

## **Brain Drain in Africa: Issues and Challenges in the Context of Higher Learning in Cameroon**

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**ABSTRACT** The so-called brain drain is a topical issue globally, and especially in Africa, where the phenomenon is multifaceted. Inspired by similar trends reported for Africa, this conceptual paper highlights the case of Cameroon by exploring the structure of academic staff recruitment by state universities, which is managed through a highly centralised bureaucratic public service system. The tendency to appoint people to key university positions, such as vice rectors, deans, and heads of departments, by presidential decree exacerbates the situation. In addition, the limitation of 45 years as the maximum entry age into the public service deprives universities of highly skilled professionals, who seek employment elsewhere although they have the potential to contribute to the development of the economy through involvement in the local higher education system. To mitigate this situation, it is imperative for governments to separate state universities from the broader public service system, and grant the universities autonomy to manage their own affairs, including recruitment based on their peculiar realities. Giving universities the authority to manage their own recruitment and promotion processes will encourage competition, boost output and reputation, and curb brain drain.