

ARCHITECTURAL PERSONNEL AND THE CHALLENGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper addresses the problems of unemployment among architects in Nigeria. Accordingly, emphasis is placed on why Nigerian architects are unemployed and how to make them employable. A well-structured questionnaire which data were analyzed using the mean value and simple percentage were used find out the causes of unemployment among Nigerian Architects. This paper reveals that unemployment among architects in Nigeria is caused by employers' preferences and Government policies and its poor implementation. The paper therefore recommends proper implementation of Government policies, entrepreneurial skills among architects and proper monitoring of personnel used on sites as ways of reducing unemployment among architectural personnel.

Keywords: Architects, unemployment, innovation, architectural personnel, advancement.

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment refers to a situation in which people who are willing to work at the prevailing wage rate are unable to find job. Unemployment can also be described as a percentage or number of labour force that are not engaged or working but are willing and capable of working at the current wage and working condition. It is the difference between the amount of labour employed and the amount of labour not hired at these conditions and level (Tunde, 2007; Fajana 2000; & Standing, 1983). Unemployment is one of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria and other developing countries mostly Africa (Dike, 2005; Alanana 2003; Fanimu & Olayinka 2009). The unemployment in developing countries such as Nigeria and other African countries increases rapidly. Every year graduates from the universities,

polytechnics, colleges of education, young secondary school leavers and dropouts and primary schools dropouts are turned out into the society but end up not being engaged or having meaningful employment. Research revealed that unemployment rate in Nigeria has continued to rise. The rate was 6.2% in the 1970's, 9.8% in 1980's, 11.5% in 1990's, 19.7% in 2009, 21.1% in 2010, and 23.9% in 2011 and has not decrease since then (Vanguard of December 23, 2004; Alanana 2003 & Nwachukwu, 2012; World Bank, 2012). Report shows that primary school account for 14.7% unemployment, secondary school 53.6% and tertiary institutions which polytechnic is a member constituted 12.4% (Vanguard Dec. 23, 2004 & Dike, 2005). Unemployment rate is an indicator of a country's economic performance. Unemployment signifies low productivity which weakens the economy (Dike, 2005 & Abdullamid, 2012). The high rate of unemployment has negative effect on the nation (Nigeria) and her economy which includes high rate of criminal activities, youth restiveness, low standard of living, etc.

Many scholars had studied about unemployment in a country. They came up with the fact that unemployment is caused by overdependence on white collar jobs, Overseas Recruitment, Government Policies, technological shocks, Trade Union Wage Demand, etc. Accordingly, Tunde, (2007) pointed out that this attitude of the Nigerian youth has helped to increase the number of unemployed youths in Nigeria. Hence, overdependence on white collar jobs is also responsible for unemployment in Nigeria. Abefe-Balogun and Nwankpa, (2010) have also said that overdependence on white collar jobs among Nigerians is as a result of egoism, pride and lack of entrepreneurial, technical and marketable skills. Also Fajana, (1994) and Anyanwu, (1994) stated that government policies play a key role in increasing the rate of unemployment in Nigeria. They argued that the failure of Nigerian government to appraise the employment implications of international trade policy, monetary and fiscal policies immensely contribute to unemployment rate in the country. Nigeria Government had failed to create employment opportunities or take care of the unemployed as practised in developed nations (Fasesan and Okunniga, 2007).

According to Fajana, (2000), trade unions in Nigeria always demand for high wages for its members to the detriment of the unemployed population. In a situation of massive unemployment as experienced in Nigeria now, the union's role is not only to protect the interest of members, but unions should broaden their aims in such circumstances to include social justice for all employed and unemployed people. Trade union should also help in creating more jobs by insisting as far as possible on labour intensive project instead of agitation for increase in salaries or wages of workers.

Also, Gali, (1999), Gali&Rabanal, (2004), Pigou, (1933), Solow, (1981) Keynes, (1936) and Mouhammed, (2011), unemployment is affected by several factors other than factors mentioned in the classical theory above. They argued that unemployment is affected by innovation, behaviour of workers, external sources and shocks, technological advancement and political and economic policies of a country. Using the classical theory of unemployment as propounded by Pigou, (1933), it could be deduced that factors such as employers; preference, facilities, behaviour problems, technological advancement/automation and government's political and economic policies are responsible for unemployment in a nation.

Architects are technical staff. They possess Bachelor of Technology and Higher National Diploma (HND). In industry, they function partly as operatives and managers. Architects possess both artisan's skills and some level of analytical skills of the engineers (Oluka, et al, 1999). Technologists can face the challenge of unemployment squarely if they rise up to the occasion. An architectural technologist is a specialist devoted to the development and implementation of existing technology within a field of architecture. Architects usually apply basic architectural principles, technical and practical skills in product improvement, manufacturing, construction and architectural operational functions. The 2004 National policy on education in Nigeria stated clearly that Universities shall provides the technical knowledge and skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development of Nigeria, and to impart the necessary skills for training of technicians, architects, and

other skilled personnel to make them enterprising and self-reliant (Tobi, 2012).

