

## Globalization and Nigeria's National Development

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines globalization and Nigeria's national development through the interrelated dimensions of unemployment, brain drain, and trade and investment. Anchored on Dependency Theory, the paper adopts a qualitative design based on a purposive review and thematic synthesis of empirical studies, policy reports, and institutional publications. The evidence indicates that globalization has expanded Nigeria's access to international markets, capital, technology, and information, but the developmental gains remain uneven. Global integration has favoured capital-intensive and externally oriented sectors while labour-absorbing manufacturing and agriculture remain comparatively weak, thereby limiting productive employment. It has also facilitated the sustained migration of skilled professionals, weakening institutional capacity in health, education, research, and other strategic sectors. Trade and investment flows have increased, but they remain concentrated in extractive activities with limited domestic linkages, technology transfer, and employment spillovers. The study concludes that Nigeria's problem is not integration itself but the dependent and weakly diversified form of integration. It recommends employment-centred industrialization, stronger domestic institutions, human-capital retention measures, strategic trade policy, and enforceable local-content requirements for foreign investment.

### 1. Introduction

Globalization describes the intensification of cross-border flows of goods, services, capital, labour, technology, information, and ideas. It has reconfigured production systems, labour markets, corporate activity, and the policy space available to national governments. Proponents associate openness with market expansion, efficiency, foreign investment, technological diffusion, and improved consumer choice. Critics, however, emphasize that the gains are distributed unevenly because countries enter the global economy with different levels of productive capacity, institutional strength, technological capability, and bargaining power (Baylis & Smith, 2001; Rodrik, 2018; Stiglitz, 2017). Consequently, globalization may generate growth without structural transformation, employment, or broad improvements in human welfare.

Nigeria offers an important setting for examining these contradictions. Since the market-oriented reforms of the mid-1980s, the country has pursued trade liberalization, financial openness, privatization, and closer engagement with international financial institutions. These policies increased Nigeria's exposure to world markets and attracted capital into oil, telecommunications, banking, and other modern sectors. Nevertheless, national development remains fragile, uneven, and vulnerable to external shocks. Oil continues to dominate export earnings, domestic manufacturing is weak, unemployment and underemployment remain persistent, and public institutions struggle to retain highly trained personnel (Adeleye et al., 2020; International Monetary Fund, 2024; World Bank, 2023).

A major concern is the weak connection between global integration and productive employment. Capital inflows and international trade have largely benefited capital-intensive and externally oriented sectors, whereas agriculture, manufacturing, and small-scale production—sectors capable of absorbing large numbers of workers—have not received comparable support. Global competition has also exposed less productive local firms to imported goods and more technologically advanced multinational enterprises. At the same time, employers increasingly demand digital, technical, analytical, and communication capabilities that many graduates have not adequately acquired. Globalization therefore changes the composition of labour demand without automatically increasing the volume or quality of employment (Chiemekwe et al., 2009; Effiong et al., 2020; National Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

Globalization has equally reduced barriers to skilled migration. Nigerian doctors, nurses, academics, engineers, information-technology professionals, and other specialists can more readily access opportunities in advanced economies. Migration may generate remittances, professional networks, and knowledge circulation, but sustained outflows of scarce skills can weaken domestic service delivery and institutional capacity. Where wages, research facilities, career prospects, security, and working conditions are poor, global mobility becomes a channel through which countries that financed professional training lose human capital to economies offering higher returns (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012; International Organisation for Migration, 2014; Raufu, 2002).

Trade and investment present a similarly mixed picture. Liberalization has widened market access and increased foreign direct investment, yet Nigeria's export structure remains concentrated in crude oil and other primary commodities. The limited depth of domestic supply chains reduces technology transfer, local sourcing, industrial learning, and employment spillovers. Foreign investment can therefore coexist with capital repatriation, import dependence, weak industrial diversification, and vulnerability to commodity-price fluctuations (Akinboade, 2013; George-Anokwuru, 2018; Oyelaran-Oyeyinka & Lal, 2005). The developmental

effect of globalization consequently depends on the quality of domestic institutions and the capacity of the state to connect global flows to national productive priorities.

