An Assessment of Generic Skills and Competencies of Architecture Graduates in Nigeria

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Abstract

Graduate unemployment has become a fundamental problem worldwide, necessitating studies that seek to identify generic transferable skills towards improving prospects for graduates in future. Several disciplines have received such research attention. There has been comparatively less attention paid to establishing generic skills/competencies that will boost the employability potentials of architecture graduates. A total of 102 survey questionnaires containing 19 generic skills/competencies were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests as well as the Wilcoxon signed ranked test in SPSS v.21. Results reveal that the most developed skills by architecture graduates, also considered important by respondents were basic knowledge of the field/discipline, creativity, knowledge of the profession, computing/ICT and the capacity to learn. Other important skills were decision making, ability to work as part of an interdisciplinary team, capacity to apply knowledge in practice, time management, responsibility for one's own work/self-criticism, interpersonal/communication, ethical commitment as well as leadership skills. The study recommends that stakeholders in architecture education re-iterate the acute need for architecture graduates to develop important generic skills to improve their versatility and employment potentials in future.

Introduction

Graduate and youth unemployment is currently a pressing issue for many countries. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that worldwide "the total number of jobseekers is 201 million today, over 1 million more than a year ago" (ILO, 2015, p. 16). This staggering statistic is however considered an underestimation of reality as the world's youth unemployment rate maybe six or seven times what the report forecasts (Butler, 2015). This is largely because statistics typically assess people looking for jobs and do not necessarily include the real figure of the unemployed not seeking work (ibid). Statistics for Sub-Saharan Africa are even more disturbing. Estimates reveal that as many as 11 million young people in the region will be joining the job market every year for the next decade (World Bank, 2014). The risks associated with such numbers of unemployed youth lacking meaningful occupation are high and costly (McCowan, 2014; Sodipo, 2014).

Despite the surge of interest in higher education, global employment gaps continue to widen. A reason proffered for this trend is a mismatch of skills acquired in school with real life job requirements. Young people are gaining tertiary qualifications more than ever before but young people are not gaining qualifications relevant to a changing labor market (Butler, 2015). "Graduate unemployment rates are high in many countries and employers across the [Sub-Saharan] region complain of a lack of basic, technical and transferable skills" (McCowan, 2014:3). These are critical for graduates facing the overwhelming task of finding meaningful employment in areas deviating from courses and disciplines studied in school.

Employability has been defined as the "possession of relevant knowledge, skills and other attributes that facilitate the gaining and maintaining of worthwhile employment" (McCowan, 2014:5). Extensive discussions abound within media circles about graduate unemployment and the skills gap but "there is in fact a surprisingly weak evidence base to support it" (ibid). Consequently, there is a severe dearth of information regarding the actual skills, competencies, values and knowledge graduates possess.

This paper presents the results of a pilot study which aims to bridge this gap. The study assesses basic skills and competencies of Architecture graduates from Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) being the oldest school of Architecture in Nigeria, a country with the largest population in Sub-Saharan Africa. Architects are traditionally considered major leaders in the construction industry, which provides employment to a large number of people and is a primary driver of many economies worldwide (Dwyer, 2013).

Additionally, while other disciplines such as Nursing, Medicine, Chemistry, Occupational Therapy Practice and Education have received research attention regarding skills and competencies (CoRe, 2010), relatively few studies addressing this issue have been conducted in subjects related to the built environment. An exception is Engineering (see Sackey et al. 2014; Pearce, 2015). Specifically, the study poses three

research questions: First, which are the most important generic skills and competencies expected from architecture graduates? Second, which skills and competencies are most developed in school by architecture graduates? Thirdly, how closely do generic skills/competencies developed by the architecture graduates match the importance expected of those skills? The hypothesis to be tested in the study is that there is no difference between important and developed skills/competencies of architecture graduates from the study sample.

