

Unemployment in Nigeria; A Challenge of Demographic Change?

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Abstract-With the current population of approximately 182million people (PRB, 2015); Nigeria is the most populous Black Country in the world. Arguments are ripe whether her ever-growing population is the sole factor responsible also for her continuous growth of unemployment. To answer this question, this paper extracted secondary data from Population Reference Bureau (PRB, 2003-2015), United Nations Annex Table (2012), International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2002-2015) and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2003-2015) to prove whether unemployment is mainly caused by demographic change in Nigeria or there are other intrinsic factors responsible for this social challenge. A comparative analysis of the population and unemployment structure of three purposively selected and heavily populated countries in three different continents-Nigeria, China and USA were undertaken. Results show that population growth is not the **SOLE** factor responsible for increase in unemployment in Nigeria as unemployment statistics is stable for U.S. and China while their populations are growing, but the reverse is the case for Nigeria as both population and unemployment are growing. Recommendations were thereafter made to address other likely factors identified.

Key Words: Unemployment, Population Growth, Comparative, Factors, Population, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is one of the developmental problems currently facing all developing economies of the world (Patterson et al, 2006), and Nigeria is not an exception. Unemployment or joblessness occurs when people are without jobs and they have actively sought work within the past five weeks (International Labour Organization, 1982; Fajana, 2000). It is the consequence of the surplus of labour supply over labour demand. The unemployment rate is a measure of the prevalence of unemployment and it is calculated as a percentage by dividing the number of unemployed individuals by all individuals currently in the labour force. The higher the unemployment rate in an economy the higher would be the poverty level and associated welfare challenges (Emeh, I. E., et al., 2012). Unemployment has been grouped into two categories: first, the older unemployed who lost their jobs through retrenchment, redundancy, or bankruptcy; and second, the younger unemployed, most of who have never been employed (Oyebade, 2003). Though unemployment occurs to people of all categories but its effect has bitten more

sarcastically hard on the youth and this is the primary concentration of this paper.

Unemployment is a global challenge, but worse in developing countries of the world, with attendant social, economic, political, and psychological consequences. It contributes to low GDP and leads to increase in crime and violence, psychological effect, adverse effect on health and political instability (Njoku & Ihugba, 2011). Unemployment is not a recent challenge in Nigeria as the national unemployment rate rose from 4.3 per cent in 1970 to 6.4 per cent in 1980. This fluctuated around 6.0 per cent until 1987 when it rose to 7.0 per cent (Central Bank of Nigeria 2003; Akintoye 2003). Structural Adjustment Program was brought in place by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1986 to tackle unemployment challenge. This was a bit effective as unemployment rate declined from 7.0 per cent in 1987, to as low as 1.9 per cent in 1995. After this, it rose to 2.8 per cent in 1996, and has been growing worse since, hovering between 2.8 and 13.1 per cent between 1996 and 2000 (Njoku & Ihugba, 2011). Unemployment rate in Nigeria is presently growing at the rate of 16 per cent

annually with the youth impacted the most and accounting for three times the general unemployment (Doreo, 2013).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, youth population was estimated at 138 million people in 2002-2003, with 28.9 million (21 per cent) of them unemployed (ILO, 2004). It has also been reported that youth unemployment in Africa has a geographical dimension as it is generally higher in the urban areas than rural areas (Nwanguma, et al., 2012). Namibia has the highest rate of unemployment in Africa, perhaps in the world, with over half (51%) of her citizens unemployed while South Africa has one of the highest rates of unemployment at 25 per cent within the continent (Adesina, 2013). Nigeria and indeed Africa is not the only developing country struggling with increasing unemployment because it is a global social challenge. It has become a major problem for most countries across the world but a little bit more stable in the developed countries rather than the continuously rising trends as experienced in most developing countries. In USA for instance, unemployment had increased from 5 per cent in 2007 to 9 per cent in 2011. That of Spain has risen from 8.6 per cent to 21.52 per cent as a result of the debt crisis in Europe; UK from 5.3 to 8.1 per cent while that of Greece rose from 8.07 to 18.4 per cent during the same period (Vanguard, 2012). However, the average unemployment rate in the developing countries especially Africa is generally high. For example, Botswana, Angola and Kenya have unemployment rates as high as 17.5, 25 and 11.7 per cents respectively and these are not the highest figures in the Continent (Allawadi, 2010). In Nigeria, an unemployment ratio of 23.9 per cent of the total population means that over 38 million Nigerians are unemployed. Also, the analysis by educational status suggests that people who have been majorly affected by unemployment most in Nigeria are those without basic education. For instance; persons with and without primary school educations accounted for 76.8/80.6 per cent of the unemployment in 1974 and 1978 respectively.

