

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to take a critical view on the challenges and prospects of architectural practice in Nigeria. Architectural practice has always been seen by architects and students of the discipline as a tough and stressful terrain. This, indeed is connected to the obvious demands of the training of architects, characterized by long hours of studio work and jury, this does not end at the schools of architecture but continues through the practice life. There are challenges both within the profession and outside the profession. Several of these challenges have serious implications on the training of architects and the practicing of architecture in the country. This paper aims at providing pathways towards addressing the challenges and analyzing the prospects of an architect in Nigeria. The paper adopts a qualitative research approach while presenting findings from in-depth interviews from architects in practice and related literatures. The study observed that most of the challenges are as a result of the shortcomings of the products from the schools; practice demands, government policies. The paper concludes with the recommendations that certain areas of study of architecture such as specifications writing, understanding of planning and building laws, regulations and entrepreneurship studies, in architecture should be given intensified attention in the training institutions. The need for architects to reach out socially through all available media within the ambits of the law to promote commissions while being actively involved in the activities of their professional bodies was found to be a crucial path to practice success. Finally, partnerships and collaborations between architects and firms is assuredly a path towards promoting stronger, healthier and enduring architectural businesses.

Keywords: Architectural practice, challenges, prospects, profession, Architects.

INTRODUCTION

The society we live in is constantly changing both locally and globally, these changes have significant implications on the perception of architecture and the way architectural business is done. In Nigeria today, these changes have resulted in a very challenging and sometimes hostile practice environment for the architect. These challenges have pushed some architects away from the profession thereby draining the profession of needed talent and skills. It has been argued that some young graduates from Nigerian schools of Architecture are poorly prepared to fit into the world of practice as there appears to be disconnect between training and practice in Nigeria. Tzonis (2014) said such sentiments are not restricted to Nigeria and have indeed been the focus of debates and discussions in countries like Britain, America, Germany, etc The architect is essentially a product of his training. It is the training he receives that provides him the basic knowledge and skills necessary for professional practice. It is expected that such knowledge is built upon in response to the dynamism of the practice environment. However, if the initial training is defective, at the end of the day the graduate architect will be a misfit in the workplace, struggling through professional life and having difficulties responding to its dynamics The main objective of this paper therefore is to provide answer to the following questions; how does the quality of graduates from schools of architecture in Nigeria influences professional practice, To what extent does the practice environment have an adverse effect on architectural profession in Nigeria? What is the way forward for architects practicing in Nigeria?

It is in the light of the above that this paper examines the prospects and challenges posed by the current architectural practice environment in Nigeria. It proffers some recommendations aimed at ensuring that the products of architectural training schools in the country are well equipped to not only transit smoothly from school to work but to also successfully navigate through the dynamic world of professional practice in Nigeria.

Architectural Practice Overview:

This paper agrees with Haruna (2008) in defining the word “*practice*” to mean “to work in a profession.” The practice of architecture therefore covers any sector that is involved in the shaping or re-shaping of the built environment including private practitioners, public servants and academics. It is therefore not restricted to the private consulting firms. Haruna, (2008) concludes that “whatever sector an architect finds him/herself, so long as his schedule entails architectural judgment in content and /or context, such an architect is in the practice of architecture”. Architectural practice involves combining the art, science as well as the management components, applying them to design and building construction under an organized system or business to make profit.

In a paper presented at the Architects Colloquium organized by the Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON), Arc. Ibrahim Abdullahi Haruna identified architectural practice to include any sector that is involved in the shaping or re-shaping of the built environment (Haruna 2008). He identified that success in professional practice is built on certain foundation. The first is the tutelage years which involves the period spent in school acquiring education. The second is the associate/apprenticeship age which is the period spent developing experience and confidence in the practice of the profession. The third and final stage is the specialist age which involves years of professional practice where a practitioner struggles to maintain relevance through coping with new developments. He enumerated the ideals of architectural practice in the presentation. Haruna (2008) further established some of the absurdities witnessed in architectural practice in Nigeria in the last 20 years. Some of the absurdities identified are non-compliance with requirements of the NIA Code of Conduct and the ease with which anyone (qualified or unqualified) can register a construction business. Furthermore, Haruna in an attempt to trace the challenges of architectural practice in Nigeria recognized that the dynamic nature of architecture as a profession cannot be separated from the practice of it as a business. Therefore, the architect is faced with the “dual role of being both producers and managers at the same time”. Haruna suggested that for a practice to survive the

