

**AWARENESS, PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE OF GRADUATING
STUDENTS OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES TOWARD CHALLENGES OF
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**

BY

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELLOR EDUCATION,
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA, IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR
OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD) DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND
COUNSELLING**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled “Awareness, Perception and Attitude of Graduating Students of Nigerian Universities toward the challenges of Youth Unemployment” was written by me and it has been the record of my research efforts. I also proclaim that neither the whole work nor any part of it had been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree at this or any other University or any other organization. The thesis has also been approved by the ethical committee of the University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This academic work is dedicated to the Almighty God whose backing I enjoyed all through.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I deeply appreciate the grace of God upon me which has brought me this far in life and to a successful pursuit of this academic programme. Multiple journey mercies, strength and vitality, divine supplies and sustenance, divine direction at every crossroad, all and many more I have enjoyed by God's grace. I am deeply grateful to Him.

Specifically I want to appreciate my supervisor Prof. A.A. Adegoke. His empathic and humane nature is rare. It was a great privilege being one of his supervisees. While this programme lasted, the Counsellor Education Department was under the headship of; Prof. S.H. Umoh, Prof. I. A. Durosaro, Prof. J.A. Omotosho, Prof. L.A. Yahaya, the incumbent Head of Department, Associate Prof. (Mrs.) M.O. Esere. They all encouraged and urged me on. I wholeheartedly appreciate them all. I am specifically grateful to Prof. A. I. Idowu, Prof. (Mrs.) M. G. Fajonyomi, Associate Prof. A. O. Oniye (all of Counsellor Education Department) and Prof. A. A. Fajonyomi (the internal/ external examiner). Their passion and commitment to standard greatly helped me to shape and trim this thesis to size, making it more manageable as well as giving it a clearer focus.

I also like to acknowledge the individual input of all other lecturers in the department; Dr. F. A. Okesina, Dr. S.K. Ajiboye (who was never weary reading through my work and offering very useful suggestions), Dr. F. N. Bolu-Steve, Dr. M. L. Mustapha, Dr. A.A. Odebode, Dr. L. A. Agubosi, Dr. L. O. Adegboyega and Mrs. M. B. Alwajud, Mr. D. O. Adebayo, Mrs. A. Adeboye, Mr. S. A. Mohammed, and K. A. Adegunju.

Even though Dr. E.A. Adeoye and Dr. M. Ogwohademhe have passed on to eternal glory, I owe them a posthumous appreciation for helping to build enough confidence in me to dispel my initial apprehensions about the programme. May their souls keep resting in peace. My appreciation also goes to Mr. Obiesun, Mr. Fakunle and all non-academic staff of the department for their co-operation.

My sincere appreciation goes to Dr. A.A. Olubitan (KWASU) who offered time and again, to proof read the drafts of this work. I sincerely appreciate Dr. E.J. Umoh, Dr. F. M. Dada, Dr. A.M. Asebiomo, Dr. S. Owodunni for their contributions. I sincerely appreciate Brigadier General P. M. Atere for encouraging me from the beginning of this program to the end. I appreciate as well Brigadier General N. F. Umaru (who emphatically put an end to my accommodation problems in Ilorin while this programme lasted). I acknowledge with gratitude the consistent encouragement given to me by Mr. and Mrs. Boro E. B. I appreciate as well Mr. Daniel Aiyeku and Mr. Athanasius Onyeokro for identifying with me all through the programme.

My sincere gratitude goes to my spiritual mentor Pst. Eric Alao for always being there for me. Similarly, with gratitude I acknowledge Rev. and Mrs. Olanrewaju for their support and ceaseless intercessions for a successful conclusion of this programme. I appreciate as well the spiritual support of Pst. James Abraham, Pst. Dapo Olumuyiwa, Pst. Rotimi Adebisola, Pst. Caleb Olubiyi, Pst. Francis Ebube, Pst. Gabriel Oladayo and Pst. Michael Jayeoba. I deeply appreciate all my senior colleagues and colleagues in kingdom service. They include: pastors Isimah, Ajayi, Omole, Akanmu, Idakwo, Ezenwodo, Yos, Okonkwo, Okolo, Omoyin Efunnowo, Phemy, Abiodun, Eniola and Pst. Ben.

Mr. Samuel Tanyu, Mr. Barazan Barnabas, Pst. Light Daniel, Bomu Agnes, Dupe Ayodele and Samson are acknowledged for their supportive roles as research assistants. I also like to appreciate the professional contribution of Mr. Chime Sunday and Mr. Otitoju Israel who, out of his own volition, became more of a Personal Assistant to me. The individuality of academic pursuit at this level notwithstanding, my cohorts in this programme, namely; Dr. S. O. Olakitan, Dr. E. E, Bankole and Dr. (Rev) Titilade Adetayo ensured they carried me along. I sincerely appreciate them all.

On the home front, I sincerely appreciate my wife Deborah for her understanding, prayers and all round support. My biological children Osoro, Afore, Mosekebomu and my grand children; Ebenben, Fomopo, Mosinamofan and Efan are highly appreciated. My other children too; Comfort, Funmi A., George, Biodun, Makafan, Funmi O., Osakije, Oreka, Yemisi, Dupe and Efurosibina. They presented no distraction to me throughout the research work. I appreciate them all. I appreciate all my siblings and their families for their co-operation.

My data analyst, Mr. Mike Ajokpaniovo is highly appreciated. I appreciate “Momo Ife” (my typist) and all those whose names I am unable to mention, my profound appreciation goes to them all.

ALAFIN, Simon Bamidele

2018

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ABSTRACT

Graduate unemployment is a global challenge. It began to manifest in Nigeria in the late 70's becoming seemingly uncontrollable and posing a serious concern to all stakeholders. Most students graduate with very high expectations for a comfortable life anchored on viable and well paying jobs. But these expectations soon give way to frustrations, confusion and hopelessness when later they encounter, face-to-face the realities of the challenges of securing gainful employment. Could this be an indication that most graduating students were not anticipating these challenges? This study therefore examined the awareness, perception and attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment. The objectives of this study were to find out: (i) the awareness level, (ii) perception (iii) attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment, and (iv) the influence of gender, age, and course of study on these variables.

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised all graduating students of universities in Nigeria, estimated at about 1.8 million. The target population was drawn from public universities comprising 40 federal and 44 state universities spread across the six geo-political zones of the country. Multistage sampling procedure involving; simple random, purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used to select a total of 1,582 respondents made up of 853 males and 750 females for the study. A researcher - developed instrument was used for the study. The instrument was content validated by five experts. The instrument was subjected to a test re-test reliability technique using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation formula which yielded a coefficient of 0.78. Percentage, t-test and Analysis of Variance statistics were used for the data analysis.

The findings of the study were that:

- i. the respondents had high awareness level of the challenges of youth unemployment with a value of 97.5 percent;
- ii. the respondents' perception of the challenges of youth unemployment was negative with a value of 94.7. percent;
- iii. the respondents' attitude toward the challenges of youth unemployment was negative with a value of 87.7 percent; and
- iv. there was no significant difference in the awareness level, perception and attitude of respondents toward the challenges of youth unemployment on the basis of gender, age, and course of study.

The study concluded that the challenges of youth unemployment were obvious to the graduating students because their perception and attitude towards the challenges were negative. There is therefore need for improvement in their perception and attitude toward the challenges. The implication is that the graduating students need counselling to change their perception and attitude toward youth unemployment. It was recommended that counselling restructuring techniques should be used to sensitise students on these challenges.

Word count: 449

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Graduating from the university is a major landmark accomplishment in the life of students worldwide. It is often greeted with encomiums and flowery comments from parents, relations and well-wishers. Myatt (2012) described graduation as a joyous time, full of accolades and recognitions. Praises and congratulatory messages such as; “you did well”, “that is great”, “you made it through”, “we are proud of you”, are lavishly poured on the graduating student. Most times, parties are organized to celebrate this attainment. *Graduationparty.com* (2014) in a nationwide survey put the average cost of graduation party in the United States of America (USA) at nine hundred and eighty five (\$985) dollars. This is over five hundred thousand in its naira equivalence at the current exchange rate.

Graduation parties are also a common place in Nigeria on convocation days or shortly after. While some may be modest, a good number of them could be very elaborate or fairly elaborate, with souvenirs and mementoes for invitees. Some weird forms of celebration are also a common sight across university campuses in Nigeria on convocation days. Fresh bachelor degree recipients of both gender are drenched with water, beverages (alcoholic and none alcoholic), diluted juice drinks, all manner of drinkable juice extractions and even diluted tomato puree in some extreme cases. Though bizarrely odd and hazardous, the celebrants appear to enjoy every bit of the moment with a posture that seems to suggest that they have been looking forward to the experience. In all, the common bottom line is fun, feasting and merriment.

After the feasting, merriment and the general euphoria that accompany convocation ceremonies and celebrations comes the big question, “what next?” What next after graduation has always been a tough and unpleasant question for the fresh graduate to address (Kiprono, 2014; Jacky, 2014). According to Schwarzenegger (2013), what to do next was the biggest thing on her mind on the day of her graduation when the merriments were over. Schwarzenegger revealed that she discovered that the same question was in the minds of all her graduating peers as well as every

other fresh graduate she met. The question of what to do next indeed was stressful, leading to feelings of insecurity and cluelessness on how to figure out life after graduation. Schwarzenegger disclosed further that while most undergraduates do not often have clear answers to where they will be going after graduation, most fresh graduates similarly do not have any clue as to what next.