In recent times however, the situation has been compounded by the increasing unemployment of professionals such as accountants, engineers, among others. According to a recent survey by Akintoye (2003), graduate unemployment accounted for less than 1 per cent of the unemployed in 1974, but by 1984, the proportion rose to 4 per cent for urban areas and 2.2 percent in the rural areas. A survey by the National Bureau of Statistics (2011) indicates that between 2006 and 2011, there were 1.8 million new entrants into the active labour market per year. Even the following states recorded high composite unemployment rates that is above the national average of 23.9 per cent as of 2013: Bayelsa (38.4%), Katsina (37.3%), Bauchi (37.2%) Akwa-Ibom (34.1%), Gombe (32.1%) Adamawa (29.4%), Borno (27.7%), Kano (27.6%), Yobe (27.3%), Taraba (26.8%),

Jigawa (26.5%), Imo (20.8%), FCT (21.5%), while Plateau recorded the lowest figure of 7.1% (Salami, 2013).

Justifying the pervasiveness of youth unemployment in Nigeria was the recent Nigerian Immigration Test conducted on Saturday 15th March, 2014 which later turned sour. Stampede at five of the six different stadia used across the country for the aptitude test claimed the lives of about 20 applicants and left thousand others injured. During the stampedes, 8 applicants were feared dead at the National Stadium Abuja, 5 at the Liberation Stadium Port Harcourt, 3 in Ibadan, 1 in Benin and 3 in Minna (Vanguard Newspaper, March 16th, 2014; This Day Newspaper, March 16th, 2014). At Abuja National Stadium alone, over 125,000 applicants came for the test occupying a 60,000 capacity stadium, chasing only 4,500 vacancies available in the Nigerian Immigration Service. Anxious 125,000 applicants sat in a 60,000 capacity stadium without much crowd control strategy arranged, the result was a deadly stampede. Stampedes were also reported in Akure, the Ondo State Capital where though no life was lost, but thousands of certificates were allegedly lost. Port Harcourt Liberation Stadium is of a capacity of 16,000 but 23,000 turned up for the test at the venue. It was also reported that applicants were charged an application fee of #1000 each turning the organisers of the test to sudden millionaires while the unemployed are left impoverished. This is just a true picture of how endemic unemployment is in Nigeria. Research shows that Kano and Lagos lead in youth unemployment in Nigeria. Of about 3, 334,139 Nigerian youth currently unemployed; Kano State is topping the list with about 369,139 unemployed persons and Lagos is second with a figure of 353,097 both representing 22 per cent of the national total (Amusan, 2007). This is because Nigerian young graduates from all corners of the country rush to Lagos State in search of white-collar jobs. They are of the opinion that Lagos State, being the former Federal Capital and Centre of Excellence has more job opportunities than other states, necessitating the scuttle to Lagos for greener pastures. This rush has led to a very bad state of the rate of unemployment and its associated effects in the State.

Unlike what obtains in most developed countries; in Nigeria, there is no social security system in place to cater for the unemployed. Thus, as the unemployed do not receive unemployment benefits from the government, most, if not all, are unable to fend for themselves. Many have thus resorted to engaging in activities that constitute security challenge. Such security-threatening activities common in Nigeria include political thuggery, armed robbery, area boys, pipelines vandalization, oil bunkering, prostitution, etc., thereby constituting a nuisance to the society, rather than being agents of change and meaningful development. Some of them engage in these criminal activities because