Existing studies frequently assess globalization through aggregate indicators such as gross domestic product, trade openness, and foreign direct investment. Fewer studies integrate labour-market outcomes, skilled migration, and the structure of trade and investment within a single theoretical explanation. This paper addresses that gap by examining three questions: how globalization affects unemployment in Nigeria; how it influences brain drain; and how it shapes trade and investment outcomes. The study contributes an integrated, theory-driven interpretation of Nigeria's experience and identifies policy measures required for more inclusive engagement with the global economy.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Globalization and National Development

Globalization has been conceptualized as internationalization, liberalization, universalization, and the increasing interdependence of national economies. Internationalization stresses the growth of cross-border relationships; liberalization refers to the removal of state-imposed restrictions on trade and finance; while universalization concerns the diffusion of ideas, practices, and cultural forms across geographical boundaries. These dimensions are supported by advances in transportation, telecommunications, digital platforms, and global production networks (Baylis & Smith, 2001). Globalization is therefore not a single event but a multidimensional process that reorganizes economic, political, social, and technological relationships.

National development is broader than economic growth. It includes productive transformation, employment creation, improved health and education, institutional capacity, technological capability, equitable distribution, and the expansion of citizens' opportunities. From this perspective, increases in trade or gross domestic product do not necessarily represent development when they are accompanied by unemployment, dependence on imported technology, human-capital loss, weak public services, or widening inequality. The relevant question is therefore not whether Nigeria is connected to the global economy, but whether that connection strengthens domestic production, human capabilities, and policy autonomy.

The Nigerian experience demonstrates that globalization can produce opportunities and vulnerabilities simultaneously. International markets provide access to finance, technology, knowledge, consumer goods, and export demand. Digital communication has improved banking, education, commerce, and organizational coordination. However, the same processes intensify competitive pressure on local firms, transmit global crises rapidly, and expose the economy to exchange-rate, debt, and commodity-price shocks. These outcomes are shaped by Nigeria's dependence on oil, inadequate infrastructure, policy inconsistency, insecurity, corruption, and limited industrial capability (Nsehe, 2017; Ukeje, 2012; World Bank, 2023).

Thus, globalization should be understood as an enabling environment rather than an automatic development mechanism. Countries capable of coordinating trade, industrial, education, technology, and investment policies can use openness to upgrade production. Countries with weak institutions and narrow export structures may instead become markets for imported goods, suppliers of primary commodities, and sources of skilled labour. Nigeria's national development challenge lies in transforming external integration from a largely extractive relationship into one that deepens domestic productive capacity.

### 2.2 Globalization and Unemployment in Nigeria

Globalization affects employment through trade competition, foreign investment, technological change, migration, and macroeconomic policy. Increased exports and investment can create jobs when they stimulate local production and supplier networks. Conversely, import competition can displace workers where domestic firms cannot match the scale, technology, financing, or quality of foreign producers. Technology raises productivity but may reduce demand for routine labour while increasing demand for workers with advanced technical and digital skills. Employment outcomes therefore depend on the sectoral composition of growth and the adaptability of the workforce.

Nigeria's global integration has been concentrated in oil, finance, and telecommunications. These sectors generate substantial revenue but are relatively capital intensive and cannot absorb the rapidly growing labour force. Agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and small enterprises have greater employment potential, yet they face inadequate electricity, transport costs, limited finance, policy uncertainty, and competition from imports. The oil sector's dominance also weakens incentives for broad-based production and leaves public revenue vulnerable to international price fluctuations (Odularu, 2008). Consequently, periods of economic expansion have often produced insufficient employment.

The employability dimension is equally important. Globalization increases the premium placed on practical, digital, analytical, entrepreneurial, and communication skills. Nigerian tertiary institutions have expanded graduate output, but employers frequently report gaps between academic training and workplace requirements. Chiemeké et al. (2009) and Samuel et al. (2012) link graduate unemployment to inadequate practical preparation and weak alignment between curricula and labour-market demand. The problem is therefore both a shortage of jobs and a mismatch between available skills and the requirements of a technology-driven economy. Empirical studies report mixed effects because globalization operates differently across countries and periods. Effiong et al. (2020) found that globalization may reduce unemployment weakly in the short run but increase it over the long run in West Africa. Adamu et al. (2018) reported that the dimensions of globalization have different effects on unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa, while Altiner et al. (2018) found divergent country experiences among emerging economies. These findings suggest that openness is not inherently employment-creating or employment-destroying; the outcome depends on industrial structure, labour skills, social protection, and the ability of policy to support adjustment.