Mypath (2015) undertook an investigation on deployment projects, interacted with many undergraduates about to round up their academic programmes. The investigation revealed that undergraduates did not have clear answers as to where they would be going after graduation. And for the fresh graduate respondents, most of them have no clue as to what next. What next is made even tougher for the fresh

*graduate to answer by the convocation itself especially through the speeches, charges, accolades and most times through exaggerated praises and optimism they are treated to during the ceremonies. The graduating students are fed with such ideas that are in sharp contradiction with the reality on the ground. As a charge to graduating students, a favourite poem at convocation by Fuchs (2014) says:

If every single graduate were as special as you are, the world would be a better place and everyone a star. In the real world though you sure stand out for your outstanding traits, these uncommon things about you everyone appreciates. So congratulations, graduate! We wish (you) all the best, we know as you meet life's challenges, you'll ace each and every test.

A charge like this and many more have diverse undertones, capable of either inspiring the young graduate, boosting his/her morale or pumping up the ego, depending to a very large extent on the nature and disposition of the individual. It is therefore not unexpected that during the euphoria of graduation, amidst all these morale boosting charges and praises of their resilience, bloated ideas and expectations become dominant in the minds of graduating students (Recablanca, 2012; Mushood, 2014). These bloated expectations are aptly depicted in this poem by Fuchs (2014):

*We are graduating into our future anticipating only the best.
Spreading our wings now we'll do great things now meeting
every challenge, pass every test.
We will overcome whatever life hands us, use what we learnt
(here) in school for our success.
We'll boom wherever our journey lands us reaching our goal
of sweet success.*

This bloated expectation as depicted in the above poem, is a universal level of optimism common among graduating students irrespective of their country and institution (Mushood, 2014). Most students graduate with the mentality that they have arrived, ready and fully equipped with their school knowledge to subdue every challenge on their way to “sweet success” once they step out of school. But as graduation is just a celebration of the student’s academic achievement and marks the beginning of an amazing journey into the world of work (WOW), events in succeeding weeks after convocation soon prove how naïve and wide off the mark such notions could be.

Recablanca (2012) pointed out that it was very unfortunate that things did not go the way she had hoped and planned even with her parents. And according to her, frustration began to set in immediately. This fresh graduate began to ask; “is life meant to be this hard?” Looking back at her first one year after graduation, Schwarzenegger (2013) revealed that it was a huge period of ups and downs with lots of frustration. Charamnac (2013) described her first two years after graduation as a period in the “wilderness embracing uncertainty”, a period of feeling “completely lost”.

The case of the Nigerian fresh graduate is not just as worrisome, but generally pathetic and hopeless. *Thenationonline* (October 4, 2015) reported the ordeal of Mariam Adamson who graduated with a first class in 2011 from the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) and who up till October 2015 (the time of the news paper report) was yet to find a job. When she was asked what she has been doing since her graduation, she said “I have been applying for every job offer online, but none of them called me. These four years have been really bad, sitting at home, applying, waiting and hoping. It has been terrible”.

The account in *thenationonline* (October, 2015) points to the fact that Adamson was not planless. According to her revelation, her dream was to work for two years, raise enough money to start her own farm and “make it big by the end of the fifth year”. But according to her, that dream has gone down the drain as four years have passed with no hope or sign of the dream becoming a reality. Adamson said she felt as if she had wasted her time going to the university and even graduating with a good grade.

Okonkwo Theresa graduated in 2012 with a first class degree in Accounting from University of Lagos. According to the report, her desire was to work in an audit firm. But when this did not work out, she tried banks and other financial organizations. These efforts also yielded no positive results. According to her, she now settles for any job that comes her way. Currently she is assisting her uncle's friend in a small private personal office (*thenationonline* 2015). Olagoke Kehinde Olalere graduated also with a first class from FUNAAB in 2011. His thinking according to the revelation he made to *thenationonline* (2015), was that the University will retain him as a Graduate Assistant. As this did not happen, he decided to go for a master degree in Animal Nutrition.

Foyeke Akinfenwa read animal breeding and genetics in FUNAAB and came out with first class in 2011. Four years after graduation she was yet to secure an employment. According to her, she did her national youth service at Osun State Ministry of Agriculture. All her hope was that she would be retained there after service. This did not happen and she has since then been looking for job. In her search for work, Foyeke revealed she once fell into the hands of fake job recruiters. When The *nationonline* asked Foyeke how she feels about post graduation experiences, she said "I feel very bad that after four years, I have nothing to show that I am a university graduate even with a first class degree. My condition does not inspire my younger ones or anyone close to me either. It is discouraging". She added that this could be why many students do not read much. They do not care about academics. There is nothing motivating them. They could count on one finger their graduate predecessors who have gotten a job (*thenationonline*, 2015). The plight of most graduates in Nigeria may not be different from the above accounts irrespective of the class of degree. It is apparent that the graduate labour market in Nigeria holds little or no prospect for graduates, not even those with outstanding academic credentials.

What most fresh graduates discover after graduation is that the reality on the ground is far from the conceptualized "better life" or "sweet success" they had envisaged while in school and up to the time of convocation. For this and many other challenges the fresh graduates have to contend with in the process of finding their feet after graduation, many become disillusioned, disappointed and bitter. Many share the feeling that their schooling did not do enough to get them ready for the

reality they now have to face after graduation. One anonymous business school graduate was reported as saying, “the real world (referring to the wow) is far too different from what you can ever imagine when sitting in the classroom thinking about it”. Another fresh graduate was reported as saying, “it is disheartening to realize that I went to school all this time and after graduating I have nothing to show for it, no job” (Chan, 2011).

Dashed hopes and uncertainties after graduation from the university and stepping into the reality of finding placement in the work world makes transition into this new phase of life as noted by Palmiter (2009), intimidating, tough and frightening. This situation in a jiffy wipes off all the excitements that accompanied the successful completion of a university degree programme. Graduating from the university and stepping into the world of work (wow) or the work world, the adult world, or quarter life, conceptually refer to this same phase of life after graduation. Similarly, work, world of work (wow) and youth unemployment are interwoven conceptually. The challenges of youth unemployment for instance must first be overcome by graduating students desiring to find placement in the wow. In other words, securing employment launches the graduating student into the wow.

Transition from school into the world of work (wow) is a world-wide phenomenon. It is often the time to compare the expectations, career dreams and the expected comfortable life envisaged while in school with the reality of life after graduation. It cannot be denied that many people seek higher education as a means of accessing lucrative careers, high paying jobs with attractive benefits and bonuses that would guarantee a comfortable life style and standard. McGuire (2012) opined that the importance of university education is quite vivid in terms of wage earning, noting that acquisition of higher education is a gateway to more job opportunities and better options in the face of the current global economy that has become increasingly competitive. Expressing a similar opinion, Amy (2006) and Moon (2009) stated that the motivation of many who seek after university degree is the paramount belief that university education is a sure means to secure well-paying enviable employment. They submitted that people in the ever evolving economy pursue university degree, hoping to enhance their resumes and get an edge while searching for job.

The belief that higher education guarantees high-paying job is so strong and compelling that some adults in steady jobs feel returning to school for more education is a sure access for upward mobility to guarantee job stability. Linn (2012) reported that weak economy and high unemployment have prompted many adults to head back to the classroom, propelled by the hope that more education will bring them a higher pay. Linn reported that between year 2000 and 2010 in the USA there was a 42 percent increase in enrolment of post secondary school programmes by students who were over 25 years old.

Similarly, Croux (2013) reported that a survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Graduate School of Education and Information Studies revealed that “landing a high-paying job is student’s topmost reason for earning a bachelor’s degree”. The survey according to Croux, revealed that 87.9 percent of incoming freshmen say getting a better job, “to make more money” and “be very well off financially” were their primary reasons for coming to college. In another study, Schweitzer (2014) reported that a survey on education and economy conducted by Kaplan University revealed among other things, that 90 percent of United States (US) adults feel that furthering their education can increase their earning potentials and opportunities for promotion.

Recounting a personal experience, Rae (2009) revealed that ‘it was a concluded issue (both me and my parents) that I was college bound after high school, to get a degree and promptly land a high-paying job that would allow me to lead a comfortable life style for the rest of my days.’ Rae indeed enrolled in a university and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree according to the revelation. Generally, higher education could confer advantages in a job search. Hedges (2012) opined that young graduates even in the toughest job market can still secure good jobs. Higher education was my “one golden ticket” with zero personal connections to secure a plum job” after graduation Hedges revealed. Bruce (2011) did not specifically attribute the level of earning to higher education but noted that graduating from the university is a significant rite of passage. For many graduates, it signifies an important transition into the work world of being totally independent and earning a livelihood full-time. In a similar vein, Allen (2007) asserted that an individual’s quality of life goes hand-in-hand with education.

In very clear terms, the indication is that the basic motivation of most people in quest for higher education is to gain access to good and well-paying jobs after graduation. This mind set could be right some decades ago, but the current economic reality world over has abundantly revealed that there is no guarantee that going to school and earning a degree will lead to a job (Loose, 2013). The reality is that as students' enrolment figure into higher educational institutions grows higher and higher by the year, the competition for few available jobs on graduation becomes tougher and fiercer.

To make things more complicated as Kirk (2009) observed, the shaky economy has forced and still forcing cutbacks of more jobs every day, thus confirming the observation of Gardner (2008), that American Federal job reports over recent months (as at then) continued to show an economy shedding jobs. Sharing same view, Vertreace (2009) described the American economy as being in a downturn, characterized by high prices, low employment and advancement prospects. Vertreace remarked further that many companies had reduced staff and many more were planning similar reductions and concluded that the economy is simply a "nightmare economy". Bardwell (2011) remarked that looking for job in times of tough economy could leave one disappointed, frustrated and depressed where one has to start the search process all over again after every unsuccessful attempt. This is what Hedges (2012) described as an uphill battle, graduating in a terrible job market.