they seem to look like the most attractive options for them after years of joblessness and frustration. Universities and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria produce an average of 120,000 graduates each year while another 500,000 school leavers or college graduates are turned out each year, without the hope of any job (NAPEP, 2003). According to Okafor (2011), the ever expanding educational growth and the desperate desire on the part of youths to acquire university education irrespective of course and course contents add to the scourge of unemployment in Nigeria. As a result, a number of skills acquired from the university appear dysfunctional and irrelevant (Okafor, 2011). This has called into question again quality of Nigerian graduates.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has tried to tackle unemployment and reduced poverty through various Programmes for over four decades now. Establishments of programs and organizations such as Community Bank, DFRRRI, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), People's bank, Better Life for Rural Women and Family Support Programme were some of such projects aimed at addressing various manifestations of poverty and unemployment. The most recent is the establishment of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS). Though none of these programmes were completely without merits, the truth is that they did not generate a significant, lasting and sustainable positive effect on unemployment in Nigeria. However, it is becoming glaring that functional vocational/skill acquisition programmes and entrepreneurship development are the two most potent hammers to nail-out unemployment in Nigeria. Nigeria on a good day should not have anything doing with unemployment because she is now the largest economy in Africa with a nominal GDP of \$508.62 billion dollars and per capital income of \$1,401. Also, she is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh (7th) in the world with a population of approximately 174 million people (PRB, 2013). Nigeria is ranked the 6th largest oil producer in the world and highest in Africa, yet, the country's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the world.

It appears like unemployment in Nigeria grows even as her population grows. Is unemployment growing the same way population grows in USA, China and other more populous countries? If yes, we can then conclude that population increase brings about unemployment. If no, then any other factor(s) such as structural factors, cultural factors, lack of political will, skewed budgetary allocations and poorly coordinated intervention program as put forward by Salami (2013) apart from increase in population is/are responsible for increasing joblessness. Therefore, this paper seeks to provide critical answers to two critical questions. One, is unemployment growing in Nigeria as population grows or does population growth brings about increasing

unemployment or there are other intrinsic factors(s) contributing to unemployment in Nigeria? Two, is unemployment rates in United States, China and other more populous countries increasing or stable even as their populations grow per annum? There have been arguments among researchers globally as to the root-cause of high and increasing unemployment especially in the developing countries. Some argued, of course, that sustained and sometime increased population growth which the small labour market is unable to absorb resulting in the army of job seekers is the primary cause. Others believe it is lack of economic growth and a host of other intrinsic reasons. Based on the foregoing, this paper aims to find out whether population growth is the actual reason for corresponding growth in unemployment rate or there are other reason(s) which are more important determinants of unemployment rather than increases in population of Nigeria.

This study is very important and critical to the economic and human development of Nigeria in many ways. One, if population growth is found to be the sole contributor to corresponding continuous growth in unemployment rate in Nigeria, the government would be admonished to intensify efforts on population control measures particularly in the areas of embracing contraceptives or family planning. We would encourage the government to also seriously encourage men especially in northern Nigeria to support their wives in the usage of contraceptives and allow them freedom of child spacing. This will give the woman ample opportunity to also give more time to her career and other productive economic endeavours rather than baby making. If population growth is not the only factor responsible for this on the other hand, we will rather tell the government to concentrate on other intrinsic factors that may be contributing to rising rate of unemployment as will be presented in a later section in this paper so that the core factors can be effectively attacked and there will be economic development in the long run.

The outline of the paper is in the following order: Section one introduces the concept of unemployment and its dynamics in developing countries especially Africa. Section two examines some relevant empirical literatures especially on other intrinsic causes of unemployment in Nigeria besides population change while section three spelt out the methodology used in the paper. Results and discussions were presented in section four while in section five we presented the conclusion and recommendations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURES: EMPIRICAL DISCOVERIES

World Bank (1998: 63) defines the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work

but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. Examples of those ineligible to work and/ or leaves work voluntarily according to Aiyedogbon & Ohwofara (2012) include housewives, full time students, invalids, those below the legal age for work, old and retired persons. The application of this definition across countries has however been faulted, especially for the purpose of comparison and policy formulation, as countries characteristics are not the same in their commitment to resolving unemployment problems (Akintoye, 2008).