### 2.3 Globalization and Brain Drain

Brain drain refers to the sustained emigration of educated and skilled people from their country of origin to economies offering better remuneration, facilities, security, professional recognition, and career opportunities. Globalization facilitates this movement

through improved information, international recruitment, recognition of qualifications, transport links, and migration networks. Developed countries often use targeted immigration programmes to attract workers in occupations where domestic supply is inadequate, thereby drawing scarce skills from developing countries (Murru, 2008).

Nigeria experiences strong push factors, including low and irregular remuneration, inadequate equipment, weak research support, limited career progression, insecurity, strikes, and poor governance. These conditions are particularly visible in health and higher education. Raufu (2002) documented concerns about the movement of Nigerian doctors and nurses, while the International Organisation for Migration (2014) showed that skilled migration is an important component of Nigeria's migration profile. The consequence is not merely a reduction in personnel numbers; it includes heavier workloads for remaining workers, declining service quality, higher training costs, and weakened institutional memory.

Migration can also produce benefits. Remittances support households, diaspora networks may facilitate investment and knowledge transfer, and some migrants return with new skills. Docquier and Rapoport (2012), however, emphasize that the net development effect depends on scale, duration, occupational scarcity, and the capacity of the home country to benefit from its diaspora. Where outflows are persistent and domestic replacement is slow, the loss of doctors, lecturers, scientists, and engineers can exceed the gains from remittances.

Brain drain is therefore linked to national development through human-capital formation and institutional capacity. Nigeria invests public and household resources in professional education, but a significant portion of the resulting expertise is deployed abroad. This pattern resembles a transfer of subsidized human capital from a peripheral economy to wealthier labour markets. Retention policies must consequently address the domestic conditions that make migration rational rather than relying on restrictions that may violate individual freedom or prove difficult to enforce.

#### *2.4 Globalization, Trade and Investment*

Trade liberalization and foreign investment can enhance development by expanding markets, increasing competition, introducing technology, and connecting domestic firms to global value chains. Akinboade (2013) associates globalization with wider trade and investment opportunities for Nigeria. The growth of telecommunications, financial services, digital commerce, and selected manufacturing activities demonstrates that foreign capital can support modernization when it is connected to domestic demand and effective regulation. However, Nigeria's export base remains narrow. Crude oil accounts for a dominant share of foreign-exchange earnings, while manufactured exports and high-value agricultural products remain limited. This structure exposes the country to external shocks and constrains industrial learning. It also creates a pattern in which foreign exchange earned from primary commodities finances imports of machinery, refined products, food, and consumer goods. Such trade may increase volumes without developing competitive domestic industries. The quality of foreign direct investment is therefore more important than the quantity alone. Investment produces stronger developmental effects when it creates local jobs, purchases domestic inputs, transfers technology, trains workers, supports research, and reinvests profits. Oyelaran-Oyeyinka and Lal (2005) stress the importance of knowledge and innovation linkages, while George-Anokwuru (2018) found that foreign direct investment did not effectively drive Nigerian growth during the period studied. Weak linkages, capital flight, profit repatriation, and concentration in extractive sectors can reduce the domestic multiplier effect.

Local firms also confront unequal competitive conditions. Multinational corporations may have superior technology, finance, brands, logistics, and access to international supply chains. Without electricity, infrastructure, affordable credit, and consistent policy, Nigerian firms may lose market share even where they possess employment potential. Strategic trade and investment policies are therefore required to combine openness with industrial upgrading, local-content development, competition policy, and support for small and medium-sized enterprises (Ukeje, 2012).

#### *2.5 Theoretical Perspective*

Dependency Theory, associated with the structuralist work of Prebisch and subsequently developed by scholars such as Frank, explains underdevelopment as an outcome of unequal relationships between advanced and developing economies. The global economy is organized around a core that controls capital, technology, finance, and high-value production, and a periphery that supplies primary commodities, low-cost labour, and markets for finished products (Prebisch, 1950; Frank, 1967). Integration under these conditions may reproduce dependence rather than generate autonomous development.

The theory is relevant to Nigeria because the country relies heavily on commodity exports, imported technology, foreign capital, and external policy advice. International financial institutions may provide needed finance and technical support, but conditional lending and adjustment programmes can restrict public investment and prioritize macroeconomic stabilization over employment, industrial diversification, and social welfare. Stiglitz (2017) argues that globalization produces adverse outcomes when global rules and domestic reforms fail to account for unequal capacities and social consequences.