Employability, generic skills and competencies

Employability is defined in literature from different perspectives. It is the capacity to gain initial employment, maintain the employment and obtain a new one if need be (Hillage and Pollard (1998). Kamal (2006) opines it as the propensity of graduates to exhibit attributes employers anticipate for the future effective functioning of organizations. In a similar vein, Harvey and Bowes (1998) describe employability as the ability of graduates to gain employment related to their university training and standard. In the United Kingdom (UK), employability is regularly assessed as an educational outcome illustrating the percentage of graduate employment in the first six months following graduation (Harvey, Lock and Morey, 2002). It is obvious from the above definitions that in many cases, employability is associated with graduate education. This is based on the assumption that a linear causal relationship exists between university studies, skills, competencies and attributes graduates take

into the job market and their success at finding employment as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Employability-a linear progression?
(Adapted from McCowan, 2014, p. 5)

McCowan (2014) however notes that there are other factors mediating alongside the assumed linear progression. These include learning experiences outside the university at home or from previous schools, job availability, social networks as well as possible discrimination. Despite the recent surge in higher education degrees in Nigeria (Adebisi & Akinkuowo, 2015), unemployment rates are as high as 23.1% for those with undergraduate degrees (McCowan, 2014). A reason proffered for this is employers are dissatisfied with the skills and qualities of graduates. While employers were generally satisfied with hard skills relating to disciplinary knowledge, gaps are seriously perceived in the soft transferable skills related to ICT, personal, communication and decision-making. Pitan and Adedeji (2012) found an overall skills mismatch of about 60. 59% between employer requirements and graduates' abilities in the workplace. Adebakin, Ajadi and Subair (2015) report that ICT and team work related skills were the highest skills required by employers in the manufacturing, banking and finance, education and communication industries in Nigeria. "It was however found that an average university graduate lacks skills relating to decision making, teamwork, leadership, analysis and

solving problems which ordinarily should aid their existence and survival within and outside work environments". Similarly, Pitan (2015) asserts that communication and analytical skills were in high demand by employers in manufacturing, health, banking and agriculture/forestry as well as in education. A recent study in Malaysia reports that the most important generic skills required of graduate architects includes communication, presentation and interpersonal skills (Salleh, Yusoff, Amat, Noor & Suredah, 2013).

Generic skills are essential, basic, soft, transferable skills necessary for gaining and maintaining employment. In literature, skills are often subsumed within the framework of competence (Salleh et al. 2013). Competency is a composite of skills, knowledge, attitudes or traits (Grzeda, 2005); it is a combination of relevant attributes that underlie aspects of successful professional performance (Moore, Cheng & Dainty, 2002). Competence is the "ability of an individual to perform his duties effectively and efficiently, which requires the possession of specific knowledge, skills and personal attributes deemed important to both the job requirements and context of the industry" (Salleh *et al*., 2013: 44). Literature is replete with definitions of competency with little definite consensus. However, common elements namely knowledge, skills, personal abilities and attributes have been found to frequently reoccur in discussions about competency. To be competent, a person not only requires the right knowledge and skills but also the right personal attributes (Salleh *et al*., 2013). In assessing the right set of

qualities towards improving employability of graduates, most studies reviewed employ quantitative approaches involving survey questionnaires with Likert scale lists of skills, abilities and competencies considered important to the relevant industry. The Tuning project has developed a standard list of generic skills and competencies which have been widely employed towards assessing competencies required by graduates for higher education institutions (HEIs) across several disciplines (CoRe, 2010). This study employs the template for evaluating 17 generic skills considered "most important for the professional development of university graduates both by graduates and by the companies that hire them".

Methodology

A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed between February and December 2015 targeting current academic staff, MSc Architecture graduates from 2009/10-2015 sessions as well as allied professionals in the construction industry (employers, clients and built environment professionals). The criterion employed for allied professionals was that they had previously worked with architecture graduates from ABU and were thus in a position to assess their skills and competencies. 105 questionnaires (42%) were retrieved and 102 employed for analysis.

To address the first research question regarding the most important skills expected of graduates of architecture, respondents were required to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 the level of importance of the 17

skills/competencies from the Tuning template. 2 more skills (Time management and Leadership) were added unto the list from literature, bringing the total to 19. Skills/competencies with mean values (M) equal or greater than 4 out of 5 points were considered important for the purpose of this study. A similar procedure was employed to obtain ratings regarding the extent to which the 19 skills/competencies have been developed in architecture graduates from ABU. Mean values equal or greater than 3.5 points were considered fairly well developed above the average value of 3 out of 5 points. To establish whether there is a mismatch between importance and level of development, means of both categories from each of the skills/competencies were compared using the procedure employed by Pitan and Adedeji, (2012). This is based on computing ratios of discrepancy between the means (see Table 4). Cronbach's alpha was employed to test reliability of the scale used. This yielded values of 0.937 for levels of importance and 0.898 for levels of development of skills/competencies. This is well above the acceptable limits of 0.7 (Field, 2013). Additionally, none of the items fell below critical values of 0.3 for corrected item-total correlation with the overall scale (Field, 2013). The questionnaire was therefore considered reliable for the purposes of this study.