The United States of America is the number one economy in the world (Gray, 2017). Yet many fresh graduates in that country are caught in this web of unemployment. Nigeria officially became African's largest economy in April, 2014 because her Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose to 509.9 billion dollars (Odilim, 2014). Even though Nigeria's income per capita also rose by 89 percent, it remained as low as 2,688 dollars. GDP which represents the size of a country's economy and income per capita GDP which measures the average welfare and affluence of the populace have been noted to be inaccurate in computing poverty level of countries. GDP based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) is adjudged more accurate when determining the economic rating of countries (Global Finance, 2014). Analysis buttressing this assertion says that PPP takes into account the

relative cost of living, cost of local goods, services and inflation rates of countries rather than using international market exchange rates which may distort the real differences in income (Wikipedia December, 2014).

Thus, going by GDP estimates derived from PPP calculations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in their October 2014 separate ranking charts placed Nigeria number 20 in the world economy (Wikipedia, 2014). Many analysts are however quick to point out that even though the calculated GDP has raised Nigeria's profile, it has changed little or nothing on the ground in terms of infrastructure, employment and poverty alleviation of the masses (Odilim, 2014). Youth unemployment, including graduate unemployment remains very high even though accurate and reliable data are hard to come by (Imeli, 2014; Ogunlusi. 2015).

This seeming contradiction is obvious because the sectors namely, the oil and mobile communication industries, which made huge contributions to the rise in the GDP of the country, are not sectors known for high employment generation (Ndikumana, 2014). Thus the GDP can appreciate substantially with unemployment still very high. With the current population estimate of 178.5 million people as at July 1, 2014, Nigeria is number seven in the world rank order of countries by population (Worldometer, 2014). Youths constitute over half of this huge population. Going by the definition of the Nigerian national youth policy 2001, all persons between the ages of 18 and 35 years who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are considered as youths (Oduwole, 2015). That this large population of youths is highly unproductive (being largely unemployed) as observed by Odilim (2014) is surely not a positive omen. Youth transition to desirable adulthood will often be adversely affected by wide spread unemployment and its ripple effects (Banks, 2016; Mortimer, Kim, Staff & Vuolo, 2016). What this implies is that youth unemployment has a strong tendency of leading to aberrational adulthood.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) fourth Quarter (Q4) 2016 report put the total labour force of Nigeria at 81.15million with youth labour force of 40.7 million (representing 52.2%) inclusive. The report also revealed that 19.3 million youths were either unemployed or underemployed. According to the report, about 61.6 percent Nigerians in the labour force aged 15 –

24 years were either unemployed or underemployed, while 37.5 percent of those aged 25 – 35 years were also either unemployed or underemployed. Observable trend shows that virtually all bachelor degree graduating students of Nigerian universities cluster within the age range of 20 to 30 years.

One major opportunity transition from school to work provides, is that it can enhance a person's chances of escaping the inter-generational circle of poverty prevalent in our society. But this opportunity is evidently far from the reach of the graduating student in Nigeria as graduates constitute a very large proportion of the unemployment pool in Nigeria. Kolawole (2012) painted a graphic picture of graduate unemployment in Nigeria, observing that every year the country turns out thousands of graduates into the labour market armed with degrees without guarantee of any job.

Kolawole (2012) revealed that a 2009 publication on the state of graduate unemployment in Nigeria showed that close to 64 million youths were unemployed or underemployed in the country. The same document according to Kolawole, recorded that only ten percent of university graduates or other equivalent institutions ever got paid jobs in 2008. Ashimuneze (2011) noted that Nigeria's capacity to employ her own population seems to diminish progressively over the years and unemployment figure appears to grow arithmetically every year, thus aligning with Omotosho, Idowu, Esere and Arewah (2009) who had earlier submitted that the capacity of the country to employ her own population was declining progressively despite her oil wealth. Ashimuneze added that this unemployment statistics consists also of the highly educated and skilled even by European and American standards. According to him, Nigeria exports far more skilled labour and trained intelligentsia than it attracts which is not healthy for self-reliance and socio-economic development.

Nigeria is still one of the poorest countries in the world notwithstanding her new position as the number one economy in Africa and 20th in the world. If many graduates in the United States of America face ordeals of unemployment and underemployment and own up to be confused and disillusioned, then the situation of the Nigerian counterparts under the prevailing harrowing economic conditions can only be better imagined than described. Omotosho, Idowu, Esere and Arewah (2009) noted that Nigerian graduates have limited chances of becoming gainfully employed. They noted further that thousands of young people are often found waiting to be

interviewed for very scanty vacancies. Ogege (2011) described the Nigerian situation as pathetic, observing that university graduates wander about hopelessly for years in search of jobs. Cutback in jobs as noted above has been identified as a major cause of graduates' unemployment in the USA (Gardener, 2008; Kirk, 2009; Vertreace, 2009). In Nigeria, the situation is far beyond cutback in jobs.

Report says about 834 industries collapsed or shut down their operations in Nigeria in 2009 (Nwokwu, 2013). About half of the remaining operating firms Nwokwu added are classified as ailing. They are under what one can call "heavy doses" of downsizing, rightsizing or rationalizing, to use the often preferred coinages for cutback in jobs in Nigeria by hiring authorities. What this implies is that, there is no vibrant manufacturing sector which has the capacity to absorb unemployed graduates and youths in general in Nigeria. The Nigerian economy is too weak to absorb the large number of graduates turned out each year (Ashimueze, 2011; Ogege, 2011; Kolawole, 2012; and Nwokwu, 2013). With a very weak economy, coupled with many other factors such as intense corruption, lack of infrastructural facilities, hostile and risky investment climate amongst others, employment generating agenda however well crafted, cannot thrive. It is therefore not surprising that Nigeria has a very huge youth unemployment figure which has been estimated between 54 and 64 million (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010; Nwokwu, 2013). Omotosho, et al (2009) put Nigeria's unemployment figure at 66 percent especially her educated youth who live below the international poverty line of \$1.00 (dollar) a day. Since this submission almost a decade ago the situation has not abated. Rather it has continued to worsen.

As harsh, harrowing and frightening as this situation may seem, it is the reality. Graduating students must navigate through it to find placement in the world of work. The picture of the wow often envisaged by students while in school, is usually far from the reality and therefore transitioning into the wow after graduation could be shocking to many of them because moving from academic life into the wow is entirely different from moving from one level of education to another (as in migrating from secondary to the tertiary level). Kyser (2008) metaphorically described transition from school into the wow as a "road with no end in sight, with twists and turns, slippery slopes and hills that become mountains". Moon (2009) observed that transition from school to the wow can be smooth, rocky, or somewhere in between.

Similarly, Mueller (2014) observed that transition from school into the wow can be very challenging. Mueller said, even where a fresh graduate has no slightest idea of what to do in this new phase of life, he or she would still require financial upkeep to meet compelling daily needs. And this is not easy without being employed. The thought of it alone according to Hedges (2012) is enough to make those about to graduate feel hopeless.

Onwubiko (2015) revealed that she was comfortable getting set for the wow while in school. But stepping out of school after graduation, she encountered the reality of a host of things contrary to her expectation. The real world impression which the school, her parents and other adults gave her, as well as what she has been seeing from the television screen about it, were the farthest things away from the truth. They have no semblance, no meeting point. Nothing at all was what she had thought it would be. Onwubiko's revelation no doubt portrays a sharp contrast between her knowledge and perception of the wow when she came face-to-face with the reality of the same world she has been preparing for. This perhaps confirms the assertion by Bradford (2009), that you learn about the wow better in the wow and not from within the walls of the classroom.

It is important to add here that although a lot has been mentioned about exaggerated praises at convocation ceremonies that pump up unrealistic expectations in the graduating students, the occasions are not often entirely devoid of bitter truths about the realities of the wow for the graduating students to ponder about. With the intention of preparing the minds of graduating students, Oloyede (2008) in his convocation address, made it explicitly clear to the fresh graduates that they will need to brace up to the challenges of life. Life after graduation, Oloyede said will appear to them (the graduating students) in its true colour which will usually be as “different as reality is from illusion”. He said the undergraduates' vision (perception) of life after graduation is often that of “fanciful fantasies”. Also, Phil (2012) attempted to prepare the minds of graduating students for what to expect after graduation, said. “life is a long ride, and you are the driver every single day”. This implies that fresh graduates must be prepared to accept responsibility for their choice of action, the consequences and the overall outcome of the transition process into the world of work.

The foregoing has largely shown that unemployment is the major challenge of graduating students. This is because viable employment after graduation has been identified as the major propelling factor for acquiring higher education in the first place. What is more, many other challenges after graduation are direct ripples from unemployment, particularly in Nigeria. For instance Egbule (2009), buttressed by Kolawole (2012), noted that most young graduates in Nigeria face the challenge of a waning hope of realizing their personal career dreams, feeling of hopelessness, stigmatization as a potential criminal, and overwhelming temptation to indulge in a possible antisocial means in response to these challenges.

Due to inaccurate awareness and wrong perception, it is usually a huge challenge for many young graduates when trying to strike a balance between the impression they came with from school and the reality on the ground as they attempt to find placement in the work. According to *Careerlism* (2014), fresh graduates require a lot of effort to come to terms with the realities of life after school because of the too high expectations they formed about the work while in school. In the process of navigating their way into the work, the unemployed graduate could be prone to depression, low self esteem, frustration and other negative consequences (Ipaye, 1998). Many graduating students could be at risk of culture shock which could manifest in diverse forms such as; boredom, general nostalgia for their undergraduate days; stress reactions such as anger, anxiety, short temper, confusion, neophobia (fear of new situations including fear of trying out new things) and many more (Eshiet, 2016). Some of the other negative consequences of unemployment alluded to in Ipaye (1998) could also manifest in form of desperation which could lead in some cases to depravity, gullibility demeaning integrity and even suicidal tendencies. The sophistication in crime dimensions especially in Nigeria, and the involvement of 'graduates' in most of these crimes attest to this assertion.