World-Systems Theory extends this explanation by distinguishing core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral states. Core countries dominate advanced production and finance; peripheral countries specialize in primary activities; and semi-peripheral economies combine elements of both positions. Nigeria's dependence on oil exports and imported manufactures is consistent with peripheral specialization. The framework also explains why countries that successfully build manufacturing, technology, and institutional capability can improve their position, while economies that remain commodity-dependent experience limited bargaining power and vulnerability to external shocks (Wallerstein, 2004).

Modernization Theory offers a contrasting interpretation. It attributes development to internal transformation through industrialization, education, technology, rational institutions, and movement from traditional to modern social structures. Its strength is the emphasis on domestic capability and policy reform. Its limitation is the tendency to treat the historical path of Western countries as a universal model and to understate unequal international relationships. Nigeria's experience indicates that internal weaknesses and external structures interact; neither can adequately explain development outcomes alone.

This study adopts Dependency Theory as its principal framework because it integrates the three focal issues. Capital-intensive global integration helps explain weak employment creation; international wage and institutional differentials help explain skilled migration;

and commodity dependence helps explain limited trade and investment spillovers. World-Systems Theory supplements the analysis by locating Nigeria within a hierarchical global division of labour, while modernization insights are retained to recognize the importance of domestic institutions, skills, infrastructure, and governance.

### 2.6 Empirical Review and Research Gap

Empirical research on globalization and Nigerian development produces mixed findings. Oluwabade and Ibidapo (2024) found that trade openness supported economic development, although the effect of financial integration was weak. Onye et al. (2019) reported a positive but largely insignificant contribution from trade openness and foreign direct investment, while terms-of-trade changes and capital formation were more influential. Maduka et al. (2017) found positive long-run effects from trade openness, financial integration, and foreign direct investment. These studies suggest that globalization can support growth, but the magnitude and statistical strength of the effect vary.

Other Nigerian studies are more critical. George-Anokwuru (2018) found that imports negatively affected growth and that foreign direct investment was ineffective in driving real economic expansion. Olaiya and Adelakun (2018) reported a weak relationship between globalization and development, while Popoola (2020) linked globalization-oriented reforms to unemployment and constraints on democratic development. Nsehe (2017) concluded that Nigeria's institutions and regulatory policies were too weak to manage the demands of globalization effectively. Edidem and Olufemi (2024) similarly emphasized the adverse implications of globalization for third-world development.

Cross-country evidence also shows that national conditions matter. Kilic (2015) found that economic and political globalization promoted growth in developing countries, whereas social globalization had a negative effect. Gozgor (2015) reported that greater trade openness reduced structural unemployment, but broader globalization dimensions were statistically insignificant. Adamu et al. (2018) found that political globalization reduced unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa, while Altiner et al. (2018) showed that globalization increased unemployment in some emerging economies and reduced it in others.

The literature therefore does not support a simple conclusion that globalization is wholly beneficial or harmful. Differences in measurement, country structure, period, institutional quality, and econometric method explain part of the variation. More importantly, many studies use gross domestic product as the principal outcome. Growth measures may conceal the distribution of benefits, the employment intensity of expanding sectors, the loss of skilled workers, and the domestic linkages created by trade and investment. A second gap is fragmentation. Unemployment, brain drain, and trade and investment are often investigated separately, even though they reinforce one another. A narrow export structure limits employment; weak employment and institutional conditions encourage migration; brain drain reduces the skills needed for diversification; and limited diversification sustains dependence on foreign technology and commodity exports. An integrated approach is therefore necessary to explain how globalization shapes national development.

This study addresses these gaps through a qualitative synthesis organized around the three dimensions and interpreted within Dependency Theory. It does not claim that external forces alone determine Nigeria's outcomes. Rather, it examines how global structures interact with domestic weaknesses to produce a form of integration that expands external connections without sufficient productive transformation.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design and Sources

The study adopted a qualitative research design based on secondary data. This design was appropriate because the purpose was to synthesize theoretical arguments, empirical findings, and policy evidence rather than estimate a new econometric model. The study population comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, government reports, policy documents, and publications of national and international institutions addressing globalization, employment, skilled migration, trade, investment, and Nigerian development. Purposive sampling was used to select materials directly related to the research objectives. Priority was given to studies on Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa, together with comparative studies that clarified how globalization operates under different institutional and structural conditions. Recent sources were emphasized where available, while foundational works were retained for theoretical development. Institutional evidence was drawn principally from the National Bureau of Statistics, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, and International Organisation for Migration.

