauthorized migrants and rejected asylum-seekers from the European territory, however. It does not consider migrants’ post-return conditions or their human and financial potential as participants in development (Cassarino, 2008). Detention centers, fingerprint identification systems, yearly expulsion quotas, and laws on preventative custody are just a few examples of returns. Expulsion or readmission has been gradually prioritized as a policy of containment, and there is a resilient pattern of confusion between return and expulsion or return and readmission.

The term “return” can be used to define a situation in which migrants go back to their home countries after living in another country for some period of time. However, this definition will often conceal more complex situations (e.g., secondary or repeat migration, temporary or definitive returns, etc.) that are considered in this study (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2007). Migrants’ motivations to return home, on a temporary or permanent basis, as well as their

manifold patterns of reintegration and re-adaptation, constitute the main research interests of scholars across various disciplines (Cassarino, 2008). New classifications, such as voluntary return and forced return, began to shape more intensive public discourse.

Migrants' patterns of reintegration are shaped by three interrelated elements. First, the context of reintegration in the home country; second, the duration and type of experience lived abroad, which should be most favorable—i.e., neither too short nor too long (King, 1986, p. 19)—so that migrants can invest the human and financial capital they have acquired abroad upon their return. Finally, the factors or conditions (whether favorable or not) in the host and origin countries that motivated the return (i.e., the pre- and post-return conditions) have been examined (Cassarino, 2008). These three elements will be explored in more detail. The basic condition that intimately connects any person who returns home from abroad, regardless of their place of origin, social background, motivations, prospects, skills and occupational status, is return preparedness. Return preparedness is a process that takes place in a person's life, through time, and is shaped by changing circumstances (i.e., subjective experiences and contextual factors in sending and receiving countries). It is not only about preparing for return. It is also about having the ability, though not always the opportunity, to gather the tangible and intangible resources needed to secure one's own return home (Cassarino, 2008). Free will and the readiness to return are the two fundamental elements of return migrants' preparedness.

Cassarino (2008) described the free will to stay or return as the act of deciding or choosing on one's own initiative to return, or the subjective power to choose to return at a certain time, when there seems to be a timely and logical phase in the return process. The freedom to choose to return (i.e., free will) may appear superficial if the returnee lacks the ability to weigh the pros and cons and costs and benefits of the decision to return. However, what

matters with the free will to stay is the subjective feeling that the decision to return was not dictated by others or by external circumstances. Free will refers to whether it is the time, and whether it is right, to choose to return or not. Sometimes, unexpected events or obstacles disrupt the stay and return cycle and compel students to return home at a shorter notice than expected. A lack of freedom to choose to return, however, might have severe implications on the condition of the student.

Readiness to return, according to Cassarino (2008), reflects the extent to which students have been able to mobilize the adequate tangible (i.e., financial capital) and intangible (i.e., contacts, relationships, skills, and acquaintances) resources needed to secure their return, whether temporary or permanent. This underscores the need to see return as an ongoing process, which requires time. Students have different capacities for readiness. Some may have the best possible readiness, while the readiness of others may be insufficient. Time, resources, experience, knowledge, and awareness of the conditions in the host and home countries all constitute the main factors that shape an individual's capacity for readiness to return. The free will and readiness to return concepts reflect the ability of a person to decide how, when, and why it is time to return to the home country. This ability is not a given, for the conditions of return may vary substantially, leading to various degrees of preparedness. In other words, not all students choose to return on their own volitions, nor do they have the readiness to do so.

Preparedness pertains not only to the free choice of students to return home, but also to their readiness to return. In other words, for optimal preparation, a return requires the individual's capacity to decide freely to return and to mobilize the tangible and intangible resources needed to secure such return (Cassarino, 2008). Readiness to return varies with the students' types of experiences and their context of return. Cassarino (2008) addressed three

levels of return preparedness. The first refers to actors who feel that they have gathered enough tangible and intangible resources to carry out their projects in their home countries. They have also developed valuable contacts and acquired skills and knowledge that can constitute a significant accessory to their initiatives. They have had time to evaluate the costs and benefits of return while considering the changes that have occurred in their countries of origin at institutional, economic, and political levels. Some students may maintain their residential status in their former areas of settlement with a view to securing their cross-border mobility. Of course, despite their strong degree of preparedness, returning students are not immune to undergoing a process of re-adaptation in the home country.

The second degree that Cassarino addressees pertain to returnees whose length of stay abroad was too short to allow for tangible and intangible resources to be mobilized. These returnees have a weak degree of preparedness, which impacts their capacity to reintegrate. They consider the cost of staying to be higher than that of returning home, even if few resources were mobilized before their return. Hence, when resource mobilization in receiving countries remains extremely limited, the returnee will tend to rely on resources that are available at home (e.g., local social capital). The last level refers to returnees who did not freely choose to return when they did and who were given the preparation necessary to return. Adverse circumstances, in their broadest sense, prompted them to leave, leading to the abrupt interruption in their studies or stay (Cassarino, 2008).

Temporary stays overseas are used to accumulate resources, either for consumption or investment, for later use in the home country. In conclusion, the readiness concept emphasizes the ability to mobilize, with time, the resources needed for return, whereas free will focuses on autonomy and the individual choice to return or not. Clearly, there are as many degrees of

preparedness as there are existing pre- and post-return conditions, for circumstances have a decisive impact on returnees' reintegration process and their ability to contribute to national development. Thus, returnees' experiences and profiles, free choice, and readiness to return are all key elements to understanding why some succeed in reintegrating back home whereas others do not. The next section of this study reviews career choice and development and how these will help us to understand the decision-making process and formulate the semi-structured open-ended questions.

### **Career Choice and Development**

The world of work provides financial security, social identity, associates, and friends. A well thought out career decision not only adds value and purpose to life but it gives one the means to express and fulfill their potential. Career decision-making refers to the process that people undergo when they search for viable career alternatives, compare and evaluate them, and then choose one. Choice is a subjective, rational decision-making process in which one weighs advantages and disadvantages in the light of certain motives and preferences (Gati, 1996). Thus, choice is the process of eliminating options and narrowing alternatives. Career choice is a central component of one's identity. Being informed about career choice processes lead individuals to have a better comprehension of the barriers that can deter initial career choice and those that follow (Zunker, 2008). Since human development is a holistic project and occurs in a series of stages, when making an initial career choice decision, an individual's background, traits, culture, and other factors that make individual identity unique come into play.

Meanwhile, choosing a career is rarely an overnight decision. It requires mature perception and assumptions, planning skills, accepting responsibility, and an awareness of various aspects of a preferred vocation. Since many factors need to be considered when one is

choosing a career, making a career decision means a commitment of time and energy to choose the best professional path. Work that is in line with one's values, interests, talents, and capabilities is likely to bring about a sense of meaning, accomplishment, achievement, and fulfillment in life. This study sought to understand how individuals assess these elements of themselves and how their assessments change over time, as the best career choice fulfills the need to select what is most important and to capitalize on best assets and rewards to help make real the desired lifestyle.

Many adults make multiple career choices over their life span (Zunker, 2008). The implication of this is that adults are challenged to meet the demands of changing technology and the changing roles of work and versatility. Self-knowledge (in terms of understanding one's personality, goals, and values) is vital to making an initial career choice and finding an occupational identity. Career decision-making is a learned skill and no single occupation is the best fit for any individual. Zunker argued that unique learning experiences over a lifespan and the interaction of cognitive and affective processes are the primary influences that lead to a career choice. Making this choice involves a problem-solving activity that depends on self-knowledge.

The initial career path is an inclusive multidimensional process of development. Through activities in their environment, people play an active role in the formation of their initial choice. Stage-like changes, or gradual ones, may occur. The shaping process is both continuous and discontinuous. Key factors like competency in planning, attitudes, consistency of choice, traits, treasures, one's individuality, socioeconomic status (SES), faulty beliefs, self-knowledge, self-efficacy, freedom of choice, prestige of career, interests, career gender types, and personality types all play roles in influencing career decision-making processes (Zunker,

2008). Career decision-making, thus, is shaped, both positively and negatively, by the interaction of biology, psychology, and socio/cultural influences.

Factors that influence the development of career choices include an inherited predisposition toward intelligence, personality, and temperament in the biological domain. The psychological domain contains a broad range of mental health issues and self-referent deficits, such as lack of decision-making and problem-solving skills, lack of openness to innovative ideas, methods, procedures, and low self-esteem. Environmental experiences can also exert both positive and negative influences on career development. Socioeconomic status disadvantages can be very influential in the formation of one's personal perception of the self and the world of work. Included here are lack of access to educational institutions, lack of access to occupational opportunities, lack of quality educational experiences, and unstable familial experiences.

In the social cognitive theory choice model, there are the following five components: (a) self-efficacy and outcome expectations promote career related interests; (b) these interests, in turn, influence goals; (c) goal-related actions lead to performance experiences; (d) the outcome of performance experiences determines future pathways; and (e) efficacious expectations can influence people to make career decisions or redirect goals (Zunker, 2008). The field of career choice and development started at the turn of the century, claiming sociology as part of its heritage. Holland developed the theory of vocational choice, claiming a measure of understanding and explanation of the origin and evolution of people's occupational careers. Brown and Brooks wrote on the process of career development. Roe, Ginzberg, Super, Tiedeman, and Miller are the major career development theorists covering traits and factor theories, personality development and career choice, vocational, psychodynamic models,

sociological perspectives, and individualistic approaches (Spenner, 1986). The dominant approaches in the vocational and career development field continue to be individualistic, rationalistic, idealistic, and voluntaristic. The socialization effects of a given job are more emphasized than a single occupation for a lifetime or a personality-occupation fit.

Holland and Super's theories and Strong Interest Inventories instrument, each emphasizing distinct aspects of the process of career development and choice, were reviewed for this study and used to generate open-ended questions for interviewing respondents. Holland's vocational identity scale simply refers to the possession of a clear and stable picture of one's goals, interests, and talents. These characteristics lead to relatively untroubled decision-making and confidence in one's ability to make good decisions in the face of environmental uncertainties. They provide the tools needed to differentiate the defined groups to form a consistent set of data in terms of how stable or how fluctuating one's goals and intentions are.

In his Salience Inventory life span, meanwhile, which presents life-space theory of career development, Super (1990) posited that people play a variety of roles as they mature. He specified nine major life roles that he believed could be used to describe most people during a lifetime. In approximate chronological order, these roles are child, student, leisurite (a person engaged in leisure-time activities), citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent, and pensioner. Super argued that the sequence and duration of these roles vary. Nevertheless, with each of the distinct roles comes a set of expectations and responsibilities (Greer & Egan, 2012). Super coined the term *role salience* to represent the notion that all life roles are not necessarily of equal importance to a person with three basic components: commitment (conative component), participation (behavioral component), and knowledge (cognitive component).

The Strong Interest Inventory suggests that people with similar interests and personalities gravitate toward similar careers. Most people enjoy being around and working with others who share similar personality traits and interests. The Strong Inventory helps people to find their passion. Choosing a career can feel like a monumental decision. At the same time, it can also feel like guesswork. However, the Strong Interest Inventory assessment assists individuals to discover their interests, preferences, and personal styles; this is exactly the information that they need to choose a career that they can be passionate about, increase their job satisfaction, make a change, choose appropriate education and training, plan a fulfilling retirement, and find a balance between work and leisure (Guindon & Richmond, 2005). Motivation also influences the stages of the individual's decision process. Motivation includes competing commitments, and these may distract from a more moral course of action, challenging the individual to prioritize and commit to moral values over other personal, institutional, or social values.

The present study applied Strong's inventory and uses the concept of motivation to contribute to the emerging literature on stay rates by comparing Nigerian doctoral students and their initial stay or return decision considering their occupational interests, motivation, abilities, goals, and values and the structure of meanings in which their self-perception is linked with career roles. This study also investigated why those who decided to return did so. This may include whether they did not get a job in the U.S., were offered incentives in Nigeria, or had their visas expire with no prospects of securing a green card?

### **Stages of Decision Making and the role of Expectancy and Self-efficacy**

What are the stages of decision making in career choice and development? How does self-efficacy and expectancy fit into each stage of the decision-making process? This section

examines and identifies the stages in the process of making major career decision. It includes, first, the decision to pursue doctoral study in the U.S. and, second, the decision about what to do, in the short-term after the receipt of the degree and in the long term. This research employs the concepts of self-efficacy and expectancy theory to understand how those decisions are navigated.

Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as a person's belief about their ability to organize and execute the courses of action necessary to achieve a goal. In other words, persons with strong self-efficacy beliefs are more confident in their capacity to execute a behavior. Beliefs about self-efficacy have a significant impact on goals and accomplishments, influencing personal choice, motivation, effort, patterns of persistence, and emotional reactions. According to self-efficacy theorists, low self-efficacy impedes academic achievement by causing motivational problems. The key to motivating and engaging struggling learners is to get them to believe that they can succeed (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Margolis and McCabe (2006) held that students get self-efficacy information from four sources: task performance, referred to as enactive mastery; vicarious experiences; verbal persuasion; and their physiological reactions or states. Self-efficacy is the judgment that students make about their ability to succeed with a specific task or set of related tasks. Bandura (1977) described enactive mastery, a key element of self-efficacy, as the students' recognition of the degree to which they succeed or fail at tasks. These experiences form expectations that are generalized to other situations that may either be similar or substantially different from the original experience.

Vicarious experiences—such as observing friends model a task—provide struggling learners with direct guidance about how to do something with little effort or persistence (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Verbal persuasion grounded in personal experience leads learners

to believe that they can succeed in accomplishing a task or behavior using suggestion, exhortation, or self-instruction (Bandura, 1977). Physiological reactions or states refer to how students feel before, during, and after engaging in a task. By emphasizing three of the four sources of self-efficacy, *what to do* and *what to say* strengthens struggling learners. *What to do* stresses enactive mastery and vicarious experiences; *what to say* stresses verbal persuasion.

Landry (2005) believed that Intention influences goals and accomplishments by influencing personal choice, motivation, effort, persistence and patterns, emotional reactions, and outcome expectations into the decision-making process. Exploring constructs such as intention, decision certainty, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations will add considerably to the development of an expanded theory base from which to study stay and return rates (Landry, 2005). This study focuses on the characteristics of doctoral students and doctoral recipients who choose to or (for those who have not yet received their degree) expect to stay in the U.S. post doctorate as opposed to those who choose to return to Nigeria upon graduation, a phenomenon that has not been extensively explored in the stay and return literature. This study examined the social, academic, and psychological processes behind this decision to stay or return to understand why and how doctoral students enrolled in a foreign nation make this decision, thus adding to the scarce literature on stay and return rates.

This conceptual framework was developed to better depict relationships among the variables utilized in this study. Included in this framework are constructs believed to impact students' intentions to pursue doctoral study in the U.S., remain enrolled in doctoral programs, and persist in obtaining a degree and then pursuing post-doctoral plans.

Table 6. Stages of Professional Development and Its Influence on Career Choice

Stages of Professional Development	Influence on Educational Program and Career Choice
<b>1. Self Knowledge Prior to Enrollment in the Doctoral Program</b>	Activities include knowing values, interests, skills
<b>2. Building a Professional Knowledge, Competence, and Skill Base through Education:</b> The plan is to get each respondent's self-assessment of their skill level at various points in their doctoral study.	Activities include goal setting, assessing needs, being aware of contradictions, identifying resources, and realizing the barriers to overcome. Parameters include: -professional values; -professional knowledge; and -professional identity and professional use of self.
<b>3. Developing Expectations:</b> Expectations for professional abilities during the first stage of deciding to pursue doctoral study; during the second stage of persisting in doctoral study; and at the third stage of postdoctoral practice	Activities include enhancing ethical sensitivity, establishing cultural relevance, increasing practice competency, and expanding knowledge of practice environment.
<b>4. Occupational Exploration</b> Career exploration and decision making: exploring how to find specific job information and organizations that fit with discovered options values, interests, and skills and that are a good fit for preferences. Successful professionals are aware of professional possibilities. Learning how to identify and evaluate career options by utilizing online resources and connecting with professional community is a skill. With it, one finds new and rewarding opportunities, no matter how one's interests grow and change.	<b>Career Decision &amp; /Choice of Major</b> Evaluate choices based on -Personal costs and benefits; -Advantages/disadvantages; -Risks and outcomes; -Desirability; and -Odds of succeeding.

Adapted from: Decision steps & career development steps <http://www.upj.pitt.edu/21870.pdf>

### Stages of Career and Professional Development

Guskey (1995) list the following stages of career development: self-assessment, education, career exploration and decision, and career management.

#### Self-assessment

In this stage, one reflects on what he/she finds meaningful and engages personally, professionally, and academically in that practice. Successful professionals self-reflect regularly. Being able to articulate one's values, interests, abilities, and preferences empowers one to explore options in one's chosen field, to decide on a career path to select among job positions, and to meet professional challenges.

Building a professional knowledge, competence, and skill base through education: Professional development is about change. The purpose of professional development is to

improve learner outcomes by changing instructional behavior to achieve a pre-determined goal in teaching and learning. For professional development, like learning, to be successful, it must be adapted to the complex and dynamic characteristics of specific contexts. This change process in individual professional development takes time.

### **Career Exploration and Decision-Making**

Successful professionals are aware of professional possibilities. Learning how to identify and evaluate career options by utilizing online resources and connecting with one's professional community is a skill. With it, an individual can find new and rewarding opportunities, no matter how their interests grow and change.

### **Career Management (Professional Skills)**

In this stage, one wants to identify and develop the needed skills to succeed on the career path chosen. Successful professionals develop the key skills needed to achieve their goals. Getting into school, an internship, a job, a residency program, or a leadership position is only half the challenge. Taking the time to learn communication, interpersonal, organizational, and management skills will improve a student's ability to succeed in any position and in every organization (Guskey, 1995).

### **The Place of Decision Making in Career Choice**

Decision making is an ongoing process of problem solving, considering alternatives, making choices, and following them up with necessary actions. Sometimes, the decision-making process is extremely short, and mental reflection is essentially instantaneous. In other situations, the process can drag on for weeks, months, or even years (Landry, 2005). The entire decision-making process is dependent upon the right information being available to the right people at the right times.

Decision-making is not easy because it depends on the amount of information one has available making choices. We process routine decisions easily and without worry, but significant decisions create more anxiety, and we desire to get them right. Using a planned, rational process to make a career decision will produce a more satisfying and meaningful career. Factors like the kind of decision-maker one is (i.e., decisive, undecided, indecisive), the decision-making style to be used (e.g., planning, impulsive, intuitive, compliant, fatalistic, agonizing, paralytic, delaying), and factors that can interfere with the decision-making process (e.g., personal, family, and societal) must all be considered. One's interests, work ethics, and how one makes decisions must also be considered.

### **Motivation**

Motivation to achieve is the internal impetus to excel in the socioeconomic attainment process (Howell & Frese, 1981). Ambition—a personality trait that includes need, motivation, or aspiration—is an expression of one's sense of the possible and the necessary. Thus, motivation comprises an individual's disposition to strive and the effort that one is willing to make toward some goal or end. Motivation is an internally constructed tendency toward action and an attitude resulting from the cognitive processing of information about one's prior actions and characteristics. It is a motivated but goal-oriented achievement-striving that affects one's school performance and one's socioeconomic attainment (Howell & Frese, 1981). Motivation is enhanced when individuals perceive that they are making progress in their learning. In turn, as students work on tasks and become more skillful, they maintain a sense of self-efficacy for performing well.

Self-belief in one's efficacy plays a key role in the self-regulation of motivation. Bandura (1993) opined that most human motivation is generated cognitively. People motivate

themselves and guide their actions through a complex self-persuasion process that relies on the cognitive processing of diverse sources of efficacy information conveyed enactively, vicariously, socially, and physiologically. Individuals form beliefs about what they can do and anticipate likely outcomes and prospective actions. They set goals and plan courses of action designed to realize valued futures. Forethought is translated into incentives and appropriate action through a self-regulatory mechanism.

### **How Self-Efficacy Fits into the Framework**

Seifert (2004) defined self-efficacy as “a construct synonymous with confidence” that “refers to a person’s judgment about his/her capability to perform a task at a specified level of performance” (p.59). Per this theory, students who consider themselves capable are likely driven to achieve, while students who find themselves incapable are likely to avoid difficult or challenging tasks.

Self-efficacy is a motivational state that refers to an individual's self-rated capacity to execute certain actions for achieving some objective. It “is concerned not with what one has but with belief in what one can do with whatever resources one can muster” (Bandura, 1993, p.123) Self-efficacy is the “cognitive locus of operations” (Bandura, 1977, p. 201) and it operationalizes motivation as self-rated confidence in one’s ability to perform specific tasks to achieve certain goals (Bandura, 1977). A self-efficacy construct exists for every domain of functioning, and a self-efficacy scale typically needs to be developed for each self-efficacy construct.

Schunk (1991) defined self-efficacy as people judging their ability to organize and execute courses of action that are required to attain particular types of performances. Bandura (1993) stated that perceived self-efficacy exerts its influence through four processes, which

include cognitive, motivational, affective, and selective. It influences the choice among activities, effort, and persistence. It is also a mechanism underlying changes in behavior, maintenance, and generalization. It refers to personal capabilities to acquire knowledge, execute skills, and master material. It varies as a function of aptitude (abilities and attitudes) and prior experience. Such personal factors as goal setting and information processing, along with situational factors (such as rewards and teacher feedback) are all part of self-efficacy. For instance, evidence suggests that self-efficacy predicts academic achievement, social skills, the cessation of smoking, pain tolerance, athletic performance, career choice, assertiveness, coping with feared events, recovery from heart attack, and sales performance (Schunk, 1991).

It is assumed that self-efficacy affects one's choice of activities, effort, and persistence—that those who work harder, and persist longer when they encounter difficulties feel efficacious. Successes tend to raise one's sense of self-efficacy while failure lowers it. Through an efficacy appraisal process, persons weigh the contributions of such personal situational factors as their perceived ability, the difficulty of the task, the amount of effort expended, the amount of external assistance received, previous number and pattern of successes and failures, perceived similarity to other models, and persuader credibility. Efficacy has been postulated to influence the choice and direction of human behavior given adequate skills, positive outcome expectations, and personally valued outcomes (Schunk, 1991).

Constructs that resemble self-efficacy include perceived control (locus of control that includes capabilities to control cognitive processes, emotions, and self-regulated behavior), outcome expectations (goal setting influenced by self-appraisal of capabilities), perceived value of outcomes (worth of the goal), attributions (explaining the cause of significant events), and self-concept (collective self-perceptions formed through experience and evaluations of

significant others) (Schunk, 1991). Students' beliefs in their efficacy to regulate their own learning and to master academic activities determine their aspirations, level of motivation, and academic accomplishments. This is because, as self-efficacy theory holds, the best predictors of behavior in specific situations are individuals' self-perceptions, which comprise their self-esteem, self-confidence, stability, and beliefs within given situations. Since self-efficacy relates to mental effort, it plays a significant role in academic motivation.

Self-efficacy studies have focused on personal and situation variables. The personal variables comprise goal setting and information processing; the situational variables comprise models, attribution feedback, and rewards (Schunk, 1991). Much research has shown that self-efficacy influences academic motivation, learning, and achievement. There is relationship between self-efficacy and self-concept, goal setting, modeling, judgment, gender differences, and career choice. Self-efficacy theory assumes that we have the capacity for self-regulation and self-initiated change, and studies of people who have overcome difficult behavioral problems without professional help provide compelling evidence for this capacity

Most philosophers and psychological theorists agree that a sense of control over our behavior, our environment, and our own thoughts and feelings is essential for happiness and a sense of well-being. When the world seems predictable and controllable, and when our behaviors, thoughts, and emotions seem within our control, we are better able to meet life's challenges, build healthy relationships, and achieve personal satisfaction and peace of mind. Self-efficacy influences the adoption of healthy behaviors, the cessation of unhealthy behaviors, and the maintenance of behavioral changes in the face of challenge and difficulty.

Expectancy-value theories, by contrast, hold that behavior is a joint function of people's expectations of obtaining a particular outcome as a function of performing a behavior and the

extent to which they value those outcomes. The assumption is that people make judgments about the likelihood of attaining various goals in each situation. Much of learning involves forming expectations that certain behaviors will produce certain outcomes. Outcome expectancies are defined as the belief that certain behaviors will lead to certain outcomes. Self-efficacy is different from expectancy-value in its emphasis on students' beliefs concerning their capabilities to learn and effectively employ the skills and knowledge necessary to obtain the valued outcomes.

This study sought to understand participants' sense of self-efficacy and expectations. Did they change? If so, why? Who was responsible/what events or experiences of success or failure? The plan of this study was to examine these questions in the context of participants' type of decision-making style (e.g., impulsive, reflective, etc.), the kind of decision maker they were, their obstacles to decision-making, etc. The next section provides background on the research topic by reviewing what three Asian countries with effective policies are doing to attract their best and brightest back to their homes of origin.

### **Three Asian Countries with Effective Return Flow Strategies**

#### **China**

One of the principal channels for the mobility of people is higher education. This section provides a review and analysis of the strategies that successful Asian countries adopt to bring their best and brightest students educated overseas back home. Zweig (1997), in a qualitative and quantitative study based on 273 face-to-face interviews with students, scholars, and former residents of China in the U.S. who were asked to explain their views about returning to China, found that fewer than 9% had definite plans to return and that over 32% were positively disposed to returning in the future. Per Altbach (2004), "estimates of Chinese and Indian

students choosing not to return to their home country after their study in the U.S. range from 66 to 92% and 77 to 88%, respectively.” The findings below suggest that the governments of these two countries favor “selective-returnees” to the original homeland considering the “quality” of the returnees’ area of specialization. They tend to favor science and technology majors.

Per Young and Shih (2003), China’s 1712 edict stated, “The Chinese government shall request foreign governments to have those Chinese who have been abroad repatriated so that they may be executed” (p. 5). This position has been completely reversed, and the Chinese government acknowledges that Chinese émigrés are vital allies in reconstruction, modernization, and nation building. Chinese abroad are now seen not as a loss but as agents to strengthen the nation in a global environment (Young & Shih, 2003). The government now encourages them to remain loyal to China’s national interests, including its communist ideology, while living elsewhere. Scholars have been wooed back through numerous conferences, conventions, and fairs (Young & Shih 2003). Further, Chinese authorities have modified the legal context (multiple-entry visas and job contracts), improved economic conditions (tax exemptions, higher expatriate salaries that are sometimes four times higher than for a Chinese colleague, bonuses, etc.) and created a special status for expatriates who wish to work in collaboration with China (honorary posts, national prizes, etc.). Thus, the Chinese government promulgated the 1990 Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Returned Overseas and Relatives of Overseas Chinese, which attracts their doctoral recipients to come back and play a specific role in nation building and national development and then to leave the country and settle abroad (Young & Shih, 2003).

Zweig stated that Chinese leaders, in the 1970s, put a strategic policy in place to re-involve China diplomatically, economically, and academically in the world community by

sending scholars overseas for academic and scientific training to propel China into the top ranks of the global scientific community. This was effective in the early years because only matured scholars with established careers and families in China were initially sent overseas (Broaded, 1993). Since the Chinese state was bearing the cost of providing higher education to these individuals, they were obliged to repay the debt through limited-term service to the state. This trend changed in the 1980s with the June 04, 1989 military attack at Tiananmen Square on student demonstrators. This was a watershed event as it led to mass public protests and, subsequently, to a mass brain drain (Lui, 2000).