pace of development in Nigeria, it must reposition itself in the most competitive state. This can be achieved by aiming at high-performance through reaching out for new opportunities; also success oriented architectural practice must equip its staff with the ability to integrate theory into practical reality. Similarly, Arc. Roti Delano, the President of the Association of Consulting Architects of Nigeria (ACA Nigeria) identified that the bane of architectural practice in Nigeria is the over-reliance on expatriates to work illegally on projects at the expense of qualified indigenous practices Njoku (2011). He asserted that before now, projects were awarded to “Nigerian architects provided they showed they have the technical experts”. In this sense, the Nigerian architect gets the project and “then engaged his counterparts from anywhere in the world because probably at that time, they didn’t have the skills to design some of those large projects”. He observed however that the reverse is now the case Arc. Delano asserted that “Nigerians are now going out to get architects from outside who are coming to work here despite the fact that they have a lot of Nigerians who can do the job even better than the foreign architects” Njoku (2011). It is evident from the few articles reviewed that the architectural practice in Nigeria is faced with a lot of challenges

Dare-Abel (2015) said from whichever angle one wants to look at the challenges facing architectural practice, one cannot separate the dynamic nature of architecture as a profession, and the practice of it as a business. Architecture in the early days was a master- builder approach (design and build). Much as serious considerations were given to materials and environmental determinants, the challenges they posed were not as critical as today. Architecture was narrowly concerned about fulfillment of functional and aesthetics values. Architecture today focuses more on the three fundamentals thus: value, function and image, value (tangible), which distinguishes architecture from pure arts, has suddenly become an undisputed major consideration in architecture today. The prominence of value has necessitated the need for the architect to at least be aware of finances, market forces, development options, despite the wide range of specialization areas in architecture; the demand on the architect is everyday stretching.

Job prospecting and marketing, have its own fair share in the dynamism of the profession. As De Long puts it, *"in the past, the work of professional service firms was a gentleman's game – and now it's blood sport. You cannot wait for clients to knock on your door. Now you must go and sell the business. And most firms are competing for the same kind of clients: large, complex and global"*. Many a times the architect has to study the problems around his prospective client, and sell the idea to him in exchange for commission.

Architects require the acuteness of the business manager plus the super skill to work within the confines of NIA strict provisions of the code of conduct on marketing. There is also the complication professional practitioners find themselves, that of the dual role of being both producers and managers at the same time. The competition is getting tougher, and client's expectations are reaching soaring height to the extent that they are expecting the architect to be a magician. The challenges facing the practice of architecture today has been growing in size and complexity, and pattern. For example, a client may award his contract purely on political, religious or other considerations to a company or an individual that has no business with construction yet expecting the architect to perform wonders and get the job done within the specified quality, time and cost. This is probably because the role of architect in normal post contract services is misconstrued to be that of supervision even in some of the NIA's official documents. It should be realized that the architect only inspects and monitors, because supervision of the nitty-gritty of construction process is actually the responsibility of the contractor's staff on site.

Hindrances to Architectural practice

The focus of architecture essentially is the society. Consequently, whatever happens to the society impacts on the practice of architecture? For instance, a prosperous economy will stimulate increased demand for housing and other building types requiring the services of the architect. Similarly, policies that stifle the economy in turn result in a lull in architectural practice. This section of the paper identifies some factors that posed threat to the practice of architecture in the Nigeria.

- i) Proliferation of project management approach as opposed to traditional method.