Many graduates who cannot earn their living become prone to social vices Omotosho, et al (2009). It was no surprise when *This Day Live* (19 May, 2013) reported that behind the abduction gangs springing up across the country are young, smart and intelligent university graduates who are

being lured into dangerous crimes by growing unemployment. For most people it was already a common knowledge that many graduates now indulge in high profile criminal activities. The following newspaper captions/reports attest to this. The *Punch* news paper (7 May, 2015) reported that two polytechnic graduates were arrested for kidnap of a Lagos business woman. *Crime-Nairaland* (18 February, 2015) reported that three university graduates and others rob and snatch vehicles for livelihood. While *Nairaland.com* (20 May, 2015) reported that the police arrested a computer science graduate for car snatching. These and many more are common reports in both print and electronic media in Nigeria.

While frustration and desperation arising from unemployment lured some graduates into crime (as claimed by some of those apprehended), some others choose to commit or attempt to commit suicide. *Naijagist.com* (22 April, 2013) reported that one Chidi Onyeka an unemployed graduate stabs himself to death in Aguda, Surulere area of Lagos. Similarly, *Vanguard* (10 April, 2014) reported that Sunday Omotayo a mechanical engineering graduate attempted suicide in Akwa Ibom. When this graduate was rescued by the police, he said “there is no state I have not gone to in search of job in the past 10 years but none for me ... I want to die, I am tired of the world”. Although suicide cases are not uncommon in Nigeria, *NAIJA.NG* (2017) noted that suicide rate is on the rise in the country as a consequence of joblessness, hopelessness, bleak future and over all meaninglessness to life.

From the foregoing, it is clear that many fresh graduates are phenomenally disappointed with the reality of securing gainful employment as they desire to step into the world of work. Many who went after higher education with the mind of securing good jobs, financial security and enhanced society's respect were probably most disappointed. Globally, the economy has become gloomier and Nigeria heavily burdened with massive unemployment (Adebayo, 2013). If graduating students are to be effectively prepared in advance for transition into the world of work amidst these daunting challenges, their awareness and perception of the challenges will be a major focus. Where they are fully aware of the magnitude of the challenges, the graduating students are

most likely to develop appropriate attitude that will dispose them to prepare well for the process. Such attitude will also dispose them to be eagerly receptive to all intervening measures put in place by the university system to prepare them. They are also most likely to be determined, and prepare their minds, strategize and brace up to the challenges appropriately.

Statement of the Problem

Graduating from school and entering into the world of work involves securing an employment. Securing graduate level employment in the present tough economic situation in Nigeria is fraught with numerous problems through which the graduating student must navigate. Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) investigated youth unemployment in Nigeria and put the figure between 54 and 64 million. Ewumi (2014) investigated the factors responsible for high rate of unemployment in Nigeria and highlighted how youth unemployment in Nigeria has degenerated to the present level. Akande (2014) evaluated the situation of youth unemployment in Nigeria and noted that unemployed graduates of tertiary institutions in the country constitute about 20 percent of youth unemployment figure.

Also Ashimueze (2011) investigated youth unemployment in Nigeria. His submission showed graduate unemployment as a likely precursor to overall development retardation in the country, while Adebayo (2013) focused on youth unemployment and crime in Nigeria. Ajufo (2013), Imeli (2013), Okon (2014), and Ogunlusi (2015) all focused primarily on graduate unemployment in Nigeria, its political and socio-economic effects. Earlier, Omotosho, et al (2009) investigated the problems and counselling needs of unemployed youths in Nigeria. Their findings amongst others showed that unemployed youths in Nigeria have myriad of problems prominent amongst which is the scenario where thousands of applicants chase after very scanty job vacancies.

To the best knowledge of this researcher, not much has been done especially in the area of assessing the awareness and perception of graduating students and their attitude toward the challenges of transition from school into the world of work. Yet, these are vital variables involved in their effective preparation for the task ahead of them. This gap is what this study intends to fill.

This study investigated the awareness, perception and attitude of graduating students of universities in Nigeria toward the challenges of youth unemployment after graduation.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What are the challenges of graduating students of Nigerian universities about youth unemployment?
2. What is the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment?
3. What is the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment?
4. What is the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment?

Research Hypotheses

From the research questions, the following hypotheses were drawn:

1. There is no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian Universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.
4. There is no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on challenges of youth unemployment based on age.
5. There is no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on age.
6. There is no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian Universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment based on age.

7. There is no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment based on course of study.
8. There is no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on course of study.
9. There is no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment based on course of study.

Purpose of the Study

The transition from school into the world of work demands that graduating students navigate through the numerous challenges involved in the process. It has been shown above, that youth unemployment and its ripple effects are the principal challenges of graduating students. To successfully navigate through these challenges, adequate preparation becomes mandatory. How well and effective the preparation can be will depend to a large extent on the students' awareness and perception of the challenges involved, as well as their attitudinal disposition toward the challenges. Thus, this study undertook the assessment of the awareness, perception and attitude of Nigerian university graduating students about the challenges of transition from school into the world of work with a direct focus on youth unemployment. The variables of interest are; gender, age, and course of studies.

Significance of the Study

It is believed that the findings of this study could help draw students' attention to the challenges ahead of them as they graduate from school and commence the process of securing viable employment. This awareness is expected to help ginger them up to prepare adequately for the challenges involved and to facilitate a smooth crossover into their next phase of life. Importantly, the study is expected to sensitise students specifically against entrapment by the "unexpected" and disappointments in the graduate labour market thereby avoiding frustration, confusion depression and many more negative consequences often associated with the unemployed.

The study would also be useful to University Education Curriculum Developers. It would help them to further appreciate the need to build self employment as well as further emphasize entrepreneurial and life skills into the curriculum to prepare students. Furthermore, the finding of this study can assist the federal ministry of labour, employment and productivity to better understand the intricacies of youth unemployment and how to better ameliorate the phenomenon. The study can also draw the attention of University administrators to the need for the university system to further expand and develop the counselling and human development centres of the universities to make them more functional to facilitate smooth navigation through the challenges associated with transition of their products into the world of work. In addition, the study could be useful as a source of empirical evidence for researchers apart from stimulating further studies in the area of fruitful engagement after graduation. It is the conviction of this researcher that the findings of this study would be very informative to relevant government authorities on the need for appropriate policy enactments that will create “soft landing” for people in transition from school into the world of work.

Operational Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as operationally used in this study:

Attitude: This is the disposition/reaction of the graduating individual toward the challenges of securing employment after graduating.

Awareness: This implies having the knowledge of the existence of the challenges involved in securing job placement after graduating.

Challenges: These are the various problems graduating students face on individual basis as they encounter the realities of securing viable employment after school.

Graduate Employability: This refers to the possession of skills and personal attributes that make the graduate more likely to secure employment, maintain and progress through it.

Graduating students: These are students who are in the final year of their academic programme in the university.

Perception: This refers to the mental image formed by the graduating student about the challenges of securing employment after leaving school.

Transition from school: Leaving the university on graduation (this does not include dropouts).

Scope of the Study

The study focused on finding out the awareness, perception and attitude of graduating university students about the challenges of youth unemployment in Nigeria. The six geopolitical zones of the country were covered. Two public universities were selected purposively from each zone. From the selected universities five faculties were selected. Thirty students were randomly selected from each faculty. In all, 832 males and 750 females yielding a total of 1,582 respondents were involved in the study. A twenty item questionnaire was drawn to elicit information on each of the three variables under investigation (Awareness, Perception and Attitude). Section 'B' of the questionnaire was designed to affirm what constitutes youth unemployment challenges of graduating students of Nigerian universities. The intervening variables of interest were gender, age and course of study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Review of relevant literature is a pertinent stage in every thesis. Stridhar (2014) noted that literature review acts as a stepping stone towards achieving the objective of the study at hand and provides as well a solid background for it. Apart from helping to situate the current work in relation to works others have done earlier in the related field, literature review helps to avoid duplication of work often referred to as incidental plagiarism (Kim, 2015). The review of literature in this study covered the following subtopics:

Theoretical review

- The Concept of work, world of work, employment/unemployment
- Securing employment after graduating from the university.
- Graduate employability
- Employability model
- Employability theories

Empirical review

- Youth/graduate unemployment
- Challenges of securing employment after graduation
- Awareness of the challenges of unemployment by graduating students
- Perception of the challenges of unemployment by graduating students
- Attitudes of graduating students toward the challenges of unemployment
- Theoretical Framework.
- Summary of the reviewed related literature.

Theoretical Review

The Concept of work, world of work, employment/unemployment

Work refers to any legitimate activity (apart from begging and similar activities) attracting remuneration. The pursuit of a career is also work. But a footballer may not be said to be working except he receives payments for his engagement(s) thus making him a professional footballer.

Smith (1776) defined work as an activity requiring the worker to sacrifice his tranquility, freedom and happiness in return for wages. Smith was however heavily criticized for limiting his view of work to slave labour (Magdoff, 2006). But in the view of Engel (1934), work is central to human existence, it constitutes the prime basic condition for all human existence. Indeed, it was through creative work that mankind created culture and civilization (Applebaum, 1992).

Magdoff (2006) explained that Engel's speculation was that work created man himself in that as man developed bipedal locomotion (walking on two feet), the hand became free to develop and undertake more complex tasks. The specialization of the hand led to work, mastery of nature and exploitation of its comparative environmental advantages. These in turn brought people together which necessitated speech development. Speech thus came with work and further development of the brain.