Drawing on extant literature, Broaded (1993) showed how the Chinese Government later utilized its mass media to encourage Chinese students and scholars abroad to complete their studies and to return home and how successfully those who returned were reabsorbed. This was a deliberate strategy to reduce the attractiveness of remaining abroad vis-a-vis increasing the attractiveness of doctoral recipients abroad returning home to China. There were sentiments about the obligations of Chinese living abroad to return and repay the nation, the people, and the party for benefits and opportunities they received. These were often mixed with cultural or national pride and identity. It was also the sentiment that a genuine Chinese should have a patriotic heart. The emphasis here was on attachment and obligation to the motherland, the nation state, and/or the cultural tradition (Broaded, 1993).

Consequently, Saxenian (2002) stated, U.S. educated students from China and Taiwan started returning home in growing numbers in the late 1990s. A study by Beijing Science & Technology Committee found that 140,000 students returned to China between 1996 and 2000 (Saxenian, 2002). Saxenian documented that a larger wave of returnees began in 2000 because of the substantial foreign investments in semiconductor manufacturing capabilities. Thus, the

return of U.S. educated scientists and engineers significantly contributed to China's growing role in global production networks.

Successful re-absorption included finding appropriate employment, "opportunities to continue research activity, having access to adequate laboratory facilities and sources for funding to support research, ability to publish one's results both at home and abroad, ability to travel overseas to attend conferences or further advanced study or research, and ability to maintain contacts with professionals abroad" (Broaded, 1993, p. 289). The Chinese government/state created a favorable impression about the opportunities for the significant expansion of duties, promotions, or career advancement for scholars who returned home. Broaded concluded that the Chinese government put into place a policy that bridges the gap in international remuneration, logistic support, occupational prestige, political stability, and openness to attract their compatriots to return to China.

Song (2003) stated that "although the economics of supply and demand still play a key role in the decisions scientists and engineers make about emigration, policy makers also need to consider personal and non-material factors" (p. 1-5). Swinbanks and Tacey (1996) noted the same trend when they stated that the remarkable increase in the number of overseas Chinese scientists returning to the booming economies of Asia is already having an impact on the region. While this trend is beneficial to China, a problem arises due to the preferential treatment of returnees in terms of better pay and working conditions, which is tending to weaken the morale of the experts who are trained at home. Broaded made another observation that the Chinese government harbors a fundamental mistrust of intellectuals. Hence, the government has put in place restrictive policies that make it harder to go abroad for graduate studies by posting huge

bonds that students forfeit if they failed to return to China at the completion of their studies (Broaded, 1993).

Altogether, those who perceive themselves as having limited opportunities if they remained abroad and/or those who have established positions waiting upon their return have been more receptive to returning to China. Similarly, factors such as cultural pride and identity, family loyalties and obligations, and the initial preference for living in the homeland all have their appeal to Chinese returnees.

However, the question remains whether the Chinese government really wants Chinese students and scholars abroad to return. Broaded (1993) opined that there would be serious social problems that the government would have to contend with if the more than 60,000 students and scholars returned. Therefore, the Chinese government appeared to have settled for selective returnees: those with technical skills in the fields of engineering, computer science, medicine, and agriculture.

## **India**

In 1958, Indian scientists instituted the “brain pool” concept as an intellectual depot for the country to draw on whenever necessary. According to the African Concept Note (2007), India facilitated the creation of subsidiaries of multinationals and of joint ventures between multinationals and local firms, often created by scientists who emigrated and subsequently returned and started information engineering and biotechnology businesses. The government also reformed its research agencies facilitating contractual agreements and rewarded scientists by merit.

According to the African Concept Note of 2007, the Indian government set up a special committee that investigated the role that Indian’s best and brightest could and should play in its

country of origin and identified some of the issues, structures, and facilities needed to manage relations with the multiple types of associations, networks, and expatriate organizations that exist in different sectors, from businesses to charitable investments, education, and health (Concept Note, 2007). With this idea taking hold, “many countries have been trying to take an inventory of their scientists abroad, to mobilize and organize them, to reconnect them with the scientific community at home, to capitalize on their work and introduce it to the local scene” (Gaillard & Gaillard, 1998, p. 23).

Following this lead, by 2000, over one-third of Silicon Valley’s high-skilled workers were foreign-born and overwhelmingly from Asia. These U.S. educated engineers are transforming developmental opportunities for formerly peripheral regions as they build professional and business connections to their home countries (Saxenian, 2005). Indian born engineers are accelerating the development of information technology industries in their home country as well, initially by tapping the low-cost labor force and, over time, by contributing to highly localized processes of entrepreneurial experimentation and upgrading while maintaining close ties to the technology and markets in Silicon Valley (Saxenian, 2005)

Saxenian (2005) concluded that both China and India have “attracted substantial foreign investments based on the combination of large technical skilled workforces and low wages. For both, brain circulation with overseas community in Silicon Valley has been a crucial factor in attracting foreign investment” (p. 43). They invested in higher education, especially technical education, and are politically and economically stable enough that their nationals in foreign countries consider returning home. Policy makers from both countries have established ties with their technical human resources in Silicon Valley. However, most of Africa, of which Nigeria

is a part, lacks the skill base or political openness to attract technological entrepreneurship (Saxenian, 2005), and herein lies the limit to Nigeria embracing the Chinese and Indian model.

### **South Korea**

Gaillard and Gaillard (1998) reported that, in the 1970s, about 80% of Koreans educated in the United States stayed back after graduation with only 20% returning home immediately after receiving their degree. However, since the 1980s, the trend has changed. Gaillard and Gaillard stated that about 40% of the students went back to their home of origin as soon as they obtained their degrees and close to 70% went home within three years of receiving their doctorates in the United States (cited in Song, 1997). The last thirty years saw economic growth that prompted this reversal and the standard of living in Korea compared to developed countries has improved because of this economic growth.

China, India, and South Korea are not the only countries in which this has happened. The fact is that the economic model that underlies the brain drain, which hitherto had shown that the country of origin is the loser and the country of destination the winner, is being reversed in some countries in South Asia, where the return flow of doctoral holders is now effectively under way. The factors that encourage Chinese, Indian, and Korean professionals to return to their countries of origin, per Broaded (1993), include sustained national efforts to link the obligations of national citizenship with solidarity and the allegiance of students and scholars abroad to their families, their ethnic identities, and their cultural traditions.

Studies have shown that there are indications of a return movement because “the working conditions have improved, the national economy, and personal living conditions are making many Chinese engineers and scientists who are living abroad now look at their future from a new angle” (Gaillard & Gaillard, 1998 p. 27). Many Chinese expatriates monitor changes at

home as they put their departures on hold. Citing Zweig and Chen Changgui (1995), Gaillard and Gaillard stated that “the decision to return home is based not on increased democracy, but rather, on the country’s scientific open-mindedness, economic growth, and evidence of political stability” (p. 26). Another factor that encourages refugees to return to the country of origin is improved electronic communications media through which information and ideas travel easily. These new modes of communication and cooperation may, ironically, “favor both the decision to stay in a foreign country and the decision to go home, because regardless of the choice made, they ensure continued contact” (Gaillard & Gaillard, 1998 p. 17).

Overall, China and India provide templates for encouraging countries such as Nigeria to persuade their citizens to return home to assist in national development not based on national or cultural identity but based on ethnic and kinship loyalties and obligations. Both China and India have implemented bold and creative strategies backed by national policies that provide world-class educational opportunities, have constructed knowledge-based research and development industries, and have put into place sustainable finance (Saravia & Miranda, 2004). For these reasons, few people migrate from these countries, and research and development opportunities employ national talent and even attract immigrants. As Gaillard and Gaillard (1998) pointed out,

Many developing countries do not have national coordinating bodies and scientific institutions with the muscle needed to properly manage such a Diaspora, nor do they have the minimal socioeconomic or professional conditions needed to open the tap for the return flows. That is why many countries still must cope with national losses through student/scholar emigration. This applies to many African countries where the scope of the problem has been sizable, even alarming, notwithstanding new policies that are being designed or tested to curtail the effects. (p. 28).

This is not to suggest that they no longer leave for the U.S. or that doctoral holders in the U.S. are eager to return to China and India after they obtain their degrees. By contrast to them,

however, the national research systems in many developing nations, especially Africa, hardly produce a significant and visible output on the map of worldwide science.

Gaillard and Gaillard (1998) concluded that, in response to all this “push” in the home country, there is counter force “pull” at the foreign end in the form of scientific dynamism, flexible organization, risk acceptance (both scientific and financial), a competitive spirit, and intellectual stimulation. This is what inspired a Chinese scientist in 1971 to say, “Brain goes where brains are, brain goes where money is, brain goes where humanity and justice prevail, brain goes where recognition and healthy competition are assured” (Kao, 1971, cited in Gaillard & Gaillard 1998). Another study submitted that policy makers are now being asked to think in terms of “brain circulation” rather than “brain drain” (Song, 1997). This study built on this concept of brain circulation to explore ways of creating opportunities in Nigeria to recover its human capital living abroad. Building an enlightened leadership is one such way, as is investing in infrastructure for research and implementing educational strategies based on national priorities.

### **Current Findings about Nigerians Abroad**

Nigerians come to the U.S. for many reasons, including economic, social, and political ones. Like their Chinese and Indian counterparts, African born immigrants desire better economic opportunities, political stability, and, sometimes, asylum. Specifically, foreign-born African scholars have migrated to the U.S. in search of opportunities to advance their academic dreams. As Ande observed, “the prevailing political instability in most parts of Africa and other socio-economic considerations have not encouraged the much-desired academic freedom; hence, many African scholars have remained in the U.S. to take advantage of research and fellowship opportunities offered by universities” (Ande, 2009). The need to better understand

the opportunities and challenges facing Africa has encouraged dialogue among American universities to employ Africans to pursue research that is based on African-related issues. This diversification at American universities has benefited African nonimmigrants, who compete favorably with other minority groups seeking positions in African-centered research (Ande, 2009).

Meanwhile, many emigrants eventually return home, while some remain in the U.S. Yet little is known about the returnees. Their status raises the following questions:

- Are they more or less successful than those who stay back?
- Does the return tendency increase or decrease with age?
- Are family ties significant to decisions to return?
- How do the return patterns depend on home country culture and economic performance?
- Is the decision to return always voluntary? Is it not sometimes the case that the U.S. government requires immigrants to leave for assorted reasons?

Even though international students are officially temporary migrants, many eventually become immigrants to the United States. Despite the considerable number of students who adjust their status, however, little is known about their migration intentions and decisions.

Alberts and Hazen (2005) conducted a study on international students from six nations (the students were Chinese, Dutch, Greek, Indian, Japanese, and Tanzanian-Africa) at the University of Minnesota to investigate their migration intentions. The researchers used questionnaires and individual focus groups interviews. The study reported the factors that students considered in deciding whether to stay in the U.S. or return to their home countries upon completion of their studies and how these factors varied by nationality or other

characteristics, such as gender or field of study. They also investigated whether international students saw their stay in the U.S. as temporary or as a springboard towards permanent immigration. Their findings suggested that few students arrived in the U.S. with the intention of immigrating permanently. Instead, a variety of professional, societal, and personal factors influenced students in an ongoing decision-making process. Broadly speaking, economic and professional factors typically act as strong incentives for students to stay in the U.S., while personal and societal factors tend to draw students back to their home countries. In the long run, a natural progression of professional and personal decisions leads many to become permanent immigrants (Alberts & Hazen, 2005).

Song (2003) found that the prospects of career opportunities and participating in their home countries' further development have been major motivating factors behind students' choice to return home. In addition, family matters, cultural identity, and feelings of obligation have been identified as major factors in the decision to return. In some cases, financial and material incentives can help. However, individual decisions are more often based on intangibles, such as perceived prospects for professional development, national loyalty, and family concerns (Song, 2003).

While Alberts and Hazen (2005) found that family ties at home increase the likelihood of return, family ties in the host country also reduce the likelihood of return and recent immigrants are more likely to return than the earlier ones. At the same time, it is unclear whether more successful or less successful immigrants are more likely to return. Governments need to address such findings if they are to better manage brain circulation. Importantly, concerned governments need to find ways to keep doctoral recipients interested in the progress of their home countries and believing that they have a role to play in its development. Indeed,

even the Nigerian civil war from 1967 to 1970 did not keep people permanently away from their home. In Nigeria today, Democracy is thriving and there are more economic opportunities given the natural resources that the nation has.

Song (2003) stated that personal and institutional networking could also be powerful tools for encouraging doctoral recipients to return home. Recent studies indicated that most expatriate scientists and engineers are willing to maintain contact with their home countries. Song argued that a well-designed and properly maintained network might provide them with a forum and help them to foster a sense of belonging that reinforces loyalty to their homelands. This is one of the reasons that universities work so hard to maintain good alumni networks, which provide the sense of identity that pays dividends in the form of donations to the institution and assistance to other members. Song concluded that, at the national level, a good network encourages expatriates to feel that they have a role to play in their home country's progress, and it provides a mechanism for them to do so. A good opportunity might even bring some expatriates home, either temporarily or permanently. Finally, such networks can also facilitate consulting arrangements and business partnerships between the home country's businesses and universities and the expatriates and their current employers.

Anyamele (2009), in a heuristic phenomenological study with twenty participants entitled "Exploring why Nigerians are not returning to Nigeria after post-secondary education in South Florida," found that,

the fear of governmental political, leadership instability, and governance policy prevents Nigerians from returning to Nigeria; fear of lack of personal safety due to terrorists, and criminals prevents Nigerians from returning to Nigeria; corruption and bribery are required to transact business, and to purchase consumer goods in Nigeria, thereby raising the cost of living and frustration; jobs are scarce, the pay less than those in the U.S. and better incentives should be provided to encourage Nigerian professionals to return to Nigeria; difficulty gaining start-up investment capital inhibits entrepreneurial efforts in

Nigeria, and public institutions should be privatized to improve poor Nigerian infrastructures in roads, utilities, hospitals, and schools, which create a lower quality of life than what is enjoyed in the U.S. It is assumed that students who go to the U.S. for further studies do not return home upon program completion, which impoverishes the nation. Nigerians travel to the U.S. for economic opportunity. Others move out because of political persecution, and some others to pursue higher education. (p. 1).

Today, the governor of Lagos State, Nigeria is a catalyst for change and productivity because he has harnessed the human resources available abroad to develop his state. What other factors can motivate individual return to Nigeria? The purpose of this study is to answer this question by shedding light on the decision-making process of doctoral students and recipients either to stay in the U.S. or return home. This study will go beyond previous studies in exploring the motivations and incentives that propel those who return to do so.

### **Methodological Issues in Studies of Stay and Return Rates**

Previous academic studies on the issue of why doctoral educated Nigerians do not return to their homelands upon graduation have primarily focused on the effects, consequences, and empirical analysis of the phenomenon based on limited data. There have been few studies (Anyamele, 2009; Offoha, 1989) on how and why they come to make the decision whether to stay or return. While Anyamele and Offoha focused on why Nigerians do not return to Nigeria after post-secondary education in the U.S., this study focuses on their decision-making process and how they come to make the decision to stay or return. It goes beyond cause and effect.

A synthesis of the above literature generated seven themes: governmental/policy, cultural identity, political, economic, professional, societal, and personal. This systematic review of the literature has synthesized research from several disciplines and provided a concise refinement of the methods and measures used to study the impact of doctoral students and recipients not returning to their original homelands. The strengths and limitations of the existing body of work

was examined, and it concluded with a proposal for a student-based inquiry approach to achievement research aimed at filling in some of the information missing from the literature. The purpose of this qualitative study was to fill the gap in these previous studies by comparing why some Nigerian doctoral students and recipients chose to stay in the U.S. after completing their programs and why others decide to return. The findings of this research also suggest how those who choose not to return could contribute to their homelands from the Diaspora.

This review has limitations. First, it has focused on students' decision making as a key factor in return rates, but this is only one feature that helps to explain stay rates patterns. Other factors, like immigration barriers, play a part in stay rates patterns. The latter was beyond the scope of this review. Open Doors publication maintains an extensive dataset on actual students stay rates in the U.S., but they do not provide data on the motivations behind the stay rates. The main articles used in this review are, however, significant methodologically and in other ways, in that they each closely examined stay and return rates, brain drain, human capital, and what can be learned from the Asian countries discussed. They gathered primary data provided from extensive fieldwork that used data collection methods such as interviews, participants' observations, and archival analysis to understand and explain stay rate processes and to generate theory instead of secondary data.

One way in which theory is generated is that people can tell their stories to the researcher, who then transforms their words into abstract thought through systematic data gathering, data analysis, and triangulation. Most of the cited studies used this approach to examine the outputs of the stay rates rather than their processes. Whereas the examination of the outputs and outcomes of stay rate efforts constitutes most of the literature, examining and explaining the

processes of stay and return rates is also necessary. Although this is not a new type of research, this is where this study will bridge the gaps in literature.

In summary, this chapter reviewed the available literature on the stay rates of sixteen Nigerian doctoral recipients and doctoral students in the U.S, providing insight into the processes, content, and outcomes of participants making the decision to either remain in the U.S. or return home. It contributes to the brain drain discourse in extant literature by tracing a historical overview of early Nigerian responses to U.S. higher education and analyzing the history of Nigerian doctoral students and recipients' experiences, career paths, obstacles faced, and the impacts of the original initiative on all stakeholders. The review also examined the push and pull factors that motivate individuals to travel overseas and to either remain there or return to the homeland upon graduation.

Because the world of work provides financial security and a social identity, associates, and friends, a well thought out career decision not only adds value and purpose to life but it also gives one the means to express and fulfill one's potential. The review considered career decision-making, which refers to the process by which people search for viable occupation alternatives, compare and evaluate them, and then choose one. The stages of decision-making and the role of self-efficacy and expectancy were also reviewed as conceptual frameworks. Also reviewed was what constituted return readiness.

A review of three studies provided current findings about Nigerian doctoral recipients and students in the U.S. Alberts and Hazen (2005) investigated the migration of international students from six nations (Chinese, Dutch, Greek, Indian, Japanese, and Tanzanian-Africa) at the University of Minnesota. Anyamele (2009) conducted a heuristic phenomenological study

with twenty participants entitled “Exploring why Nigerians are not returning to Nigeria after post-secondary education in South Florida,” and Ande (2009) carried out a similar study.

The findings of the present study will help to formulate policies that will take full advantage of the positive outcome of increased student mobility and, at the same time, limit any negative effects associated with the outflow of higher educated people in the globalized education and labor markets. Also, the findings of this study have implications for policy and practice that will help to enhance the development of incentives that motivate Nigeria’s doctoral educated workforce abroad to return.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS**

This study, by focusing on Nigerian students who chose to stay in the United States compared with those who chose to return to the homeland, addresses the dynamics of brain drain. Using narrative inquiry, the methods employed in-depth interviews to allow participants to tell their story. These dialogues were held with sixteen Nigerian doctoral recipients and students in the U.S. to uncover, describe, and analyze their perspectives on the stay rate phenomenon, its causes, and any gains or losses to these individuals and the sending and/or receiving country. The participants were selected using the snowball sampling approach described in Creswell (2005).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The qualitative world of research seeks to answer questions about how social experience is created and given meaning using a variety of forms, media, and means to communicate ideas and personal feelings (Creswell, 2005). Qualitative research involves a reflexive process that operates through every stage of the study, including collecting and analyzing data, developing and modifying theory, elaborating or refocusing the research questions, and identifying and dealing with validity threats (Maxwell, 2008). Thus, a quantitative design is broader and less restrictive than a qualitative design but still has order, system, and consistency.

Several key concepts emerged during the literature review (see Chapter 2) that gave shape to this study, including expectancy, self-efficacy and return preparedness/readiness as they shape each stage of the decision-making process, from the initial decision to pursue doctoral study in the U.S. to the decision about what to do after receipt of the degree, both in the short term and the long term.

## **Expectancy, Self-efficacy, and Return Readiness Concepts**

### **Expectancy**

Expectancy refers to something that is significant and attracts us or that we are curious or passionate about; it is goal orientation, also referred to as aspirations, expectations, plans, or ambitions; it involves the quest for knowledge, skills, competences, outcome potentials, and the perceived value of outcomes. In short, it includes both expected outcomes and the value placed upon those outcomes. Expectancy-value theories suggest that behavior is a function of people's aspirations of obtaining an outcome by performing a behavior and the extent to which they value those outcomes. The assumption is that people make judgments of the likelihood of attaining various goals in given situation. Much of learning, in fact, involves forming expectancies that certain behaviors will produce certain outcomes.

### **Self-efficacy**

Self-awareness and a positive self-esteem/concept in the career development process in relationship to others, school, and the world of work. Self-efficacy makes us aware of, explore, and develop our personal interests, attitudes, and aptitudes and to understand the life-career concept. It enables us to match our values and skills to personal experience and understand how these preferences can change over time due to maturity. By extension, it refers to the ability to organize and execute courses of action required to produce desired outcomes. This includes initiating behavior, how much effort will result, and how long the effort will be sustained amid obstacles. The components of self-efficacy include but are not limited to being decisive, independent thinking, belief in one's ability, self-advocacy, and self-determination.

Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as a person's beliefs about their ability to organize and execute courses of action necessary to achieve a goal. In other words, persons with strong

efficacy beliefs are more confident in their capacity to execute a behavior. Beliefs about self-efficacy have a significant impact on individual goals and accomplishments by influencing personal choice, motivation, effort, persistence, and our patterns and emotional reactions. According to self-efficacy theorists, low self-efficacy impedes academic achievement by causing motivational problems. The key to motivating and engaging struggling learners is to get them to believe that they can succeed (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Self-efficacy is different from expectancy-value in its emphasis on students' beliefs concerning their capabilities to learn and effectively employ the skills and knowledge necessary to attain the valued outcomes. Outcome expectancies, by contrast, are defined as the belief that certain behaviors will lead to certain outcomes.

### **Return Preparedness or Readiness**

The concept of return preparedness refers to a process that takes place in a person's life, through time, that is shaped by changing circumstances (i.e., subjective experiences; contextual factors in the sending and receiving countries). It is not only about preparing for return. It is about having the ability, though not always the opportunity, to gather the tangible and intangible resources needed to secure one's return home (Cassarino, 2008). Free will and the readiness to return are the two fundamental elements of return migrants' preparedness.

Temporary stays overseas are used to accumulate resources for later use in the home country, either for consumption or investment. Thus, readiness lays emphasis on the ability to mobilize, over time, the resources needed for return. It includes free will, autonomy, and the individual choice to return or otherwise. Since circumstances have a decisive impact on returnees' reintegration process and their ability to contribute to national development, there are as many degrees of preparedness as there exist pre- and post-return conditions. Thus,

returnees' experiences and profiles, free choice, and readiness to return all constitute key elements in understanding why some succeed in reintegrating back home while others do not.

Dumont and Spielvogel (2007) offered four main reasons to explain why people return to their home countries: failure to integrate into the host country; individuals' preferences for their home country; achievement of a savings objective; or the opening of employment opportunities in the home country thanks to experience acquired abroad. Moreover, migrants are likely to adjust their objectives over time and to consider immigration policies in the host country.

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- The overarching research question central to this study was, what factors influence the choice of Nigerian doctoral students or recipients to remain in the U.S. or return to their homeland upon completion of their doctoral studies? How do factors related to field of study, family ties, or tribal affiliation help to explain this choice? How does return readiness fit into what they do after the receipt of their degrees in the short and long terms?
- The secondary questions are as follows: What factors influence the choice of Nigerian doctoral students and recipients to come to the U.S. to study? How do they choose a location/university and field of study? How does expectancy fit into each stage of the decision-making process?
- By what process did respondents persist in their doctoral programs? How does self-efficacy fit into each stage of persistence?

To encourage respondents to retell their stories about why and how they made the decision to come to the U.S., several prompts and probes were used to encourage them to elaborate where necessary. These included questions about (a) why study in the U.S.; (b) what it involved; (c) where and what was studied and how it related to the degree sought; (d) what was learned; (e) previous study experience in the homeland; (f) dealing with unexpected events; and (g) the primary funding source for the doctoral study.

### **The Role of the Researcher**

As a student who was on nonimmigrant status initially, the researcher struggled with the idea of whether to return to the home country on completion of the doctoral program. This insider perspective on the decision-making process provided some background for developing the research and open-ended questions. Generating these questions from personal experience might have introduced biases. To overcome this hurdle, the researcher brainstormed with three others, consulted existing literature, and used semi-structured questions. He also generated the raw material provided by studies of Chinese and Indian Diasporas from which to build questions on career choice and development and assistance. The researcher positioned himself in his relationship with study participants, collected participants' meaning, focused on a single concept or phenomenon, brought personal values into the study, studied the context or setting of the participants, validated the accuracy of the findings, interpreted the data, created an agenda for change or reform, and collaborate with the participants.

### **Participants**

The criteria used for selecting participants was based on the condition that they were born and raised in Nigeria. All but two had at least their secondary education in Nigeria. A clear majority had their undergraduate educations in Nigeria. One outlier received her doctorate in

Nigeria but came to the U.S. for post-doctoral studies. All respondents undertook graduate studies in the U.S. Purposive (selective) sampling was used to choose participants for this study, and participants identified others through the snowball technique, a chain referral method to find and recruit persons who fit the profile and criteria for inclusion. Snowball sampling is often used to find and recruit “hidden populations” (Maxwell, 2008). As Potter (1996) and Creswell (2005) pointed out, since sampling deals with who, where, when, and what, the participants were selected based on characteristics relevant to the research questions and what they could potentially contribute to the study. The pool for this study consisted of over 600 Nigerian doctoral students and recipients from U.S. universities over the past decade who made the decision to stay in the U.S. or return to Nigeria upon graduation. Three of the participants were from Glory State University, NJ; two each were from Tri-State University, NY and the University of Republic, GA; and one each was from nine other universities.

This sampling methods used captured the heterogeneity of the population adequately, with participants from the three major tribes of Igbo, Hausa, and Yorubas. This sampling allowed for the examination of cases that were critical for the theories with which the study started. This was tied to the study’s objective of analyzing why the doctoral students and recipients felt the way they did about staying or returning, the processes by which these attitudes were constructed, and the role that they played in their decision making.

The careers of participants represented a wide range of backgrounds and academic disciplines, including education, psychology, sociology, science, and technology. The group included students pursuing doctoral degrees as well as those who had received them. These were individuals who graduated within the last 15 years in any field of study and lived anywhere in the U.S. or the homeland. One criteria for inclusion was the availability and proximity of

respondents. Approval was obtained from the IRB in SHU, which covered individuals who accepted to be interviewed.

Table 7. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Recipients 7	Current Doctoral Students 9
Returned to Nigeria	3	0
<u>Gender</u>		
Males	4	6
Females	3	3
<u>Tribe</u>		
Hausa	4	3
Igbo	2	3
Yoruba	1	3
<u>Field of Study</u>		
Social Science	2	3
Education	3	5
Arts/Humanities	2	1

Applying the snowball strategy uncovered sixteen U.S. educated Nigerians, comprising nine current doctoral students and seven doctoral recipients. The gender comprised of nine men and seven women using the referral method. Three doctoral recipients have returned to Nigeria and thirteen are still in the U.S. The three main tribes were represented thus: six were Hausas (North), five were Igbo (East), and five were Yorubas (West). Sixteen were chosen because of the unique situation whereby the targeted sample cannot be reached quickly, and sampling for proportionality was not the main concern. The rationale for choosing U.S. universities was that they fell within the geographical location of where the researcher lives, work, and studies, making the identification of Nigerian doctoral students and recipients easily. The liberty and the opportunities that the U.S. offers has led to a large team of Nigerian professionals in all fields of human endeavor to live and work here.