The traditional methods of project procurement whereby the architect was literally in charge appears to be giving way to other procurement methods like design and build, turnkey, design and manage, BOT, and various forms of developer procurement methods. The concern for the architect is that his hitherto secured position in the Building industry is seriously threatened as more prominence is given to the project manager or developer, as the case may be. This situation has pushed some architects to seek additional qualifications and expertise.

- ii) Information Technology (IT):

A major influence on the architect and practice of architecture is the on-going revolution in the information technology sector which appears in the words of Sa'ad (2001) to be moving architecture increasingly from "the drawing board to cyberspace". Although studies of Nigerian firms by Oluwatayo (2009) found a low availability and uptake of IT compared to firms in developed countries, there are strong indications that spirited efforts are being made to bridge the gap. Today, IT facilities especially computers are common feature in many offices. What is not quite clear, however, is the extent to which these facilities are deployed in the daily operations of the architectural practices. Benefits of IT to architectural practice are enormous and include speed of decision making and delivery, easier networking, greater interaction and appreciation of designs, savings in resources (time, labor and money).

- iii) Proliferation of non-professionals and quacks.

Although the menace of quacks parading as architects has been a source of concern for several years running, it is disheartening to note the prevalence of quacks in the country. Also of concern is the unhealthy rivalry that goes on between architects and other professionals, where the professional integrity of the architect has been questioned. Even among architects, all do not appear to be well especially between architects in the public service and those in private practice. Lack of cordial working relationship often observed between these groups, instead of strengthening the profession tends to expose it to ridicule.

iv) Globalization and Competition:

Improved interaction, communication and cooperation between nations of the world have served to gradually demolish the partition walls that in times past separated people in one location from another. It is increasingly realized that the world indeed is a "global village". A major implication of this in our context is that architectural practices can now have a more global outreach in terms of sourcing jobs, expertise, facilities and information while maintaining a local foothold. Often times we see international jobs being advertised as competitions open to all that meet stipulated guidelines, including students. It also opens up doors of opportunities for international collaboration which enables collaborating partners to operate from their offices in different localities while inputs can then be coordinated with the help of IT facilities. For Nigerian architects, this signifies the need to widen the scope of knowledge beyond the local and keep abreast of developments on the foreign scene. IT also plays a critical role in this regard. The obvious implication of globalization and its associated competition is for architects to repackage themselves and go for those extras that at the end of the day will make them stand out from the crowd. Often times, time is spent on doing the so called "big things" that the equally important "small things" are glossed over. A couple of Nigerian architects have been rightly faulted on this for inability on their part to demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills in technical and management (especially financial) matters. Often times, drawings are incomplete and relevant details missing.

v). Socio-economic and Environmental Issues:

Oluwatayo (2009) said Nigerian architects are practicing in an economic environment that can be mildly described as "tough". The level of unemployment or more importantly under employment is on the increase. Majority of Nigerians are reportedly poor. Government's direct investment in housing projects appears to be dwindling in real terms. Harsh economic and other policies of government appear to constrict the revenue base of potential clients. The few clients available appear more knowledgeable and persistent in demanding for value for their money. Many clients prefer to negotiate than pay for architectural services in accordance with the prescribed scale of fees. The perception of the architect and the services he renders are often

poor and in many instances inaccurate. A client in several cases will feel more comfortable paying the contractor than the architect whose effort is equated to the number of sheets in which his work is presented! Architects over the years have been taught to give consideration to materials and environmental factors in evolving their designs. However, the scope of environmental concerns worldwide has widened to include consideration about weather changes and depleting natural resources. These make it imperative that architectural judgment ensure that resources are used in a very judicious manner. "Sustainability" today is a global watchword. The issue of sustainability is very critical for the practice of architecture because buildings, the main product of architecture, have been identified as major consumers of resources as well as major polluters of the environment. Today, Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA) reports are required for especially large projects. It has been suggested that perhaps in the near future, the scope of impact of projects on communities may be expanded to review of projects by not only regulatory bodies but also other stakeholders including members of the community, several of whom may not have technical background (Sa'ad, 2001).