By the combined function of hands, speech organs and the brain, not only in individuals but also in societies, men became capable of executing more and more complicated operations, and were able to set for themselves higher order of goals. The work of each generation itself became different, more perfect and diversified. Agriculture was added to hunting and cattle raising. Then came spinning, weaving, metal working, pottery and navigation, trade, industry, art and science (Engel 1934 cited in Magdoff 2006).

The world of work has always been in perpetual evolution. From the above, work is seen as a progressive continuum from historical times till date and with all indications will continue to rapidly change with science and technology driving the changes. From the evolutionary trends of the work world, arose division of labour, separation of people into classes and social organizations, private property ownership, and exchange. These and many more became dominant characteristic of economic life (Magdoff 2006). The world of work (wow) today involves the pursuit of opportunities for productive work that delivers a fair income, security of workplace, social protection, better prospects for personal development and social integration (Ilo, 2012).

The alignment of the world of work in Nigeria with this concept is not far - fetched. Magdoff (2006) reported Engel as saying that when work is not conceived as an imposition but as needful by the individual, it becomes attractive and a delightful experience for the individual to undertake. This leads to the individual's self realization and satisfaction. Among the many importance of work

is that; work fetches money and better living, gives social status, provides identity, fulfills dreams and desires. In addition, work provides platforms to utilize the possessed skills, provides a platform for everyday learning, and gives a sense of security. Work makes a person a “better and responsible citizen” (Thompson, 2011; Superdawn, 2013). In Nigeria, not much respect is accorded anybody who does not work. Against this background, the crave for employment by graduating students in Nigeria can be clearly understood.

The world of work has never been static, it has continued to change. No one would have thought of the current shape of the work world some 50 years back (Herman, 1999). Experts have predicted that machines would soon make workers obsolete (Thomson, 2015). This in a way, accounts for the current scarcity of jobs in the country and globally. These evolutionary trends serve as pointers to the impermanent nature of the job market to all and particularly the graduating students. The prevailing situation highlights the disappearance of jobs that existed some two decades ago. The reality is also that even if a job is secured today based on some specific skills, such skills might soon be obsolete and the job lost to technological advancement.

The theoretical view that work is sacrificing one’s peace, freedom and happiness for wages, though strongly criticized, still holds some relevance in the current world of work in Nigeria. It is a view that should galvanize the graduating student into entrepreneurship and self employment instead of looking and wishing for an employer to whom he will surrender his tranquility, peace and freedom as an employee.

The concept of the wow is closely related to the total workforce. A country’s workforce comprises of the total number of the country’s population employed, plus those not employed who are actively seeking for paying work (businessonlinedictionary.com). The workforce does not include children, (below age 15), those who choose to stay at home not seeking any employment, the invalids and full-time students. Though with slight variations by countries, it does not also include the elderly, aged 65 years and above in Nigeria (NBS, 2016). The unemployed are the people in the workforce bracket who are actually looking for paid jobs and are yet to secure one.

In Nigeria, the fresh university graduate is automatically launched into the workforce after the compulsory one year national service. From here the individual begins to plot his or her way into a means of legitimate livelihood either by being employed or self-employed. Success in this direction places the fresh graduate in the employed divide of the workforce. One can thus conclude that the wow is simply the divide of the workforce that is employed.

Securing employment after graduating from the university

To secure employment after graduating from the university, the individual could be hired in the public or private sector. The graduate could also choose to be self employed. Whether by being hired or by self employment, the bottom line is earning a living within the norms of the society. Securing a well paying job that will guarantee and sustain a comfortable living standard has been the paramount motive for many seeking university education in the first place (Croux, 2013). University education offers graduates more job opportunities to choose from. It is a lifetime-high-income yielding investment that improves individual's quality of life which goes hand in hand with education (Allen, 2007). But all these have been over taken by the current economic downturn which has no preference for degree certificates.

In the current dispensation, graduates leaving universities are entering a very different wow from what obtained some three decades back (specifically before the 1980s in Nigeria). The current wow is marked with high level of uncertainties, complexities and rapid changes, reflecting the bewildering array of global issues of economic instability, economic meltdown, general recession and youth unemployment including university graduates (Sterling, 2014). By orientation, it is believed that every degree holder in Nigeria must be employed by government (Ogege, 2011). Or at least the government should facilitate their employment. Many graduates are still searching and waiting endlessly for government employment under the illusion that the government owes them a job and a living (Eneji, Mailafia and Weiping, 2013). This concept which is premised on an orientation and notion that do not fit into the present dispensation has kept pushing higher and higher the population of graduates stuck in their effort to enter or find placement in the wow.

How much intervention government should impose on economic activities of a state/society has remained unresolved by economic theorists. Hayek (1948) postulated that markets and market forces alone should dictate all economic decisions. This is the classical liberalism stand point. Classical liberalism theory holds that market forces should reserve the sole mandate to make all economic decisions and dictate the tone of economic activities of the society/state. Through the same source, explanation could be found for the performance or non-performance of the economy per time (Laflamme, 2008). Going by this theory, the current difficulties graduates in Nigeria are facing in securing employment is largely due to overproduction of graduates vis-à-vis available job opportunities (Ashimuneze, 2011; Eneji, Mai-Lafia and Weiping, 2013).

For interventionist liberals led by Keynes (1936), the government could and should intervene in aspects of the economy not adequately addressed by market forces. Keynes believes that fluctuation in economic activities, giving rise to distortions such as; unemployment, inflation and instability in prices and many more could be effectively checked by government intervention. Keynes advocated that increasing investment can similarly increase the volume of employment and reduce unemployment. But this prescribed intervention is often hard to come by in Nigeria because of fiscal indiscipline and corruption, abuse and misuse of state resources resulting in the sustenance of the vicious cycle of unemployment and poverty (Eneji, Mai-Lafia & Weiping 2013).

Neo-classical liberalism dates back to the post second world war era of recession. Keynesian economics and welfare state was too costly for governments to continue to pursue full employment policies (Laflamme 2008). Neoclassical liberalism became the choice of world leaders (America and Britain) as this economic stand point rejected any government intervention in the domestic economy and placed increasing importance on global institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The creation and strengthening of these institutions put pressure on regions and developing countries to subscribe to the policies emanating from them (Laflamme, 2008). Neo-classical liberalism emphasizes extensive economic liberalization policies such as; fiscal austerity, deregulation, free trade, reduction in government spending to increase the role of private sector

participation in the economy (Wikipedia, 2017). Neo classical liberalism is still very much in place with additional new institution – the world trade organization – to consolidate the system.

Neo-classical liberalism encourages the developing economies (Nigeria inclusive) to buy into its theories/policies of globalised market forces and monetary policies. In addition, developing economies are encouraged to liberalize their economies as fast as possible and to ignore social concerns arising from such implementation. The implication of implementing these economic theories and their policy prescriptions provides explanation for the current climate of the wow in Nigeria. The inability of a huge number of graduates to gain entry into the wow is a serious social concern and the prescription of this theory about social concerns is clear – they are to be ignored (Lanflamme, 2008). The inability of a huge number of graduates to secure entry into the wow in Nigeria could thus be appreciated against this theoretical background.

Graduate employability

The concept of employability refers to an individual's capacity to become and remain attractive in the labour market (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Employability has to do with the capability of the individual to be successful in a wide range of jobs because of the possession of appropriate skills set, interest and other attributes. Employability therefore involves the possession of a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to secure employment, keep and grow through it (Paadi, 2014). To be employed or unemployed is largely the function of the employability of the individual, graduate or youth hence the attention accorded employability in this chapter covering some of its models and theories.

Graduate employability is the ability of graduates to secure jobs in the labour market, being equipped with skills required by the employer. Graduate employability is multifaceted and encompasses academic performance, career management skills and labour market awareness (Paadi, 2014). It also involves being career resilient, that is, to possess the ability to adapt to changing circumstances even when the circumstances are not pleasant (Collard, Epperheimer & Saign, 1996). Employability skills usually considered important in most developed economies are; team work, communication, self-management, critical thinking and analytical ability (Jackson, 2013). For

developing and transitional economies (like Nigeria), Hargreaves and Shaw (2004) suggested lifelong learning and training as what is most needed. They submitted that education creates the future and lifelong learning promotes and sustains the quality of that future. The concept of lifelong learning Hargreaves and Shaw (2004) added, involves a situation where people have skills, disposition and values to continually access information and build knowledge for the workplace and the overall interest and general goal of the society. It could thus be summarized that lifelong learning implies the possession of knowledge, skills and competences, and the disposition to keep building on them to the interest and advancement of the individual as well as the overall interest of the society.

Graduate employability models

Models in general help to facilitate the understanding of concepts. Knight and Yorke (2004) defined employability as “a set of achievement skills, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits them, the workforce, the community and the economy” (p.5). Knight and York went further to develop a four interrelated components of employability titled USEM. USEM is an acronym for:

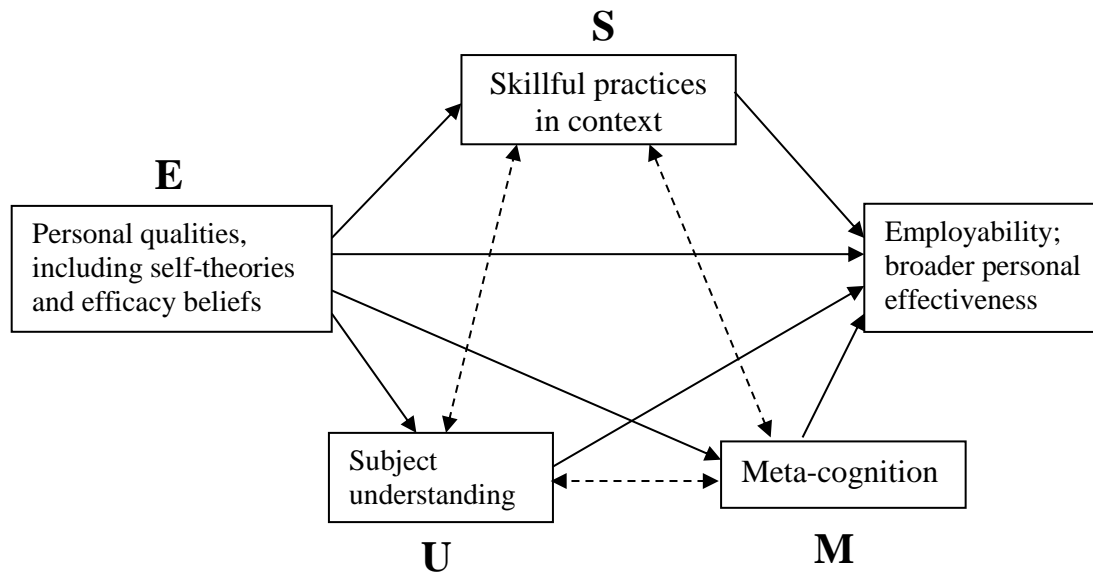
Understanding

Skills

Efficacy, beliefs, and

Metacognition

Figure 1: USEM model of employability.