Causes of Unemployment in Nigeria

There have been several researches on unemployment and its causes in developing countries, especially Nigeria. Scholars have identified the following as the major causes of unemployment in Nigeria as well as other developing countries; neglect of agricultural sector, rural-urban migration, wrong impression about technical or vocational education or training, corruption with its attendant grave embezzlement, rapid population growth, low economic growth and activities, low investment, leadership and managerial problem, lack of political will, outdated school curriculum making Nigerian graduates unemployable, poverty, lack of adequate youth development programmes, increase in the supply of educated manpower as a result of producing more graduates than available jobs and more painfully, the gradual collapse of manufacturing sector (Adesina, 2013; Salami, 2013; Nwanguma, et al. 2012; Adebayo, 1999; Alanana, 2003; Echebiri, 2005; Ayinde, 2008; Morphy, 2008; Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010; Okeke, 2011; Njoku & Ihugba, 2011 and Anyadike, et al. 2012). Some of these studies were purely empirical so the situation is a mirror of the now in the Nigerian society. These related factors contribute to low job creation and because of increasing population growth the small labour market is unable to absorb the resulting army of job seekers. The most popular cause of unemployment as found by these scholars is rapidly growing urban labour force arising from rural-urban migration. Rural-urban migration is mostly explained in terms of push-pull factors which include the pressure resulting from man-land ratio in the rural areas and the existence of serious underemployment arising from the seasonal cycle of climate. This is further aggravated by the lack of infrastructural facilities, which makes the rural life unattractive making youths to move to urban areas with the probability of securing lucrative employment in the industries and to enjoy the available social amenities. Salami (2013) emphasized lack of political will, especially in fighting hard against corruption and enforcing vocational and technical education.

Rapid population growth is also considered as one of the major causes of urban unemployment. According to the

2006 census in Nigeria, the nation's population was put at 140,431,790 and projections for the future indicate that the population could be over 180 million by the year 2020, given the annual growth rate of 3.2 percent (National Population Commission & ICF Macro, 2009:3). With this population, Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa. It is argued that the high population growth rate has resulted in the rapid growth of the labour force, which is far outstripping the supply of jobs. According to National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2011), over 1.37 million students were enrolled in universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in 2006 and another 1.98 million in 2007. Given that most courses are completed in four or five years, many of these 3.2 million students that enrolled in 2006 and 2007 entered the labor force in 2010/2011. These do not include the number of Nigerians of working age that dropped out at secondary school level for various reasons and entered the job market in the rural and urban areas out of the 21 million that were enrolled in 2006 and 2007.

Outdated school curricula and lack of employable skills are other identified factors contributing to the growth of unemployment in Nigeria. Some scholars have argued that the average Nigeria graduate is not employable and, therefore, does not possess the skills needed by the employers of labour for a formal employment. The course contents of most tertiary education in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial elements that would have enabled graduates to become job creators rather than job seekers. Presently, with over 97 universities in Nigeria (Federal, state, and private) and the increasing demand for higher education, there has been the problem of suitable employment for the varieties of graduates turned out by these higher institutions every year. Ordinarily, this should not have been a problem, but the reality is that the Nigerian economy is too weak to absorb this large number of graduates (Utomi, 2011).

Very importantly is the issue of corruption. Corruption, which Okafor (2011) acknowledged as having permeated the entire social structure of Nigeria, has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base. Funds meant for development projects have been misappropriated, diverted, or embezzled and stashed away in foreign banks, while some incompetent and corrupt bureaucrats and administrators in the public enterprises and parastatals have liquidated these organizations (Okafor, 2007). Also, there is no vibrant manufacturing sector which has the capacity to absorb unemployed youths in Nigeria as according to Adesina (2013), there are over 800 collapsed industries in Nigeria and over 37 factories closed shops in 2009. About half of the remaining operating firms have been classified by Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) as "ailing," a situation that poses a great threat to the survival of manufacturing in the Country. The banking sub-sector,

due to the ongoing reforms and consolidation has sent several young men and women back into the labour market. Instead of the sector generating employment, it is shrinking. The manufacturing sector has not fared any better. For example, the number of persons in paid employment at the end of 2010 in the cement manufacturing sub-sector stood at 3,318 compared to 4,142 in 2009, a decline of 19.9 per cent. Salami (2013), is of the opinion that Nigeria's spiraling youth unemployment can be said to have significantly contributed to the dramatic rise in social unrest and crime such as Niger Delta militancy, Boko Haram and the Jos crisis.