## **Interview Protocol**

The interview protocol for this study was developed mainly through three resources. First, it was developed through what the research literature said about the people and topic being studied, second through brain storming with three potential respondents, and third by consulting the results of the interview questionnaires for information on stay and return rates. The point was to know what other scholars said about the topic, what has not been researched, and, to some extent, to let respondents help craft the questions to enable them to tell their own stories on their own terms. The questions were open-ended, which allowed respondents to offer additional information; they included an opening statement to the interviewee and then the key research question. Additional Probes followed the key questions.

The interview protocol was tested as a guide on two respondents as a pilot and their feedback led to modifications of some of the questions and to the estimated time it would take to interview them. The pilot enabled me to adjust the guide and limit the interviews to less than an hour. Probes or prompts that elicited more detailed and more elaborate responses were developed and used to enhance the key questions, allowing for unexpected data to emerge and taking the interviewees in several different directions. Each interview began with warm-up questions for initial rapport building, thus putting the interviewer and the interviewee at ease with each other.

Per Rabionet (2009), an interview protocol has two important components: how the researcher introduces himself to the person being interviewed and the questions to be asked. The first component helped to establish rapport, created an adequate environment, and elicited reflection and truthful comments from the interviewee. The researcher crafted the opening statement to establish a line of communication that elicited the stories. As I introduced myself,

the protocol included statements of confidentiality, consent, options to withdraw, and the use and scope of the results.

The second component included the development of the questions and follow-up probes using extant literature and previous work (Rabionet, 2009). The researcher read more than forty articles directly and indirectly related to the area of interest and further refined the quality of the interview protocol he had been working with while his dissertation chair provided feedback and guidance. Entering the lives of others, especially the lives of colleagues, required considering ethical and moral issues. The researcher reflected on whether the questions were perceived by the interviewees as being respectful and culturally sensitive. Each respondent was approached in a fair and ethical way.

### **Data Collection**

The heart of qualitative research is the desire to portray the human part of a story. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) opined that qualitative researchers are interested in collecting people's life stories to study various aspects of the human experience and so the primary way to gather these stories is by interviewing people. Through phone interviews, respondents shared their personal stories with me. These interviews were conducted only once with each respondent, although they were opened to follow-up interviews should the need arise. A telephone and/or Skype interview were the techniques for obtaining data through direct contact with respondents using the semi-structured and open-ended questions. Notes were taken in addition to tape-recording. The advantages of interviews are that they include in-depth probes, allow respondents to clarify answers, and provide the researcher with deeper information. The main disadvantage is that such data can be voluminous, and thus time consuming to gather, transcribe and analyze. There are also chances of personal bias. Also, as noted in the limitations section

of Chapter 1, since the research was carried out exclusively via phone interviews, this limited face-to-face interaction, thus leaving facial and body queues unobserved.

### **Data Quality**

Per Richards (2006), far from making life easy for the researcher, qualitative research demands a rigorous approach and constant vigilance to resist the seductive appeal of the superficial. At its worst, qualitative research does little more than state the obvious; at its best, it takes us close to the heart of phenomena and its data come from reliable sources that are consistent and, to some, extent can be replicated.

One of the criticisms of qualitative research is its personal dimension, or its subjectivity. From the outset, there is no such thing as purely infallible, objective research. Subjectivity has its place in every research process (Richards, 2006). Personal theories and methods are built into biography, as are biases, values, and interests, and concerns of gender, race, and age. Understanding the researcher's place in the process enables readers to judge the relevance of findings to their own situations. To aid this transparency, a research journal was kept that enabled reflections on decisions, made connections between ideas and concepts, and exposed aspects of the researcher's thought processes to ensure the credibility and transferability of the results.

Qualitative inquiry must meet the criteria for adequate research by emphasizing trustworthiness and meeting the criteria of validity, credibility, and believability. Richards (2006) defined these terms as follows:

- *Credibility* is the adequacy of data from the field, which involves drawing on different data types gathered in different ways from different participants;

- *Dependability* is the documentation of the research, including records of reflection and decision making according to which the steps of the research process can be reconstructed; and
- *Transferability* is the richness of description and interpretation offered Richards (2006).

This research data represented the social phenomenon to which it referred and was consistent with the meanings assigned to the themes and subgroups or demographics.

The adequacy and dependability of qualitative data depend not only on methods and sources but also on the practical skills of the interviewer, such as employing the questioning strategies available, not dominating the interview, probing for clarification, being sensitive in exploring potential avenues, and analyzing interview transcripts to identify areas where skills need to be refined (Kvale, 1996). Data were analyzed in a methodical, rigorous, and sensitive way to ensure transferability. This called for imagination, art, flexibility, and reflexive awareness of analytical strengths and weaknesses. The research questions had a clear relationship to the goals of study and were informed by what is already known about the phenomena being studied and the theoretical concepts and models that can be applied to these phenomena (McCaslin et al., 2003). The results of the study demonstrated the internal and external value of the research. The former relates to research ethics and the latter to the relevance of the research to educational practice as well as its accessibility to actors in the relevant setting and to other researchers.

To ensure validity, this study used triangulation, providing multiple ways of investigating the situations and interpreting the findings. Interview notes were recorded in terms of what was as concrete as possible, including verbatim accounts of what respondents said rather

than the researcher's reconstruction of the general sense of what they said, which would have allowed his personal perspective to influence reporting. These guarantees credibility, reliability, and transferability.

### **Validity and Reliability**

To ensure validity and reliability and minimize the researcher's values and biases, the interview was taped recorded and transcribed by experts. This helped to correct the natural limitations of memory and intuitive glosses on what respondents said, allowing for a more thorough examination of what respondents said and permitting repeated examinations of the responses.

Secondly, themes and sub-groups that could be corroborated by other researchers were identified. These themes included studying abroad as a dream come true and the poor standard of Nigerian higher education, with a bleak future for graduates in contrast to the exceptional standard of U.S. higher education and the availability of funding and opportunities for a bright career. The identified subgroups consisted of Those that Actively Sought to Come vs. Those Sent; Undergrads vs. Graduates; Voluntary Comers vs. Involuntary Comers; Doctoral Students vs. Doctoral Recipients; Stayers vs. Returners; 25-35 Younger/Traditional respondents vs. 36-60 Older/non-traditional respondents; Voluntary Returners vs. Involuntary Returners.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

This section presents the procedure used for data analysis. Data analysis is a wide-ranging process, one that occurs simultaneously and interactively with data collection, data interpretation, and report writing (Creswell, 2005). It is based on data reduction and interpretation, both decontextualization and recontextualization (Patton, 1990). It represents information in matrices, in systematic spatial format displaying categories by informants, in

sites, etc. (Patton, 1990). The coding procedure used reduced information to themes and categories (Creswell, 2005). The data analysis was based on the themes generated from the literature review, the research questions, the transcribed data, and includes concepts such as expectancy, self-efficacy and return preparedness.

The first stage of analysis included carefully reading the transcripts of the interview. The data were analyzed systematically and transparently building on the framework method for the data display originally developed by the National Center for Social Research (Ritchie et al., 2003). A thematic framework was developed for classification and summary of the data, with headings and classifications that reflected the original matter of inquiry and any new themes emerging from a reading of the transcripts. Data were extracted from the transcripts and summarized into tables. This data reduction was used to explore the accounts of all respondents within the common thematic framework. Analyses involved searching the verbatim quotations in the narrative report for an understanding of the diverse ways in which inclusion (or not) was approached. Verbatim words and phrases by those interviewed were presented in quotation marks and block quotes to enable a better understanding than would the authors' paraphrasing, although paraphrasing also had its place in the narrative.

The coding involved highlighting ideas, categories, or themes and sub-groups that helped to answer predetermined research questions and address the more general inquiry. Respondents were coded on a scale from 1 to 16. This helped in the examination of how the presence of themes compared across the different subgroups (male vs. female, young vs. old, undergrad vs. grad, etc.) of the sample. The literature was reviewed and the interview transcripts read carefully. Thoughts on the themes were written into the margins of the transcripts. This

was repeated for all sixteen participants, and similar themes were clustered together to reduce their overall number.

Through this sorting, themes and illustrative quotes and accompanying concepts were compiled into the outline of a narrative that explained the phenomenon. These were followed by the generation of key themes or the relationship between categories; finally, the story was reported with interpretation and the conclusions presented.

The researcher/analyst was the main tool of interpretation; an audio recorder and transcription were used. Per Davidson (2009), transcription as a process is theoretical, selective, interpretive, and representational because it entails the translation or transformation of sound/image from recordings to text. In the transcriptions, some words were left blank because of “accent” and, sometimes, poor audio quality. Flatworld Solution Inc., Florida, a professional transcriber, was contracted to transcribe the interviews.

### **Qualitative Conventions for Writing the Narrative**

The literary strategy balanced description, analysis, and interpretation, as suggested by Sandelowski (1998). “Description,” here, refers to the “facts” of the cases observed; “analysis” refers to the breakdown and recombination of data that allows researchers to manage and see them in innovative ways; and “interpretation” refers to the new meanings that the researcher created from the treatment of the data (Sandelowski, 1998). Data were represented using the strategies of time, theme, sensitive concepts, and coding. To ensure that the findings were succinct, intelligent and relevant, they were structured into an overview of range of responses. The basic themes across all respondents for each research question were identified and then illustrated with quotes from the transcripts. Transcribed data were used selectively to exemplify, illustrate, and illuminate a coherent rendition of the events and description of the individuals

studied. The prose, codes, and categories were linked, clinical, and significant, as respondents remembered words more than events (Sandelowski, 1998).

Since the purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to determine how Nigerian doctoral recipients come to make the decision to stay or not to stay in the United States, most presentation emphasized describing of the respondents' views with minimal analytic or interpretive intrusion by the researcher. Their views were represented in ways that economically and faithfully captured common and idiosyncratic themes in the interview data, with their words paraphrased or quoted to illustrate these views. The data were allowed to speak for themselves (Sandelowski, 1998). Narratives from the data that related to return readiness, expectancy, and self-efficacy were pursued. Writing up the findings involved both committing the story to paper and making sense of the data. The goal was to attend not only to the informational content of the write-ups but also to their form, as poor form can seriously interfere with readers' comprehension of the findings, or even their desire to read the findings. The goal was to create a compelling narrative for the reader.

This section focused on research methods. The research questions had a clear relationship to the goals of study and were informed by what is already known about the phenomena being studied and the theoretical concepts and models that could be applied to these phenomena. The study demonstrated the internal and external value of the research. The former relates to research ethics and the latter to the relevance of the research to educational practice as well as its accessibility to actors in the relevant setting and to other researchers.

The key concepts that designed this study included return readiness, expectancy, and self-efficacy as they shaped each stage of the decision-making process, which included the decision to pursue doctoral study in the U.S., the motivation to persist, and the decision on what

to do in the short and long terms after receipt of the degree. Efforts were made to ensure that the study met the criteria for validity, credibility, and dependability (trustworthiness) using triangulation, themes, categories, and sub-groups. The section presented the data parsing procedures that occurred simultaneously and interactively with the data collection, data interpretation, and the narrative. Table 7 shows a summary of respondents' characteristics.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter reports the results of the data analysis. It begins with an introduction and a restatement of the purpose of the study, followed by a description of the theoretical framework. The three basic research questions are framed (related to the decision to come and study in the U.S., the process of persistence in the university and field of study of choice, and the decision to stay or return at the end of the study) and the several sub-questions within each. A synopsis of the methods is presented. The last section reports the characteristics of the sample and the findings that emerged from addressing the research questions. This chapter tells the story of why respondents came to study in the U.S. relying on the concept of “expectancy.” Second, the story continues with how respondents persisted, with the study relying on “self-efficacy” as the conceptual framework in these sections. Finally, the last part of the narrative describes whether respondents planned to stay in the U.S. or return to the homeland after graduation based upon the concept of “return readiness.”

### **The Purpose of the Study**

This study sought to understand how Nigerian doctoral students and recipients perceived their opportunities to stay in the U.S., how they seek employment opportunities in their homeland, and under what conditions they might consider returning to Nigeria. Since there are doctoral students at various stages of their studies, one objective was to understand how their perceptions, intentions, and decisions develop and change over time. This study addressed the following research questions.

## **Research Questions**

- The overarching research question central to this study was, what factors influence the choice of Nigerian doctoral students or recipients to remain in the U.S. or return to their homeland upon completion of their doctoral studies? How do factors related to field of study, family ties, and tribal affiliation help explain choice? How does return readiness fit into the binary choice to stay or return?
- The secondary questions are: What factors influence the choice of Nigerian doctoral students and recipients to come to the U.S. to study? How do they choose a location/university and field of study? How does expectancy fit into the decision to come to school in the U.S.?
- How did respondents persist in their doctoral programs? How does self-efficacy fit into each stage of persistence?

Key themes around which the findings were organized were identified and analyzed. The following demographic characteristics of the sixteen respondents, based on when they came, their motives for coming, and their plans, emerged. Those that Actively Sought to Come (voluntary) 12 (75%) vs. Those Sent (involuntary) 4 (25%); Undergrads 2 (12%) vs. Graduates 14 (88%); Doctoral Students 9 (56%) vs. Doctoral Recipients 7 (44%); Stayers 12 (75%) vs. Returners 4 (25%); 25-35 Younger/Traditional respondents 10 (63%) vs. 36-60 Older/non-traditional respondents 6 (37%); Voluntary Returners 12 (75%) vs. Involuntary Returners 4 (25%).

## **Respondents' Characteristics**

Table 8 reports the characteristics of the sixteen individuals whose interviews were at the heart of this study. It is divided into seven columns and seven subgroups beginning with the

naming of the doctoral students and recipients; the university the participants attended; their age/gender/tribe; their field of study; their year of arrival in the U.S. and year of graduation/or departure; their stage in program for those who are still in the Ph.D. program; and the status of the Ph.D. holders. Respondents were numbered 1-16 and provided disguised names to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity promised in the informed consent forms before conducting the interviews. Each respondent was interviewed only once, although they agreed to follow-up questions should the need arise.

Table 8. Sample Characteristics of Respondents

Doctoral Students	University Attended	Age/Gender/Tribe/	Field of Study	Year of arrival to US/left US	Stage in Program	PhD Holders
1 Aminu	Glory State University, NJ	48/Male/Yola-Hausa	Leadership/Mgt/Policy	2006-2014-Present	Dissertation	
2 Bobby	University of Fanfare, ND	45/Male/Kaduna-Hausa	Educational Leadership	2005/2014-Present	PhD	In USA
3 Uche	Glory State University, NJ	57/Male/Akwa Ibom-Igbo	Leadership/Mgt/Policy	1980-2009-Present	Dissertation	
4 Bill	Tri-State University, NY	45/Male/Adamawa-Hausa	Scripture	1997-2007-Present	PhD	In USA
5 Marty	Tri-State University, NY	42/Male/Adamawa-Hausa	Leadership/Supervision	1998-2006-Return	PhD	Returned
6 Lori	University of Republic, GA	28/Female/West-Yoruba	Education	2007/2014-Present	Dissertation	
7 Kim	Melony University, CA	57/Female/Kaduna-Hausa	Public Health	2000-2013-Present	Pre-Qualify	
8 Pam	Kalamazoo School of Law	35/Female/Kaduna-Hausa	Law	2006/2011-Return	PhD	Returned
9 Sally	University of Glory AK	48/Female/Anambra-Igbo	Educational Admin	2003/2013-Return	PhD	Returned
10 Yusuf	University of Billings, IA	28/Male/Oyo-Yoruba	Cardiology-Medicine	2010-Present	Residency	
11 Obot	Galaxy State University, LA	60/Male/Anambra-Igbo	Civil Engineering	1976-1989-Return	PhD	Back & Forth
12 Jason	Sunshine University, FL	58/Male/Imo-Igbo	Education	1979-2006-Present	Post-Qualify	
13 Shawn	University of Rockland, MO	31/Male/Kogi-Hausa	Geology/Soil Science	2011-Present	Post-Qualify	
14 Titi	University of Republic, GA	30/Female/Lagos-Yoruba	Pharmacy	2000-Present	PhD	In USA
15 Nate	Glory State University, NJ	39/Male/Imo-Igbo	Leadership/Mgt/Policy	2010-Present	Post-Qualify	
16 Brooke	Sound Track University, MN	32/Female/Ogun-Yoruba	Communication	2009-Present	Post-Qualify	

Respondents were drawn from thirteen universities: Glory State University, NJ accounted for three respondents and Tri-State University, NY and University of Republic, GA accounted for two respondents each. All other universities produced one respondent each. Participants were attracted to these universities because they were affordable, flexible, accessible, diverse, and accredited with world class learning facilities and a highly qualified faculty. Respondents were divided into two age brackets: six respondents were between 25-35 and ten respondents were between 36-60 years old. To understand the themes, this demographic was entitled Younger/Traditional students versus Older/non-Traditional or mature students. The idea of the older/non-traditional or mature student was defined based on students' chronological age. Students over 35 were described as non-traditional or mature. However, definitions of terms such as “mature” are problematic since they are context bound and vary considerably. Besides, younger students do not form a monolithic block. Nevertheless, the study was interested in finding out whether different patterns of university experiences between these two groups of students exist.

## **Results**

Out of the sixteen interviewed, only two pursued undergraduate studies in the U.S. The other fourteen completed their undergraduate education in Nigeria and came to the U.S. for graduate and doctoral studies. Nine males and seven females participated in the study altogether, representing sixteen different disciplines (field of study), including the sciences, humanities, and arts. The fields of study varied from education to the social sciences, theology, and the physical sciences, giving the sample a fair spread across the broad spectrum of teaching and learning.

The tribal factor was a very significant category because it covered a wide cultural spectrum representing a diversity of views, values, and orientations. The sample represented the diaspora in terms of the Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa tribes. Six Hausas, five Yorubas, and five Igbos were interviewed. This was based on the availability of the individuals to be interviewed. There were no criteria for selection since the snowball strategy/method was used to find the respondents. Of note is that English is the medium of instruction in Nigerian schools given that the British colonized the country. This background also makes it easy for Nigerian students to study in the U.S., although adjustments are made given the cultural differences between the British and American systems of education.

It is important to note that almost all respondents, at one stage or the other in their stay in the U.S., were confronted with the issue of their accent and where they learned the English language. Obot said that he was surprised at how much undue attention the Americans he met and interacted with gave to accent when there are millions of Americans who cannot speak or write correct grammar. “Almost any time I open my mouth here, someone is bound to ask me where I came from and how long have I been in the country. In most cases, I say New York and they quip, no I mean where you are originally from because you have an accent.” It turns out to be a futile discussion. Is it a form of condescending, he wonders, or just small talk?

With respect to their year of arrival to the U.S., three participants came to the U.S. within the range of 1970-1980; three came within 1981-2000; eight from 2001-2010; and two from 2011-present. The three who departed after graduation and returned to Nigeria left in 2006, 2011, and 2013. One participant shuttles between Nigeria and the U.S.

Based on the Sample Characteristics of Respondents (Table 8), nuances in the overarching themes that emerged related to each research question were identified. How do

these sub-groups differ? Which sub-group is more useful for understanding respondents' views on the factors that influenced their decision to come to study and persist in the U.S.? Which sub-groups were more useful for understanding respondents' prospects to return? It is important to note that not all subgroups are relevant for illuminating every research or sub-research question. However, the intent is to provide an overview of the different strands in the sample tapestry.

### **Research Question 1: The Expectancy Concept**

All respondents came to the U.S. for graduate education with the intention to study and return to the homeland. None, at the initial stage, came with the intent of making the U.S. a permanent home. For many, the itinerary was to capture the proverbial Golden Fleece and return to Nigeria and improve their lives and communities. Over time, personal, national, and international events shaped the lives of the respondents and led to a change of mind contributing to the decision to stay in a fusion of adventure and misadventure. This research tells the story of the participants' quest for advanced education. One of the factors that influenced their decision to come to the U.S. was the motivation of their families (immediate and extended), most of whom were not literate, and friends that gave them strength, confidence, and pride to pursue their dreams, excel, and overcome obstacles. They encouraged respondents to pursue education, although some of them were cognizant of the fact that their children might not return to the homeland. They believed in the value of acquiring knowledge.

Growing up in Nigeria, respondents came from the nation's three dominant regions: North (Hausa), East (Igbo), and West (Yoruba). These regions have completely distinct languages and cultures. As described in the literature, the tribal factor was significant because it covered a wide cultural spectrum representing a diversity of views, values, and orientations.

Each respondent told their story based on their cultural background but with a shared sense of identification and affinity—a sense of brotherhood and camaraderie as Nigerians.

An overview of the broad themes is presented here, described in some detail, particularly in the section on push and pull factors. Part of this detail includes illustrating how the themes manifested themselves in one or more of the subgroups identified. The themes were as follows: study abroad—“as a dream” —and the role of family members; frustration with the Nigerian educational system and lack of access to admission to graduate education as push factors; and the overall outstanding quality of educational programs in the U.S. and availability of funding as pull factors. Beyond integrating the demographic analysis into the narrative discussion of the research questions, reference to the time dimension and how things changed over time was also made.

Addressing research question 1, this section gives a general overview of why, when, and how participants came to the U.S. To understand why participants decided to come to the United States in the first place, it is important to know what motivated them. All sixteen participants stated that some or the following reasons motivated them: economic, professional, social, and personal. These motivations played a role in respondents choosing a location and university at which to study, choosing a field of study, and deciding whether to stay or return to the homeland upon graduation. Broadly speaking, professional and economic factors encourage students to stay in the U.S., while societal and personal factors encourage students to return to the homeland.

Economically, participants felt that the availability of funding for graduate education, graduate assistantship, or tuition waivers for graduate students and the overall quality of U.S. graduate programs were the main attractions to moving to the U.S. for study. Funding

opportunities in the U.S. were far better than those available in Nigeria or in other countries that they sought to apply to for graduate school. The good academic reputation of U.S. graduate schools also contributed to their decision. Because of the cost of tuition and the extra length of time required for education, deciding to enroll in a doctoral program is a serious decision. Economic reasons for making this decision relate to having a viable field of study that helps to secure lucrative employment. Respondents all believed that a doctoral degree increased financial prospects. For instance, Uche said that he “worked for over 10 years as a clerical officer in Nigeria to be able to save \$5,000.00 for his initial tuition and flight ticket to the U.S.” One can save over that amount in less time with a graduate degree and a decent job in the U.S.

Academically/Professionally, respondents took into consideration factors dealing with wages, work conditions and facilities, and opportunities for professional advancement. They believed that a doctoral degree from a U.S. university would make them stand out in today’s job market alongside equally or more highly qualified candidates in a society that views graduate education as a rite of passage rather than a luxury. So, being exposed at this level will enable them to undergo personal growth and professional development, pursue their interests in more depth through personal research alongside study topics, acquire professional skills, attend extracurricular events and meetings, hear from guest speakers, and make valuable connections with fellow doctoral students, academics, and experts. These experiences will prepare them for the world of work. As Shawn stated, “Doctoral studies will enable me to know my subject inside-out and give me the opportunity to contribute to the field of soil conservation.”

Social factors refer, broadly, to those factors connected with how comfortable respondents feel in a social, political, or cultural environment. Participants felt that doctoral

studies were mostly about connecting with fellow students and faculty professionally. Uche complained of the dysfunctional nature of Nigerian education “because of how the lecturers tend to victimize students.” Nigerian university education is very tough compared to that in other countries—tough in the sense of trying to gain admission by writing a series of exams to so much hardship that it hinders students’ progress. One example of victimization referred to by Uche was that of students afraid of being failed in a field of study because they do not meet some irrelevant requirement stipulated by the lecturer.

Second, there is hardly an open-door policy between university authorities and students. Lecturers tend to portray the attitude of mini/demi gods with a monopoly on wisdom, which instills fear in students. Students are not encouraged to have inquisitive minds and remain mute in class. Students who report lecturers because of poor teaching performance are guaranteed to fail that course outright. Uche came to the U.S. primarily for graduate studies because lecturers in Nigeria “tend to victimize students... I promised myself I wasn't going to pursue any further degree in Nigeria...With respect to coming to the U.S., I decided not to further my education in Nigeria because of the sub-standard nature of education and the way of getting a degree drags out.”

Another contentious issue is the publication of textbooks by lecturers and forcing students to purchase them, threatening to fail students who refuse to buy them. This amounts to bullying and extortion. This is how lecturers make their money. Female students are forced into quid pro quo situations with their bodies for grades or pay a fee to pass or be given a better passing grade, in a practice that is termed “settlement.” Pam stated, “I personally know of a case where a female law student in Nigeria was given a B grade and NEVER sat for the exam. She paid money to ‘the powers that be’ and was given this dubious grade. This is sad and is

academic fraud to say the least.” Pam wrote her dissertation on corruption in Nigeria. A system where students live in fear and must pay their way through their classes would result in a generation that has no integrity, believes totally in corruption, and has lowered academic standards. No one presently sees these things as problems. They believe that they are rites of passage for every student in Nigeria. The net result is a decline in the quality of graduates.

Such educational conditions made Uche and many others go abroad where lecturers treat students with dignity and respect. Indeed, all the respondents felt that networking through interpersonal relationships with lecturers and students was indispensable to learning. Education, for them, is about connecting with like-minded people in an atmosphere of collegiality to collaborate, discuss, and further knowledge and skills and to expand their professional circles. Close-knitted and lasting friendships are built at this level, as well. Lori spoke about the activities that give her the most pleasure:

My faith. I have a church that I go to right now and I see them as my family. We are small but the smaller the better. The bigger, they won't know you. We are small. We're always watching each other's backs. "You are late today. What were you doing?" "Oh, we need to celebrate your results" (passing qualifying and comprehensive exams). We have that one family relationship in my community, and so that helps me. I have many of colleagues that we share ideas, those I give advice to, those we talk critically together. That brings sanity to me also in the sense that you can sit down and see "Oh, look at it this way. What is wrong with African tradition?"

Yusuf stated that the U.S. was a good option for him because his father had had some experience here and could recommend some good schools. Similarly, Lori was motivated by her dad and aunt to come to America.

### **Push Factors**

Beyond this cursory review of the background reasons for the participants coming to the U.S. to study, the analysis delved in more detail into both the PUSH factors that led respondents to leave their homelands and the PULL factors that attracted them to the U.S. While they

identified varied factors, the following threads were most salient: study abroad as a dream, dissatisfaction with the Nigerian educational system, and difficulty securing admission. The concept of expectancy was used in this analysis to help elucidate these themes.