In this work, the classical- Keynesian theory of unemployment was adopted. Classical theory sees unemployment as a sign that smooth labour market functioning is being obstructed in some way (Ackerman, Goodwin, Nelson, Weiss kop& Institute, 2013). In this theory, the quantify of labour services is measured (i.e. the number of workers working full days over a given time period), the price of labour, labour supply and employers' demand for labour are factors considered to affect unemployment rate in a given market. This paper aims at examining the cause of unemployment among Nigeria architects and the possible ways of making them gain meaningful employment. Keynesian theory sees the market as an imperfect labour market and mostly considered the cyclical unemployment. It stated that the market may not follow the idealized supply and demand model. Theory explained that surplus of labour will not cause fall in wages; hence full employment equilibrium will not occur at a lower wage rate.

METHODOLOGY

The design for the study is descriptive survey. The sample for the study consists of 50 persons randomly selected from among University staff, Polytechnic graduates and the general public in Rivers, Bayelsa and Akwa-Ibom states. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. The questionnaires items were self – report interest inventory (SRII) checklist and the subject or people responded to the SRII items on a five (4) point scale of strongly agreed (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). They were structured basically to seek the opinion of the respondents so as to have logical yardsticks to accept or reject our research hypotheses. The responses were analysed using statistical tools (mean and pie chart).

Research questions

The research questions used in this study are as follows:-

1. Is a behavioural problem responsible for Nigerian architects been unemployed?

2. Is employers' preference responsible for Nigerian architects' unemployment?
3. Do facilities and personnel in training institute causes unemployment among Nigerian architects?
4. Is a government economic and political policy responsible for Nigerian architects been unemployed?

RESULTS

Question 1: Is behavioural/attitudinal problems is responsible for Nigerian architects been unemployed?

Table 1: Behavioural/attitudinal problems as causes of unemployment among architects.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Poor attitude of Nigerian architects to work makes them unemployed.	-	40	100	60
2.	Over dependence on white collar jobs makes Nigerian architects unemployed.	28	106	48	18
3.	Nigerian architects hate self-unemployed.	48	32	96	24
4.	Nigerian architects are lazy, hence are unemployed.	-	4	54	142
5.	Nigerian architects lack self-unemployed.	88	32	66	14
	Total	164	214	364	258

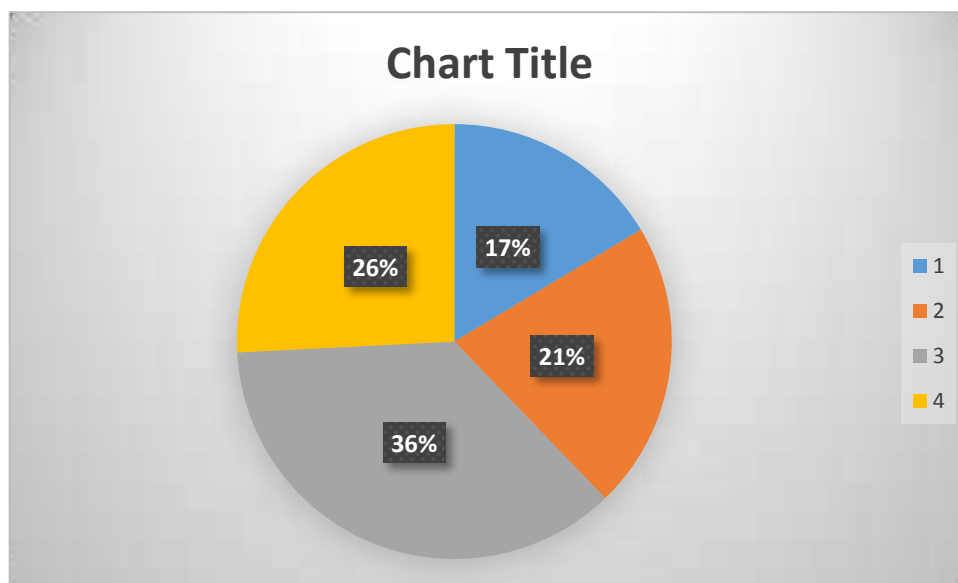


Fig. 1: Pie Chart showing Behavioural/attitudinal problems as causes of unemployment among architects

Question 2: Is employers’ preference is responsible for Nigerian architects been unemployed?