An empirical research carried out by Nwanguma et al. (2012) on the causes of unemployment in Nigeria as presented in the table below shows the respondents views as regards the causes of unemployment in the Country.

Table 1: Causes of Unemployment in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Rural-urban Migration	30	11.1
Rapid Population Growth	20	7.4
Corruption	50	18.5
Outdated School Curriculum	20	7.4
Leadership/Managerial Problem	70	25.9
Poverty	20	7.4
Lack of employable skills	8	3
Increase in the supply of educated manpower	12	4.4
Lack of adequate youth development programs	40	15
Total	270	100

Source: Nwanguma, et al. (2012), Pg. 12

Respondents from this empirical research in Nigeria are of the opinion that poor leadership is the highest cause of unemployment in the Country. Approximately 26 per cent of the respondents believe that bad leadership is the bane of unemployment in Nigeria and this is followed by her 'sister'; corruption, for which 18.5 per cent representing the second highest believe is one of the core reasons for unemployment in Nigeria.

Suggested Solutions to Unemployment in Nigeria

Adesina (2013), Nwanguma, et al. (2012) and Salami (2013) are very experienced researchers in issues that have to do with labour force or employment in Nigeria and they recommended the following as main solutions to unemployment problem in Nigeria based on problems found.

Good and Competent Governance: Among the measures to curb unemployment suggested by respondents in the empirical research of Nwanguma, et al. (2012), having good governance or leadership has the highest percentage (15.8 %). Controlling population explosion was the least

suggestion (5.6%), signifying the fact that population growth has little to do with providing good employment if the Country's resources are properly harnessed and equitably utilized.

Aggressive Emphasis on Entrepreneurial Education: Entrepreneurship has been primarily suggested by many scholars to be one of the key factors to curb unemployment in Nigeria. If entrepreneurship is seriously driven by government through encouraging youth who are interested with interest-free loan and other forms of enabling-environment creating platforms, unemployment will definitely reduce.

More Investment in Youth Intensive Sectors (YIS): These include ICT, Entertainment and hospitality, e.g. Nollywood, fast food industry, catering and hotel service. Just as Hollywood, Bollywood, Ghollywood bring a lot of revenue to the government of the U.S., Indian and Ghana respectively, Nollywood- the Nigerian movie industry today can also receive renewed interest from the government to develop and act as one of the major employers of labour in the country.

Diversification of the Economy: Nigeria should cease from relying entirely on oil whose price fluctuates according to the world market. Agriculture, ICT, Hospitality and Entertainment are other promising avenue for Nigeria to diversify her economy. According to Adesina (2013), if revolution in mobile communications can provide this great employment as we see currently in Nigeria, other sectors too can do the same with similar commitment.

Conducive Investment Climate or Enabling Environment: Good infrastructure, generous access to finance and effective power supply are some of the things needed for entrepreneurship to thrive in any community. Enabling Environment, especially in the area of power supply and finding a lasting solution to our security challenges will boost employment generation in Nigeria. Salami (2013) believes that while entrepreneurship may not be the absolute panacea to youth unemployment, an enabling environment that nurtures entrepreneurship is capable of reducing youth unemployment by half.

Value Re-orientation, Honesty, Dignity of Labour and Hard work: Until very recently, Nigerians are used to being hardworking, honest and patriotic. The trend has however changed in the last few decades. If Nigerian leaders and youth can return back to their original honest and hardworking folks they were known for, unemployment might reduce because people will do whatever their hands find to do not minding whether it is not a white-collar job.