Expectancy as a concept refers to respondents' personal aspirations, expectations, plans, ambitions, and passions. Here, it also refers to respondents' motivations based on their beliefs, personality, knowledge, skills, and experiences of the likely outcomes of actions and the incentive value placed on those outcomes. Respondents were more motivated to engage in tasks with outcomes that they valued than on task that they did not value. Personal competence played an interactive role with these valued outcomes. For the participants, coming to the U.S. to get an education was about enhancing their self-image and self-respect, which shapes their major social existence, like their status symbol, life styles, and friendships, place of residence, and attitudes and opinions. Therefore, Lori said, "My family expects so much from me. All my aunts call me doctor. That is one thing that they imagine..."

It is a Nigerian mentality to celebrate in advance those who go to America, especially for a graduate education. This explains why respondents believed that working with the best professors and the doctoral programs would bring with it status and academic recognition for them when they graduate. In addition to being taught by talented faculty, respondents believed that they would have access to excellent material resources and the latest technologies. They all envisioned gaining accolades around the globe. Given that this research specifically focused on why respondents came to the U.S. and their intent to stay or remain upon completion of their doctoral studies, the factors that played a vital role in shaping their perceptions, beliefs, values and aspirations and influenced their academic and professional choices included but were not limited to families, professional interests, and the U.S. education support system. As expected,

parental influence on respondents' educational choices was more significant among the younger respondents than the older ones. Meanwhile, the influence of aspirations on choice was not static but evolved over time.

Expectancy theory provided an explanation of why respondents choose one behavior option over others. For instance, they were motivated to come to the U.S. because they believed that it would lead to their success in obtaining a doctoral degree, which would open doors of opportunity. This helps to explain why they perform at a high educational level. As Pam stated,

I knew it wasn't going to be easy. I came with that mindset. I wasn't expecting anything to be given to me on a platter of gold. I knew I was going to work for everything so I knew I had better chances to survive here because America tend to give people opportunity if you're hardworking. If you're focused, if you know what you want, they tend to give you the opportunity.

Such push factors drive respondents out of Nigeria to seek greener pastures elsewhere. The range of responses that characterize push factors included studying abroad as a dream, the role of key family members, nominated by the bishop, instability of higher education in Nigeria, and problems with access, affordability, and cost.

For Obot, coming to the U.S. was a dream come true. It was a big break from his daily grind. "I was excited. I never cared where. I just hoped I will be out of Nigeria one day, visit UK or America. It's been my dream. It's my ambition." Jason echoed that it was his ambition to further his education in the U.S. because it had always been his dream. Marty expressed the same sentiment, stating that the system of education in Nigeria is filled with too many interruptions like, student strikes, and distractions, like cultism. "I've always wanted to come to U.S. to study because the educational system is better for my course and more significant than studying back home in Nigeria." Despite its being expensive, he believed that he would get better education and results by studying in the U.S. than in Nigeria. The unstable nature of

Nigerian Higher education motivated the respondents to seek the American option. Bill, for example, left Nigeria because of constant strikes.

For several respondents, family members and friends played a key role in helping to actualize their dream of studying abroad. Nate said that his parents facilitated the process of him choosing a school, not just schools where he would go and have fun but schools that had a good academic reputation:

The greatest influence my parents had on me, I would say, was laying a solid foundation for my life that set me up for success. My family contributed financially. We are a very spiritual family and believed in prayer. They contributed, they prayed a lot. They supported me emotionally, calling me daily, encouraging me, telling me to be strong and they are proud of me and all that. They have contributed in every way they can to make sure I'm something.

For Aminu, an expatriate friend in Nigeria helped to actualize the dream of coming to America, but sponsorship was a problem. Aminu's cousin undertook that responsibility. For almost all respondents, finding the mechanism or instrument for realizing the dream was key to making it a reality. The immediate instrument was sponsorship. Having family members, bishops, and other government sponsorship were the immediate instruments in realizing their dream to study in the U.S.

Yusuf, narrating instances in which he doubted his ability to sustain his program, said that "there were instances when finances were tough for me because taking a Ph.D. is so challenging and combining working and schooling at the same time." Aminu also expressed the pain of commuting over three hours to school twice a week and combining this with work and education. His dream relates to everything he hopes to gain from his time abroad, and he believes that is what is most important. Those who pursued their dreams put in time and energy through discipline, challenging work, and perseverance. The obstacles that all participants faced

were having enough money, student visas (which can be obtained only after acceptance into a university), mastery of the English language, and not knowing where to study.

All sixteen participants noted their dissatisfaction with the inferior quality of Nigerian universities due to their instability. Constant strikes and school closures made almost all respondents leave Nigeria for the U.S. Uche complained of the dysfunctional nature of Nigerian education and Obot decried the deteriorating standards. In addition to suffering from student strikes, universities are two years behind in their programs because the academic year is two years late. For instance, students in universities in 2017 are in the academic year 2015/2016. This scenario keeps students longer than necessary and delays their graduation. This is another reason that students go abroad for further studies.

Twelve respondents cited Nigeria's social, political, and cultural environment as reasons for leaving. These included problems with access, affordability, and accountability. Yusuf decried the prohibitive cost of a Nigerian education as a factor that hindered his educational progress. Compounding this issue was lack of access—that is, the unavailability of admission. Brooke was denied admission into Nigerian universities because the quota allocated to her State was filled. She felt forced to leave Nigeria and come to the U.S. to further her studies because of the unavailability of admissions in most Nigerian universities. Universities in Nigeria receive many applications but admit very few students. Recent research showed that only 30% of high school graduates gain admission into the nation's universities. The other 70% are left to fend for themselves. After a couple of attempts to secure admission, Yusuf shared, "I then started trying colleges in the United States."

Bobby emigrated to the U.S. from Germany in order complete his graduate studies because of the language barrier and the inflated cost of living in Germany. Initially, he was sent

by his bishop, who secured a limited scholarship for him. Studying in a foreign language was difficult, which informed his relocating to the U.S. For Jason, access was the issue that brought him to the U.S. “As a junior service worker, I saved money to sustain (me) in the U.S., was interviewed by the student advisory council and, with their approval, I went to the U.S. embassy in Lagos and was given a visa to study at Sunshine University, FL.”

Twelve (75%) of participants noted the key role of family members and friends and availability of support as crucial factors in their decision. The literate parents of the respondents believed that acquiring a doctoral degree was necessary for obtaining a stable and meaningful career. This attitude was reflected in the educational aspirations that parents and the respondents have. Bobby, Bill, Obot, and Jason all stated that their family members, especially their parents, played a key role in their coming to the U.S. Obot said that because his father earned his Ph.D. and his mother a nursing degree in Texas, they gave him a precondition to obtain an undergraduate degree in Nigeria before going abroad for his advanced degree. Uche navigated the Internet, exploring schools that offered the degree he wanted and what their requirements for admission were (he applied to eight universities). His dad had ideas on some of the better universities in the U.S. Shawn’s father, meanwhile, wanted his children to have access to higher education, but he was disadvantaged by going to a technical (hands-on) school in Nigeria instead of a secondary school tailored to academics. He went to a vocational school because he was not smart enough to be admitted to a secondary school. Enrolling for a Ph.D. in the U.S. was an afterthought – a kind of convenience for him. Like a case of nemesis, his reputation for not being smart followed him until he proved otherwise by challenging and pushing himself, and so he seized the opportunity, even though it was not a conscious aspiration.

Aminu, Bobby, Bill, and Marty were a unique group of student priests, nominated by their bishops and approved by the council of priests, who were nominated/sent by a sponsoring agent. Being a priest myself, it was easy to enlist them in my study and to provide a religious affiliated flavor to the research. They came to the U.S. specifically to study and benefit their dioceses upon graduation, but achieving this would require the availability of scholarship. Their motivation for further studies was to improve their knowledge, skills, and competences and then return to their homeland. The positive interpersonal relationships with their bishops and peers made their being chosen easy.

What can be learned about Nigerian students' motivation when comparing those respondents who journeyed to the U.S. in pursuit of a dream with those who came in response to an external push? Voluntary migrants, in this study, were defined as those who came to the U.S. because of their own desires and motivations. The term involuntary migrants refer to those who migrated to the U.S. by the authority of a sponsoring agent. Voluntary migrants tended to have more control over their destinies than involuntary migrants. They also had more leeway in terms of their choice of location and university, their choice of field of study, and the duration of their study, even though other considerations, like visa status and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), came into play.

What can be learned by examining the differing experiences of those who came to the U.S. early and late in their student careers? Four students came to the U.S. straight out of secondary school (high school) while the clear majority came with undergraduate degrees and some work-related experience. Lori, Yusuf, Shawn, and Titi were the respondents who came to the U.S. as undergraduates. Their stories were different from those who did undergraduate work in Nigeria because they had neither experience of higher education in Nigeria nor any work-

related exposure in terms of their dreams and aspirations. The respondents who came early were more disposed to finish their studies on time and to explore available opportunities in the U.S. It was easier for them to embrace U.S. values, culture, and ways of life. The graduates tended to make mature decisions based on their exposure and experience.

### **Pull Factors**

Pull factors refer to benefits that entice and attract respondents from the U.S. The range of possible survey responses that characterized pull factors in this study included *the overall outstanding quality of educational programs in the U.S., the availability of funding, the availability of admissions, excellent academic conditions and standards, economic incentives, and potential employment opportunities*. The availability of infrastructures, better training facilities, and modern information technologies also lured respondents to the U.S. All sixteen respondents believed that the outstanding quality of educational programs in the U.S. was a major attraction for them. Overall, they believed that the availability of access and choice, the availability of funding, the attraction of scholarships or sponsorships, graduate assistantships, and tuition waivers all made U.S. education exceptional.

Foremost, American universities offer access and choice. Five respondents—Brooke, Kim, Sally, Uche, and Jason—came to the U.S. to further their educations because their schools granted them admission and were more reliable and efficient than those in Nigeria, where they could not choose their university or major (instead, majors were imposed by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board that admitted students). Lori and Jason immigrated to the U.S. because of the availability of sponsorship, graduate assistantships, scholarships, and tuition waivers. Six respondents believed that, overall, any university in the U.S. is better than the best in Nigeria. For instance, Marty stated, “I’ve always wanted to come to U.S. to study because the educational

system is better for my course and more significant than studying in Nigeria.” Despite being expensive, he believed that he would get better educational value and results studying in the U.S. than studying in Nigeria.

Four respondents were enticed by the “diversity attraction,” understood the U.S. as a melting pot for all nations, and desired to be a part of that experience. Nate came to the U.S. because it is a melting pot where people from different countries and cultures come together and freely express themselves. Aside from getting a good education, he noted, by studying in the U.S. he could establish an excellent relationship with individuals from various parts of the world:

I have learnt a lot, both academically and by interactions with people from different countries, diverse backgrounds. They have helped to shape me and to give me a worldview so I don’t only think of myself and my little country when I think of people all over the world.

Opportunities to learn about diverse cultures and to live out multicultural experiences, meet new people, and see the world through different eyes were all attractive. Lori stated, “I want to travel and I want to do something new . . . the school I went to in the U.S. had a great international student body and so we all just came together like a family, basically, to support each other and help.” Thus, studying in the U.S. provided her with an opportunity to interact with current ideas, people, and cultures and, consequently, to enrich one’s knowledge base.

Closely related to the diversity attraction is the desire for change and to experience something new and different from the Nigerian experience. When the opportunity presented itself, Sally moved to the U.S. courtesy of acquiring the green card through U.S. government diversity lottery program, which grants 50,000 immigrants visas annually. She became a U.S.

citizen in 2005. Kim was tired of living in Nigeria and change was most welcome when she won the lottery. In her words,

I relocated to the U.S. and decided to go back to school and read for a Ph.D. in public health. I believe if I gain the knowledge, the exposure . . . that would be very encouraging. That will be very good . . . I will get something to do and that would really make me happier, working with the people directly, so that's why I decided to go back to school.

Kim migrated to the U.S., most importantly, for change and opportunity, not because she was struggling in Nigeria.

In fact, Kim was doing very well with her government job; she had a driver and house-help and her husband owned his company, but she needed change to explore other avenues to educate herself and, especially, to give her children opportunities for the best education available. She proceeded to enroll for her Ph.D. in Public Health. She gave little thought to what university to choose; already employed at age 57, she was just looking for one that would be flexible with her job. She also looked at the rating and academic reputation of the school. She had the motivation and commitment and the opportunity to forge ahead with the program. Both Sally and Kim moved to the U.S. to fulfil their desire for change. For them, the prospect of an education in the U.S. represented an opportunity to leave Nigeria and to experience something new in terms of lifestyle and outlook, including a new view of family status, mobility, financial security, health, career aspirations, and educational development and the development of relationships at home and at work.

Many of the respondents saw attending university in the U.S. for a Ph.D. as an opportunity to expand their minds, to meet and interact with people from diverse backgrounds, and to engage in active, animated, and exciting discussions about the world in which they live. They are students of life, indulging and absorbing all the knowledge that they can with open

minds. Those who were sent to the U.S. from Nigeria tended to take this experience for granted with a sense of entitlement. The most significant difference between them and those who came on their own, however, was the time limit set by their sponsoring agents to study and return, which is discussed in more detail below.

### **Research Question 1a: Choice of Location/University**

Half of the respondents gained admission by personal preference. While some of these admissions were secured by the respondents themselves, others were offered by the sponsoring agent, and yet other participants took advantage of scholarships, tuition waivers, and graduate assistantships in tandem with self or sponsor action. Half of the respondents considered the reputation of the university and its resources as important to their personal preference. They wanted to be a part of a university with good teachers, strong student organizations, and successful alumni. Equally important, if they were planning to spend at least four or more years in a location of choice, were considerations of setting, climatic conditions, size, type, IT services, cost, scholarships, and financial aid.

Many respondents came to the U.S. to study voluntarily. Given that they had never visited the U.S., they had to rely on Internet research and phone calls to the Universities in the U.S. to inquire about the university, its location, the kind of people who study and teach there, the quality of its academic programs, and its environment. Some participants sought advice from family members or friends who had studied in the United States. This is where parents and friends who studied abroad were helpful. Knowing and trusting them allowed these new students to ask specific questions about the institutions their friends and relatives had attended. For instance, Yusuf's online search yielded three schools in the U.S. Pam used the Internet to

research her schools, but she also had a friend who was doing her graduate education in the U.S. that recommended some schools to her. Ultimately, that was how she chose where to apply.

Most of the respondents started the search process twelve months ahead of time and considered their long-term goals. Many turned to educational advisors for guidance and counselling. The role of an educational advisor is broad, and different people and organizations fill this role at home and abroad. They used informal brochures and catalogues and local Internet Cafes to research locations and universities. Due to the Internet, respondents had access to much more information than previous generations. The challenge for them was that, sometimes, there was too much information, particularly for the younger participants, which made finding reliable sources difficult. They used the World Wide Web to find comprehensive basic information about studying in the U.S., such as profiles on specific universities, information about getting a visa, and the estimated costs and tuition.

Geographic region also influenced their choice of school. Coming from the tropics, the participants in this study did not want to live in cold regions of the U.S. Nate, speaking about how he made adjustments in terms of the weather, food, clothing, and the environment generally, stated, "Before I came, I researched on the Internet to see how the environment, the weather, clothing and food and everything, how it compares to what we have in Nigeria, and with what I found I was able to condition myself. Also, I had a couple of friends who were already here that helped me." Lori expressed the same sentiments when she said,

I just didn't like Texas. I liked it because of the weather but outside the weather I wasn't comfortable with it. I had an uncle there that wanted me so badly to come to stay. He tried many schools there and I got admitted into, but I didn't want to stay. I thought that if U.S. is a place for me to excel, why don't I go to somewhere, where I don't have to watch my back? In Texas my uncle would say, "You can't take a stroll. It's dangerous." Everything is dangerous or is scary. Some of these dreadful things about it, so why am I not in Lagos? How can I be in America and still have that fear and insecurity...?

Lori was afraid and insecure because of the gang violence in the neighborhood in which her uncle lived, so she was determined to live in a place where she did not have to constantly watch her back. More than half of respondents considered weather and climatic conditions and where they could purchase Nigerian food and could communicate with other Nigerians to choose a location and university. Those with plans to study for the long-term considered it important to study in an environment that would be safer than the chaos they experienced in Nigeria. Respondents also considered cultural, religious, sporting, and recreational activities important when choosing where to settle. Some of these preferences are discussed in the section on persistence.

Due to their maturity and concomitant adult needs, the age bracket of the participants (36-60) represented learners who approached educational experiences differently from their younger counterparts, who have less diverse life experiences. The older generation tended to shop for a university based on price, quality, and the reputation of the institution. Given their experience, they could take advantage of the sturdy support system offered by decades of experience in hosting foreign students from U.S. universities. On the negative side, they reported difficulty integrating into student life and other campus activities. The younger students reported that separating themselves from family and friends and adjusting to the new social and academic environments at their university, although exciting, involved a great deal of stress. Their concerns with their transition were coupled with the additional psychological concerns of academic and social adjustment, the development of autonomy, and identity development.

For a few respondents, admission was offered by sponsoring agent. Four (Aminu, Bobby, Bill, and Marty) were nominated and sent abroad for higher education by their bishops

and required to return. Sponsorship, in these instances, means the bishop gives the student permission to travel abroad to study, secures admission, finds a parish for the student to stay, and gives the student some start-up funding of between 5-10 thousand dollars; once in the U.S., these students must meet all other funding needs for the duration of their study. Marty's bishop determined where he would go and what he would study based on the needs of the diocese. "The first time," he said, "I didn't have a choice in the location/university or course that I would study. The bishop got the form and simply asked me to fill and he submitted it, but on my return for my doctorate I made the decision to specialize in educational leadership."

Given that the sponsor gives only initial funding and that the student is left to fend for himself for the rest of his study period, working and studying created unique challenges and a certain psychological tension. Three respondents had to pay their way through schooling and pay for their medical and other bills, which ran into thousands of dollars. They took loans to pay these bills and cannot return to Nigeria within the time limit set by their sponsors without paying them back. When the sponsoring bishops demanded their return, these respondents were caught with substantial obligations to pay their outstanding bills. One bishop withdrew the faculties of a respondent, denying him his function as a priest and reducing him to a vagabond. This is not unique; others (who were not interviewed in this study) have reported similar anecdotes. This contributed to the phenomenon described later in this chapter as feeling "stranded" or lost and isolated.

Aminu responded to the question about his plans for getting a job after earning his doctorate by saying that he was not thinking of a job because "I am just like meat in the hand of a butcher. If I were an independent person, then my answer would be different . . ." Everything he does depends on his bishop, who makes unilateral decisions instead of holding

dialectical consultations. The simile of a butcher stands for being cold, sharp, or both with a knife, ready to cut and kill. However, being a butcher also requires understanding, patience, and careful attention to detail, which the sponsors lacked in this situation. In Northern Nigeria, the butchers are better known as Fulani militants and herdsmen, who unleash terror and war against innocent people. They literally slaughter people in the same way that they slaughter cattle. The metaphor presented by Aminu here portrays his superior as insensitive, impatient, not being sympathetic and understanding. Aminu put it this way: “Some Nigerian bishops don't tell you why they want you back home, and they don't even discuss with you. They tell you, ‘I want you to go and do this.’ My advice to any student coming overseas would be to ask themselves these questions: Where will I study? What will I study? What do I want to do with this degree? Am I planning to stay here? Or am I planning to go back?”

Sponsoring agents, because they have jurisdiction of command and control, require their wards to return after a given time without considering delays in graduation, costs, and unforeseen circumstances. It is equally true that those sponsored should consider their agreement to return at a stipulated time. The remaining twelve respondents who came on their own were not burdened with such concerns. This was the most significant difference between the two groups. The ability to alternately enter and exit the U.S. physically or figuratively gives one a sense of being in control of one's destiny. There is no greater pride in knowing that one determines one's destiny and takes responsibility for planning and executing one's life and career options despite the obstacles. Respondents tended to operate better if they knew their goal and believed they had control over what was happening to them.

The availability of scholarships, graduate assistantships, and tuition waivers was another factor that participants considered before they made their final decision. Most universities have

tuition fees. For the three respondents whose parents could afford to pay the bill, these fees were not a problem. However, the majority sought other ways to get the necessary amount, such as scholarships, but they had to work hard to maintain good grades, student loans, and student jobs. Many universities offered part-time jobs for respondents like Lori, who worked and studied at the same time. She also said that her choice of location and university was influenced by the low cost of living, the weather, the hospitable and friendly community from which she can travel and experience the country by herself, and the availability of a tuition waiver. Respondents with F-1 or JS visas could only work on campus. A few were on the part-time study programs, and it took them longer to graduate, but they could study and make some money at the same time.

### **Research Question 1b: Choice of Field of Study**

The field of study refers to the respondents' areas of specialization and how respondents chose them. Two factors were considered: intrinsic motivation (doing something for oneself, like reading, writing, or learning because it is personally enjoyable) and external motivation (engaging in an activity to earn a reward or avoid an adverse outcome). Intrinsic factors were, more prominently, individual interest and career plans. All respondents were required to take the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Graduate Record Exam (GRE) exams as a prerequisite for their graduate level academic work.

For some, the process of choosing a field was difficult because they had unreliable Internet access where they lived. The process included online searches for narrowing down programs and regions and whether a particular university offered the degree they wanted and what their requirements for admission were. They also searched to see if an internship was offered to help them survive economically in the U.S. Another consideration was their chance

of being accepted as graduate assistants by meeting the TOEFL and GRE requirements. Fortunately for them, Nigeria is one of four English-speaking countries in West Africa at a level of English proficiency high enough for a study to study at any university in the U.S.

When choosing a program that best fit their goals, respondents weighed their preferences, deciding that some factors were more significant than other. Career goals were critical in choosing field of study, and the program of study was the most principal factor, followed by the tuition fee as the second most crucial factor in the order of priorities. Those respondents who went through undergraduate studies did not have to decide their main field of study when seeking admission or at initial enrollment. The point is that they studied what they wanted. Those who knew what they wanted to study centered their search on universities with accredited programs (allowing them to transfer credits to other universities) in that area.

The four participants who graduated from secondary schools (i.e., high school) had to enroll in undergraduate institutions as full-time students to maintain their F-1 visa status. How one is required to maintain full-time enrollment differs depending on the students' status. Undergraduate programs require at least twelve credit hours each semester during the academic year. Most graduate programs require nine credit hours, depending on the university. This student visa is valid for the duration of study. These students can work no more than twenty hours on campus per week when school is in session, can apply for work permit to work off campus, must report a change of address, and must keep their passports valid. Given the onus put on them to be informed on the regulations governing their status, undertaking employment and possible violations of their status constantly play on their minds and make them nervous. After the program ends, students are required to depart the U.S. within 60 days. They can apply for an extension or renew or change their status. The applications of the twelve who came for

Master's and doctoral degrees were submitted directly to the department of the university for which they applied.

Older respondents had a lower workload and fewer things to worry about, and they revealed tendencies to be more positive in their self-concepts than their younger counterparts, as well as more internally oriented, perceived less anxiety in learning, were more oriented toward goals and achievement, wanted more formal learning methods, preferred to learn in a variety of ways, were less impulsive, and perceived themselves to be more abstract in their thinking. They displayed higher levels of academic and intellectual growth than their younger counterparts. For the younger generation, pursuing a doctoral degree was motivated by the hope that it would give them an edge in a tightening job market both in the U.S. and at home. Noteworthy was the finding that self-concept as learners was strong between the two groups, although the older group reported a keen sense of commitment to the goal of obtaining a university degree and having better academic facility than their younger colleagues. The following section examines how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation fit into this study's analysis.

### **Intrinsic Motivation**

Eight (50%) of the participants reported that their choice to study in the U.S. was personal to achieving set goals and objectives (Interest, Aptitude, and Career). Intrinsic motivation happens when you do something because you enjoy it or find it interesting. Personal interest to respondents and seeing the value of persevering represents part of what motivates them. Intrinsically motivated people believe that they have the ability to complete their educations. These respondents stated that personal preference stimulated them and that they saw a link between their actions and obtaining better grades and recommendations from their instructors. The challenge they face was ensuring that what they were studying would contribute

to securing profitable careers. Interest should match aptitude and be motivated by what Obot called “choosing high-growth-areas so that one does not end up being a Ph.D. holder driving a taxi.”

Pam said that since secondary school she was always interested in law and in graduate education. She was the chief judge of arbitration for the literary and debating team in secondary school and during her undergraduate studies. “I watch more of drama and movies with legal cases and all that. I have always known I was going to study law.” Human rights defense was also part of her nature and interests:

I just liked the feeling of standing up for people who could not stand up for themselves, like being the voice of the voiceless. I don't see myself as a troublemaker, but I can't stand . . . I hate to see other people being bullied . . . If you don't have the capacity or the knowledge to protect yourself, that's when I step in. That was when my interest in human rights started growing.

Pam delved into women's rights and youth training as part of the process of choosing a field of study because Nigerian women are regarded more as chattel. Women are taught to be seen and not heard, and most women do not have the capacity to stand up or speak up for themselves. Pam's choice of discipline was motivated by a childhood dream of becoming a defense lawyer to become the voice of the voiceless and the downtrodden.

Uche chose Glory State University because it offered a program in higher education leadership, management, and policy. He was interested in a change of career. Initially, he was interested in finance. Obot's ambition was to become a quantity surveyor, but the U.S. did not offer a degree in this field so he settled for civil engineering and construction, in which he earned his Ph.D. For Aminu, the choice of discipline was based on interest and the accessibility of the field, from communications to higher education leadership, management, and policy.

Lori's choice of discipline, by contrast, built on the undergraduate field of cultural studies, and she emphasized education in culture and diversity and teaching and learning. Bill chose Scriptural Theology because it offered him a more academic and scholarly approach to research:

I felt that the knowledge we received in the Seminary did not expose us to critical thinking, critical questioning, in-depth analysis and understanding of Scriptures, so I wanted an innovative approach, an approach that appeals to me, an approach that will answer some of my questions, and an approach that will deepen my faith.

Shawn chose his discipline because he was always an outdoor person, which enabled him to interact with the environment and be close to the soil and agriculture. He loves the soil. While growing up in Nigeria, he noticed that food and drug safety was a big problem, especially around storage, outbreaks of cholera and typhoid, and food poisoning. This influenced his choice of field of study. For these participants, interest, aptitude, and a desire for expert knowledge all played a significant role in their choice of location and university,

### **Extrinsic Motivation**

Extrinsic motivation involves doing something for external rewards or to avoid negative consequences. It also involves things that drive change from outside that are not really within one's control. Four respondents were motivated more externally. When Jason lost his job in Florida, his peers and teachers encouraged him to work for a Ph.D., thus providing him with an external push. The hardship of losing his job gave him the impetus to fight to achieve success later in life. For Marty, the choice of field of study was determined by the support he received, such as financial aid, mentoring, and information about university requirements, especially about the extracurricular activities available outside of school. Since Yusuf has already studied Medicine-Dentistry in Nigeria, he had the desire to study Medicine in the U.S. He sat for the

board exams, which he passed, and is now in his program. He stated that the goal of being a medical doctor provided him with the push to achieve a certain result. Yusuf strongly believed that his family background and cultural factors, as well as his parents' attitudes and actions, played a significant role in his choice of field of study.