To empirically test the hypothesis of differences between levels of importance and levels to which architecture graduates have developed these 19 skills / competencies, the Wilcoxon signed rank test was employed (distributions for level of importance of skills/competencies were found to be non-normally distributed, F= 0.95, p=0.026). Additionally, t-tests were conducted to explore differences in importance and development levels for individual pairs of skills/competency rated. Results from all of these analyses are presented in section 4.

Results and Discussion

Results from the demographics reveal that more than half of the respondents are either architecture graduates or academics (Table 1). In response to the first research question, results from respondent ratings reveal that 13 out of the 19 basic generic skills/competencies are considered important for employment of graduate architects (Table 2). These include Basic knowledge of the field/discipline (M 4.25), Decision making (M 4.24), Working as part of an interdisciplinary team (M 4.22), Capacity to learn (M 4.15), Applying knowledge in practice (M 4.12), Time management (M 4.12), Knowledge of the discipline (M 4.11), Creativity (M 4.09), Responsibility of own work/self-criticism (M 4.07), Interpersonal/communication (M 4.05), Ethical commitment (M 4.04), Computing/ICT (4.01) and Leadership skills (M approx. 4). Surprisingly, analytical and research skills (M 3.78 and 3.76 respectively) were not rated very highly relative to the most important skills for architecture graduates.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents

S/No	Category	N	%	Remarks
1	Academic staff	22	21.6	56.9% of respondents are
2	Architecture graduates	36	35.3	academics and graduates
3	Employers	6	5.9	
4	Allied professionals	33	32.4	
5	Clients	5	4.9	
	Total	102		

Table 2: Most important generic skills/competencies for graduate architects

Rank	Skill/competence	Very High 5	High 4	Fair 3	Low 2	Very Low 1	Missing values	Mean
1	Basic knowledge of field/discipline	47 (46.1)	34 (33.3)	14 (13.7)	4 (3.9)	0 (0)	3 (2.9)	4.25
2	Decision making skills	47 (46.1)	35 (34.3)	11 (10.8)	6 (5.9)	0 (0)	3 (2.9)	4.24
3	Working in an interdisciplinary team	46 (45.1)	37 (36.3)	14 (13.7)	2 (2)	2 (2)	1 (1)	4.22
4	Capacity to learn	45 (44.1)	34 (33.3)	13 (12.7)	7 (6.9)	1 (1)	2 (2)	4.15
5	Applying knowledge in practice	49 (48)	28 (27.5)	10 (9.8)	9 (8.8)	3 (2.9)	2 (1.9)	4.12
5	Time management skills	49 (48)	23 (22.5)	19 (18.6)	9 (8.8)	0 (0)	2 (2)	4.12
7	Knowledge of profession/applications of discipline	42 (41.2)	36 (35.3)	16 (15.7)	3 (2.9)	3 (2.9)	2 (2)	4.11
8	Capacity to generate new ideas (creativity)	48 (47.1)	26 (25.5)	16 (15.7)	10 (9.8)	1 (1)	1 (1)	4.09
9	Responsibility for own work/self criticism	45 (44.1)	27 (26.5)	19 (18.6)	8 (7.8)	1 (1)	2 (2)	4.07
10	Interpersonal/communication skills	36 (35.3)	40 (39.2)	20 (19.6)	4 (3.9)	1 (1)	1 (1)	4.05
11	Ethical commitment	43 (42.2)	33 (32.4)	11 (10.8)	11 (10.8)	2 (2)	2 (2)	4.04
12	Computing/ICT skills	45 (44.1)	26 (25.5)	19 (18.6)	8 (7.8)	3 (2.9)	1 (1)	4.01
13	Leadership skills	41 (40.2)	32 (31.4)	14 (13.7)	10 (9.8)	3 (2.9)	2 (2)	3.98
14	Appreciation of diversity/multi-culturality	35 (34.3)	32 (31.4)	22 (21.6)	7 (6.9)	2 (2)	4 (3.9)	3.93
15	Capacity to adapt to new situations (flexibility)	33 (32.4)	39 (38.2)	20 (19.6)	6 (5.9)	3 (2.9)	1 (1)	3.92
16	Oral/written communication in English	34 (33.3)	35 (34.5)	20 (19.6)	12 (11.8)	0 (0)	1 (1)	3.90
17	Capacity for analysis and synthesis	30 (29.4)	34 (33.3)	23 (22.5)	10 (9.8)	3 (2.9)	2 (2)	3.78
18	Research skills	25 (24.5)	43 (42.2)	15 (14.7)	9 (8.8)	5 (4.9)	5 (4.9)	3.76
19	Knowledge of languages	21 (20.6)	31 (30.4)	30 (29.4)	15 (14.7)	4 (3.9)	1 (1)	3.50