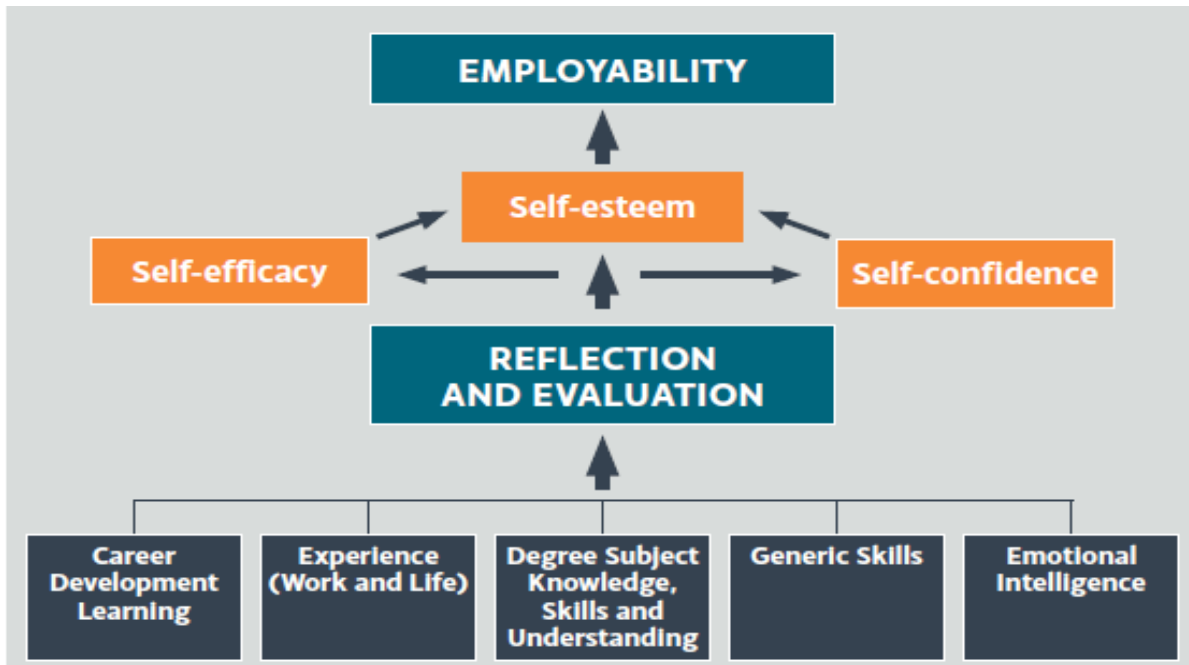


(Source: Cole & Tibby, 2013) The Higher Education Academy.

The USEM model provides a framework for considering how to embed employability into the curriculum taking into account the needs of students, employers and other stake holders. USEM encourages curricular assessment that develops students' efficacy and metacognition, relating them to subject knowledge and professional skills that are transferable (Cole & Tibby, 2013).

Pool and Sewell (2007) acknowledged the relevance and strength of USEM. They however observed that its clarity is limited to experts in the field. Non-experts e.g. students, parents and (even some employers) could be stuck in grasping its explanation of what exactly is meant by employability. Pool and Sewell (2007) then came up with career EDGE model of employability.

Figure 2: Career EDGE Model of Graduate Employability.



Source: Cole & Tibby (2013) The Higher Education Academy.

This model is designed to show that each component is vital and if any is missing, it can compromise the graduate's employability. Pool and Sowell (2007) noted that this model offers to all stake holders in the promotion of graduate employability a clear picture of the issues involved. Career development learning is a life-long exercise. Specialized skills of the chosen field must be acquired through experience (through internship). These acquired skills must be accompanied with generic skills and emotional intelligence to produce self efficacy, self confidence and self esteem, culminating in employability. Employability rating will however be determined by how much of these components the graduate possesses

DOT employability model

This employability model was developed by Law and Watts (1977)

Decision learning

- Decision learning skills

Opportunity awareness

- Know what opportunities exist and their requirements

Transition learning

- Including job searching and self presenting skills

Self awareness

- In terms of interests, ability and values.

DOT's employability model (Watts, 2006)

This model comprises of four major components of employability identified by Law and Watts (1977) as follows.

- Decision learning
- Transition learning
- Opportunity awareness
- Self awareness

With special skills to learn under each component as shown above the model is easy to adopt. Career development learning (though a life-long exercise) can also be facilitated when the components of this model are adopted.

Employability Theories

Consensus theory

The concept of graduate employability in Nigeria can further be appreciated against the background of consensus theory of Brown, Hesketh & William (2003). The emphasis of the theory is on what social groups or subgroups have in common in terms of social norms, cultural values and beliefs. In this case graduate employability is the common concern. The common ground here is that graduate employability deficit is a reflection of the shortcoming of higher education system in Nigeria amongst other factors. The Nigerian national policy for education assigns the role of training high level manpower to the universities to facilitate the economic and over all development

of the country. But in about the past three decades, graduate unemployment has continued to rise by the year while the universities appear helpless about it and kept graduating more and more students every year (Ogege, 2011; Ashimueze, 2011; Kolawole, 2012; Nwokwu, 2013).

Consensus theory assumes that Nigerian universities are running obsolete pedagogy, completely out of tune with the realities of the current developmental needs of the country and the labour market demands (Elegbede and Shadare, 2012). The theory in addition, assumes that the employability deficit of the Nigerian graduate is rooted in poor government funding of universities, poor skill acquisition, weak industrial support and corruption (Elegbede, 2012; Irmeli, 2013; Nwokwu, 2013). With a holistic view at the Nigerian education system, consensus theory blames the problem of graduate employability challenges on the government, the universities, employers and the graduates themselves for each party not doing enough to halt or reverse the trend (Godwin & Johnson, 2012). One can therefore conclude that, to a large extent, the massive current graduate and youth unemployment figure in Nigeria could be ascribed to the interplay of all these factors with varying degree of influence.

Conflict Theory

The problem of graduate unemployment in Nigeria is a serious concern to all (Eneji, Mai-Lafia & Weiping, 2013; Akande, 2014). Conflict theory traceable to Karl Marx (economic conflict) and Max Weber (power conflict), provides a clear picture of this national concern. Marx believes that a society (state) is always in perpetual conflict because of competition between the component socio-economic, political and other similar interest groups (Brown, Hesketh & William 2003). The theory has often been used in explaining a wide range of social phenomena, including conflicts among groups. Conflict theories emphasize the importance of interests over norms and values. The way in which those interests are pursued generates different types of conflicts.

The phenomenon of graduate employability in Nigeria involves the role of different groups, namely the government, employers, the academia, employees (the graduates) and other peripheral groups with varying stakes and influences. The Scenario of the labour market in Nigeria at present is that graduates complain of unemployment. Employers on their part, argue that graduates are

poorly prepared for work. The employers complain that a university degree certificate is no longer a guarantee for good communication skills or technical competence. As a result university graduates are commonly viewed as ‘half-baked’ (Dobalen, Oni & Adekola, 2000). The conflict here is that graduates see themselves as ready for work but employers see them as highly unprepared.

Employability is multifaceted (Paadi, 2014) and so also are its conflict grounds. There is the academia versus employers’ conflict. The employers feel that the universities have not been giving adequate specific and generic skills training to their students to make them employable. Conflict theory argues that employer should take responsibility of providing work place training for the graduates they employ and not to expect the university to provide all skills needed, even the skills specific to a particular firm.

Another area of conflict is the demand for experience by employers whereas the fresh graduate needs the employment to acquire experience. Similarly, in the area of skills acquisition, there is a conflict in what skills students think are relevant in enhancing their employability. The skills students focus on are at variance with what the employers demand (Brentley preparedness studies, 2014).

Search theory

Terry (1998) search theory also provides another picture of the concept of graduate employability in Nigeria. The summary of the search theory is that while graduates are involved in searching for a good job, the firms or employers are also involved in searching for competent workers. This exercise probably accounts for the common scenario of strenuous screenings and multiple layers of interview of graduate applicants for job placement in the Nigerian current labour market. Although the theory is tagged unemployment search theory, it becomes relevant in understanding employability concept because ability to search skillfully is one of the components of employability (Watts 2006). For a successful search for employment within a reasonable time limit, the graduating student requires an appropriate blend of all the components of employability including emotional intelligence and resilience.