Unfortunately, this advice may not be obeyed by our teeming youth if they do not see such in our leaders.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Specification: Secondary data was primarily used for this research. The data were extracted from *Population Reference Bureau (PRB, 2003-2015)*, *United Nations Annex Table (2012)*, *International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2003-2015)* and *National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2003-2015)*. A thirteen (13) year unemployment trends/rates of two (2) heavily populated countries-China and United States were purposively derived together with their population change for the same duration. The same sets of data were derived for Nigeria and were compared with those of China and the United States to see if population growth was actually the root-cause of unemployment or whether there were other intrinsic causes. A comparative analyses of the population changes and trends of unemployment in Nigeria, China and the U.S, were undertaken and findings were descriptively presented using tables, trends analysis and charts for data presentation and the simple percentage for discussions.

Study Area: Nigeria is one of the fastest growing sub-Saharan African countries in the western coast of Africa. It is located on longitudes 3^o and 15^o East of the Greenwich meridian and latitudes 4^o and 14^o north of the equator. She is bounded in the north, west, east and south by Niger Republic, Benin Republic, Republic of Cameroon and Atlantic Ocean respectively and Abuja is her Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Nigeria is the most populous African nation with about 175 million inhabitants and an annual growth rate of 2.8 per cent per annum (PRB, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A thirteen (13) years trend of unemployment rates and demographic change (2003-2015) in Nigeria, China and USA is derived in Tables 2 and 3 below. Differences are compared and contrasted to actually confirm if it is population increase that also brings about increase in unemployment or there are other intricate reasons other than population change in these three countries.

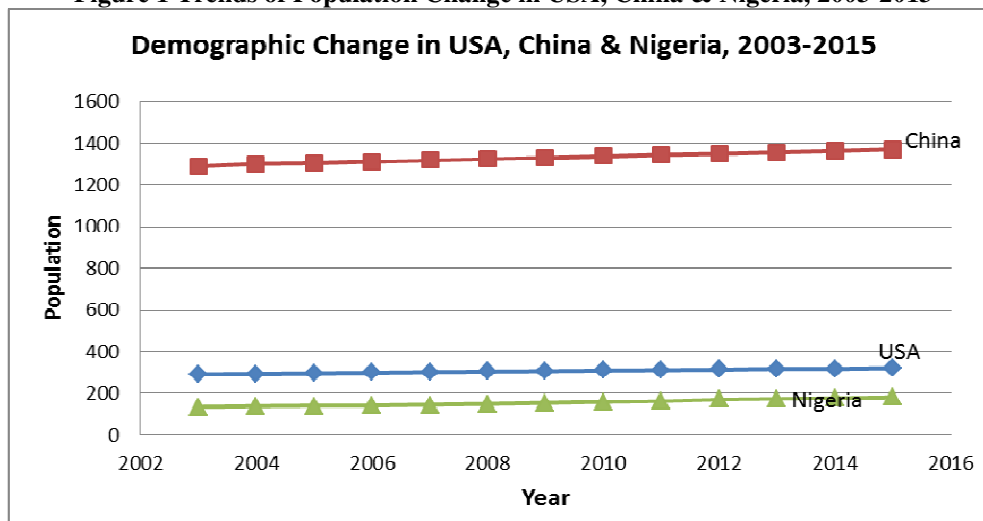
Table 2: Demographic Change in USA, China and Nigeria-2003-2015

Country & Population(in Millions)			
Year	USA	China	Nigeria
2003	291.5	1,288.7	133.9
2004	293.6	1,300.1	137.3
2005	296.5	1,303.7	139.6
2006	299.1	1,311.4	140.4
2007	302.2	1,318.0	144.4
2008	304.5	1,324.7	148.1
2009	306.8	1,331.4	152.6
2010	309.6	1,338.1	158.3
2011	311.7	1,345.9	162.3
2012	313.7	1,350.4	170.1
2013	313.9	1,357.4	173.6
2014	317.7	1,364.1	177.5
2015	321.2	1,371.9	181.8

Source: PRB, 2003-2015, IMF, 2003-2015 & Official Gazette, FGN, 2009.

There is no doubt about the fact that the populations of these three countries have continued to increase yearly as can be seen in Table 2 above, though at different rates.