Data were analysed using thematic content analysis. Evidence was coded under three themes: globalization and unemployment; globalization and brain drain; and globalization, trade, and investment. The findings reported by different studies were compared to identify convergence, disagreement, contextual conditions, and recurring explanations. Dependency Theory provided the principal interpretive framework, supplemented by World-Systems and modernization perspectives.

The method is limited by its dependence on the definitions, data quality, and methodological choices of the reviewed sources. It cannot establish a single causal coefficient for globalization. Its value lies instead in integrating evidence that is usually examined separately and developing a coherent theoretical account of Nigeria's national development experience.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Globalization and Unemployment

The reviewed evidence indicates that globalization has created selected employment opportunities in oil and gas, telecommunications, banking, logistics, digital services, and multinational operations. It has also improved access to information, modern management practices, and new forms of online work. These benefits are important but insufficient relative to the size and growth of Nigeria's labour force. Employment creation has been limited because the sectors most connected to global capital and trade are frequently capital intensive.

The principal structural problem is the weak development of labour-absorbing industries. Manufacturing and agriculture face high operating costs, unreliable infrastructure, limited access to credit, policy inconsistency, and import competition. When domestic firms contract or remain informal and low-productivity, openness does not translate into stable, well-paid employment. This finding

supports Effiong et al. (2020), who identified potentially adverse long-run employment effects in West Africa, and Popoola (2020), who linked globalization-oriented reforms with unemployment in Nigeria.

Skill mismatch strengthens the negative effect. Internationalized production requires workers who can use modern technologies, solve problems, communicate effectively, and adapt to changing work systems. The Nigerian education system produces large numbers of graduates, but the reviewed literature identifies inadequate practical and technical preparation (Chiemekwe et al., 2009; Samuel et al., 2012). Employers may therefore recruit a limited number of highly skilled workers while many graduates and less-skilled workers remain unemployed or underemployed.

From the dependency perspective, the employment outcome reflects Nigeria's peripheral specialization. The economy exports primary commodities and imports many finished and intermediate goods. This arrangement transfers significant production and employment opportunities to trading partners. Foreign exchange earnings may rise, but domestic value addition and supplier development remain weak. Employment becomes vulnerable to oil-price shocks, exchange-rate instability, and externally driven adjustment policies.

The finding is therefore not that globalization inevitably causes unemployment. Rather, Nigeria's existing mode of integration has not generated enough domestic production to absorb labour. Globalization is more likely to create inclusive employment where trade policy is coordinated with industrial development, infrastructure, skills formation, access to finance, and support for competitive local enterprises.

#### *4.2 Globalization and Brain Drain*

The study finds that globalization has intensified Nigeria's brain drain by making international opportunities more visible and accessible. Recruitment agencies, professional networks, digital information, and migration pathways connect Nigerian professionals to labour shortages in advanced economies. The decision to migrate is reinforced by differences in wages, equipment, working conditions, research support, security, and career progression.

The health and education sectors illustrate the developmental cost. The migration of doctors, nurses, lecturers, researchers, and other specialists reduces service capacity and increases pressure on remaining personnel. Raufu (2002) and the International Organisation for Migration (2014) document the long-standing scale and significance of skilled migration from Nigeria. The loss is particularly serious where professional training is publicly subsidized and replacement requires several years.

Brain drain also creates a self-reinforcing cycle. Weak institutions encourage skilled workers to leave; their departure further weakens institutions; and deteriorating services increase public dissatisfaction and additional migration. Universities lose mentors and researchers, hospitals lose experienced clinicians, and public agencies lose technical expertise. These losses reduce the capacity to formulate and implement the industrial, technological, and social policies required to benefit from globalization.

The evidence nevertheless requires a balanced interpretation. Diaspora remittances, investment, professional collaboration, and eventual return can support development. The critical issue is whether Nigeria possesses institutions capable of converting migration into brain circulation rather than permanent loss. Retention and diaspora policies should therefore improve domestic opportunities, support temporary and virtual engagement, recognize professional achievement, and create credible routes for return.

#### *4.3 Globalization, Trade and Investment*

The findings show that globalization has expanded Nigeria's trade and investment flows, but the benefits are concentrated and uneven. Foreign investment has supported telecommunications, banking, oil and gas, consumer markets, and selected infrastructure. Trade has increased access to machinery, technology, medicines, and consumer goods. These outcomes confirm that openness can contribute to modernization and growth (Akinboade, 2013; Maduka et al., 2017).