vi) Gender Segregation:

A cursory examination of all spheres and cadres of the architectural profession - be it public service, consultancy or even academia, reveals a very low representation of women. Lack of a level playing ground has been identified as a major cause for the high attrition rate of female architects from the profession. Studies like Oluwatayo (2009) have shown that many Nigerian architectural firms are unenthusiastic about employing female architects, especially those that are married and within the child bearing age. When female architects manage to get employed, they are faced with biases ranging from lower remuneration and slow career advancement to stereotypes about their professional capabilities. There have also been reported cases of sexual harassment of female architects in the work place. Consequently, many female architects report being under employed, having to work under pressure and sometimes, dressing and acting like men as they struggle to gain acceptance and career progression in the work place, Also most women architects tend to explore

other areas of specialization of the profession, than design and construction. As one woman aptly reechoed the thoughts of several others, “you have to put in twice as much effort compared to your male counterparts in order to be noticed and much more to be reckoned with “gender disparity is everywhere just like what Zaha Hadid went through before her designs were accepted all over the world.

vii) Urbanization and Population Growth Rate :

Nigeria has one of the fastest growing populations in the world today, with a population of about 194million persons with an annual growth rate estimated at about 3.2%, (NPC, 2006). The important characteristics of this population apart from its huge magnitude are the rate at which it is urbanizing on one hand and the proportion of the population that is considered poor, on the other hand. Presently, about 70% of the Nigerian people are classified as being poor, (NPC, 2006). The magnitude of the population gives a fair indication of the huge demand for housing and other infrastructure needed in the country. Although the huge Nigerian population and its associated demand for infrastructure should suggest a boom for architects, however, the high level of poverty suggests increasing shift in clientele base away from the affluent. It also implies that architects become more creative and innovative fashioning new ways of interventions in shaping and reshaping the built environment.

viii) Corruption

As with every other sector in the country, bribery and corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian psyche; the building and construction sector and indeed architectural practices are not safe from the onslaught. There is almost nothing one can get done within the civil service or government parastatals without Naira exchanging hands and the disease has even infiltrated the quarters of private companies and multinationals. Not only does this demeaning practice destroy national image, giving bribes in other to obtain a service or win a contract.

Professional integrity under clause 1.1 of the document (honesty, integrity, faithfulness impartiality and responsibility) it states that, *“Members shall be honest in all their dealings, act with impartiality and responsibility and uphold the credibility and dignity of the*

profession at all times in their professional and business activities." Furthermore under clause 1.3, it says *"Members shall not offer or take bribe in connection with their professional and business activities."* Bribery and corruption makes it more difficult for an architect to perform his professional duties in a credible manner with dignity and integrity. On the other hand, it means professional design services and supervision contract will be awarded to the highest bidder; either an indigenous firm/ consortium with close affiliations with weighty political figures who may not necessarily have the merit to execute or foreign firms who lacking allegiance to the country and professional body are capable and sufficiently motivated to engage in such unpatriotic behavior.

ix.) Lack of Standard Architectural Education System in the Country

Mgbemena (2007) says with fifty-five years of **architecture education**, a forty-seven years old professional body, ten federal governments, nine state governments, one private (Covenant University) owned degree awarding schools of architecture. Nineteen polytechnics and colleges of technology offering national diploma in architecture for architectural technician, and an estimated population of one hundred and forty million (census 2006) It is time for architecture in Nigeria to be reckoned with. In this global world to jettison the past in which inadequate staffing, insufficient research facilities (which may still prevail in nascent schools of architecture) were seen as the major problems in our system but analysis the present (the influence of globalization), and look into the challenging future and realize that the increasing gap between the school of architecture and the architectural profession pose a great challenge, for how folly and helpless is the beginning without a vivid picture of the end.