Figure 1 Trends of Population Change in USA, China & Nigeria, 2003-2013



Source: Authors (2016). Note: Population figures are in millions

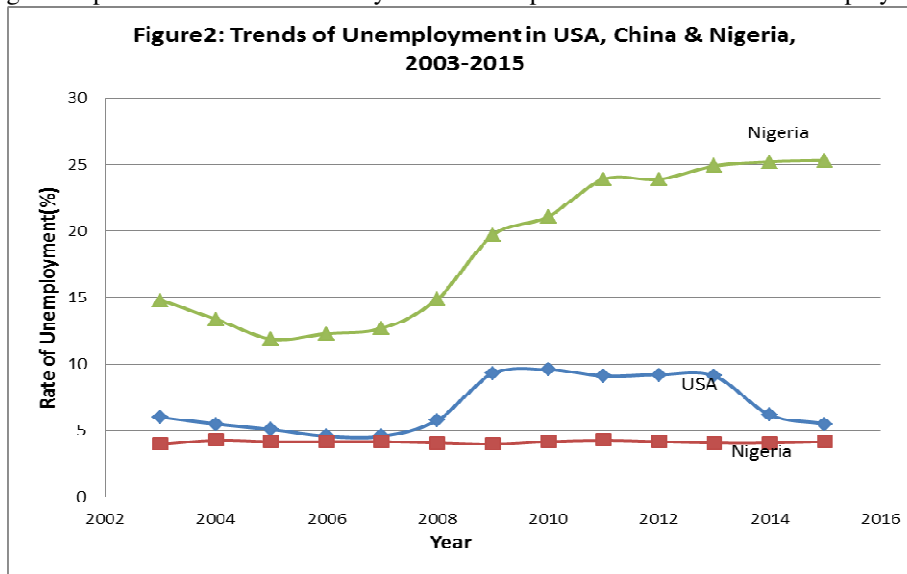
Table 3. Trends of Unemployment in USA, China & Nigeria, 2003-2015

Country	Year (2003-2015) and Unemployment (%)													
Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Average-'03-'15
1. USA	6.0	5.5	5.1	4.6	4.6	5.8	9.3	9.6	9.1	9.2	9.1	6.2	5.5	6.9
2. China	4.0	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2
3. Nigeria	14.8	13.4	11.9	13.7	14.6	14.9	19.7	21.1	23.9	23.9	24.9	25.2	25.3	19.0

Sources: United Nations 2012 Annex Table (2009:38), National Bureau of Statistics (2010:2); 2003-2015, IMF, 2003-2015

As earlier stated and as seen in Figure 1 above, the population of the three purposively selected countries are growing annually, though with different percentage rates. China, being the most populous nation in the world is in her first billion and it is expected that its annual population addition surpasses those of the US and Nigeria. A country's population is expected to grow no matter how small the percentage under normal circumstances. Only in cases of natural disasters such as landslides, hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, and the likes just like the terrible earthquakes of Tahiti in 2010 can we have population reduction in a country. Other possible man-made causes of population decrease is in cases of war and riots be it ethnically, politically and religiously stimulated just like we presently have in different parts of the world today. There are different forms of civil conflicts, insurgencies or riots presently going on in Syria, Somalia, Central African Republic, Ukraine (Crimean Region) and Northeastern Nigeria leading to all forms of forced migrations like internal displacement or refugee movements. Only in such cases can we have population decrease in any country or an administrative area. Apart from these, a country's population is expected to increase as seen in the case of the three countries presented in the chart above. From information presented on Table 3 above, unemployment grew by a whopping 17.3 per cent within thirteen years

(2003-2015) in Nigeria while population grew by 22.9 per cent within the same time period. This implies that unemployment increases as population grows with similar percentage rate. But in USA and China with higher populations, unemployment grew at only 10.4 and 4.7 per cent respectively while their populations grew at just 7.8 and 5.1 per cent respectively within the same period. This implies that in China for instance, which is the most populous country in the world, population growth is steady with rate of unemployment within the same period (5.1% compared with 4.7 %). Population was growing in China but unemployment situation was stable maintaining 4.2 per cent average all-through the period under consideration (2003-2013). In Nigeria on the other hand, as population was growing, unemployment too was jumping. This comparative analysis implies that if unemployment could be stable for eleven years in China and somewhat too in USA with higher populations, then population growth in Nigeria is not the real cause of unemployment. There are definitely other intricate causes of the menace in the Country outside population growth. This implies that any other factors as listed by Nwanguma, *et al.* (2012) in Table 1 above from his empirical research, of which the most common are leadership problem, corruption, lack of adequate youth development programs and rural-urban migration could be responsible for increase in unemployment in Nigeria.