However, the export structure remains dominated by crude oil and other primary products. This concentration exposes the economy to volatile prices and reduces the learning opportunities associated with manufacturing and complex exports. Imports satisfy domestic demand but also compete with local producers that operate under difficult infrastructure and financing conditions. The result is a persistent gap between the expansion of trade and the depth of domestic production.

Foreign direct investment has similarly produced limited spillovers where local sourcing, technology transfer, training, and reinvestment are weak. George-Anokwuru (2018) found that foreign direct investment did not effectively promote real growth in the period studied. This does not imply that foreign investment is undesirable; it indicates that policy must distinguish between extractive investment and investment that builds local capability. Enforceable local-content provisions, supplier-development programmes, research partnerships, and competition regulation can strengthen the domestic multiplier effect.

The dependency interpretation is supported by the coexistence of increased external transactions and continued structural vulnerability. Nigeria participates actively in global markets but retains limited influence over commodity prices, international finance, technology ownership, and value-chain governance. Improving the development impact of trade and investment therefore requires diversification into agro-processing, manufacturing, digital services, renewable energy, pharmaceuticals, and other activities with strong employment and knowledge linkages.

#### *4.4 Integrated Interpretation*

The three findings are mutually reinforcing. Limited industrial diversification produces weak employment; unemployment and poor professional conditions encourage skilled migration; and brain drain reduces the technical and institutional capacity required for diversification. At the same time, trade and investment that remain concentrated in extractive activities provide insufficient domestic linkages to break the cycle. Globalization therefore affects national development through an interconnected system rather than isolated channels.

Nigeria's internal challenges remain important. Infrastructure deficits, insecurity, corruption, inconsistent policies, weak education-industry linkages, and inadequate research funding reduce the capacity to use global opportunities. Dependency Theory should not be interpreted as removing domestic responsibility. Instead, it shows that internal weaknesses become more damaging when a country occupies a subordinate position in global production and finance. Development requires both stronger domestic institutions and more strategic terms of external engagement.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study examined globalization and Nigeria's national development through unemployment, brain drain, and trade and investment. The evidence demonstrates that globalization has brought access to markets, capital, technology, information, and organizational innovation. Nevertheless, these opportunities have not produced sufficiently inclusive development because Nigeria's participation remains dependent, commodity-centred, and weakly connected to domestic industrial capability.

Global integration has favoured capital-intensive sectors and exposed less competitive local industries to external pressure, thereby limiting employment creation. It has facilitated the migration of scarce professionals and weakened key institutions. It has also increased trade and investment without generating adequate local value addition, technology transfer, and employment spillovers. Nigeria's challenge is therefore not globalization in itself but the structure, governance, and domestic content of its globalization process.

### 5.2 Recommendations

First, the government should pursue employment-centred diversification. Industrial policy should prioritize agro-processing, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, digital services, renewable energy, and other sectors capable of generating value addition and large-scale employment. Reliable electricity, transport infrastructure, affordable long-term finance, and stable regulation are necessary to enable domestic firms to compete.

Second, education and labour-market policy should be aligned with global production requirements. Universities, polytechnics, employers, and professional bodies should jointly update curricula, expand practical training, strengthen digital and entrepreneurial skills, and support internships and industry-based research. Skills policy must be connected to the sectors targeted for industrial development rather than treated as an isolated educational reform.

Third, human-capital retention should focus on the conditions that motivate migration. Competitive remuneration, functional equipment, research funding, merit-based career progression, security, and professional autonomy are essential in health, education, science, and public administration. Diaspora policies should facilitate temporary return, joint research, remote teaching, investment, and knowledge networks so that mobility can generate brain circulation.

Fourth, trade and investment policy should require stronger domestic linkages. Foreign investors should be encouraged and, where appropriate, required to source locally, train Nigerian workers, develop suppliers, transfer relevant technology, and comply with environmental and labour standards. Trade agreements should be evaluated according to their effects on employment, industrial learning, and policy space, not only their effects on trade volumes.

Finally, Nigeria should strengthen its bargaining and implementation capacity in relations with international financial institutions and multinational corporations. External finance should support productive infrastructure, human development, and diversification rather than deepen debt dependence or impose adjustment costs disproportionately on vulnerable groups. With coherent institutions and a long-term productive strategy, Nigeria can move from passive integration toward a more selective, negotiated, and development-oriented engagement with globalization.

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