Table 2: Employers’ preference as a cause of unemployment among architects.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Employers use few architects to avoid high salary bill.	80	70	40	10
2.	Employers prefer sing quakes.	88	32	56	24
3.	Expatriates are mostly employed in Nigeria.	50	80	55	15
4.	Semi-skilled labour is preferred in Nigerian industries.	45	115	25	15
	Average	263	297	186	64

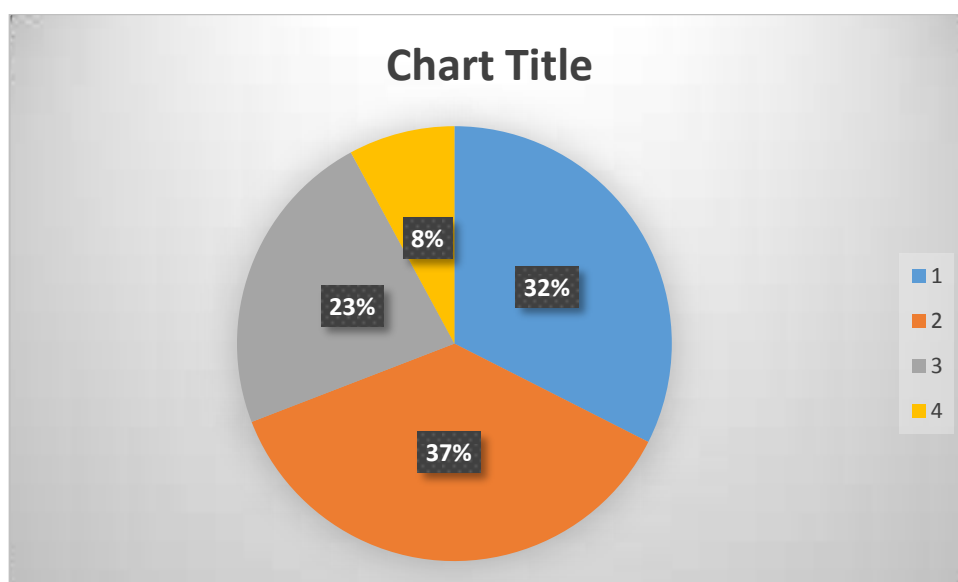


Fig. 2: Pie Chart showing Employers’ preference as a cause of unemployment among architects

Question 3: Do facilities and personnel in training institute causes unemployment among Nigerian architects?

Table 3: Facilities and personnel as cause of unemployment among Nigerian Architects.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	No modern equipment in workshop and studios in most universities and polytechnics in Nigeria.	63	87	40	10
2.	No studios/workshop in most universities and polytechnics in Nigeria.	0	40	100	60
3.	Practical are poorly organized in Nigeria universities and polytechnics, etc.	40	90	65	5
4.	Most architects in charge of studios/workshops are not able to operate modern equipment in their lab/workshops.	60	125	10	5
	Average	163	342	215	80

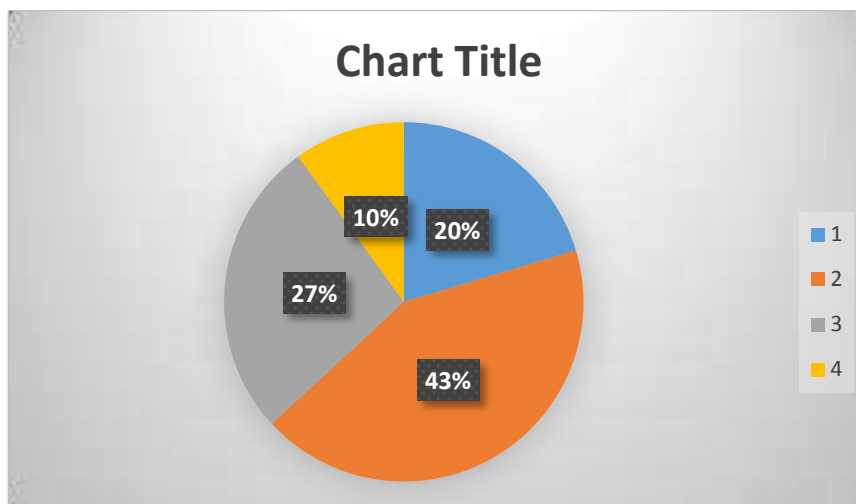


Fig. 3: Pie Chart showing Facilities and personnel as cause of unemployment among Nigerian architects

Question 4: Is government policies and implementation responsible for unemployment among Nigerian architects?