Source: Authors (2016)

Except for a slight fall in 2005 to 11.9 per cent, there has been constant increase in unemployment as population

grows since then. It is impressive to note that this decrease in 2005 was attributed to the various government efforts

aimed at addressing the problem through poverty alleviation programmes and an increase in the number of people who got engaged in the informal sector activities such as entertainment and hospitality as was also confirmed by Salami, et al. (2013). There was a record high rise of 9.6 per cent in as many decades as possible in unemployment rate in the U. S. in 2010 when economic meltdown was biting hard on her economy. There has been a little recovery from 2011 to 2013 which has stabilized unemployment rate at 9.1 per cent since then. But is the situation similar in Nigeria with less population? The answer is *CAPITAL NO*. As population grows, unemployment too continues to grow in Nigeria. To corroborate explanations given on the above Tables 1 and 2 and with figures 1 and 2 and as earlier mentioned; the main challenge of unemployment does not necessarily have to do with increase in population. A national survey jointly sponsored by NUC and the Education Trust Fund (ETF) in 2004 sought to determine the labour market needs. The study revealed that 44 per cent of the 20 organizations rated Nigerian science graduates as average in competence, 56 per cent rated them as average in innovation, 50 per cent rated them average in rational judgment, 63 per cent as average in leadership skills and 44 per cent as average in creativity. On needed skills like literacy, oral communication, information technology, entrepreneurship, analytical, problem-solving and decision making, 60 per cent rated them as poor. By any standard, the above statistics reflect a good assessment of Nigerian university graduates and further buttress the argument that Nigerian university graduates are unemployable (Okafor, 2011). Besides, child marriage which is a nagging social challenge in northern Nigeria may also fuel this increase. Most young girls who are out of school as teenagers settle for marriage before clocking eighteen years thereby creating a barrier to their social and entrepreneurial skills which would have been developed through higher education (Adekola, et al. 2016). In view of the above, the infamous challenge of unemployment in Nigeria has multi-dimensional causal-factors on the part of job-seekers themselves, archaic cultural factors like the issue of child marriage just mentioned and unfavourable government policies and activities other than population growth.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper looked into the case of unemployment rate in Nigeria and compared that to two (2) purposively selected countries with higher populations than her-China and USA. This was in a bit to find out whether unemployment is actually triggered by population growth or other factors. Findings from this paper show that population increase is not the key factor influencing growth of unemployment in Nigeria. Poor leadership, corruption, lack of adequate youth development programs and rural-urban migration are other

key factors that may have great influence on growth of unemployment in Nigeria, rather than demographic change. Having revealed the above, the authors feel very strongly that the following recommendations would do well to unravel the mystery behind continuous growth of unemployment in Nigeria;

1. Further research would do well to look beyond population growth and consider other factor(s) which may be causing constant increase of unemployment in Nigeria. Perhaps, a lasting solution may be found if this is discovered. This is because as stealing continues unless the rogue(s) is/are found in any society, the same way, unemployment will continue to grow unless the **REAL CAUSE(S)** is/are found, but definitely not population growth as found in this paper.
2. Diversification of the Economy: Nigeria should cease from relying entirely on oil whose price fluctuates according to the world market. Agriculture, ICT, Hospitality and Entertainment are other promising avenue for Nigeria to diversify her economy. According to Adesina (2013), if revolution in mobile communications can provide this great employment as we see currently in Nigeria, other sectors can do the same with similar commitments.
3. Nigeria needs to adopt a skill-oriented education principle to train skilled and technically strong manpower, to build and maintain its critical infrastructure to drive the economy.

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