Empirical Review

Graduate Unemployment /Youth unemployment

Generally the term employment refers to people in who are engaged in some form of remunerated work while unemployment refers to those who are actively seeking paid jobs but are unable to secure one. Unemployment is a major challenge of fresh graduates world over. Hanapi and Nordin (2013) examined the phenomenon of graduate unemployment in Malaysia. They noted that in 2009, graduate unemployment figure stood at 3.7 percent. The researchers were quick to add that this figure, though low, when compared with countries like the USA and other countries in Europe, it is however not an issue to be neglected.

Citing some official state sources, Hanapi and Nordin (2013) put the 2005 graduate unemployment figure at 59,000 and the figure of others who worked in fields that do not match their higher educational qualification at 30,000. Graduate unemployment in Malaysia according to the researchers is due largely to the weak quality of the graduates. They reported that the graduates do not have suitable skills and qualifications which meet the needs of the industries. Based on records of job vacancies and job placements in Malaysia in 2012, job vacancies kept increasing from year to year, showing that graduate unemployment in that circumstance was not due to lack of job opportunities but due largely to low quality of graduates (Hanapi & Nordin, 2013).

In Zimbabwe, Mafumbate, Gondo and Mutekwe (2014) investigated graduate employment challenges, using Zimbabwe Open University as a case study. The researchers found out that many graduates who undertook studies in higher education, anticipating employment in their field of specialization were disappointed as most employers were hesitant to employ highly qualified persons particularly with the economy still in depression. Many graduates end up taking any job they can find. The research also revealed that there was a mismatch in what the Universities produce and what the employers need or are demanding. Using a mix method of qualitative and quantitative research, Mafumbate, Gondo and Mutekwe (2014) reported that 30 percent of their respondents found suitable jobs in their area of specialization. 50 percent got jobs below their academic qualification, while 20% were still job searching. The study also reported that graduate unemployment in Zimbabwe is due mainly to limited job opportunities in specialized fields.

Elegbede and Shadare (2012) investigated graduate unemployment in Nigeria and noted that graduate unemployment in Nigeria was unknown before the late seventies. According to them, if there was anything as graduate unemployment in the country before 1972, it was presumably very minute and not due to lack of employment slots but due mainly to slow bureaucratic machinery for processing application for employment. They observed that at that time, there was a serious shortage of medical doctors, graduate teachers and Engineers although agriculture graduates were underutilized. The semblance of graduate unemployment began to rear its head only in the late seventies in Nigeria.

In their study which relied on both primary and secondary sources, Elegbede and Shadare (2012) enumerated the causes of graduate unemployment in Nigeria as; general economic recession, faulty government approach in addressing the recession, government's faulty manpower planning and expansion of educational facilities that unduly raised the expectations of Nigerian youths, the introduction of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, imposition of a national minimum wage, unionism collective bargaining, use of capital intensive technology, graduate attitude to certain job and certain locations as well as rural urban migration. Elegbede and Shadare also identified that lack of necessary training for employment readiness has also contributed substantially to graduate unemployment in Nigeria in addition to lack of reliable data on which to base human resource and developmental planning. As these challenges keep lingering unresolved, graduate unemployment and general youth unemployment with their ripple effects kept mounting they concluded.

Ogunlusi (2015) in an in-depth look at unemployment/employment statistics in Nigeria noted that reliable data on the country's population is often hard to secure and that calculations based on unreliable data will also produce unreliable results. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) puts the unemployment figure in Nigeria at 7.5 percent as at the end of the first quarter of 2015. This figure according to Ogunlusi has been sharply criticised by many observers who believe it does not tally with the observable reality in the country. Some describe it as an unserious approach to deal with a national problem such as unemployment. To some other critics, the figure must have been a typographical error mistaking 7.5 for 75 percent.

The validity of this unemployment figure may remain questionable and contestable until the method of gathering the data used is assessed to determine how credible. Ogunlusi (2015) explained that the population considered for employment often described as the “economically active” segment of a population is made up of people between 15 and 64 years of age who are available for, and are actively seeking for employment. People who choose to stay at home, full-time students, the sick and invalid persons are not counted as unemployed. Ogunlusi explained further that the number of hours of work per week determines whether one is in full-time employment or not. The International Labour Organization (ILO) puts the benchmark at one hour a week. In other words if an individual in the economically active bracket works for at least one hour a week, he or she cannot be classified as unemployed. South Africa and Zimbabwe adopted the formula in calculating unemployment figures in (Ogunlusi, 2015).

In Nigeria a benchmark of 40 hours a week was adopted in 2001 by the National consultative committee on statistics. Since then only people who have worked up to 40 hours a week (the week preceding the survey) are counted as employed by the Nigerian standard. However the NBS, in September 2014, reviewed this benchmark in tune with the prevailing realities in the country (Ogunlusi, 2015).

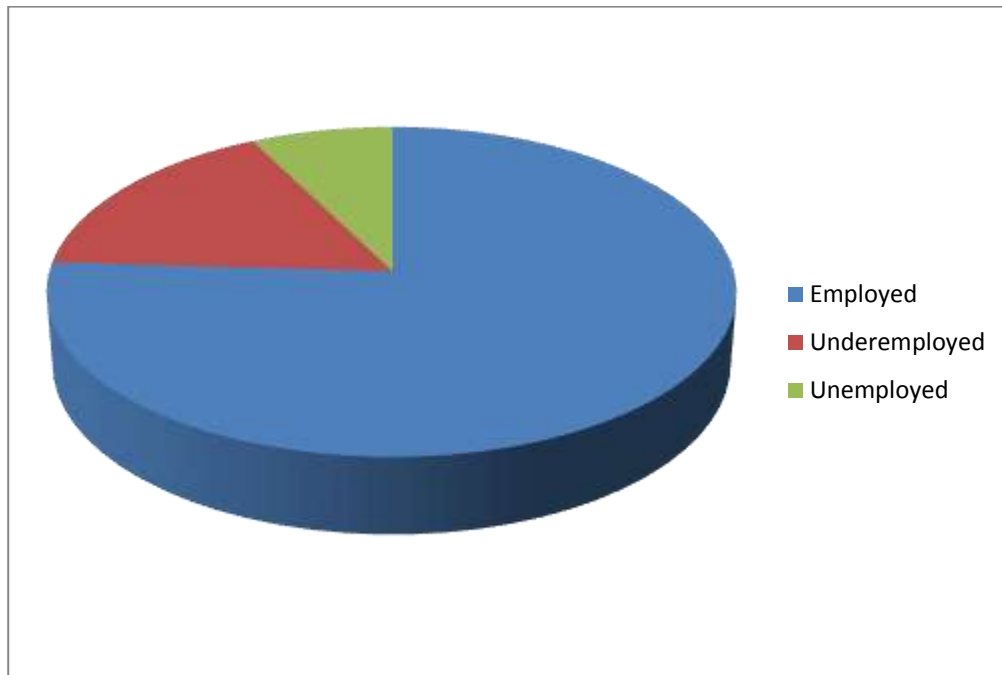
With due consultation, the review fixed a new benchmark at 20 hours work per week to measure employment/unemployment in Nigeria. Applying this new approach, in the first quarter of 2015, as shown in table 4, 75 percent of the population of the country’s work force representing 55.7 million people, were employed. About 12.2 million of the people, representing 16.6 percent were underemployed, while only 7.5 percent of the work force is unemployed (Ogunlusi, 2015).

Table 4: Percentage of Employed, Underemployed and Unemployed People in Nigeria first quarter 2015

| Employed | Underemployed | Unemployed |
|----------|---------------|------------|
| 75.9% | 16.6% | 7.5% |

Source: Ogunlusi (2015)

Figure 3: Employed, unemployed and underemployed population in Nigeria first quarter 2015



Source: Derived from Ogunlusi (2015)

In summary, Ogunlusi (2015) concluded that Nigerians are working but not necessarily in the formal or high productive job sectors. Just as in many other developing nations most Nigerians cannot afford to be completely unemployed. The World Bank, according to Ogunlusi, remarked in its 2014 country Economic report that “those without good productivity employment, engage in various low productivity and low paying tasks for survival”. This implies that the real problem is underemployment and not unemployment. Going by this, it is unlikely to have a Nigerian graduate sitting at home doing absolutely nothing. He or she will offer to conduct tutorials for secondary school students, sell recharge cards or similar merchandise, engage in “Okada” business, just anything provided it is legitimate, including being an airport tout (Ogunlusi 2015). Whatever the analysis may look like, with the attendant arguments and divergent views, what is obvious is that graduate and youth unemployment though a worldwide phenomenon, remains a chronic problem in Nigeria.

In an effort to trace the root of graduate unemployment in Nigeria, Adebayo (2013) observed that following government deregulation of education in Nigeria there was a sharp rise in the number of educational institutions in the country. Adebayo observed further that this aggressive creation of more private and public funded institutions has not been matched with commensurate job creation strategy for graduates of these institutions. As tertiary institutions / universities turn out grew in geometric progression, job creation and the economy in general remained static and in some cases went into decline (Adebayo 2013; Ajufo, 2013). In 1986/87 graduate turnout in Nigeria was 73,339; it rose to 431,016 in 1996/97. In 2009 about 4.5 million graduates of tertiary institutions entered into the labour market without any hope of securing employment (Adebayo, 2013). In 2014, about 8.6 million graduates were released into the labour market (Akande, 2014).

Akinyemi, Ofem and Ikuenomore (2012) investigated graduate unemployment in Nigeria with specific focus on the mismatch between the knowledge and skills graduates are equipped with and the skills demanded by employers for the available jobs. The study revealed that this mismatch is the major cause of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The study reported that in 2003, graduate unemployment figure was 25.6 percent. This rose to 40.3 in March 2009. The reported 2003 figure agrees with Debalen, Oni and Adekola (2000) who had earlier put graduate unemployment figure in Nigeria at about 25 percent. Dabalén, Oni and Adekola (2000) was based on the analysis of available labour statistics. They also interviewed 55 public enterprises, private firms, professional associations and non-governmental organizations. Their findings show in addition that the managers surveyed were of the consensus that:

- University graduates were poorly trained and unproductive on the job
- Graduate skills had drastically deteriorated over the past decade.
- Short-coming were particularly severe in oral and written communication as well as in applied technical skills.