Titi considered finding a flexible career as motivational for her. She changed her major from medicine to pharmacy because she did not want to be stuck in a hospital for the rest of her life. "When I went to work with patients in the hospital, I really didn't like being there all day." She likes interacting with people. She wants to be in the medical or science field because she had a profound love for science, so when she was introduced to pharmacy, and because she loves math and chemistry, although she is not a fan of biology, she pursued that field. When asked what the expectations of her family were with her relocation and how she was surviving on her own, Titi responded, "It wasn't like a big deal," further commenting,

The first part of it was finances from Nigeria that was helping me out. My parents were helping me out from Nigeria in terms of tuition and board. Without family . . . especially in the financial aspect, my parents made sure that I have . . . I was living in a very comfortable apartment. My school fees were paid. I had food. I had a car to move around. I got jobs. I worked on campus. I had friends. I had one aunt in Atlanta as well and that was okay for me. My parents came every year to visit me as well. When my visa expired I went to fashion school for a couple of months while I looked for a job, just to maintain my student visa status.

She made pharmacy a career primarily because of its flexibility. She can work in a hospital, in retail, in insurance companies, in a drug company, and in long-term care.

Professional or career rewards in either the U.S. or Nigeria also motivated respondents to choose a field of study. Their interests, expectations, values, and academic performance played a role in their academic and professional choices. All respondents put high premiums on their professional and career goals. Bill stated, "I personally chose to attend my school because

it is in New York City, which allowed me to gain a much broader exposure to the job opportunities and cultural diversity that the city offers.” Other influences were factors like social and cultural affiliation, geographical area, academic guidance, and approaches to vocational guidance.

Since, in Nigeria, Ph.D. holders are esteemed highly, it is not a surprise that a Ph.D., especially from the U.S., is highly prized there, as recipients are perceived as intelligent, smart, potentially rich, and successful persons. This factor also motivated the respondents to study in the U.S. Paper qualifications are a cultural status symbol in Nigeria. While a doctoral education gives one specialized skills to excel, it ultimately also serves to boost and buttress one’s ego/self-esteem. Respondents believed that a doctoral degree paves way to a career in industries centered on research and innovation. Besides this, a Ph.D. degree helps to develop valuable transferrable skills that are valued by prospective employers. The very nature of the degree teaches respondents to be team players (given that they belong to an exclusive club as specialists in their fields), problem solvers, have great presentation and communication skills, and have an analytical mind and perseverance.

Most respondents believed that the process of receiving a Ph.D. was often recognized as providing training in creativity, critical inquiry, negotiation skills, professionalism, and confidence. Many viewed a Ph.D. as an excellent means to acquire theoretical as well as practical skills. However, it is also a degree that they pursued because they were driven to do something original, creating a new knowledge base and preparing themselves to discover the unknown. As Obot explained, “One of the hardest things to do in the world, in educational terms, is the Ph.D., but the rewards are amazing. The self-fulfillment and satisfaction you achieve from it pushes you to go through all the challenging work and toil. So, whatever the

academic area of interest, studying for a Ph.D. is regarded as being on the very top of your field.” It is also worth noting that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are bound together and not easily distinguishable as separate entities.

### **Summary of Results for Research Question #1**

The decision of participants to come to the U.S. for doctoral studies was influenced by four major push and pull factors: study abroad as a dream; dissatisfaction with the Nigerian educational system; the overall outstanding quality of educational programs in the U.S.; and the availability of funding, graduate assistantship, or tuition waivers for graduate students. Funding opportunities in the United States were far better than those available in Nigeria. The good reputation of U.S. graduate schools also contributed to the respondents’ decision to immigrate to the U.S.

Meanwhile, the criteria by which participants chose a specific location/university and field of study was predetermined for some respondents by their sponsors—e.g., bishops—in some instances and, for others, more intrinsic factors—like the availability of scholarships, graduate assistantships, internships, tuition waivers, safety, and security—were decisive. For other respondents, the choice was circumstantial and included considerations of regional hospitality, accessibility, affordability, and cost. Finally, the process by which respondents chose their location/university and field of study was facilitated, in some cases, by their sponsoring agents, like their bishop, in other cases by their parents and family members, and in yet other cases by friends who were studying abroad who helped in their searches. Other respondents used online search and saved personal funds to realize their interest in doctoral study in the U.S.

## **Research Question 2: Persistence in the Doctoral Program**

Research question 2 sought to understand respondents' persistence. The process of students' persistence has two dimensions. First, the students seek to persist. Second, the university seeks to retain them. While the institution's interest is in increasing the proportion of their students who graduate from the institution, the student's interest is in completing a degree. Viewed from the students' perspective, persistence is just one form of motivation. Students must be persistent in the pursuit of their degrees and be willing to expend the effort to do so even when faced with challenges that they sometimes encounter. Without motivation and the effort it engenders, student persistence is unlikely, regardless of institutional action.

When asked what factors gave them the most pleasure and enhanced their motivation to persist in their academic pursuits, the respondents mentioned the following six: self-efficacy; financial support; sense of belonging; perceived value of the curriculum; available guidance and counseling; and extracurricular activities. This section will explain how respondents' experiences shaped their motivation to persist and, in turn, what they did to enhance that motivation. The answers to these questions are far from simple. Many experiences shaped their motivation to persist, not all of which are within the capacity of universities to influence.

### **Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy refers to the belief in respondents' interest and ability to perform and succeed in their educational enterprise. It encompasses sources of academic and professional support and the cultural influences that shape disciplinary choices and career options. It is one manifestation of how past experiences influence how respondents come to perceive themselves and their capacity to have some degree of control over their environments. Self-efficacy is learned, not inherited. It is flexible, not fixed. It cannot be generalized in the sense that it applies

to all tasks and situations, but it can vary depending on the task or situation at hand. Respondents may feel capable of succeeding at one task but not another. This analysis tells the story of how individual respondents' self-beliefs, motivation, judgment, and persistence to exert more effort initiated the series of actions required for them to reach their goals and objectives.

The following four factors determined respondents' self-efficacy: experiences with success or failure in their past situations; comparing their experience with peers whom they perceived as similar in ability and intelligence to themselves; teachers' verbal affirmation that convinced respondents who doubted their capabilities that they possess the skills needed to persist and succeed in their educational quest; and physiological and emotional states, which affected their interpretation of the outcome of their investment in education either positively or negatively. The older respondents had issues and concerns that differed from those of the younger full-time respondents. The ten older respondents had been out of school for years and were anxious about returning. Initially, they did not know what to expect. Those students often ended up being among the best in the class because of their wealth of experience.

When it comes to respondents' belief in their ability to succeed in universities, a keen sense of self-efficacy promotes goal attainment, while a weak sense undermines it. Whereas younger respondents with high self-efficacy engaged themselves more readily in tasks, expended more effort on them, and persisted longer in their completion even when they encountered difficulties, older respondents, because they already had degrees to fall back on, tended to be lackadaisical in their approach to studies. Although many students began their doctoral studies confident in their ability to succeed, more than a few did not, especially those whose past experiences led them to question their ability to succeed.

However, even those who entered the university confident in their ability to succeed encountered challenges that weakened their sense of self-efficacy. That was particularly true during the critical first year as respondents sought to adjust to the heightened demands of university. The older respondents also tended to have personal, family, and academic circumstances that were much different from those of younger ones. Many were married with children (or unmarried with children). Many worked long hours to support themselves and their families and to afford tuition and books, and still barely stayed above water financially. In some cases, they attended school for close to a decade. Their study skills may have eroded. They had forgotten much of what they learned because they had their undergrad education over ten years before, and they were unfamiliar with modern technologies. What mattered for success in that first year was not so much that they entered university believing in their capacity to succeed as that they came to believe they could succeed as the result of their early experiences.

About half of the respondents in the doctoral program reported that they could obtain the timely support they needed to succeed when they encountered early difficulties meeting the academic, and sometimes social, demands of the university. Such support was effective because it occurred before their struggles undermined their motivation to persist. Bobby provided an example of this. He started higher education in Germany but found his stay rather difficult. “My life in Germany was very, very difficult and frustrating. Going to Germany was like signing a death warrant. My admission letter was all German.” However, he persevered, earned a diploma in the German language, and wanted to study dogmatic theology, but it was difficult for him. He was ready to return to the homeland but his bishop asked him to proceed to the U.S. (the bishop having studied in the U.S.) to complete his graduate studies. He came to the U.S. in

2005, where he embarked on the second phase of his academic pursuit in the Minnesota and South Dakota areas. He persisted and graduated with his Ph.D. at the time of interviewing him.

Younger students, meanwhile, felt that they needed structured support to succeed. This includes having a goal and knowing how to achieve it through counseling, staying on track by keeping their eyes on the prize, feeling that somebody wants to help them to succeed through nurturing and mentoring, actively participating in class and extra-curricular activities through engagement, feeling that they are part of the college community through connection, and feeling valued, recognized, and appreciated for their abilities, skills, talents, experiences, and contributions to the campus. Lori, for instance, stated that her faith helped her to achieve her goals. “I belong to a Church that gives me material and spiritual support every week. I also listen to a Christian radio station every morning so that when I'm down it lifts up my spirit and my motivation is renewed.” She also did volunteer work in Red River High school, where she taught refugees English and helped with their assignments as part of community outreach. She planned to do an internship with a human rights and child abuse institution. Pam talked about going to seminars and conferences as part of her social networking. She stated, “Most times, when I go out for any event or conference, I use it as a networking opportunity, and I try to sustain my relationships with people, send emails occasionally, and stuff like that.” The older respondents did not care so much about these connections.

### **Financial Support**

Affording the full cost of attendance, as a requirement to persist, was an issue that respondents also addressed. Many believed that they could succeed if they could find a reasonable way of financing their educations. Increase awareness of the financial resources available to support their university attendance was key to their persistence. Twelve respondents

felt that they needed help filling out the applications and understanding their financial ability to attend graduate education. Once enrolled, they needed solutions to financial problems (through financial aid workshops) that threatened them with the need to drop out.

Obot received the support he required to persist. He had worked in Nigeria and came to the U.S. with a BA, gaining admission to Jackson State University in Mississippi to pursue an MBA. He was given an assistantship and earned his degree in December of 1980. Then, in 1981, he received a federal scholarship from Nigeria for his Masters and Ph.D. programs, and so he also enrolled in and earned another MS degree in computer science in 1981 before continuing with the federal scholarship in 1982 in engineering. He moved to Galaxy State University in 1987 for his Ph.D. in engineering. While there, he became an associate professor until he earned his PhD in 1989. By this time, he became a tenured professor. The federal scholarship that Obot received from Nigeria enabled him to pay for everything, including his means of subsistence. This was a significant break for him because he had nothing to worry about financially. He was one of two participants with such sponsorship from Nigeria. Uche, by contrast, saved money when he worked as a junior clerical officer in Nigeria. After he had saved enough to pay his tuition, Glory State University gave him admission. He arrived with an F1 student visa. He did his undergraduate studies and worked as an accountant, but he later lost his job. This motivated him to go back to school to study for his Ph.D.

Jason, who received outside support, got his break in 1989 through the Amnesty program, which enabled him to get his Green Card. In his excitement, he stated,

That means I have arrived in the U.S. (arrive here means the green card facilitates his getting a job and other benefits associated with it) because I can now go out there and look for a job and try to compete with others on equal footing. As soon as I got my Green Card in 1989, I traveled to Nigeria and when I returned, I started my own business...

With the passage of time, the system changed and a Master's degree in psychology, counseling, or mental health was required for his job. He was retrenched, which forced him to enroll in the doctoral program at Sunshine University, FL from 2002 to 2006, from which he graduated with a PhD in Education.

When asked about family expectations and involvement in the doctoral program, Pam said,

I got financial support. I got moral support from my family. Everyone was excited because being a woman from northern Nigeria, it's not every day you see a woman with a Ph.D. and not just a Ph.D., a Ph.D. in law, so everyone was excited for me. I got financial support because that was the only way I could survive in the States. When I went back to school, I wasn't working for three years, so I was staying with my cousin in Maryland and her husband. They were very supportive. Then, I got financial support from my family back in Nigeria from time to time, basically.

The type and mix of financial aid provided to respondents had either positive or negative influences on their decisions to remain in the university, depending upon their circumstances and background factors as well as the cost of tuition, room and board, and fees. In addition, the quality of on-campus residential living was an essential element in the students' social integration. Through living/learning communities, respondents became active participants in their academic and social communities.

Universities need to listen to all their students, take seriously their voices, and be sensitive to how perceptions of experiences vary among students of different races and, in the case of Nigerians, even tribes, income levels, and cultural backgrounds. Only then can they further improve student persistence and degree completion while addressing the continuing inequality in student outcomes that threaten this persistence.

## **Sense of Belonging**

While respondents understood that personal belief was essential to persisting to completion, it does not in itself ensure it. For persistence to occur, respondents needed to see themselves as members of a community of other students, faculty, and staff who valued their membership—that they matter and belong; hence the term, “sense of belonging.” The outcome was expressed as a commitment that served to bind the individual to the group or community even when challenges arose. Engagement with others on the campus counted. More important still was respondents’ perceptions of those engagements and the meaning that they derived from them as to their belonging.

Although a sense of belonging mirrored some respondents’ prior experiences, it was most directly shaped by the broader campus climate and daily interactions with other students, faculty, staff, and administrators on campus and the messages that those interactions conveyed. The younger respondents, who perceived themselves as belonging, persisted more because it led not only to enhanced motivation but also to a willingness to become involved with others in ways that further promoted persistence. In contrast, the older students’ sense of not belonging, of being out of place, led to a withdrawal from contact with others that further undermined their motivation to persist.

For their part, the recruiting universities promoted the perception that all students saw the institution as welcoming and supportive and that the culture was one of inclusion. They did this by not only speaking to issues of exclusion but also by promoting those forms of activity that required shared academic and social experiences. When asked about the activities that lent her the most success in achieving her goals, Brooke said that she had good friends and an excellent support group that made her feel welcome and that they could talk about common

issues and concerns, so she felt that she was not alone. This support system enriched her life, improved her wellbeing, and increased her sense of belonging and purpose, thus boosting her happiness, self-confidence, and self-worth.

In the academic realm, shared experiences took the form of cohort programs and learning communities. Within classrooms, creating shared experiences meant using pedagogies like cooperative and problem-based learning that required students to learn together as equal partners. In the social realm, institutions took steps to provide for a diversity of social groups and organizations that allowed respondents to find at least one smaller community of students with whom they share a common bond. However, to better promote students' sense of belonging, institutions should address it at the very outset of students' journey, as early as orientation. As is the case for self-efficacy, developing a sense of belonging during the first year facilitates other forms of engagement that enhance student development, learning, and completion.

Lori spoke of how she belongs to various clubs and study groups that helped her to have a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose. She said that she loves teaching students and learning from them at the same time because it makes her more student conscious. She chose this program because her first degree was in cultural studies education. She was looking for something that would help her to impact people better in the culture and help her to integrate culture and diversity issues in education. She felt safe and secure within the university community. She also considered conveniences like the low cost of living, warm weather, a hospitable and friendly environment, travelling and experiencing the country by herself, and getting a tuition waiver. For Bill, the environment was different when he arrived into the U.S. Like all other participants, he planned to return to the homeland upon graduation, but his plans

changed over time, which affected his decision-making persistence. The longer he stayed, the more he was exposed to innovative ideas, new visions, and innovative approaches to life, which subsequently made him change schools until he found the fit that he felt most comfortable with.

### **Perceived Value of the Curriculum**

Respondents' perceptions of the value of their studies also influenced their motivation to persist. Respondents perceived the material to be learned as of sufficient quality and relevance to warrant their time and effort. This motivated them to engage that material in ways that promote learning and, in turn, their persistence. Curriculum perceived as irrelevant or of low quality often yielded the opposite result. Aminu insisted that the curriculum should be tailored to the needs of the homeland.

Addressing this issue was challenging because respondents' perceptions of the curriculum varied not only among themselves but also among the differing subjects that they were asked to take as part of their disciplines. Bobby complained about taking courses that had little or no bearing on the Nigerian situation and felt it was a waste of time. It is necessary, therefore, to help students enroll in a field of study appropriate to their needs and interests so that they find the material within those courses sufficiently challenging to warrant their effort. Second, the curriculum should include their experiences and histories. Third, meaningful connections in subjects that they are asked to learn should not be left for students to discover but should be demonstrated by faculty in ways (e.g., pedagogies, interdisciplinary learning, and contextualization in which basic skills are taught within the context of another field) that have relevance to issues of interest to them. The outcome of persistence is not simply that students complete their degrees but also that they learn in powerful ways. Education is the goal; persistence is a vehicle for its occurrence.

Some students will persist even if they have little sense of belonging or see little value in their studies. Some of the respondents persisted because of external pressures, especially not to disappoint the family, while others persisted because they perceived the value of obtaining their degrees as enhancing their occupation, income, and status outcomes. However, earning a degree is a hollow achievement if it fails to take advantage of the intrinsic benefits of a university education, namely belonging and learning.

### **Guidance and Counseling**

With the significant increase in personal counseling usage, guidance and counseling were important in assisting respondents to overcome problems that interfered with their performance and their involvement in academic and non-academic programs and activities. Aminu said that he was missing his family, friends, and familiarity with the homeland environment and feels homesick, so studying in the U.S. was a challenge. The U.S. culture is also different from that of the homeland. He looked around Kingston area in New York for schools. They had a state university, but guidance from his bishop did not allow him to attend a public university. He wanted a Catholic school and, when he found one, it required the GRE, and that would take time to prepare for and write. Glory State University (GSU), on the other hand, did not require the GRE for enrollment, and St Mary's College would not give him a discount. Given that he studied communications at the Masters level, but had no Ph.D. in the communications field at GSU, through guidance and counseling he chose higher education leadership, management, and policy as an alternative path to realizing his dream.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Younger respondents indicated that significant and meaningful participation in extracurricular activities contributed to their success and retention. Campus clubs,

organizations, intramurals, campus events, and student traditions all played a role in engaging them and providing intentional connection opportunities. The older or adult learners tended to be transfer students because they worked about forty hours per week off campus and almost exclusively commuted long distances hence had little or no time for extracurricular activities. These demographic and economic conditions were different for younger respondents compared to the older ones, who could easily fall into adult attrition. The following section addresses situations in which respondents considered withdrawing from the program. When asked whether they seriously considered withdrawing from the program at any time and the barriers they faced, respondents who answered affirmatively cited three leading reasons: feeling overwhelmed by the workload; problems with faculty/curriculum; and family issues.

### **Feeling Overwhelmed**

The older respondents reported feeling very overwhelmed with their academic workloads. Difficulties keeping up with the pace of their courses, especially those that required a great deal of reading, were reported. The older respondents also cited stressors related to the demands of completing their doctoral degrees while working full-time and raising a family. Some students did not appreciate the amount of work required in their doctoral programs, the multiple and competing demands on their time, or the level of commitment required to succeed. When I asked Kim what concessions in her life she was prepared to make to be successful in the program because she would not be able to succeed in the doctoral program without recognizing that life changes would be required, she said,

I don't want to be pressured to finish my thesis as quickly as possible or to attend back to back conferences as this will make me lose my curiosity and see academia as an obstacle that needs to be overcome. But I am willing to be conscientious, which includes self-discipline, curiosity, and a willingness to be industrious. At this stage of my life, I will do what it takes to be successful.

### **Problem with Faculty/Curriculum**

Talking about the challenges that she faced while in her program, Pam said, “the hardest part was coming up with a research proposal and putting all these cumbersome processes into something that is creative and would contribute to the body of knowledge. Getting funding was another challenge.” Discussing a critical point in her educational quest, she said that it was difficult for her to satisfy her four committee members, who made her rewrite repeatedly. “It was really hard,” she said. “Some mornings, I wake up and I’m like, oh my God, what have I gotten myself into? Am I going to be able to finish? Am I going to graduate?” Because some days it gets very hard and some days I just get very tired. I think that’s what everyone goes through, the mental stress.”

Older respondents seek a supportive learning environment in which faculty treat them with respect, understand them as adult learners, and are fair in their grading. Unfortunately, when respondents encounter what they perceived as inflexible and/or uncaring faculty or administrators, withdrawal can follow. A caring educational environment is important to adult learners. For this group, faculty concern for students was significantly more important than for the younger students. One way of promoting their success was helping them to develop an understanding of their background and educational goals. Faculty members are in a unique position to socialize students. Mentoring and guidance helped to create self-efficacy and increase the likelihood of persistence among the respondents.

### **Family Issues**

The third reason cited for considering withdrawal was family issues. These often overlapped with health and financial concerns, and sometimes they exacerbated feeling of being

overwhelmed. This case was more prevalent among the younger generation than the older. Shawn had not seen his mother in over four years since coming to the U.S. and missed his family, especially at holidays. He tried to talk to them every week. His goal was to get his Geology degree and return to his hometown in Nigeria. He was disturbed when his uncle had a stroke and help was too far away, and he tried to follow his father's advice "to study continuously and live frugally." "The whole village looks up to me," Shawn said. "Getting an education from abroad is highly valued."

Brooke, in response to being asked how often she goes to Nigeria, said,

I haven't gone back to Nigeria because my mom is begging me not to come home now. I've renewed my visa twice so I just want to go home for vacation ... Mom is going to be 70 this year. My mother told me that I shouldn't come until I finish my program . . . Oh my goodness, my family is putting pressure on me. They have already started calling me doctor while I'm still in the process. It serves as motivation but it is also stressful . . . All my aunts say I am a doctor. This is the one thing they imagine. They say to me, "Don't worry, you will pass. We will pray for you" . . . And I send money back home to them. I don't get money from them. I feel as if I'm obliged to send money and sometimes it kills me because I have bills to pay and I have family responsibilities, so what comes first? How do I share this money coming in on the 30th and I'm thinking of these things? The family responsibilities and the way they look at me is as if I make tons of money, sometimes it's saddening because I live from hand to mouth ...

In such cases, it is important for the receiving institution to demonstrate understanding and, when appropriate and possible, flexibility. Respondents believed that if they had someone in the administration or among the faculty to whom they could turn for support they were more likely to persist in their studies. Likewise, institutions can encourage the creation of peer groups to support students through rough times or help them deal with chronic family pressures. Younger respondents who established a strong network of peers, faculty, and administrators persisted in their educations despite challenging family issues. If expectations, understanding, and support cannot come from family members or friends, they must come from elsewhere.

In some cases, there may be no other option but for students to withdraw. For relational purposes, it is important to stay in contact with them, to show that the institution cares about them as people, and to welcome them back should they return. Part-time adult respondents faced multiple challenges. Therefore, it is important, at the outset, that the institution makes them aware of expectations. It is equally important for the institution to provide a supportive and caring environment that encourages persistence. A holistic approach to education, in which respondents' needs are recognized and addressed, is required. For instance, rules aimed at keeping younger students from dropping class or coming in late everyday might not work for older respondents, who have families, jobs, and live far away from the university. They struggle with bus schedules, child-care issues, and constantly shifting demands at work. Penalizing them for being late or absent in the same way younger students are penalized who stay out drinking or just sleep in is neither fair nor productive. Besides feeling anxious, the older respondents felt conspicuous because of their age or the way they looked, talked, and dressed. They should be made to feel valued because these older respondents bring a wealth of wisdom, experience, and skills to class, along with a perspective on life that is very different and infinitely more practical.

### **Summary of Results for Research Question #2**

This section examined what activities gave respondents the most pleasure and enhanced their motivation to persist in their academic pursuits and whether the respondents had seriously considered withdrawing from the program at any time. The objective was to understand how respondents persisted in their universities and fields of study. Factors that influenced their persistence included their aspirations, backgrounds, social environments, institutional climates, academic programs, college reputations, educational facilities, costs, and potential employment opportunities. Geography also imposes constraints on the choice of university. Institutional

characteristics like cost, size, distance, the quality of programs, and the availability of financial aid were all factors that respondents considered.

Along with providing descriptions of the challenges they faced, many respondents reported various coping strategies that helped them to deal better with and overcome some of their challenges. These coping strategies were, in most cases, developed over time by the respondents themselves as they gained a better understanding of their specific areas of weakness.

### **Research Question 3 – Return Readiness**

It is essential to underscore the importance of both questions related to leaving and staying and their associated lines of inquiry; both are vital to understanding why respondents choose to stay or return upon graduation. In response to the third research question about the factors that influenced the choice of Nigerian doctoral students (with plans) or recipients to remain in the U.S. or return to their homeland upon completion of their doctoral studies, doctoral students versus doctoral recipients, stayers versus returners, younger/traditional students versus older/nontraditional students, and voluntary returners versus involuntary returners all shared how they felt about staying or returning and how return preparedness/readiness fit into their decision about what to do after receiving their doctoral degrees.

The main themes that emerged about staying in the U.S. were the prospects of better or future job opportunities. The principal factor that determined whether respondents wanted to stay in or leave the United States after graduation was why they chose to pursue graduate studies in the United States in the first place. For the younger traditional students that chose future career opportunities as a reason for deciding to study here, their chances of staying were

significantly higher than their older counterparts. The overall quality of life, professional networking, better salary, and expanded opportunities for family members were some other considerations in their choosing to stay. The older subgroup (10) was influenced by whether they were aware of programs or policies in the homeland that encouraged people to return from abroad. Those who were not aware of such home country incentive programs or policies were more likely to want to stay in the United States. Those who planned to return to the homeland after graduation cited family and friends as the most important influences in their decision not to stay in the U.S. Social and cultural reasons also played significant roles in their decision to leave the U.S. Those who wanted to start their own companies felt that there were more growth opportunities in the homeland, although the U.S. has better funding opportunities.

The concept of return readiness refers to the process of preparing to return to the home country. Resource mobilization refers to the ability to gather the needed tangible resources (e.g., financial capital and intangible skills such as being educated and social networks) to do so. This concept explains the manner and the extent of respondents' readiness to return, especially in the case of those prepared to return compared to those who choose to stay.

The major categories or subheadings for this section report findings on the following: respondents with the initial intention to return; those with ambivalent feelings; stay in the U.S. considerations; return to Nigeria considerations; barriers to staying in the U.S.; barriers to returning to Nigeria; and return readiness, for which five main resources stood out. These are personal, educational, social, economic, and mental readiness. The section concludes with a summary of the chapter.

### **Respondents with Initial Intention to Return – 16 (100%)**

This section examines the concept of initial intentions to return and starts with an overview. As earlier noted, all respondents came to the U.S. with a clear intention to return. None came with the intention that “I will not return to Nigeria upon graduation.” However, with the passage of time, and with other variables intervening, only five of this study’s participants had definite intentions to return. Of these, three have returned. Six decided to stay in the U.S. and the other five have ambivalent feelings over whether to stay or return.

Fourteen (88%) participants described attachment to the homeland and reunion with family and friends as important motivations to return. Describing his attachment to the homeland, Nate said that he felt “there is no place like home. You always have that part of you that is attached to your home. I pretty much miss home. I’m attached to home but I’m here now because of what I’m doing and I must cope. But I plan to return to my homeland when I graduate.” Bill’s original intention was to come, study, and go back, also because there is no place like home.

You cannot erase the fact that this is the land of your birth, the place of your origin. I will always have ties to Nigeria. I will always have ties with the diocese and to my family. I am pretty much in touch with them. I go home once or twice a year for vacation. I have completed a couple of projects also by way of community development. I help with education. I keep my ties with Nigeria and my family. Once I have a clear sense of mission, I will definitely go back. We're not just staying here for staying sake. If I have a very strong sense of mission down the line I will go back, and I believe that I will go back because I still want to make contribution to the society.