Improving Architectural Practice in Nigeria

Nigerian clients are fast developing at probably a faster rate the nation seems to develop. Globalization has opened their eyes to pursue their rights and demand for the best service from architects. The architectural practice that can survive the pace of development in Nigeria must reposition itself in the most competitive state. Such practice must aim at high-performance through reaching out for new opportunities. The staff must

possess the ability to hoodwink theory into practical reality, and exploit advances in technology to the fullest. Such should not only be self centered, but also advantage to the client as a competitive advantage.

Architectural practices must also invest in the renewal of its intellectual capital, which can never be bought but developed. Many firms spend a lot on routine management training which are hardly tailored for the kind of challenges encountered in the management of professional services. The kind of business such training programs are designed for are not having the challenges posed by high level intellectual manpower consultancy firms cope with as its major capital. Perhaps the best investment in the renewal of intellectual capital for architectural practitioners is through architectural seminars and workshops, and also similar programs tailored specifically for professional service.

Article 1 of the NIA Code of Conduct dealing with Professional Obligations & Remunerations under Clause 1.2 demands that *“a member is advised before undertaking or continuing with any work to arrange that his resources are adequate and properly directed to carry it out.”* Resources here implies intellectual, financial and material. Architects should be professional enough to size up their involvement to the limit of their resources otherwise quality, cost or timing is bound to be compromised. Perhaps, many of the grossly incomplete contract documentations flying the construction industry today could be manifestation of the infringement of this clause by architects, primarily due to preponderance of one-man practices. Team work is the only way for pooling experience, sharing knowledge and articulating quality production that meets client’s objective. The global trend towards merger and acquisition is strategically geared towards waxing stronger for better services and competitive advantage.

The Code encourages members to support paid competition and forbids supplanting one another in the quest for job prospecting, so as to promote excellence and cordiality. There is enough jobs for every architect in Nigeria. As professionals, architects should imbibe the culture of *‘coo petition’*, an HBS coined word for

cooperation amidst competition as a sure strategy for good practice.

Prospects in Architectural practice

Architecture, which is concerned with the planning, design, and production of buildings either existing or new Amole (2004) Architectural works, in the material form of buildings, are often perceived as cultural symbols and as works of art. Historical civilizations are often identified with their surviving architectural achievements.

Architecture, the art and technique of designing and building, as distinguished from the skills associated with construction. The practice of architecture is employed to fulfill both practical and expressive requirements, although these two ends may be distinguished, they cannot be separated, and the relative weight given to each can vary widely. Because every society—whether highly developed or less so, settled or nomadic—has a spatial relationship to the natural world and to other societies, the structures they produce reveal much about their environment (including climate and weather), history, ceremonies, and artistic sensibility, as well as many aspects of daily life.

Admission Requirements for the study of Architecture in Nigeria

The O'level subject combination and requirements needed to study Architecture are; Five SSCE credit passes in English Language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and any of Fine Art, Geography or Wood Work, Biology, Economics, Tech. Drawing, Further. Mathematics., Introduction to Building Construction, Bricklaying/Block laying, Concreting, Wall, Floors and Ceiling Finishing, Joinery, Carpentry, Decorative Painting, Lining, Sign & Design, Wall Hanging , Colour Mixing/Matching & Glazing, Ceramics, Graphics Design, Graphic Printing, Basic Electricity.

In UTME, please note that **English Language** is Compulsory for this course. Therefore, the three (3) other JAMB UTME subject combination needed to study **Architecture** under the Faculty of Environmental science , includes Physics, Mathematics, and any of Chemistry, Geography, Art, Biology and Economics