Table 3 presents results for the most developed skills/competencies for architecture graduates in response to the second research question. Five of the 19 generic skills/competencies had mean values equal to or greater than 3.5. These are Basic knowledge of the field/discipline (M 3.68), Creativity (M 3.61), Knowledge of applications of the discipline (M 3.49), Computing/ICT skills (M3.49) and Capacity to learn (M 3.48). The most developed skills were all considered important by respondents (Table 2). It is pertinent to note that the first four of these skills/competencies are directly related to architecture as a discipline.

Table 3: Most developed skills/competencies for graduate architects

Rank	Skill/competence	Very High 5	High 4	Fair 3	Low 2	Very Low 1	Missing values	Mean	SD
1	Basic knowledge of field/discipline	16 (15.7)	40 (39.2)	31 (30.4)	6 (5.9)	1 (1)	8 (7.8)	3.68	0.870
2	Capacity to generate new ideas (creativity)	18 (17.6)	36 (35.3)	28 (27.5)	13 (11.8)	1 (1)	7 (6.9)	3.61	0.971
3	Knowledge of profession/applications of discipline	13 (12.7)	32 (31.4)	38 (37.3)	8 (7.8)	2 (2)	9 (8.8)	3.49	0.916
3	Computing/ICT skills	20 (19.6)	25 (24.5)	32 (31.4)	15 (14.7)	2 (2)	8 (7.8)	3.49	1.065 / 0.999
5	Capacity to learn	15 (14.7)	32 (31.4)	36 (35.3)	8 (7.8)	4 (3.9)	7 (6.9)	3.48	0.999
6	Applying knowledge in practice	15 (14.7)	31 (30.4)	34 (33.3)	12 (11.8)	4 (3.9)	6 (5.9)	3.43	1.034
7	Working in an interdisciplinary team	9 (8.8)	34 (33.3)	38 (37.3)	11 (10.8)	2 (2)	8 (7.8)	3.39	0.895
8	Interpersonal/communication skills	12 (11.8)	33 (32.4)	34 (33.3)	8 (7.8)	8 (7.8)	7 (6.9)	3.35	1.079
9	Appreciation of diversity/multi-culturality	10 (9.8)	24 (23.5)	39 (38.2)	17 (16.7)	1 (1)	11 (10.8)	3.32	0.932
10	Oral/written communication in English	13 (12.7)	29 (28.4)	31 (30.4)	15 (14.7)	6 (5.9)	8 (7.8)	3.30	1.098
11	Decision making skills	11 (10.8)	27 (26.5)	39 (38.2)	16 (15.7)	3 (2.9)	6 (5.9)	3.28	0.981
12	Ethical commitment	8 (7.8)	30 (29.4)	38 (37.3)	16 (15.7)	2 (2)	8 (7.8)	3.28	0.921
13	Responsibility for own work/self criticism	13 (12.7)	24 (23.5)	37 (36.3)	20 (19.6)	2 (2)	6 (5.9)	3.27	1.010
14	Capacity for analysis and synthesis	9 (8.8)	21 (20.6)	41 (40.2)	20 (19.6)	3 (2.9)	8 (7.8)	3.14	0.968
15	Capacity to adapt to new situations (flexibility)	8 (7.8)	28 (27.5)	32 (31.4)	23 (22.5)	4 (3.9)	7 (6.9)	3.14	1.017
16	Research skills	9 (8.8)	19 (18.6)	40 (39.2)	21 (20.6)	5 (4.9)	8 (7.8)	3.06	1.014
17	Time management skills	6 (5.9)	27 (26.5)	29 (28.4)	27 (26.5)	5 (4.9)	8 (7.8)	3.02	1.026
18	Leadership skills	6 (5.9)	22 (21.6)	40 (39.2)	22 (21.6)	5 (4.9)	7 (6.9)	3.02	0.967
19	Knowledge of languages	10 (9.8)	14 (13.7)	36 (35.3)	22 (21.6)	14 (13.7)	6 (5.9)	2.83	1.162

Results from the analysis conducted to establish degree of discrepancy (or otherwise) between importance and development of skills for graduates of architecture reveal a total overall mismatch of 34.3% (Table 4). The largest discrepancies in skills/competencies were found to occur for Knowledge of languages (43.4%), Leadership (39.6%) and Time management skills (39.6%). Within the Nigerian context, knowledge of languages for architecture is generally not considered relevant as English is the official language spoken in Nigeria. Leadership and time management skills were tied in position 17 just above knowledge of languages for least developed skills /competencies for architecture graduates (Table 3).