Aminu also had the original ambition to return to Nigeria after graduation. “I said to myself, ‘What do I need and why do I need it?’” Because he had plans to go back, “I said, well, let me go for a doctoral degree.”

Mobility has both push and pull factors. Push factors include the reasons why one leaves and comes to the U.S., such as lack of basic services, lack of safety, high crime, poverty, violence, and much more. Pull factors focus on what the U.S. offers to attract students, such as better education, employment, better services, good climate, and safety, less crime, political stability, and lower risk from natural hazards. Paying for graduate education in the U.S. is very demanding but worth the investment. A good graduate education is a stepping-stone to better employment as the system tends to reward such effort. As Sally stated, suggesting the pull factor enticing her home, “my career goals after graduation is return to Nigeria immediately and work for the government, do policy work, and get a teaching job, probably like a part-time teaching job. That was what I actually wanted to do because I haven't really taught in a conventional university.”

The six who decided to stay in the U.S. (Bobby, Bill, Yusuf, Jason, Obot, and Titi) love that everything in college is structured to make you a better person, whether taking classes or doing research. Every semester, you are reading books to expand the knowledge base. Their stay in the U.S. has been successful because they have learned a lot, both academically and by interactions with people from different countries and diverse backgrounds. They have been given a worldview in which they do not only think of themselves and their homeland but of all peoples. Two respondents were guaranteed jobs upon their graduation and return to Nigeria. The respondents were guaranteed jobs when they were given scholarships and signed promissory notes based on the employment guarantee, but immediately after their graduation, the economy plummeted. The Nigerian government did not honor the signed bond, which meant that there was no job waiting for them. Those who returned, although not interviewed for this research, were frustrated. Some tried to return to the U.S. but were denied reentry visas.

Titi's "intention was to stay and start working, and during that time when we graduated from pharmacy school there was so much encouragement." I thought, "Oh yeah, don't worry. When you graduate you're going to get a job and the job will file for a work permit." In her case, however, that did not happen because she graduated during the economic recession and the job market slowed down, with many workers retrenched. It took her about six months to get a job in the U.S., although pharmacists usually get jobs before graduating. She had to enroll in graduate studies to maintain her student F-1 visa status; otherwise, she would be repatriated to Nigeria. As fate would have it, towards the end of her Master's degree she got married and her husband filed for the green card for her, thus realizing her plan to stay because of her career. She now works as a pharmacist in the U.S.

A few respondents were somewhat uncooperative in their response because whatever they said about plans were estimates. This presented a challenge to the researcher, who made the most of it by being diplomatic and tactical in questioning. This leads to a discussion of those with ambivalent intentions.

### **Ambivalent Feelings**

This section examines those with ambivalent intentions about to stay or not to stay as respondents grapple with this dilemma. Five respondents had mixed feelings about whether to remain in the U.S. or return to the homeland. Shawn, for instance, spoke of a conditional return. "I would consider returning to Nigeria if there is peace and security, and if there is good academic environment. If the government tries not to interfere too much as they are doing in the educational system and they just let the schools go on and students learn and if basically there is more funding." Indeed, if Nigeria had good leadership or a good economic climate, she would attract her doctoral graduates outside the country who are doing well in various fields to

return. What the country lacks, per Shawn, “is the direction, the leadership, and good conditions for everybody to bring their talent, ideas, and experience.” Nigeria has talents but few are motivated to go back because of the menace of Boko Haram (a terrorist group that abhors Western Education) and kidnappings.

Bobby is another example of a participant who was indecisive about staying or returning. “I would not like to go back to Nigeria with everything going on there. Nigeria is in bad shape and a dangerous place to go to now. What I saw and heard from family and friends when I visited recently makes it difficult to desire to return.” He believed that he would never get any support from them and, secondly, that some feel threatened by his success. Some who returned have even been assassinated. “Right now,” he said, “I am not ready to go but, eventually, I will return.”

Security of life and property is one of the main incentives that made several participants choose a conditional stay in the U.S. It is also a country of opportunities where those who are ready to work hard will realize their dreams. The U.S. is open and respectful and rewards serious people. It has experts in various fields who pay attention to detail and try to solve problems. The police protect lives and property. Bobby supported this view when he said,

I love the U.S. because it respects the rule of law, which is lacking in Nigeria, where jungle justice is practiced. The medical system entices me to stay. There are consultants in every field and the medications work to prolong life. America respects and values hard work. In Nigeria, apart from ghost workers, people simply show up in the office for a few hours a day and a few days a month and then claim thousands in Naira (local currency).

Titi also expressed mixed feelings about staying or returning at the time of this interview. If things were normal in Nigeria, she and her family would consider returning, but she would not want to jeopardize their lives. She reiterated,

I'm very realistic. If things don't get better in Nigeria and there is insecurity and the instability that threatens my family, then that would be a major factor that would keep me here. It depends on what is going on in the homeland. Nigeria is going down the drain right now. If it continues like this and Boko Haram is taking over everywhere, you won't take your family back there, would you?

She wants to be optimistic, but what she sees and hears on the news about Nigeria does not make her feel like anything is getting better. In a government where “some people can do some things without being questioned, some embezzle money and no one holds them accountable, I cannot entrust my future nor that of my children.”

Aminu was initially planning to get his education in the U.S. and then return to Nigeria, he said, “But that is not to my liking. My heart goes out to Nigeria, but going back there is risking your life. There are numerous stories of insecurity. Nowhere and nobody are safe. Why would I want to return to a place like that—where I can easily be slaughtered like a chicken?” The pull factor was returning to be with family and friends, but “my home happens to be the operating base of the infamous Boko Haram, where every conceivable crime occurs—rape, robbery, kidnapping, and assassinations—in broad daylight. What am I going to use to defend myself? Going back is risking and surrendering my life.”

This is a source of concern for most Nigerians living abroad. Almost all respondents decried the sorry state of affairs in Nigeria. Many respondents and, indeed, most professionals would love to return but cannot because of the genocide taking place there. The bandits think that everyone who comes from America has money, and so returnees become the targets of kidnapping for ransom or murder. This strong opinion was expressed among several participants who wanted to stay alive and benefit from their many years of investing in their educations. Despite this gloom, those with ambivalent feelings were still optimistic that things

would get better in Nigeria in the long run, and then, eventually, they would return. The ensuing section addresses why respondents choose to stay in the U.S.

### **Stay in the U.S. Considerations – 6 (38%)**

This section focuses on expressed willingness to stay in the U.S. upon graduation at the time of the interview. Six participants indicated the desire to remain in the U.S. to pursue their careers. Some of the reasons for their staying included the promise of a new life, the U.S. being a land of opportunities, the provision of social infrastructures, and being able to invite family members to visit.

The U.S. dollar has been strengthened by over 500% over the last five years against the local currency in Nigeria (Naira), so participants earning in U.S. dollars see the increase in value of their gross income each time they come back to the homeland or if they invest. It is also easier to get funding in the U.S. to start one's business. Considering that most respondents focused on high growth fields of study, they ended up with the potential for high paying jobs. The ratio of cost of living to wages is a lot higher in Nigeria, as well. In a similar vein, the quality of work in general is better in the U.S. and it has a better standard of living, with no power outages, constant running water, good healthcare delivery, law and order, organized traffic, and better legal systems.

Twelve (75%) respondents saw the U.S. as a land filled with hope for a far better future if one is willing to toil long hours to achieve one's dreams, and they stayed because of the promise of a new life and U.S. as a land of opportunities. It is a land of freedom and opportunity for ambitious, hardworking people determined to make better lives for themselves. Bill strongly felt that he would rather stay in the U.S., develop his talents, and share them with those who are open to new experience and knowledge, which he believes people back home are not. By staying

here, “I’m putting myself in a situation where I’m better able to help them. I can also support those who are needy back home by way of finance or advice. It could be by inviting them to visit or helping them to get better treatment over here.” Aminu corroborated that staying in the U.S. allows family members to come on vacation and broaden their horizons. “The U.S. is not only good for studies but for vacation. It also exposes one to the realities of life and orderly conduct.”

Lori believed that if she got a green card or dual citizenship, doing so would relieve her of applying and reapplying for her visa, which becomes a burden over time. Indeed, getting a green card is one reason to stay. Another incentive is marriage. If she got married to somebody who is a U.S. permanent resident, she would stay. A third incentive for a permanent stay would be owning a business, being her own boss and determining her agenda. Obot advocated developing oneself in high-growth areas for gainful employment to stay in the U.S. He stated that he does not want to be a Ph.D. holder and end up doing menial and odd jobs. He decried the situation in which Nigerians with all kinds of qualifications, including physicians and engineers, end up doing unskilled jobs. Titi has developed herself in the past five years and treasured the ability to get any job in the U.S. “The U.S. has not changed my values,” she stated, “but it has opened my ability to reason well at a global level and maximize my potentials. Things are systematic, predictable, consistent, orderly, and productivity is rewarded in the U.S.” There are also opportunities to grow and for career advancement.

Ten (62%) participants cited the availability of essential infrastructures and basic facilities as reasons for staying in the U.S. Life in the U.S. is more comfortable given the quality of living and the availability of basic facilities and infrastructures, security, stability, safety, and the rule of law, which facilitates justice and peace. Lori values the fact that generally, people

are more honest in the U.S. than in Nigeria. Other incentives cited include the provision of necessities like constant power, water any time you open the faucet, good roads to drive on without the fear of accidents, and a productive work environment.

In addition, almost all respondents cited and hailed the availability of excellent health care delivery medical systems as an incentive to stay in the U.S. There are consultants in every field and the medications work to prolong one's lifespan. People are more aware and conscious of the environment and have access to more resources for workouts. Information flow on healthy practices is better and people pay more attention to health details. Titi said, "I see myself being fulfilled in the U.S. because of the provision of social amenities, a decent work environment, the safety of lives and property, and the educational needs for my kids."

Eight respondents cited security as a reason to remain in the U.S. because they can "sleep with their two eyes closed and not have to worry about armed robbers coming to break into their house." It is easier to hold people accountable in the U.S. than in Nigeria, they believed, especially for criminal acts. Bobby mater-of-factly stated, "This is a motivating factor for me to remain here. I have invested and sacrificed so much to be where I am now, so I cannot just imagine myself going back and be killed without benefiting from the long journey, the long ladder I have climbed." Lori also made this point when she stated that the U.S. "tries to get to the bottom of things that happen. I love this country because they respect the rule of law, which is what we lack in Nigeria, where jungle justice is practiced."

Comparing voluntary comers with those who did not actively seek coming, and why and how they chose to remain in the U.S., it is important to note that two of the four respondents who were open to staying in the U.S. were priests sponsored by their bishops who were required to return upon graduation. The two others were a young couple, totaling three men and a woman.

The two priests with the intention to stay (for distinct reasons) were considering violating the concordat that they made with their bishops that required them to return upon graduation. As noted earlier in this chapter, this created conflict without a satisfactory ending. Meanwhile, older respondents, who perceived a fair exchange for time, effort, and money invested and saw a link between course concepts and real-world outcomes, now want to demonstrate their relevance. The younger respondents still have a lifetime ahead of them and they are not in a hurry about their prospects. The subsequent section examines the reasons that respondents considered for returning to Nigeria.

#### **Return to Nigeria Considerations – 4 (25%)**

Why would respondents choose to return to the homeland at the time of this interview? What made them maintain their initial intention to return upon graduation? This section focuses on the reasons to return to Nigeria, which are both personal and social.

Five (31%) participants cited personal reasons for returning, including the desire to be with family, the sense of community, giving back to the homeland, and not worrying about their legal status. Contrary to the popular opinion that foreign students come to the U.S. with a definite intention to stay using a U.S. degree to get a green card and find gainful employment, all respondents planned to return. Over time, other factors came into play. Lori arrived in the U.S. and did not think that she would go further than a master's degree, but she opted for a doctoral degree.

Bobby, by contrast, reinforced the belief that foreign students come to study in the U.S. and use it as a springboard to obtain permanent residency:

I am thoroughly born and bred as a Nigerian and I am and remain a Nigerian wherever I am. I go to Nigeria every year for one month so I am very, very attached to Nigeria and I will love to return when I finally achieve what I am looking for here—confidential—

green card. What I'm looking for right now is to get the green card, work, and save some money and get something to take back home for survival.

When he graduated four years ago, Bobby was ready to return to Nigeria even without any money because he loves his country and wanted to get back to utilize what he learned, given that his country had blessed him. However, he decided that he would work and earn some money first and, second, apply for the green card. When he realizes his dream of getting the green card and working and saving some money, he said, he will consider returning to the homeland.

Five respondents felt that being constantly reminded that they were aliens hence did not want to stay in the U.S. permanently so they would not have to worry about their legal status. They were also constantly picked on as persons with accents. Marty said, "I'd rather be in Nigeria and be poor with dignity than to be here, rich but humiliated." Pam did not want to worry about her legal status since to graduate from school and get a job would require another three years for her to renew her H-1B visa. "I didn't want to worry about that. I knew I would have more opportunities back home because there are many Ph.D. holders here in the U.S. but few professionals like me in Nigeria. Being a woman from northern Nigeria, I would have more opportunities when it comes to jobs, consultancy, or anything."

For all respondents, being with family to have a sense of belonging was a factor in their consideration to return home. Marty expressed his feelings in this regard by stating, "I miss my family, siblings, and colleagues, classmates, and peers. I miss Nigerian food. I miss the respect given to priests. Everybody calls you Father and that is good for me. Being at home is so good." Titi echoed these sentiments: "My mom still lives in Nigeria and my husband's family. We have a very strong connection to Nigeria. We speak to them daily and visit when we can." They

would return if they developed a business idea, tested the waters, and were ready to go into it fully, or if they had career paths that were clearly defined and guaranteed. “We intend to expose our children to Nigeria at a very early age so that they will know where they come from. We want them to know and understand the fact that they might have to go back and live there.”

Ten (62%) of the respondents believed that more respect and dignity is accorded to those who earned a doctoral degree in the U.S. and suggested that better name recognition and more opportunities to advance were reasons to return home. Pam, who obtained her doctorate in law and returned, believed that Nigeria would provide her a better platform to excel than the U.S. She loves the culture and the food. She also had a life, a viable career, and opportunities for advancement in Nigeria before coming to the U.S. for her doctoral studies. “I know I would have better opportunities back home than here. After my defense and all that, I didn't have the energy to remain in America, or to start worrying about things that I shouldn't even worry about. I also believe Ph.D. holders are needed more in Africa than here.” There are many people in the U.S. with PhDs. This is a country of over 370 million people, and there are so many people that come here. There are few people that come from home, so why waste the talented manpower here? Why stay here and be lost in the crowd?

In the same vein, Uche believed that there was more potential in the homeland. His vision was to own a pharmacy. “I want to branch out and go into industry and open pharmacies all over the country. But I feel like before I get to that place in the U.S., I would have reached that place five times over in Nigeria. I feel like it will take much longer in the U.S.” His dream is to be his own boss and have his own business, which seems more attainable in Nigeria. He believed that it is easier to be successful in terms of making money in Nigeria than in the U.S.:

For me, the potential to be wealthy is an incentive to return. Another platform knows that if I return, I will at the very least make a difference in some way. Again, no matter how integrated we are in the U.S, there still is the sense that you are different because there is implicit bias and systemic racism.

Marty, another returnee, went back to Nigeria to take care of his aged mother and family business: “I want to be where people appreciate me. I want to be where I can do something for people, not to compete and compete and just kill myself for nothing.” Coming back home was a positive experience for him. “People say of me, ‘Wow, this guy studied outside the country. He studied in the U.S. and he studied in a university run by Jesuits,’ so it has its own fringe benefits. People regard you. People respect you and what you have achieved.”

All respondents felt that there is a sharp contrast between the culture in the U.S. and the homeland in terms of a sense of community and belonging over and against individualism. Nigeria is community-based. Uche put it this way: “We believe in the extended family, whereby family does not stop with husband, wife, and children. It extends to cousins, relatives, uncles, and even the community.” Hence, people look out for each other and feel a part of the community heartbeat and symphony. “The saying holds true that it takes a village to raise a child.” In Nigeria, “Once that child is seen doing something wrong, whether yours or not, you would have to redirect the child, unlike here in the U.S. You can get in trouble trying to tell somebody else's child what to do. Even when you discipline your child, it is termed abuse and the child can call the cops on you. Not so in Nigeria. That is the big contrast in culture.”

Citing another difference in Nigerian culture, Kim said,

If you want to visit a family, you don't have to call or make an appointment prior to the trip. One is always welcomed if the other party is there. Unlike here, if you are visiting family, you must call first, and ensure the individual is home, and whether you will be welcome. It takes months and sometimes years to get in touch with family members but in Nigeria you see your family every day, every week, every month. Again, in Nigeria, it is part of the culture that when you see somebody, whether related to you or not, you greet

them. Here in America, it is common to tuck away aged parents in nursing homes. In Nigeria, we bring our elderly parents to live with us in our homes. It is our turn as their children to take care of them.

Greeting is one way that Nigerians show respect and express social relationships, but in the U.S., Kim argued, when you greet somebody with “Good morning,” they turn around and ask you, “What is good about the morning?” You feel confused, embarrassed, or even guilty for initiating the pleasantries. Uche added, “I also noticed that people here do not initiate greetings and accept it with lack luster. Back home, greeting is one way to show care, to reach out and to look out one for another.” Kim said she would return to Nigeria in a heartbeat because of the communal aspect of living there.

Underscoring this communal emphasis, a clear majority of respondents felt strongly about giving back to the community that nurtured them. Obot was planning to give back to the homeland as a visiting professor who would encourage prospective students to major in high-growth fields of study to stand a good chance of rewarding employment after graduation both in the U.S. and in the homeland, depending on one’s decision. He also called on doctoral students who were willing to return to develop thick skin and not give in to the frustration of the Nigerian system. Similarly, Nate’s career objective was to teach in Nigeria after graduation, if given the opportunity, as a way of giving back to the community:

I really want to teach, to give back to the society and to do my research as well to be able to offer my own contribution to helping the society become a better place, to help especially with food production through research and professional development. I’ll be able to provide suggestions that will help.

Overall, being with family and friends and giving back to the community that laid the foundation and sponsored their education both at home and abroad were pulls for respondents returning home. For younger folks, however, these intentions changed as new opportunities

opened to them. It was also observed that older respondents were markedly different from younger ones with respect to why they came and when they planned to return to the homeland.

In summary, the reasons to return to Nigeria included reuniting with family and the desire to share the knowledge acquired. Staying in the U.S. deprives the homeland of professionals, thus contributing to the brain drain syndrome. Nigeria needs all her professional teachers, doctors, engineers, etc., which would raise her gross domestic product. Other reasons to return to the homeland are based on respondents' feelings about staying in the U.S. These included a lack of community spirit, loneliness and alienation, seeing the U.S. as a place to work but not retire, and not worrying about one's legal status. The ensuing section examines the barriers to not staying in the U.S.

#### **Barriers to staying in the U.S. – 12 (75%)**

Securing a job is a function of many factors other than technical knowledge, including lack of equal opportunity due to racism and implicit bias. The economy may crumble, laws might change, prospective employers might find applicants culturally unfit, and respondents might not be good communicators. All these factors could affect one's job market prospects. The worst case for respondents would be returning to the homeland and securing work at a lower wage, which is not even guaranteed. So, the question that the respondents grappled with was what price they were willing to pay for better opportunities to make money and perform quality work in the U.S. One respondent opined, "We will never have equal opportunities in the U.S."

Brooke came to the U.S. with a J-1 exchange visa. This presented a unique set of challenges. She stated,

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) was constantly after me, monitoring all the courses I registered for every semester as a full-time student, a requirement to maintain my status. They ensured I did that and to also show that I was not interested in staying in U.S. I was very eager to write my final exam, write my dissertation and return to Nigeria.

When asked if the length of time she had in the U.S. was sufficient for her to complete her studies, she said, “As a full-time student, the USCIS always reminded me and I had to register for nine credits every semester, so that made it easier to finish within a limited period.” Not only was this a source of stress to this respondent, but it kept her focused and it worked within her timeline to complete her doctoral degree.

Marty returned to Nigeria to take care of his aged mother and family business. His problem with living in the U.S. was racism. “Once a foreigner, always a foreigner! This means the foreigner is always expendable and not worthy of investing in.” His accent, he shared, is another factor in discrimination. While in Nigeria, he does not feel the issue of racial discrimination, “in the States, they tell you there is no racism, but it is actually there. You feel it. You touch it. You smell it. Those racial issues are just there.” Marty further stated,

I didn't like it in the U.S. I didn't like it because I don't like discrimination at all. I don't want somebody to look down on me. When people look down on you as if you are nothing, as if you are inferior, it annoys me and I get frustrated by that, so I say no. I strongly feel that no matter how long I stay in the U.S., I will still be an alien. Whether I got American visa or passport, I will still be an alien. I will never be regarded as part and parcel of that place. Secondly, being in the U.S., a place of plenty, the pastoral work is high risk. The people hardly appreciate what I do. It is like you are stage-managing everything. So deep down one is not part of it. For me those things were quite discouraging.

He concluded, “I came here to study and I couldn't live in the U.S. I love my country, so I don't have to live there with stress.” For Nate, the disadvantage of living in the U.S. was less problematic: “if you are not a citizen, you don't have equal opportunities with everybody, and

that is okay. I perfectly understand that; but, apart from that, I don't see any challenge so far. If I become a citizen, that would not be an issue, and I am working towards that.”

In summary, those respondents who felt that they could not stay in the U.S. believed that foreigners are always considered aliens regardless of their immigration status. A sizable number felt discriminated against and they decried the implicit and systemic racism that constantly stared them in the face. They were also repelled by the constant refrain about them having an accent. A final factor in their decision was the pain caused by the legalistic way of doing things in the U.S., which seemed to lack compassion.

### **Barriers to Returning to Nigeria**

The reasons not to return to Nigeria, cited by twelve respondents, included frustration over the corrupt Nigerian system, poor healthcare delivery, lawlessness, insecurity, and lack of basic infrastructures and necessities, like pipe-borne water, electricity, and good roads. Older respondents stated that some Nigerians are stranded or stuck in the U.S. and have little or no choice but to remain.

Most respondents had a problem with living in Nigeria for infrastructural reasons like a poor supply of electric power. Provision of portable water was another problem for them, as well as Nigeria's porous road network. People receive contracts without fulfilling them and no one holds them accountable. Politicians are focused on making quick money and are willing to kill to hold elective positions. Overall, respondents believed, the system in Nigeria is dysfunctional. For instance, the police are inefficient and corrupt. In most cases, they are perceived as collaborators in criminal activities. One goes to the bank to withdraw money and armed robbers are waiting to ambush. How did they know how much money you had if not

from the bank? Police informers are insiders. Criminals go free. The police stand watching criminals operate and receive bribes while brandishing their guns at innocent people.

Some doctoral recipients who returned to Nigeria between 1990 and 2000 to contribute to the society were frustrated, reported Obot, citing some of his peers who were sponsored by the Nigerian government.

They make things very difficult for you. Those from the north treat those of us from the south, from the Igbo area, as second-class citizens. These are graduates who spent a fortune to educate themselves and they are treated with disdain in the home country they want to serve.

Some of the leaders even see U.S. doctoral recipients and their willingness to come home as threats, and try to frustrate them. “When people are frustrated to a certain degree, they say, ‘No, no, no this is enough. I'm not going to fool around with this situation,’ and then they leave. Then the people are happy that they have left. Even your parents will tell you, ‘Listen, my son, you don't come here to change the system.’” This situation is endemic in Nigeria, which is why some respondents pledged never go back again.

Bill expressed these sentiments when he stated,

I decided to stay upon the completion of my studies because I felt that there were too many changes back home, social changes, religious changes, and political changes and socially the country is very, very unstable. There is so much violence, killings, destructions, so you cannot achieve your goals. You cannot actualize yourself under those circumstances. I felt that having put in so much into my education, having acquired some skills, I didn't want to go back to an environment that will not allow me to put to beneficial use what I have acquired here. That's the reason why I decided to stay.

Obot's intention after earning his Ph.D. was to return to Nigeria the moment he completed his education. Earning a doctoral degree would enhance his chances of gainful employment in the homeland, but things did not turn out as planned, he says:

We were guaranteed a job when we were given this scholarship. We signed that we will come back and work, and they're supposed to give you work when you come back, but

immediately when we graduated, the economy was so bad. The Nigerian government didn't care about the bond we signed, which means when you come back they don't have a job for you.

Those who returned to Nigeria were frustrated because the jobs that they were guaranteed were no longer available. Those who were given jobs felt unfulfilled and wanted to return to the U.S. for that reason. Some who returned to Nigeria and were frustrated succeeded in returning to the U.S., and those without green cards before they left were not able to come back because they were denied reentry visas.

Despite the joy and thrill of being in Nigeria, Marty, who returned after receiving his doctorate, saw life there as a continuous struggle: “That is another level of frustration . . . when you don't believe what the home government says. They say one thing and they do the other, and that is very frustrating. People are interested only in politics and how to sustain themselves in leadership positions. They are not concerned about the common good even though we have enough resources, both human and material. You wonder why the country is stagnant.”

With respect to health delivery, one example of the neglected common good, Titi stated, fake drugs are sold to the public, who consume them without questioning. Nigerians walk the streets with high blood pressure and diabetes, simply eat whatever they want with little or no exercise, no vitamins, and no routine checks. People move around with large stomachs (pot bellies) and are overweight, and consider it ‘evidence of good living.’ It may be a sign of sickness or exposing oneself to unfavorable conditions. They refuse to submit to regular medical check-ups. There are no ambulances and no doctors, and people die before they get to the hospitals. How can one want to return to this environment?

Similarly, Jason decried the ignorance and lack of basic knowledge among Nigerians and the prevalent greed that permeates every segment of society. “It is a society where dog eats dog. I cannot return to Nigeria now with everything going on there because Nigeria is in a bad shape and that is discouraging and humiliating,” says Jason. With institutionalized greed and endemic

corruption, the leadership continuously fails the Nigerian people. Bill opines, “if I go back home I will also be in the same boat and might be compelled to compromise with the corrupt leaders, going after them for money, compromising the truth, compromising what is good for the country.”

Bill also stated,

people are not free in Nigeria. They are not free to express themselves. They are not free from poverty. They are not free from religious manipulation. They are not free to achieve their dreams and their goals in life. Freedom is not just political freedom and independence. We need freedom from fear, freedom from poverty, freedom from manipulation, freedom from religious dogmas that keep us down and perpetuate force and violence.

“Overall,” he concluded, “I have profound respect for the American society. They have been able to achieve a level of freedom which most countries have not. If you have your facts you can stand your ground. People have protested successfully, put pressure on the government, put pressure on the community to make changes.”

Eight respondents felt that Godfatherism (political mentors, kingmakers, or powerbrokers in their positions based on tribal, political, or religious affiliation) in Nigeria is another obstacle to returning to the homeland. Indeed, Godfatherism has firmly established itself as a guiding principle in contemporary Nigerian politics. It is a symbiotic relationship between two persons, the godfather and the godson, where the godfather uses his political capital, power, and wealth to secure political position for the godson, who, a crony or surrogate, upon ascension to power pays gratuity to his mentor in kind or in cash. The subordinate relies on his superior partner for favors to help him attain his life goals. Godfatherism has become the norm in Nigeria's political environment, where, without a godfather, an individual cannot secure a political position or good job. The godson is used as subservient surrogate to control or extract

favours. Godfatherism has metamorphosed into an interest group of elites, or a mafia, that wields immense power in the community. It is both a symptom and a cause of the tension, violence, corruption, and instability that permeate the political process in Nigeria.