Table1. Showing Institutions where Architecture is studied in Nigeria 2018

S/No	Name of Institutions	Location
1	Abia State University (ABSU)	Uturu, Abia State .
2	Ahmadu Bello University (ABU)	Zaria, Kaduna State
3	Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic	Unwana City, Ebonyi State
4	Ambrose Alli University	Ekpoma, Edo State
5	Anambra State University	Uli Town, Anambra State
6	Bauchi State University	Gudau, Bauchi state
7	Bayero University Kano	Kano, Kano state
8	Bells University of Technology	Ota, Ogun state
9	Caleb University	Imota, Lagos state
10	Caritas University	Amorji-Nike Enugu state
11	Covenant University	Ota, Ogun state
12	Crescent University	Abeokuta, Ogun state
13	Cross River State University of Technology	Calabar, Cross-rivers state
14.	Enugu State University of Science and Technology	Enugu, Enugu state
15.	Federal University of Technology Akure	Akure, Ondo state
16.	Federal University of Technology Minna	Minna, Niger state
17.	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	Owerri, Imo state
18.	Godfrey Okoye University	Enugu east, Enugu state
19.	Imo State University	Owerri, Imo state
20.	Joseph Ayo Babalola University	Ikeji-Arakeji, Osun state
21.	Kaduna State university	Kaduna, Kaduna
22.	Kano University of Science and Technology	River wudii, kano state
23.	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology	Ogbomoso. Oyo state
24.	Modibbo Adama University of Technology	Yola, Adamawa state
25.	Nnamdi Azikiwe University	Awka, Anambra state
26.	Obafemi Awolowo University	Ile-Ife, Osun state
27.	Olabisi Onabanjo University	Ayo Iwoye, Ogun state
28.	Rivers State University	Port Harcourt, Rivers state
29.	Tansian University	Umunya,Oyi Anambra state

Source: Authors' survey

Skills and Competencies needed in Architecture:

For an architect to effectively function or practice in this ever competing society and be able to fit in to explore the prospects of an architect, the following skills are needed.

- Adaptability and flexibility for dealing with unexpected Situations where Necessary
- The ability to reflect on, and improve, your professional performance.
- Ability to see the big picture as well as giving attention to the smallest detail
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Understanding of history, and cultural and environmental concerns
- Design and drawing skills.
- A methodical, logical approach.
- Analytical skills.
- Excellent mathematics skills.
- Communication and negotiating skills.
- The ability to solve problems in an analytical, logical way;
- The ability to work as part of a team;
- Written and oral communication in various settings;
- Research skill
- Decision-making ability
- Imaginative and creative thinking skills
- Ability to analyze and critically assess problems
- Numeracy, design and drawing;
- IT skills, Computer-Aided Design (CAD)
- Project management skills.

Career Opportunities and Job Prospects as an Architect

The main task of an architect is to design and execute the plan for construction of any building or area. The job scenario include site selection, field research and supervision, safety management, quality control, environmental planning, estimating and costing, supervision of construction work, interior decoration etc. The architect is the overall in charge for construction- his responsibility begins right from the designing and planning of the structure until the same is erected. They must be able to communicate their ideas visually to their clients. The work of an architect starts with the layout and sketches of proposed structures according to the requirements as well as the objectives of the client. Once the plans are finalized and accepted by the client, the

architect has to obtain the approval and permission of the local authority for construction. Apart from this, it is the architects who co-ordinate the participation of all the specialists involved in the building process. That is why some text refers to him as the master builder.

With the country's current growth in industrial and economic activities, there exists wide employment opportunities for architects, both in the public and private sectors.

A qualified architect can work as an Asset manager, Construction manager, Disaster reliever, Furniture designer, Industrial designer, Interior designer, Project manager, Property developer, Researcher, Theatre designer, Urban designer, Urban planner, Architect, Architectural technologist, Interior and spatial designer, Building surveyor, Commercial/residential surveyor, Construction manager, Higher education lecturer, Historic buildings inspector/conservation officer, Landscape architect Planning and development surveyor, Production designer, theatre/television/film, Structural engineer, Town planner etc. With private and government organizations such as:

- Central and state public work departments,
- Housing and urban development corporation,
- Municipalities, city development authorities,
- State housing boards etc
- They are also employed in industrial ventures, and can function as:
 - Consultancy and private architectural firms,
 - Teaching institutions
 - Military and police organization
 - Real estate development firms etc

The most privileged scope in the field of architecture is private practice. With some years of experience in an organization, the architects can set up their own business. Architectural practices or individual architects may choose to specialize in one of a number of areas such as housing, hospital, educational, religious, and commercial facilities.