Table 4: Mismatch between levels of skill importance and development for architecture graduates

Rank	Skill/competence	Mean Skill Importance (SI)	Mean Skill Developed Dev. (SD)	Developed relative to Importance (ID) (ID)=SD/5 x SI	Extent of mismatch SI – ID	Extent of mismatch (%) SI-ID/SI x100
1	Knowledge of languages	3.5	2.83	1.981	1.519	43.4
2	Leadership skills	3.98	3.02	2.40392	1.57608	39.6
3	Time management skills	4.12	3.02	2.48848	1.63152	39.6
4	Research skills	3.76	3.06	2.30112	1.45888	38.8
5	Capacity for analysis and synthesis	3.78	3.14	2.37384	1.40616	37.2
6	Capacity to adapt to new situations	3.92	3.14	2.46176	1.45824	37.2
7	Responsibility for own work/self criticism	4.07	3.27	2.66178	1.40822	34.6
8	Decision making skills	4.24	3.28	2.78144	1.45856	34.4
8	Ethical commitment	4.04	3.28	2.65024	1.38976	34.4
10	Oral/written communication in English	3.9	3.3	2.574	1.326	34
11	Appreciation of diversity/multi-culturality	3.93	3.32	2.60952	1.32048	33.6
12	Interpersonal/communication skills	4.05	3.35	2.7135	1.3365	33
13	Working in an interdisciplinary team	4.22	3.39	2.86116	1.35884	32.2
14	Applying knowledge in practice	4.12	3.43	2.82632	1.29368	31.4
15	Capacity to learn	4.15	3.48	2.8884	1.2616	30.4
16	Knowledge of profession/applications of discipline	4.11	3.49	2.86878	1.24122	30.2
17	Computing/IT skills	4.01	3.49	2.79898	1.21102	30.2
18	Capacity to generate new ideas (creativity)	4.09	3.61	2.95298	1.13702	27.8
19	Basic knowledge of field/discipline	4.25	3.68	3.128	1.122	26.4
					Total	34.3

In response to the research hypothesis, a statistically significant difference was observed between levels of importance and development of skills/competencies for graduates of architecture (F=395, p=0.000, N=95). This finding is supported by results from the paired samples t-test conducted for individual pairs of rated skills/competencies, which reveal a statistical difference between importance and developed levels of all skills/competencies (Table 5). In essence, none of the skills had similar ratings for both importance and development from the sample.

Table 5: Paired samples t-test for differences in levels of importance and development

Skills/competencies	Importance		Developed		Difference		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	In Mean	t statistic	p-value
Applying knowledge in practice	4.12	1.109	3.43	1.034	0.69	5.386	*0.000*
Appreciation of diversity/multi-culturality	3.93	1.028	3.32	0.932	0.61	4.45	*0.000*
Basic knowledge of field/discipline	4.25	0.849	3.68	0.87	0.57	5.638	*0.000*
Capacity for analysis and synthesis	3.78	1.079	3.14	0.968	0.64	4.778	*0.000*
Capacity to adapt to new situations (flexibility)	3.92	1.017	3.14	1.017	0.78	5.407	*0.000*
Capacity to generate new ideas (creativity)	4.09	1.059	3.61	0.971	0.48	3.417	*0.000*
Capacity to learn	4.15	0.968	3.48	0.999	0.67	5.224	*0.000*
Computing/IT skills	4.01	1.109	3.49	1.065	0.52	3.834	*0.000*
Decision making skills	4.24	0.882	3.28	0.981	0.96	8.289	*0.000*
Ethical commitment	4.04	1.082	3.28	0.921	0.76	5.974	*0.000*
Interpersonal/communication skills	4.05	0.899	3.35	1.079	0.7	5.582	*0.000*
Knowledge of languages	3.5	1.101	2.83	1.162	0.67	5.378	*0.000*
Knowledge of profession/applications of discipline	4.11	0.984	3.49	0.916	0.62	5.923	*0.000*
Leadership skills	3.98	1.11	3.02	0.967	0.96	7.18	*0.000*
Oral/written communication in English	3.9	1.005	3.3	1.098	0.6	5.427	*0.000*
Research skills	3.76	1.097	3.06	1.014	0.7	5.283	*0.000*
Responsibility for own work/self criticism	4.07	1.027	3.27	1.01	0.8	6.981	*0.000*
Time management skills	4.12	1.018	3.02	1.026	1.1	8.458	*0.000*
Working in an interdisciplinary team	4.22	0.903	3.39	0.895	0.83	6.355	*0.000*