How does this phenomenon affect the younger respondents pitched against the older ones? The mass unemployment of Nigerian graduates enhanced Godfatherism as educated youth who are supposed to be vehicles for the development of the nation were employed as thugs for nefarious activities. The older respondents, meanwhile, depended on godfathers to facilitate their return to the homeland and to secure positions for them. They relied on having connections in the homeland to secure gainful employment. Respondents without godfather connections would be taking a huge risk by returning to the homeland. Those sponsored by godfathers would be forced to compromise their values. In either case, Godfatherism is a barrier to returning.

### **Stranded in the U.S.**

Being stranded covers topics like racism, police brutality, immigration status, and the pursuit of the American dream of owning a house, having a family, having a secure job, and being happy. Closely linked to this is the fact that several respondents took out loans for their doctoral programs and it takes at least 3-5 years to pay off the loans completely, considering the interest rates added. “When I got here, I realized that many people are still here not because they love it” says Sally. Rather, they are here because they are stranded:

Those who come to the U.S. and overstay get stranded or stuck. You don't have any savings and then you're thinking, ‘If I go back to Nigeria, what am I going to do? Where will I start? How will I explain myself to people?’ The fear of the unknown, afraid of what you are going to face, and who is going to help you makes returning very difficult. Then you don't have the finances to go back. If you don't have money, you're going to go back and start begging people for financial assistance. I tell you the money here is spent here. It's a capitalist economy. They make it in such a way that whatever you make

here will remain here. 95% or 98% of Nigerians that are here are stranded. I am going back because I have people to fall back on, okay? I'm not going back because I have the money. I don't have a dime. I don't even have money for the return ticket, and I have been here 10 years. I have a house. Fine, I have everything I need in the house. Fine, I have a car. I have this. I have credit cards, but then I don't have the physical cash to even buy my ticket to go back. If I'm going to buy a ticket I'm going to use credit card. Regrettably, it's just the knowledge and experience I acquired that I thank God for, and nothing else.

Many Nigerians have worked in the U.S. for many years and have nothing to show for it. These people are stranded or stuck here and are ashamed to return to the homeland to endless questioning. They live on credit their entire life. Kim shares this sentiment:

I don't want to be one of those people. I know people who have been in the U.S. working in different pharmacies for years and now approaching 60 and still working. They still pay mortgages, car loans and utilities and more. When will they get a break? Anybody who is staying in the U.S. and tells you, 'Okay I'm staying back because it's so good, it's so wonderful – is lying.' That person has something to hide. That person has something to hide.

It is noteworthy that those stuck or stranded include people who have overstayed their visa permits, thus holding the status of an unlawful presence.

Staying past the expected departure date on a U.S. visa can carry profound consequences. Overstaying could also result from not honoring the date shown on Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record, which is different from the expiration date on the visa. The penalty for overstaying could range from three to ten years ban on returning to the U.S., depending on the number of days one has overstayed. Those who overstay their visas end up stranded and lost or displaced. Other reasons for being stranded include financial handicap, grandeur expectations from family and friends who believe that coming to the U.S. is like striking a goldmine (which is not the case), having experienced the availability of social structures and services like safety of life and property, and returning to a failing nation with porous health-care delivery, a poor banking system, and a poor communication network to complete one's education. The

next section discusses why twelve respondents felt that the U.S. was a good place to work but not to retire.

A clear majority of respondents subscribed to the view that the U.S. was a temporary place to work but not a place to retire, though they understood that some young people might be okay with living in the U.S. for life. “But if you’ve tasted Nigerian life,” says Sally,

If you've been in Nigeria and you're able to get on and cope well in Nigeria, you come over here, you don't feel comfortable because you remain a stranger given it is a capitalist country. Here, you live from hand to mouth with little or no savings in your bank account. I'm a Nigerian and it gives me pleasure to consider my bank account and see money there.

Obot opined that some people in the U.S., when they retire, seem simply to cease to exist:

I look at the system here and conclude that at an old age when you are no longer producing to the system, they write you off. Therefore, I think for us, home should be a better place to retire. At that point, home is a better place than here, but some people don't feel that way, though. That's why, if you ask some people, ‘What about going home?’ they say, ‘Well, why should I go home and build a mansion? Let me build it here where I'll leave everything.’ We have some of us like that. Everybody is different.

Meanwhile, Marty complained that “I love the lawful environment in the U.S., but . . . the strictness is too much here. You constantly remain a slave and fugitive. Freedom is the motivation for me. I love the Nigerian freedom better than this place.”

For Kim, Sally, Obot Marty, and Pam, who lived comfortable lives in Nigeria, living in America was painful. Sally expressed this strong feeling as follows:

It's quite depressing for people like me who have made it big in Nigeria before coming over, so I already know Nigerian life and that’s why I miss Nigeria. After spending ten years here, I’m done. I would have returned to Nigeria about two years ago, but I wanted to stay and get my citizenship before I go so that I can come in for medicals. Immediately after my son graduated and came to Georgia, I would have left.

She was interviewed and was waiting to be sworn in as a citizen at the time of this interview.

She stated when she got sworn in as a citizen and received her passport, her plan was to go back to Nigeria and either return to her university, from which she took leave of absence, or start a

school as the proprietress. She wanted to set up her own school using the knowledge she acquired in the U.S. as an assessor and a substitute teacher in a “substitute for life” program. Her son, who also lived and tasted the Nigerian way of life, preferred Nigeria to the U.S. because he was born and raised there.

Community living in Nigeria in contrast to the individualism in the U.S. was also a principal factor in respondents’ decisions to either stay in the U.S. or return to Nigeria. The community concept confirms that personal achievements come from shared knowledge, common values, and mutual support. Society is responsible for the success of everyone. It is about the family and the society. Individualism, on the other hand, emphasizes the idea that each person progresses through their own efforts, based on dedication, focus, effort, and the personal decisions that they make. Overall, American individualism was a major cultural reason for preferring life in Nigeria. Uche expresses his frustration thus:

I don't really know my neighbors. Everybody just gets up, goes to work, and comes back. Everybody is focusing on their own thing. In Nigeria, it is more communal. Everybody is family. There's solidarity that I feel is missing here. Nigeria has a great advantage in raising families because of the community aspect.

“It can be very lonely in the U.S.,” Marty said, continuing,

Whatever would be the case back home, you always have your mother, your parents, your siblings, friends and family. The advantage at home is that you grow with the community. You grow with the people and they value what you do for them. People appreciate it. People adore you for it. People forgive you for your wrongs. They understand you and you grow together. Secondly, the pastoral needs of our people are very different. Nigerians are very religious and respect priests. They appreciate what you do for them. They want more and more of it, so you are respected as you work for them.

Marty elaborated,

I find U.S. more difficult in terms of interpersonal relationships. You want to greet somebody but you are being too careful where to touch and where not to touch. I think interpersonal relationship is becoming scary in the U.S., but back home there are no boundaries like you have here where people are so suspicious or even scared of each

other. There are certain things you don't do. There are certain things you don't say. One must understand the dynamics but if you ask me again, I don't like that kind of U.S. relationship. I prefer the Nigerian experience.

Kim said that she would return to Nigeria “in a heartbeat” because of the communal aspect of social living there:

I love my people and I am more at peace. When I was in Nigeria, I didn't have blood pressure. You know, death gives you strength when you have people around, but it is totally different here. You don't have people. Everyone is on his/her own. Everybody is working and working. Some work multiple jobs to survive and pay bills. With one job, one cannot afford the luxuries that we Nigerians are used to.

Yusuf (with F-1 to J-1 or H-1B visa) came to the U.S. to acquire knowledge and skills because Nigeria is still very limited:

I will return to Nigeria at some point to do something, no matter how small, for the country because I love my country. I grew up there. I love the people and I love the opportunity to give back to the community, maybe by putting up a small clinic where I know everything will be there, all diagnostics will be there, and it will be open to everybody regardless of socioeconomic status.

Further, only wealthy people have drivers and house-help in the U.S., something taken for granted in Nigeria. Here you see senior citizens in their 70s and 80s still driving, running their errands, doing their laundry, living alone in apartments.

Sally, who bought a house in Atlanta, took issue with “the house belongs to you but the land belongs to the government” approach to home ownership in the U.S.:

You're paying mortgage for 15 to 30 years. Even when you pay it off . . . you continue paying taxes forever because the government owns the land. The tax goes up almost every year. What can one do? Are you going to stop paying? If you stop, they take back the house. The house belongs to you, but the land belongs to them. Medical benefits will not make me stay here because one day we will all die. I can only visit, but I'm not going to live here because you're constantly reminded that you are an alien with an accent, which is annoying. If I must stretch myself to understand you, then you've got to stretch your ears to understand me and put your mind on what is being discussed. Look at my mouth. Don't listen to the sound.

Obot felt that the legalistic way of doing things in the U.S. was a disincentive to stay.

There are faster ways to get to where you want to get in Nigeria. Even though most of the ways are not good, there are faster ways, but here if you want to do stuff it's hard for you to do it illegally . . . and so much bureaucracy. You can own your own house easily and quickly in Nigeria. You buy your own land. You build your own house. You don't have to pay water bills. You pay for electricity, but the land is yours. The house is yours. Here, you pay mortgage for fifteen or thirty years. You finance or lease cars for up to five years. There are students with multiple loans. People live on credit cards with a plethora of debts. In Nigeria, you own your house, car, and have little or no debt. The houses are paid for. The bottom line is that living is more comfortable; one is more at peace because you own everything and not faced with endless bills or taxes. Here in the U.S., there are lots of bills and taxes, and more taxes. I don't mind coming to visit for a month and returning, but not to live here for good.

There was the sense, however, that younger people would find it easier to come and live in the U.S. for good. Kim believed that “It's only good for young people and not for those of us who are elderly and all that stuff. Nigeria is very good if you can feed yourself, which I believe I can.” Sally added,

The job here is hard. It's not easy. We don't work like this in Nigeria. Life is very hard and stressful here. You hardly think of things like social gatherings to have fun. It's like you are just going for work to go and pay your bills to come back and sleep and go to work – a vicious circle. This is not life at all. I have tasted both the good and the bad. I have tasted good in Nigeria. I have tasted bad in Nigeria, but I'm still attached to it because of my family, siblings, and friends. Basically, I still have a home in Nigeria.

Kim stated it is good to work in this U.S., but the work gets into your brain so much and it drains you. It saps you at the end of the day, which is why

you see most of them just working and by the time they retire they start dying. They don't even know how to enjoy themselves. I didn't think I would be working for the government or anyone at this age. At 55, I would rather own my business but even then, I wouldn't stay in the U.S. I would setup it up, come in and see how it is doing and return to Nigeria.

Kim's entire family came to the U.S. courtesy of the green card lottery.

When asked if she was afraid of returning to Nigeria given the religious tension that makes the environment insecure, Kim stated, “I was caught in a crossfire in Nigeria. I have driven and corpses would be lying on the main street and I would just maneuver through. In my

house, I was sleeping in the night during a religious crisis in 2009 and the Moslems were shouting, ‘Allahu Akbar! Mu kasha su kafirai,’ which means, ‘God is great. Let’s let kill these infidels.’ It has happened to me.” Despite this lack of security, however, Kim stated that the might one day still go back:

Yeah, I mean, wherever I am going to die, I’m going to die. I have always gone back once every year for a month and train university students on income-generating strategies and activities. For me, every kind of job in America is a pain. Put it that way in your thesis, from head to toe, but thank God at least we can eat and sleep. Life in America is very stressful. It makes your brain stressful.

### **Return Readiness or Preparedness**

Personal reasons that respondents gave for going back and reuniting with family and friends included available resources that motivated them to return. Older respondents believed that one should work as a young person in the U.S. but retire in Nigeria. Obot shared this sentiment when he said,

At old age, when one is no longer productive to the system in the U.S., they write you off. Therefore, home should be a better place at that point in time. I believe if one reaches retirement period, it is better to return to the motherland. I feel like, at that point, home is a better place than here.

One also needs a base from which to operate. For this reason, Bill insisted, “I need to provide my own accommodations, my own quarters. I need to have a base so that when I leave here I go straight into my own apartment and from there I can reach out and do whatever I need to do.” It is uncomfortable to go and live with or in somebody’s house.

The respondents with plans to return also planned to work for two or more years after graduation, using the educations they acquired from the U.S, comprising knowledge, skills, competences, experience, connections, and resources. Shawn stated, “I believe my resources are my knowledge and skills that I embody, the education I received, which I will take with me

forever.” Brooke needed access to resources like better information technology, a better academic environment, and self-investment before returning to the homeland. Obot captured this sentiment when he stated, “If you are coming from Nigeria to study here, don't waste your time studying stuff that is mostly applicable only in the U.S. if you want to go back to Nigeria. You want to study the lucrative engineering and other pragmatic disciplines.”

Economic resourcing was another consideration before returning. Almost all respondents agreed that finances were a resource needed before returning to the homeland after earning the doctorate, which entailed working and saving money. Therefore, as Bobby, who was working, shared,

Money is very important because when people know that you are coming from the United States, you can hardly get any support at home because they think you have all the money in the world. What I'm looking for right now is to work and save some money to take home where I will have something to survive on for a few years before I become a laughing stock because getting a Ph.D. doesn't mean that one is able to survive.

Return readiness, for Bobby also entailed getting his green card so that he could come and go as he pleased without having to apply for a visa every time he wanted to visit the U.S. Both Pam and Brooke also wanted to save and be able to live a comfortable life in the U.S. because of their families. They wanted to work, raise capital, and gain experience to become a force to reckon with when they eventually returned. Brooke said, “Even if I have to work here until I retire, I would eventually return to the homeland to use my retirement benefits. I will always come here to collect my pension.”

Bill was another participant who felt that finance and support were required resources before homecoming. He stated that it is not easy to just get up one day and return to the homeland. One needs money and support, at least for two years, to survive in Nigeria:

Currently, money is of the essence. If you have no money, you are doomed. You can't pay your bills. You can't provide the necessities of life. So, clearly, if I must go back, part of my calculation is to save some money and then prepare for my transition. If you don't have money, you will become extremely vulnerable to the politicians. You will look to them for money. You will look up to them for support and they will give you the money with several conditions. You can't speak your mind. You must compromise the truth. You must rely on them. I don't want to diminish myself to that level, so part of my calculation is to work and save money to go back home to be self-reliant.

Marty loved his books, which he treasured as resources that brought him tremendous joy. These were the textbooks that he used for his graduate studies. Transporting them home was a challenge, but he used the university post office and received them three months after he returned to Nigeria.

It is easier to connect with people because of the advent of social media, globalization is part of social resourcing, and Nigeria is part of the global village. Everybody is more aware of what is going on over the globe. Closely associated with globalization are networking opportunities for resources and sustaining relationships with people, which is another factor that respondents considered in deciding to return. Uche kept in touch with his colleagues from his previous workplace before he came for his doctorate in the U.S: "I needed people back home," he noted, "my former boss where I used to work, because at some point it became difficult to get materials about Nigeria from the Internet. I called my colleagues back in Nigeria and they got these materials, scanned and sent to me." One must work with people globally; so, he concluded, "I will also need a good social network, but must be very careful not to buy into a corrupt, already existing social network."

Shawn felt that he was not ready to return. He stated, "Right now, if I decide to go back, I don't have needed resources. But I do have my dad and family. My dad would prefer me to come back. He's a big 'come back to your homeland' advocate. If I decided to do that, he will

support me.” Shawn had confidence that his father would show him the opportunities available. If he did decide to go back, his dad would be his main resource person, and having this support from the get-go, he believed, would set him up for success. Bobby believed that he could use his experience from the U.S. to provide social welfare to abused children and women. Women’s empowerment is very important for him, he said. Poverty issues were very important. He called for improved training and changing the mindset of children and youth. Titi, meanwhile, believed that her doctoral degree would make her dad proud, so that he could brag, “Oh my daughter is a doctor of Pharmacy.” She shared, “It is a thing of joy for him that his daughter did well after all these years of paying board and tuition.” Finally, Lori was of the strong opinion that she needed to secure a job in the homeland before venturing back to Nigeria. She would use her friend there to accomplish this.

For participants with definite plans to return, mental readiness was a resource required to make the transition smoothly. Pressure and stress were familiar experiences as they prepared to leave. Maintaining a strong mental focus, given that the U.S. and the homeland have their own unique ways of operating, required striking a balance and respecting each process. Resilience—the ability to grow and thrive in the face of challenges and bounce back from adversity—came into play. This required mental toughness. In terms of preparedness, one must be mentally tough to live without power, water, good roads, and good health delivery in Nigeria. Uche summed it up with these words: “You are going to have to be ready to take that as the new normal every day and just roll with it, or you are going to be frustrated.”

In conclusion, money, having a home base, mobility, networking with people, and a good social network were the resources required to return. Money was most essential to returning. Having a place to stay was another requirement. Mobility meant having a vehicle to

be able to move around with, and networking builds the interpersonal relationships needed for productivity to occur.

#### **Summary of Chapter 4**

Using expectancy as the concept to understand the phenomenon, this chapter answered the question of why the respondents decided to come to the U.S. for doctoral studies. Secondly, using the concept of self-efficacy, the narratives and summaries in this chapter described how respondents persisted in their universities and fields of study. Finally, using the conceptual framework of return readiness or preparedness, this chapter described the conundrum involved in deciding whether to stay in the U.S. or return to Nigeria upon graduation.

The good reputation of U.S. schools, their overall quality compared to Nigeria's, and the availability of funding were the main attractions, among others, that participants considered in navigating to the U.S. Reasons to return to Nigeria were, broadly speaking, personal and social. Personal factors related to interactions with family, friends, peers, and coworkers. Social reasons included how participants' felt in each social, political, or cultural environment.

The advantages and disadvantages of staying in the U.S. and the merits and demerits of returning to Nigeria were also analyzed. The advantages of staying in the U.S. were mostly based on political and environmental stability and the myriad available economic opportunities. The demerits of staying in the U.S. included the excessive reliance on legalistic interpretations of the law and the lonely life. The advantages of returning to Nigeria included giving back to the country that laid the foundation for their educational and career success, thus minimizing the brain drain. The community aspect of living in Nigeria, in contrast to the individualistic nature of living in the West, was another factor enticing their return to the homeland. However, respondents decried instability and lack of security as reasons not to return. They also

complained about lack of functional infrastructures and basic social amenities like good roads, a constant power supply, pipe-borne water, and a good health care system to enhance the quality of life. Some respondents found themselves caught up in what was referred to as a “stranded” status, stuck in the U.S. for assorted reasons, ranging from being ashamed to return with nothing to show for it to not having the necessary documentations to make a legal living in the U.S.

Also noteworthy is the finding that the older respondents considered schooling and working in the U.S. but preferred to retire in Nigeria. They believed that their retirement benefits would be more useful in Nigeria given the disparity in the exchange rate between the dollar and the Nigerian Naira. Additionally, explored were the five resources that respondents needed to facilitate their return to the homeland, which were personal, educational, social, economic, and mental readiness. Participants who planned to return would do so only when they secured both the tangible and intangible resources required to survive in the homeland for at least two years.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews the purpose and design of the study and presents a summary of the findings on how Nigerian doctoral students and recipients made the decision to come and study in the U.S., how they persisted in their studies, and how they decided whether to stay in the U.S. or return to their homeland upon graduation. It further presented an interpretive discussion of how the findings fit (or do not fit) with previous research literature and drew implications of the findings for policy, practice, and further research. The purpose of conducting this study was to examine and understand the factors that played a role in how respondents perceived their opportunities to stay in the U.S., how they perceived employment opportunities in their homeland, and under what conditions they would consider returning, in addition to how they thought of the idea of giving back to the homeland. The study also examined what motivated respondents to come to the U.S. and how they persisted in graduate school.

There is a need in Nigeria for people trained outside the country, especially in the U.S., to return and develop schools, run hospitals, participate in nation building, or otherwise contribute to the homeland while still living and working in the Diaspora. One objective of this study was to understand how their perceptions, intentions, and decisions developed over time. What shaped and what changed their perceptions? Applying the conceptual frameworks of expectancy, self-efficacy, and return readiness, it was found that political, economic, social, educational, professional, and personal factors shaped participants' decision making.

## **Review of the Findings**

The factors that influenced respondents coming to the U.S. included studying abroad as a dream come true, dissatisfaction with the Nigerian system of education, the overall outstanding quality of U.S. educational programs, and the availability of funding through graduate assistantships, scholarships, and tuition waivers. With respect to their reasons for staying in the U.S. after graduation, respondents felt that everything in the U.S. was structured to allow one to become a better person. The enforcement of law and order ensures safety, security, and stability, which was a primary attraction. The U.S. was also seen as a land of opportunity for those who were willing to work hard. The provision of social infrastructures like good roads, constant electricity, pipe-borne water, good health care delivery, and access to information technology made the quality of life in the U.S. more tolerable than in the homeland.

The reasons respondents gave for not remaining in the U.S. included the prevalence of implicit bias (i.e., attitudes or beliefs held at the unconscious level that judge behavior based on stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions) and systemic racism, in which blacks are subtly coded as inferior to whites. The major parts of U.S. society—namely, its economy, politics, education, religion, and family structures—reflect discrimination based on race, exacerbation with the constant association between the individual and the accent. Systemic racism appears across institutions and society in the forms of a wealth and employment gap, housing discrimination, government surveillance, incarceration, drug arrests, immigration arrests, and infant mortality, mostly affecting people of color.

Another reason not to stay in the U.S. that the respondents cited was the rigidity with which law and order were implemented. The idea of strict justice (i.e., strict interpretation of the law without mercy or compassion, implementing the letter of the law and not the spirit of

the law) is alien to respondents, who came to see freedom in the U.S. as—paradoxically—very restrictive. One respondent reported a case in which a police officer hid in his patrol car, waiting for and baiting potential offenders to issue violation tickets because they have a “quota to fill.” Such racial profiling is also a subtle form of discrimination. Finally, respondents decried the individualism that is prevalent in the U.S, where the code of conduct appears to be “everybody for himself/herself and God for all.” Some respondents felt that this was a byproduct of capitalism, which alienates people from basic social services like universal health care for all. Also, some participants decried the lonely lives they lived in the U.S.

Respondents gave both personal and social reasons for returning to Nigeria. Among the personal reasons was the desire to reunite with family, friends, peers, and colleagues. Also included among the reasons was a desire to give back to the country that laid the foundation for, and nurtured them to realize, their dreams of studying abroad. Another consideration was the community aspect of social living in the home country, where family and friends almost always surround one. Among the reasons given not to return to Nigeria, by contrast, were the lack of peace, safety, security, and stability of lives and property and lack of social infrastructures there. These participants felt that nothing worked right in Nigeria and that returning there now would be like signing a death warrant given the menace of Boko Haram and the nefarious activities of its kidnappers.

Perhaps the most surprising finding was the extent to which respondents who remained in the U.S. felt—to use their terminology— “stranded” or “stuck.” Some respondents in the sample reported feeling stuck or stranded in America, with nothing to show in terms of achieving the “American Dream,” which means different things to different individuals, but which usually includes owning a house, having money, and being able to travel on vacation.

They could not return to the homeland due to the shame and stigma of their failure to make it big in the U.S. It was only by the grace of God that they survived in the U.S., and when they summon the courage to return to the homeland, they tend to do so trying to salvage whatever reputation they have left.

Second, some respondents perceived the U.S. as a place to work but not a place to retire. Their ideal plan was to stay in America in one's prime working years to save income but retire and live in Nigeria as a senior citizen. Their rationale was that there is a huge disparity between the exchange rate of the dollar and the naira: \$1 equals 540 naira. A thousand dollars gives one 540,000 naira. By Nigerian standards, that is a lot of money, and it is very easy to live large (a Nigerian slang for luxurious living) with a monthly income of \$2,000 (which translates to well over one million naira in local currency) in retirement benefits. Very few people in Nigeria earn that much as a monthly salary. Some of the young respondents stated they might be okay with retiring in the U.S., but this was not so for older respondents who had tasted life in Nigeria and coped well. They came to the U.S. but don't feel comfortable, largely because they remain strangers in a capitalist country.

### **Findings in the Context of the Literature**

The study conducted by Alberts and Hazen (2005) and reported in Chapter 2 on international students from six nations (Chinese, Dutch, Greek, Indian, Japanese, and Tanzanian-Africa) suggested that few students arrive in the U.S. with the intention of immigrating permanently. This study corroborates this finding: All sixteen respondents came to the U.S. with the initial intention to return to the homeland upon graduation. Alberts and Hazen also reported that a wide variety of professional, societal, and personal factors influenced students in their ongoing decision-making processes. Broadly speaking, economic and

professional factors typically acted as strong incentives to stay in the U.S., while personal and societal factors tended to draw students back to their home countries. In the long run, a natural progression of professional and personal decisions leads many to become permanent immigrants.

Anyamele (2009) underscored this finding when he stated that Nigerians are not returning to the homeland because they are afraid of the instability of governmental leadership and the volatile nature of the political arena. Another reason for not returning is the threat posed by terrorists and criminals to personal safety and property. These respondents eschewed the corruption and bribery required to transact business and to purchase consumer goods in Nigeria, thereby raising the cost of living and leading to frustration. A scarcity of jobs and poor remuneration for those available also discourages Nigerian professionals from returning. Difficulty starting one's business is another disincentive to returning, along with poor public infrastructures and social services reflected in roads, utilities, hospitals, and schools, which lowers the standard of living. Others move out because of political persecution, and some move only to pursue higher education. The present study verified these findings at the macro level by focusing on social structures, social processes, and problems and their interrelationships.

Nigerians come to the U.S. and stay for many reasons. They desire better economic opportunities, political stability, and sometimes asylum. Specifically, the participants in this study migrated to the U.S. in search of opportunities to advance their academic dreams. As Ande observed, "the prevailing political instability in most parts of Africa, and other socio-economic considerations, have not encouraged the much-desired academic freedom; hence, many African scholars have remained in the U.S. to take advantage of research and fellowship opportunities offered by universities" (Ande, 2009). Fulfilling the need to better understand the

opportunities and challenges facing Africa requires encouraging American universities to employ Africans to pursue research based on African-related issues. So far, the diversification of U.S. universities has benefited African nonimmigrants, who compete favorably with other minority groups seeking positions focused on African topics.

This research supports the previous finding that political and economic reasons tend to attract students to the U.S. for graduate education while social and personal reasons tend to make them want to return to the homeland. The research also uncovered two additional points of interest: the widespread perception, at the macro-level, of feeling stranded at the end of one's studies and the perception of the U.S. as a place to pursue a professional career as a young person but not to retire as a senior citizen, at the micro-level. The focus of this research was not on social conditions and policies that caused respondents to act in the ways they did but on their journeys or lived experiences and how numerous factors interacted in their decision-making processes.