A qualified architect, to work as a consultant or to set up private practice, must register with the ARCON (Architecture registration council of Nigeria) and must be a member of NIA (Nigeria institute of architects) before starting their profession. The Council of Architecture constituted by the federal government is charged with the responsibility to regulate the education and practice of professional architects throughout Nigeria besides maintaining the register of architects. This body along with the Nigeria Institute of Architects- the national body of Architects in the country or the club of Architects lays down the guidelines for working hours, work environment, and professional scale of fees etc.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the qualitative research approach, sourcing data primarily through in-depth interviews and Literatures. An interview schedule was prepared and used for 20 selected firms to ensure uniformity in the data collected. The participants were drawn from cities within Nigeria with high concentration of architectural firms; Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt. Principals of architectural firms that have been established for at least ten years qualified to be selected as the participants and the willingness to participate in the interview was considered. The participants included architects having rich professional experiences with between 10 and 25 years practice experience. Appointments were scheduled ahead in view of the extremely busy schedules of the participants. Notes and voice recordings (optional-by permission) were taken to facilitate effective documentation of the facts and insights derived from the interviews. Content analysis of the data was embarked upon towards distilling findings and recommendations for the study.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The findings of the study were presented as it relates to the practice of the profession and the prospects of architecture as earlier identified.

a.) The need to create a more gender balanced work environment. This should actually commence right from school where students are taught to respect everyone irrespective of

gender. Allowing students to work together in groups encourages the male students to learn and appreciate the inherent talents of their female counterparts – an appreciation which hopefully should be carried into professional life. Moreover, widening the scope of expertise via specialization programmes will also enable the female students to migrate to areas where they have both interest and talent.

b). Training of architects should not be limited to class room alone. This is because the pace of change especially with the IT revolution has been described as both “breathtaking” and “mind blowing”. Thus architects who want to be at the cutting edge of their profession need to listen and learn as much as they can and as quickly as they can. The current continuous education programme of the Nigerian Institute of Architects is indeed laudable. However, it is suggested that the programme be run as a workshop in decentralized locations in order to benefit more people. Above all, self-development is very important.

c) . The practice of architecture involves politics so architects need to learn how to be involved. The economic environment is a bit hostile to architects, resulting in scarcity of commissions. Architects need to be patient and committed to the profession. Government as clients may delay consultants payments, the architect will have to develop effective follow-up strategies and means to battle the 'Nigerian Factor’.

d) . Architects in Nigeria need to develop the capacity and ability to retain commissions from start to finish. It is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve this; hence the need to engage in design and build services is going on extinction

CONCLUSION

Emerging realities strongly suggest that architects can no longer rely on the traditional architectural services. The boundaries within which the professional architect operates are shifting as a result of the influence of technology, innovation, new project procurement methods and globalization. Growing socio-economic and environmental concerns, higher expectations of clients and the competitive nature of the practice environment demand that architects possess the enlarged knowledge and skills base needed to successfully navigate through the sometimes hostile but ever changing world of professional practice. This in

part supports the call for specializations in other areas like project management, landscape design, interior design, etc. Schools of architecture have a critical role to play in bridging the identified knowledge and skills gap necessary for the unfolding practice environment. In recognition of this role, many schools have already embarked on curricula review with a view to equipping their students with expertise in a broader range of areas. Efforts of schools are however hampered by inadequate human resources, poor funding, lack of infrastructural facilities and the challenges of securing approvals for the needed levels of curricula change, which differs from one school to another. The paper also stresses the need for training to transcend the classrooms to practice offices in view of the speed at which changes are taking place. Thereby showing the prospects that are attached to architectural practice in the country. We can say despite all orders with the required skilled and competency the architectural practice is skill elaborate.

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