Findings on the most important skills revealed that approximately 70% of generic skills are important for architecture graduates to be competent at. These largely support findings in literature, with the notable exception of the capacity for analysis and synthesis, which was found to be one of the most important for employers of labor in Nigeria (Pitan and Adedeji, 2012). This finding justifies the argument proffered by Murdoch-Eaton and Whittle (2012) for the need to contextualize generic skills for particular fields/disciplines. Research skills were rated low by respondents for architecture graduates in Nigeria, an unfortunate trend reflecting the poor research base of architecture as a discipline worldwide as well as the lack luster attitude of architects to research (Hillier, 2007; Maina, 2015, Suleiman and Abubakar, 2015).

Results from the most developed skills reveal 26% of skills are actually developed and thus supplied by architecture graduates. These can be further stratified into knowledge-oriented skills (Table 3, numbers 1-7), personal attributes (8-16) and

transferable skills (17-19). In other words, the most developed skills/competencies from the sample being knowledge oriented can be subsumed within discipline specific skills in architecture. This implies that generic basic skills developed in architecture school are largely based on university/HEI influences, with relatively less emphasis on personal attributes and transferable skills such as leadership, time management, flexibility, capacity for analysis and synthesis, responsibility for one's own work/self criticism, ethical commitment as well as decision making skills. However, the overall degree of mismatch between levels of skills considered important and how well these were developed and therefore available for supply to the job market was revealed to be 34.3%. This figure is about half the mismatch reported for the general job market in Nigeria (Pitan and Adedeji, 2012). Supported by the consistent differences observed between what is expected and what is obtained, these findings however underscore the need for schools of architecture to re-assess the issue of personal and transferable skills to better improve the employability potential of graduate architects.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study assessed the generic skills and competencies important for employability of graduate architects in Nigeria. It also established skills / competencies which have been most developed in schools of architecture employing graduates from ABU in a pilot study. Findings revealed that 13 out of the 19

skills/competencies rated by respondents were considered basic and necessary for graduates of architecture in Nigeria. The most developed skills by architecture graduates, also considered important by respondents were basic knowledge of the field/discipline, creativity, knowledge of the profession, computing/ICT and the capacity to learn. Other skills which were important but not equally developed were decision making skills, ability to work as part of an interdisciplinary team, capacity to apply knowledge in practice, time management skills, responsibility for one's own work/self-criticism, interpersonal /communication skills, ethical commitment as well as leadership skills.

Results from this study emphasize the need for stakeholders in HEI as well as graduates of architecture to begin to pay close attention to the issue of employability skills for graduates if the economy is to improve through a reduction of unemployed youths. Traditionally, architecture students focus intensely on discipline specific skills involving design/creativity, presentation and communication skills. The study recommends that schools of architecture need to stress the need for specialization and diversification of labor into other ventures involving autonomous job creation by graduates within and outside the construction industry. Although this measure has been integrated into the new M.Sc curriculum in ABU, its effectiveness is yet to achieved due to several identified factors notably the curriculum just taking off, insufficient infrastructure (studios and laboratories) as well as poor orientation for staff and students

(Maina, 2015). These problems not withstanding, developing transferable generic skills by architecture graduates has become imperative in order to be versatile in today's transformative and competitive world. Graduates of schools of architecture need to be guided into learning important transferable and personal skills such as enumerated above to survive the trials and pitfalls of finding jobs and unemployment in the near future. The importance of this measure cannot be overemphasized in light of the current economic pressures and problems in the country.

This study focused on 19 generic skills with responses from a single school of Architecture in Nigeria. Future studies ought to consider other basic generic skills over a larger sample as well as establish factors influencing the development of such skills/competencies for the architecture profession.

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