Some of those who remained in the U.S were staying not because they preferred to but because they had no choice. Many respondents perceived themselves as being on their own in a country where children desert their parents and spouses easily desert their partners any given day without displaying remorse, where a father can take his son to court, a daughter can take a mother to court, a father can disown his child, and children disown their parents. Some respondents attributed this to capitalism and some to the influence of the feminist movement. In Nigeria, on rare occasions do parents disown their children or vice versa because the family is a tightly knit unit. A marriage, no matter its problems, and regardless of the infidelity of the spouses, stands. People still respect the marriage institution, but in the U.S., there is little or no respect for it. It is frustrating that many came to the U.S. but end up stuck and stranded. Some

Nigerians are stuck or stranded. They have nothing in the U.S. and they cannot return to their homelands to face the shame and stigma of failure.

Another interesting finding worthy of note is that older participants tended to prefer staying in the U.S. in their youth and prime to work and to save income while planning to retire and live in Nigeria as senior citizens. Older respondents noted that the U.S. was not the place they wanted to retire. Coming to the U.S. as an older person is uncomfortable because one remains a stranger in a capitalist country. It is especially difficult for people who lived well in Nigeria before moving to start over, learning to do everything for themselves. For instance, some came to the U.S. as medical doctors, but their degrees were not recognized. They were, thus, forced to train as lab technicians to secure employment. These were participants who had lived in Nigeria with house-help and drivers. Older respondents also sought dual U.S. citizenship to be able to return for medical checkups should the need arise. Those who took leaves of absence at home preferred to return to the homeland and assume their previous positions or start their own businesses, having acquired the knowledge and experience in the U.S. In the absence of this possibility, they planned to work in the U.S. but, eventually, to retire in the homeland, where one can own property without paying endless property taxes. In Nigeria, both the land and the house belong to citizens and, once the house is paid for, there is no more property tax to be paid to the government. This serves as a strong incentive to eventually return to the homeland.

A third finding is that the factors and the decision-making processes vary among individuals who emigrate to study at various stages of their lives with various reasons and motives. A description of how demographics affected their motives and their decision-making is apt here. The four respondents (of students, workers, and clergymen) who chose to stay

compared to those who returned to the homeland did so for distinct reasons, such as to live in freedom, to escape poverty or oppression, and to make better lives for themselves and their children because of employment opportunities. They would use doctoral studies as a springboard to file for family members—spouses, minors, parents, and siblings—in a desire for reunification on the principle of family unity. After they settled in the United States, they started contributing to the economy of the country, and they compose an increasingly essential proportion of the U.S. workforce.

Most respondents came to the U.S. looking for a better life, inspired by pursuit of a doctoral education and the “American Dream,” which meant different things to different respondents. However, there is another side to the story, as the younger respondents left Nigeria because life there was so hard. Poverty, political instability, and recurring financial crises made their life in Nigeria more challenging than in the U.S., a wealthy country with many job opportunities.

In general, people experienced loneliness and depression staying in the U.S., especially in old age, either because of living alone or due to lack of close family ties and reduced connections with their culture of origin, which results in an inability to participate actively in community activities. Indeed, one of the reasons that respondents decided not to stay in the U.S. was persistent loneliness, which can lead to boredom or depression. In this respect, loneliness is a public health issue on par with obesity and substance abuse. As a new study in the *Journal of Perspectives on Psychological Science* found, loneliness, social isolation, or lack of social connections increased the risk of early death through heart disease and depression by 26%, which led to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness (Worland, 2015).

Social scientists believe that technology and housing trends increase the risk of loneliness. More people are living alone and technology like texting and social media make it easier to avoid forming substantive interpersonal relationships. Meanwhile, as research has also shown, relationships improve health in many ways, helping to manage stress, improve the functioning of the immune system, and give purpose to the lives of people. Humans are not designed to be solitary beings; our need to form bonds is ingrained in our genetic code (Gregoire, 2015).

Creating community interventions through events targeted at reaching out to the lonely is one way to break the cycle of isolation. It is necessary for human beings to have strong ties with family, friends, and coworkers. It is important that we have people to share our troubles and successes with. Community-based interpersonal relationships are prevalent in Nigeria, in sharp contrast with the individualism of the West.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice for the U.S. and Nigeria**

This study has implication for policy and practice, suggesting change factors, behavior motivation measures, and leadership strategies to serve as incentives to motivate the return of Nigerian students from the U.S. to the homeland. The Nigerian government can begin by stemming the cycle of violence that frightens citizens from returning. Securing lives and property should be a major priority. The government also needs to remove perceived lack of freedom of expression and movement and ensure political and economic stability. Religious intolerance creates discord and leads to violent clashes among citizens. In the long term, the Nigerian government must separate state and religion, and the government must not be perceived to favor one religion over others. In the short term, a center for conflict resolution needs to be created to resolve the constant clashes between Christians and Muslims.

Stakeholders such as policymakers, government officials, and the public should provide opportunities to make those who studied abroad feel good about returning to the homeland. Nigerian authorities should ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for returning students to apply their newly-acquired skills, knowledge, and competences. Jobs should be created commensurate with the graduate level education of returning graduates, and the government needs to provide loans for small businesses to flourish. Nigerian students trained in the U.S. can easily transfer their knowledge to the homeland when the physical capital at home is like it is abroad. As things are, individuals struggle to survive on their own and, hence, have no regrets about staying and working in the U.S.

In addition, the Nigerian government should support those who are studying abroad financially. It is said, “He who pays the piper dictates the tune.” The Nigerian nation needs to start investing in her citizens since, because of this investment, she will have more influence over the return rates of her professionals. The Nigerian government should consider the policy of selectively wooing the exceptional talents of both researchers and entrepreneurs back to the homeland, as practiced by the Chinese government and discussed in the literature review. They can do this by utilizing professional Diaspora bodies, supporting concurrent or joint positions in Nigeria and overseas, supporting cooperative research in Nigeria and abroad, supporting a short-term return to Nigeria to teach and conduct academic and technical exchanges, setting up enterprises in Nigeria, and engaging in intermediary services such as run conferences, importing technology or foreign funds, and helping Nigerian firms to find export markets.

For those who cannot return and choose to remain in the U.S., the Nigerian government can improve networking and the exchange of research ideas and findings through brain circulation, utilizing their talents and expertise through social media. People can be persuaded

to return through selective prioritization, as also practiced by the Chinese. The Nigerian government needs to search for partnerships with her Nigerian professionals abroad, business men and women, and intellectuals in the Diaspora to assist in building a strong economy, a lasting democracy (unlike China, which is a communist country), firm institutions, sustainable infrastructures, and a just and egalitarian society.

The U.S. is organized differently than Nigeria in terms of its culture, values, language, environment, and way of life. Therefore, the implication for policy and practice is to encourage people to come with their families to the U.S. to stem the widespread tide of loneliness. The Nigerian government, through the Ministry of Education, should also consider supporting the Diaspora population by providing funding for annual trips to Nigeria. This is especially important because the U.S., as host nation, engages in retention policies to maintain its foreign students, especially those who are reluctant to return home. To retain these students and provide them access to the labor market, the U.S. had eased its immigration rules at the time of this interview in 2014. Immigration rules have a significant impact on the decisions that foreign students make. Thus, if the U.S. government wants to retain doctoral recipients, integration in terms of career satisfaction, community building, and a sense of belonging and acceptance must be created. The U.S. Department of State in conjunction with the Justice Department need to provide training to both the law enforcement authorities and Africans on how to overcome the less desirable facets of American life that are systemic racism, implicit biases, and police brutality.

The current political debate over banning immigrants from certain countries from entering the U.S. is coming up for hearing by the Supreme Court this fall. This has been a cause of rising fear for international students and immigrants coming to study in the U.S. The

uncertainty generated by this policy is causing a rift all over the world. Students who go abroad for their studies do so because of the few available admission spaces in universities in the homeland and due to the poor quality of higher education. Policy makers in the homeland need to encourage collaborative graduate programming and networking like The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional grouping founded on 8 August 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines to promote economic growth, social progress, cultural development, and regional security and stability through multilateral cooperation.

Policy options for education development in the West African sub-region require partnerships with a number of different stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, and bilateral and multilateral organizations. Cooperation at the national and regional levels in a collaborative, constructive, and mutually supportive manner leads to the more responsive, enabling, and participatory planning, implementation, and execution of policies, and priority attention to individual nation-states specializing in high growth fields of study should be encouraged. Countries that are better in vocation, technical, or knowledge-based education (e.g., engineering, information technology, biology, etc.) should be well funded and developed to train citizens from the entire region to provide high quality, relevant educations that help students make good choices as they transition through the various stages of life.

Young people are one of the most valuable resources in any given country, as they can contribute significantly to development and growth. Education systems, therefore, have to cater to the multiple learning needs and circumstances of young people by promoting flexibility and respect for diversity in order to achieve essential core standards of quality and a maximum level

of inclusiveness. Universities must also cater to older students, who are tending to live longer and will, thus, need to live healthier and more self-sustainable lives. Regional cooperation and integrative policies in areas like inter-university academic and research exchanges, sports competitions, external examinations, networking, and professional assessments can go a long way toward raising the level of efficiency as universities strive to attract the best students, teachers, and resources. Such cooperation would not only encourage sub-regional training, research, and interaction, but it would help to develop an effective framework that will facilitate mutual recognition of degrees and helps to promote academic mobility to curb the trend of students going abroad for higher education. Other measures include encouraging special projects like staff exchanges for teaching or graduate supervision, exchange of external examiners, and research collaboration. Drawing from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), if an integration culture is accorded the high priority it deserves, ordinary citizens will be encouraged to think along patriotic lines, fostering a sense of national and regional allegiance. Such use of patriotic conditioning has the potential to curb brain drain.

### **Implications for Further Research for the U.S. and Nigeria**

Because this research focused on the journeys and lived experiences of both graduate recipients and current students, it would be insightful to conduct a follow-up study of the nine respondents who are currently still students in the U.S. to examine their decision to either stay in the U.S. or return to Nigeria. Second, it would be informative to conduct an in-depth study of a subgroup of doctoral students/recipients who felt “stuck” in the U.S. and unable to return to Nigeria. The research question would address why people who are here in the U.S. are still here not because they love it, but because they are stranded. They are unable to return home, and yet they face uncertain status in the U.S. Being stranded may lead to traumatic experience,

raising the question of what can be done to ensure that these stranded students can stay in this country and feel protected and relieved of the enormous anxiety that they feel about their status and futures.

How can immigration integration be achieved in the light of the current immigration debate? This question deserves further investigation using a mixed-methods approach; answering it would involve using interview data from those who are stranded to include populations from other African and Asian countries. The Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO) and Nigerian Association of U.S. Graduates (NAUSG) could promote such a research agenda, especially in areas like identifying funding, developing curriculum and assessments, teaching and learning time, language in education policies and teacher quality, informing the impacted foreign governments, and following all applicable laws and regulations.

Also requiring further inquiry is the idea of working in one's prime in the U.S. but retiring in the homeland. It would be insightful to compare those who retired in Nigeria with those who retired in the U.S. A similar study should also be done with other nations in Africa and Asia. Finally, a comparative analysis of the stay/return decision-making experiences of doctoral students and recipients with comparable African countries like Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa is required.

### **Conclusion**

This study set out to investigate why a group of Nigerian doctoral students chose to migrate to the U.S. for their higher educations, how they persisted, and how they came to make the decision to either stay in the U.S. or return to the homeland upon graduation. Staying in the U.S. contributes to the brain drain phenomenon, while returning to the homeland enhances human resources because a nation is only as good as its skilled manpower. Perceptions of

various aspects of the homeland, particularly the aspect of skill use opportunities, impact return intention.

The overall results of the study show that home perception-related factors impact return intention. The findings also show that having initial intention to return and having perceptions of skill/knowledge use opportunities at the homeland influence the possibility of return. Therefore, the government and stakeholders need to consider the supply and quality of higher education in Nigeria to stem the tide of inadequate admission spaces. An intentional retention policy also needs to be put into place in Nigeria as an incentive to stimulate returning to the homeland.

The initial intention to migrate to the U.S. to study and the decision to remain or return after graduation is each a fundamentally unique experience, as students have little or no experience of the U.S. when they first arrive. Their motivation at the initial stage is education and making some money to survive. However, by the time they graduate, they acquire the experience necessary to weigh whether to stay or return. Over time, students change their minds about the many issues confronting them. A few students did not feel fully integrated into the U.S. and decided to return to the homeland for that reason. Those who felt this way were mostly older people who received their undergraduate educations in Nigeria, but the younger generation in the sample also believed that there were distinct merits to remaining in the U.S., especially because they felt they no longer fully fit in their homelands.

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## Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Seton Hall University  
Institutional Review Board

JAN 27 2014



### Informed Consent Form

INTERVIEW ON THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS OF NIGERIAN DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND RECIPIENTS WHO STUDY/STUDIED IN THE U.S. AND THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT POST-DEGREE CAREER PLANS

This researcher, Felix Kanyip Kumai, is a doctoral student from Seton Hall University, NJ with the Department of Educational Leadership Management and Policy (ELMP). He has completed the course work and is currently working on dissertation proposal.

As part of the doctoral dissertation, the researcher is conducting interviews on career plans of Nigerian doctoral students and doctoral recipients who are currently studying or have acquired doctoral degrees in the U.S. and how employment opportunities are perceived in the homeland and under what conditions or factors they might consider returning in addition to how they think of giving back to their homeland.

The procedure to be followed for recruiting and interviewing participants are: those still in the U.S. (current students and recipients who stay) will be recruited through existing Diaspora associations like Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO) and Southern Kaduna Development-USA (SOKAD-USA). As for the doctoral recipients who returned to Nigeria, the researcher will recruit from the Nigerian Association of US Graduates (NAUSG).

As part of the procedure, participants are invited to take part in this study through telephone or Skype interview on a voluntary basis once, but with one follow-up session of less than 20 minutes to clarify unclear issues ONLY if necessary. The interview will take approximately one hour. Real names will not be recorded in the transcripts and responses will be confidential. Participation is voluntary and participants may choose not to answer any questions during the interview even after signing the consent form. In addition, participation may be withdrawn at any time and for any reason as involvement in this study is totally free.

During the hour-long telephone or Skype interview, participants may experience the discomfort of fatigue. To minimize this risk, the researcher will ensure the interview stays within the 60 minutes timeframe and will endeavor to make it [REDACTED] simple. Participants may also take a break during the interview if so needed.

With participants' permission, the researcher will tape-record the interview and have it transcribed by Transcription Experts Incorporated, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33308. Participants will be identified by a code number 0-19. The voice data will be stored in the researcher's tape-recorder and memory card and these together with the transcripts will be locked away in the researcher's safety box for 5 years.

Expiration Date  
JAN 27 2015

The instruments the researcher will use are open-ended questions, audio recorder, and transcription experts to transcribe the interview. Two sample questions among others to be asked are: How was the decision made to come to the U.S. for doctoral study and what expectations were brought with regard to life after graduation? Talk about how interest was generated and developed in the field of study in which the doctoral degree is pursued.

Although participants will not benefit directly (like receive money) from participating in this study, they will make a major contribution for policy and practice especially in the area of creating a data-base of Nigerian doctoral students and recipients. The data will be used to understand the decision-making process related to initial and post doctoral career choices: whether participants plan to return or have returned to Nigeria or plan to stay in the U.S.

If there are any questions concerning this study, please contact the researcher, who is the principal investigator at [felix.kumai@us.army.mil](mailto:felix.kumai@us.army.mil) or [fk1986@yahoo.com](mailto:fk1986@yahoo.com) (912-398-6492); OR his faculty advisor Dr Martin Finkelstein at [martin.finkelstein@gmail.com](mailto:martin.finkelstein@gmail.com) (862-215-1035); OR the IRB office at [irb@shu.edu](mailto:irb@shu.edu) (973-313-6314).

If willing to participate in the study, please sign this consent form and return to the researcher, Felix Kumai, 805 Belview Road, APT D, Leesville, LA 71446.

Thanks for participating.

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Seton Hall University  
Institutional Review Board

JAN 27 2014

Approval Date

Seton Hall University • 400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079  
(973) 761.9000 • [www.shu.edu](http://www.shu.edu)

Expiration Date  
JAN 27 2015

## **Appendix B: Script of What to Say before the Interview**

Background Information

Name of Interviewee:

Date/Time:

Location:

Years of Schooling/Service:

Interviewed by:

Thank you for accepting to participate in this interview. It will take about 1 hour. It will focus on the process of your decision to enroll in the doctoral program and your thoughts on your chosen career path upon receiving your degree. The information you provide in this interview will contribute to the understanding of how Nigerian doctoral students and doctoral recipients see the possibilities of pursuing their career in the U.S. or in Nigeria after obtaining their PhDs degrees. Thus, the focus of this interview is to understand how your thoughts on graduate studies, the challenges, values, and successes as well as the possible ensuing career thereafter as you progressed in the doctoral program. Therefore, your insights will be very useful in this research.

I have a tape recorder with me. With your permission, I will tape record this interview because I do not want to miss any part of your comments. People very often say useful and helpful things in interviews which could be missed in the attempts to write down what is said. Also, I will like to inform you that I will be on a first name basis with you. However, your name would not be used in the transcription or report. I will also like to state that you do not have to

disclose anything that you are not comfortable with and you may end the interview at any time.

Do you have any questions about what I have just explained?

## Appendix C: Open-Ended Interview Questions in Research Methods

*Interview Guide and Prompts to remind me of the information I am interested in collecting*

1. Pre/Initial entry stage: I will start by asking some questions about yourself, your life in Nigeria before emigrating, and your decision to immigrate to the U.S.

Tell me about yourself, your family and educational background, and ties with your home country. Tell me about your marital status. How old are you now? How old were you when you first immigrated to the U.S.? How long have you lived in the U.S.?

Now, I will ask you some questions about your migration history. Please share with me why you decide to immigrate to the U.S. Why did you choose that moment to immigrate? What was the objective? Did you achieve this objective?

What was your education—the highest level of school that you completed when you first migrated? Was that a key factor in your decision to migrate? Why? Would you migrate if you were educated?

Did you work in your hometown before immigrating to the U.S.? Please, tell me about the work you did in your hometown.

How did you come to make the decision to come to the U.S. for doctoral study and what expectations did you bring with you about life after graduation?

What is your legal status, and how long have you stayed in the USA? Talk to me about your plans to stay or to return upon graduation.

Tell me why you enrolled in a doctoral program in the U.S. And why are you in this program? What were your original goals?

What were your expectations of doctoral study and what were you expecting regarding life in the U.S.? Did this change over time?

Talk to me about how you developed your interest in the discipline in which you are pursuing your doctorate.

Talk to me about the process of searching for a university in the U.S. What led you to decide on going to the U.S.? How did you conduct the search? How did you make the decision about where to attend? What challenges did you face in transitioning to doctoral study in the U.S.?

Tell me about the expectations of your family for your involvement in the doctoral program. Did any member in your family help you come to the decision to migrate? What did they want you to accomplish? How did they influence your decisions and activities?

Response from Interviewee:

Reflection by Interviewer:

## 2. Two Year course work stage (that includes Qualifying and Comprehensive Exams)

Talk to me about a critical incident or a turning point during the first two years that shaped the future direction of your program. Why was this incident significant?

Talk to me about the activities that gave you the most success in achieving your goals here? Why?

Is there anything that shook your confidence in either your choice to study in the U.S. or in this institution, or this field of study?

Share with me your career goals. Has your career plans changed at any point in during the first two years? If so what has changed? When and why?

Response from Interviewee:

Reflection by Interviewer

## 3. Dissertation stage

Share with me your experience of the process of writing the dissertation proposal. What would you consider to be your most difficult challenges? Who/what do you use as a means of support during tough academic times?

Can you identify one or more times in which you doubted that you would complete the doctoral program? What was/were the cause(s) of that doubt? How did you deal with it? Here is a list of potential factors that may help you...language, culture, finance, emigration status etc.

Can you tell me about your relationship with professors and fellow doctoral students that you have developed? How did your relationship change with folks back in Nigeria? How did you keep in touch with them? What social networking or connections have you utilized during your doctoral degree quest or attainment?

Make me understand the conditions whether favorable or not in the U.S. and Nigeria that motivated your plans to stay in the U.S. or return – such as the economic opportunities and the desire to be with friends and families.

Response from Interviewee:

Reflection by Interviewer

## 4. Questions on Continuing Relationship with Homeland

Talk to me about your emotional attachment with your homeland. Tell me about the level and trust you have in your home government. What is the image of your home government and country abroad?

Under what conditions would you decide to stay or return to the homeland? Without giving me a yes or no answer, is resource mobilization, building a house and buying a car and return preparedness pre-requisites for you to return to Nigeria?

If you are so in tune with your homeland and culture, would you consider returning if you faced problems of unemployment and homelessness here in the U.S?

Talk to me about the development goals, priorities and strategies you want to involve in based on your skills, knowledge and qualifications. What are the needs of your country in terms of human capital?

Talk to me about how to best acknowledge your own interests and agenda and integrate them in the existing developmental strategies of the homeland.

Share with me your feelings about building trust among stakeholders and how to establish effective working partnership with them.

Tell me what benefits you can bring to Nigeria in terms of public policy and welfare. How can you transfer your expertise, know-how, and skills without necessarily returning home permanently?

How would you participate in the political process? Would you consider setting up local business to boost social infrastructures, promote trade and entrepreneurship in Nigeria? Talk to me about your involvement in these areas – business creation, trade links, investments, remittances, skills circulation, exchanging experiences, and impacts of social and cultural roles.

Response from Interviewee:

Reflection by Interviewer

## 5. Post-doctoral stage

Return Preparedness is the process of preparing to return to home country and having the ability to gather the needed resources to survive. It comprises free will and readiness to return. Return Preparedness is the process that takes place in a person's life, through time, and is shaped by changing circumstances (i.e. subjective experiences, contextual factors in sending and receiving countries). It is not only about preparing for return. It is about having the ability, though not always the opportunity, to gather the tangible and intangible resources needed to secure one's own return home. Return Preparedness is related to the development and change in expectations or perceptions of self-efficacy in the new country environment vis-à-vis the country of origin environment.

Having given you this background information, talk to me about your return preparedness and how that has changed over the period of your doctoral study. How

would you describe the context of your returning home? Do you have plans to return or not? Tell me whether you are returning based on your initiative and free volition or it is dictated by other or compelling circumstances that warrant your return. Do you truly believe you have the freedom to stay or return? Did adverse circumstances prompt you to leave and not complete your studies?

Tell me how you weighed the pros and the cons, the costs and benefits of the decision to stay or return. Share with me if you really believe that it is the time and the right moment to return or not.

And what were your expectations at the post-doctorate stage? At this material time, how do you see post-doctoral employment? Reflecting, how would you now make sense of your expectations when you first came to the U.S., during qualifying exam, after completing your course work, and at the start of your dissertation stages for your post-graduate studies?

As you assess your time in the U.S., how successful has it been? Talk to me about the indicators with which you judge your success.

The factors that shape return readiness include time, resources, experience, knowledge and awareness of the conditions in the US and Nigeria. Talk to me about these.

How prepared are you to return? Share with me the extent to which you have mobilized tangible (that is financial capital) and intangible (that is contacts, relationships, skills, acquaintances) which you need as a significant adjunct to your initiatives.

Tell me how you went about evaluating the costs and benefits of staying or returning while considering the changes that have taken place in Nigeria at the institutional, economic, and political levels.

Tell me if you think the length of your stay in the USA is/was sufficient to allow you to complete your study.

Tell me what you see are the limitations, liabilities, and disadvantages of doctoral Study in the U.S. particularly at this institution? What types of professional development options were you exposed when you were a student and how would you establish yourself professionally?

Please compare Nigeria's economy future with that of the U.S.? Expatriate on whether the U.S. or your home country presents the best employment prospects. Where can you easily start your own business?

Response from Interviewee:

Reflection by Interviewer

*Closure: Script of what to Say at the end of the Interview*

Thank you for the interview; reassure confidentiality; and ask permission to follow-up. Thank you very much for sharing your time, talent and treasure with me today. I promise to use the information you provided me to encourage Nigerians aspiring be PhD holders and to improve education in general.

Is there anything more you would like to add or are there any questions you would like to ask me? I will be analyzing the information you and others gave me and submit a draft report to my chair in one month. I will be happy to send you a copy to review at that time, if you are interested. Thank you for your time. Here is my contact number and feel free to call if they have any questions or additional information.

**Appendix D: Table 9**

Table 9: Summary Chart of Career Choice, Research Questions, and Interview Protocol

Career Development Concept	Research Questions	Interview Questions
<p>Self-efficacy – is the self-awareness and a positive self-esteem/concept in the career development process in relationship to others, school, and the world of work. Self-efficacy makes us aware of, explore, and develop personal interests, attitudes, and aptitudes and understanding the life career concept. It enables us to match values and skills to personal experience and how these preferences can change over time due to maturity. By extension, it is the ability to organize and execute courses of action required to produce desired outcomes. This involves initiating behavior, how much effort will result and how long will the effort be sustained in the midst of obstacles</p> <p>The components of self-efficacy include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-being decisive</li> <li>-independent thinking</li> <li>-belief in one’s ability</li> <li>-self advocacy and self determination</li> </ul>	<p>What factors did respondents consider that influenced their coming to the U.S? How individuals organize and execute the courses of action required to achieve their goals – how much effort to put, how long to persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, resiliency to adversity, environmental demands etc. Self-efficacy is believed to be an important factor that influences the ability to persist, commit and be contented with the decision to obtain doctoral degrees.</p> <p>What factors influence Nigerian doctoral students and doctoral recipients to stay in the US or return home after degree completion?</p> <p>How do these factors or influences change over the course of the doctoral study</p> <p>Why so some decide to return when there is low incentives and motivation?</p>	<p>-Contemplating your experiences as doctoral student, what would you consider to be your most difficult challenges?</p> <p>-Describe how you feel/felt these experiences affect/affected your “I can do attitude” when taking on new challenges or tasks?</p> <p>-What things as a doctoral student come easy or natural for you while striving to acquire your doctoral degree? Please explain.</p> <p>-Describe times during your study where you felt the highest level of confidence in your ability.</p> <p>-Think about a time in your life where you were successful, can you tell me about it? How does it (e.g., the previous success) motivate you now?</p> <p>-What personal skills do you possess which have assisted you in making it this far in your career?</p> <p>-Who/what do you use as a means of support during tough academic times?</p>

<p>Expectancy – means something that is significant and attracts, or that we are curious or passionate about; It is goal orientation also referred to as aspirations, expectations, plans or ambitions; it involves quest for knowledge, skills, competences, outcome expectations and perceived value of outcomes. In short it includes both expected outcomes and the value placed on those outcomes.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What are the advantages and disadvantages of your field of study?</li> <li>-Do you expect that your level of success in the doctoral program will translate directly into career success?</li> <li>-Describe why you want to stay or return to Nigeria upon graduation. What would you expect if you returned to Nigeria both in the short and long terms? What would you expect if you remained in the U.S. both in the short and long terms?</li> <li>-What information did you gather or need before making this decision?</li> <li>-What alternatives did you consider before making your final decision? What action did you take? What is the outcome?</li> <li>-What were your expectations of the doctoral study? And life in the U.S.?</li> <li>-At what point in your studies did you become aware that you must start searching for job? How was this revealed to you?</li> <li>-What kind of professional, social and personal incentives would attract you to return upon graduation?</li> <li>-At what point do you decide what to do or not to do in the doctoral program – at the initial, qualifying, comprehensive and dissertation stages?</li> </ul>
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