Table 4: Government policies and implementation as factor causing unemployment among Nigeria architects.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Economic meltdown is responsible for unemployment among Nigerian architects.	5	85	90	20
2.	Privatization policy in Nigerian is responsible for unemployment among Nigerian architects.	50	80	65	5
3.	Minimum wage policy is responsible for unemployment among Nigerian architects.	46	86	65	3
4.	Poor implementation of policy is responsible for unemployment among Nigerian architects.	80	70	40	10
5.	International trade policy is responsible for unemployment among Nigerian architects.	-	113	77	10
	Average	181	434	337	48

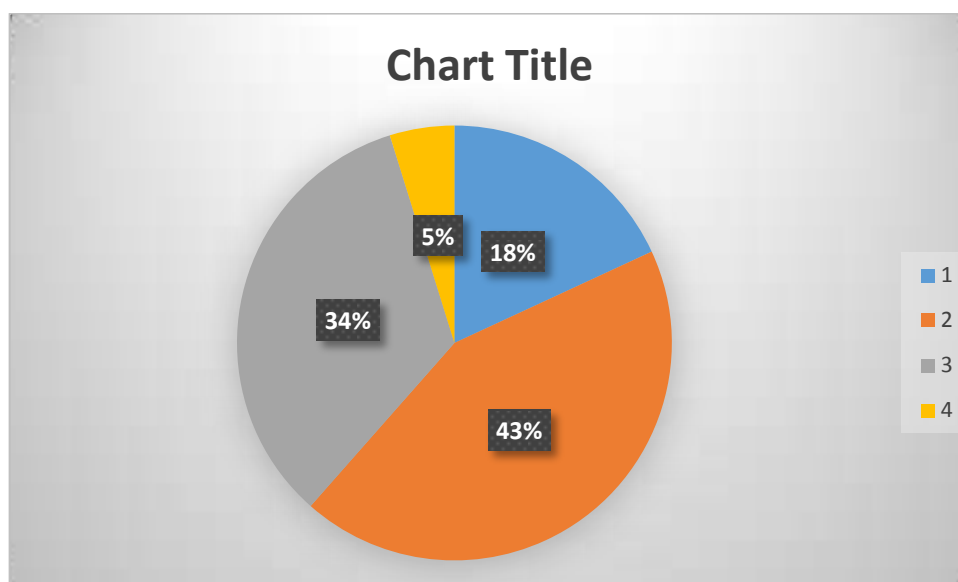


Fig. 4: Pie Chart showing government policies and implementation as factor causing unemployment among Nigeria architects.

DISCUSSION

Tables 1 and Fig. 1 above show that 38% of the respondents agreed that behavioural/ attitudinal problem is responsible for unemployment while 62% disagreed. It shows that unemployment among architects in Nigeria is not due to behavioural/attitudinal problems. Though data shows that Nigerian architects depend mostly on white collar jobs, they still do the blue collar jobs when white collar jobs are not available. This disagreed with Abefe-Balogun and Nwankpa, (2010) which stated that overdependence on white collar jobs among Nigerians is as a result of egoism, pride and lack of entrepreneurial, technical and marketable skills.

From Table 2 and Fig. 2 above, 69% of the respondents agreed that employers' preference is responsible for unemployment while 31% disagreed. It shows that unemployment among Nigeria architects is as a result of employers' preference. The table reveals that industries/employers in Nigeria prefer engaging expatriates, less of number of qualified Nigerian architects and worst still prefer use of expatriates (foreign counterparts). This supports the work of Mouhammed, (2011) and Pigou, (1933).

Table 3 and Fig. 3 above shows that 63% of the respondents agreed that training institutions is responsible for unemployment while 37% disagreed. It shows that the major cause of Nigerian architects been unemployed is the training institutions. It pointed out that most of the training institutions in Nigeria lack modern training facilities and personnel that can actually build the architects with the necessary confidence to face the task after training. This has led to the overdependence on white collar jobs mostly in area outside their field of study.

Table 4 and Fig. 4 shows that 61% of the respondents agreed that Government policies aid unemployment among Nigeria architects while 39% disagreed. This agrees with Fajana (1994), Anyanwu (1994), Keynes (1936) and Blinder (2014) that Government policies cause unemployment.

RECOMMENDATION

As a way of effectively tackling unemployment among Nigerian architects, the following are recommended: Monitoring of

personnel engaged by employers, legislation against the use of quakes and technicians in place of architects, proper implementation of the local content bill in Nigeria, equipping training institutions with modern facilities/ equipment, reorientation and retraining of trainers on the use of modern equipment and facilities, introduction of institution- industries partnership programme in Nigeria and introduction of employment generation policies by government.

CONCLUSION

Unemployment is a major disease causing havoc on Nigerian economy. The unemployment among Nigerian architects is as a result of employers' preference, architectural shocks and automation, government policies and lack of modern equipment in training institutions. The problem of unemployment among architects can be overcome if the local content bill is properly implemented, training institution fully equipped with modern equipment. Also, there should be legislation against use of quakes and number of expatriates and introduction of institution- industries partnership programme in Nigeria.

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