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Characteristics of global architectural firms

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Purpose – The aim of this paper is to investigate the factors which discriminate between local and global architectural firms in Nigeria. The rationale was to examine how the globalization process differs in Nigeria and contribute to the discourse on globalization.

Design/methodology/approach – The research is quantitative, using discriminant analysis to differentiate the global architectural firms from the local ones. The study used a random sample of 92 architectural firms in Nigeria, examining various characteristics of the firms through a questionnaire.


Findings – There was a strong distinction between global and local firms. Compared to the local architectural firms, the global firms were larger, and mostly run by sole principals who were more experienced. The internet was used more to communicate with other professionals, but less to communicate with clients and in designing and drafting. The global firms also placed higher value on developing expertise in specific building types.

Research limitations/implications – Data are obtained from architectural firms in Nigeria only. The results suggest that global architectural firms are peculiar and exhibit certain characteristics which further differentiate them from local ones.

Practical implications – The implications for architectural firms seeking to operate globally include building size advantage, building expertise in specific specializations, having principals with high level experience and employing alliances with other professionals in operating internationally.

Originality/value – This paper adds to the body of knowledge on architectural firms which are under-researched. The importance of this paper lies in its empirical nature in investigating the characteristics of global architectural firms using a sample of architectural firms in Nigeria.

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