But Ashimueze (2011) defers on graduate unemployment figure of 40.3 percent, arguing that going by available records, not more than 10 percent of graduates secured any graduate level jobs in 2009 and 2010. In other words over 80% of fresh graduates were unemployed. One can deduce from

these figures that the country is in dire need of reliable data source especially as regards her population and its component groups. The fact however remains incontrovertible that graduate and youth unemployment figures are enormous.

Transition from the university into employment is a herculean task. The observable trend seems to suggest that graduates are often poorly prepared for their navigation into the work resulting in a huge number of Nigerian university graduates roaming the streets searching for job placements that have perpetually remain elusive (Ajiboye, Oyebanji & Awoniyi, 2013). The situation is further compounded as most of these graduate job seekers do not possess the skills needed for the available jobs. Against this background, Ajiboye, Oyebanji and Awoniyi (2013) undertook an investigation into the perception of university lecturers on the influence of various fields of study on the employability of graduates. Engaging a sample of 60 lecturers from five faculties in University of Ilorin, the researchers found out that; in the perception of university lecturers, higher education positively influence employability of the recipients. The degree of influence however varies across different fields of study. The study shows that science and technology field has the strongest influence on employability, followed by agriculture. A total number of seven fields of study were considered. Law had the least employability influence according to the findings.

Earlier, Adeyemo, Ogunleye, Oke and Adenle (2010) conducted a survey of factors determining the employability of science and technology graduates of polytechnics and universities in Nigerian labour market. Their findings show that science and technology graduates also suffer from the current general graduate unemployment. The study revealed however about 75 percent of job placements were influenced by the field of study/specialization showing a strong consonance with Ajiboye, Oyebanji and Awoniyi (2013). The study also revealed that about 54 percent of job placements were influenced by the reputation of the institution attended.

Adeyemo et al (2010) reported that up to 48 percent of first job placements were secured through the various institutions' management boards, while 45 percent got their first jobs through personal connections. Only about 8 percent of the respondents got their first employment by applying in response to advertised vacancies. The study reported that employers surveyed, assessed

science graduates as negligent, careless and aversive to work. This attitude the research report noted, negates the general approach of the scientist to work. This attitudinal disposition could also have influenced to some extent, the very stringent measures introduced into recruitment processes by employers in Nigeria.

In a study conducted to find out the employability of Nigerian universities' outputs in the labour market in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, Effiong and Agboola (2014) used a sample of 1,200 respondents evenly drawn from public and private universities in the zone (600 each from public, and private universities). Based on the response of the employers of these graduates, the study found out that, the employability of these university graduates was below average. The ratings were similar irrespective of gender, or the possession of first or second degree. The study also discovered that there was no significant difference in the employability of the products of public and private universities in Nigeria. The researchers concluded that generally, Nigerian universities' outputs are not employable.

Edinyang, Odey and Gimba (2015) also investigated graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The researchers noted that graduate unemployment in Nigeria is born out of graduates' employability problem - A situation where graduates even with good grades are not suitable for immediate employment after graduation. The summary of the findings of Edinyang, Odey and Gimba (2015) was that:

- Employers complain of lack of requisite skills needed for available jobs - a consensus with Dabalén, Oni and Adekola (2000).
- Employability of Nigerian graduates is significantly influenced by academic discipline. This agreed with Adeyemo et al, 2010; Ajiboye, Oyebanji and Awoniyi (2013).
- Academic grade has no place in employability. This was in consonance with Effiong and Agboola (2014) and Adeyemo et al (2010) who reported that academic grade had only 3 percent influence on the employability of science students.

Ogege (2011) undertook a study of education and the paradox of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The study noted that university education is universally the highest level of education and

has the responsibility of equipping undergraduates with relevant knowledge and skills for high level manpower. This knowledge and intellectual skills are critical determinants of the economic growth and advancement of any society hence the importance attached to university education and its subsequent expansion in Nigeria. It is a paradox however that in spite of global expansion and growth in labour and productivity, Nigeria and other developing countries are experiencing unemployment. This is particularly disturbing as many of the employment seekers include many university degree holders (Ogege, 2011). But Tomlison (2012) shows that even the developed economies are experiencing graduate unemployment. Graduate unemployment may be an enormous challenge to Nigeria as a nation, it is nonetheless a global problem.

The Challenges of entering into the world of work after Graduation

Graduating from the university is a major milestone of success in a student's academic journey. While entering into the world of work implies securing paid work/employment on graduating from the university. This is the desired progression sequence by virtually all undergraduates. But *universityparent.com* (2013) observed that soon after the graduation ceremonies, the fresh graduate is confronted with the challenge of making multiple life decisions such as where to live. It has to be decided whether to live alone or with parents, relatives in specific locations in the same town as the alma-mater, or other cities targeted for job search. These are however life decisions that could be nerve-wracking (Chris, 2009). The fear of making a wrong decision is often very strong amongst fresh graduates. This leaves a good number of them shying away from making any decision at all about their career and future resulting in them taking no steps. Jacky (2014) in a survey of 390 students, found that 72.5 percent of the respondents were afraid of making wrong choices in life after graduation.

To go for further studies, or to look for work has also been identified as a serious decision problem fresh graduates face (*Universityparent.com* 2013; Jacky, 2014). Most fresh graduates opt for graduate school mainly to avoid immediate entry into the current chaotic labour market (Farrell, 2010; *Universityparent.com*, 2013). In Nigeria for similar reasons, graduating students go into the

one year National Youth Service with high enthusiasm knowing for sure that their entry into the labour market is put forward by another one year. Even medical students are reported to share the same fear of immediate entry into the labour market. Some are reported to even unofficially repeat the one year housemanship (Kesh, 2016).

The basic assumption is that the school world prepares students for the “real world” and that the real world is the world of work (Farrell, 2010; Teague, 2013; Wikiteam, 2014). Kiprono (2014), addressing Kenya graduating students said, we have been told to go to school so that we can be employed. But that is not the case anymore. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2012) reported a substantial rise in global youth unemployment especially those in the age 18-24 bracket. A good number of university graduates belong to this age bracket. Saulsbury (2012) described the current American labour market as a notorious one. Gardener (2008) said the labour market (talking about the American situation) can only be defined as robust and chaotic. Vertreace (2009) summarized it as a nightmare economy while Hedges (2012) concluded that securing employment is an uphill task, and added that getting into the wow is one of the biggest life challenges the graduating student has.

Dickinson (2012) observed that the current American economic condition into which young graduates are launched is scary. He noted that a future that looked so promising some years back had dimmed for most of the 1.7 million graduates set to be launched that year into the ruthless competition of a globalised world. Extending his observation beyond America, Dickinson noted that youth unemployment around the world has assumed an alarming dimension. The ‘Arab spring’ began with an unemployed Tunisian University graduate fruit vendor who set himself ablaze in late 2010 in protest against police harassment (Dickinson, 2012). Jobless youths in both rich and poor nations pose the greatest threat to domestic tranquility Dickinson added, and went further to point out that: in Britain, 1 out of every 5 youths aged 16-24 years is unemployed; in Italy 3 out of every 10 people aged 15-24 years have no jobs. In Greece the unemployment rate is 48 percent, while half of the eligible young people cannot find jobs. Dickinson noted further that in poor nations, youth unemployment statistics is more shocking because there is often no policy measure in place to mitigate the pain, yet birth rate keeps increasing.

Also focusing on employment, Ray (2010) observed that the whole process of recruiting and job hunting has changed because of the nature of the economy which is now characterized by impermanence. Ray noted that of the top 100 companies in 1900, only 16 were left in business by year 2000, and even fewer today. About 75 percent of viable companies in 1955 that could be classified as 'Blue chips' on the stock exchange list by today's standard had disappeared totally by year 2005. Over 90 percent of all new job creation is currently done by small business and entrepreneurs. These facts Ray concluded, have very serious significant negative impact on job hunting. Securing employment in the prevailing circumstance is a fierce competition, described by Petkovic (2009) as a "dog-eat-dog" job search environment, which makes transition from school into the work an uphill battle.

Cassidy (2014) reported that around 18,500 United Kingdom (UK) and European Union (EU) full-time university graduates were assumed to be unemployed after completing their first degree in the 2012/13 academic year, while several thousands more took up primary jobs such as cleaners, shelf-stackers, office juniors, hospital porters, waiters, bartenders, road sweepers, window cleaners and many more. According to Cassidy, available data from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show that Arts and humanities graduates were more likely to be involved in such elementary occupations than those who studied sciences.

Millar (2014) however had a contrary view. Millar's argument was hinged on the study conducted by U.S. Commerce Department which found out that only 25 percent of the 15 million people who have Science, Technology, Engineer and Mathematics (STEM) degrees work in STEM jobs. The report added that less than 58 percent of all the people working in STEM fields hold STEM degrees. Based on this report, Millar deduced that at least in the USA one does not necessarily need a STEM degree for a STEM job. And if one has one, it will not guarantee a job in the field of STEM. Matthew (2005) noted that the harsh reality of life after graduation was such that one out of three students who start work when they finished their degree, end up in non-graduate jobs. Matthew reported that a research by HESA confirmed that the feeling amongst many students is that they were being compelled to take jobs which had little or nothing to do with their courses.

Similarly, Guise (2014) noted that in year 2011, 53.6 percent of University graduates under age 25 years were out of work or unemployed in USA. 48 percent of those employed, secured their employment in job areas that require less than a University degree in terms of qualification. Guise added that the number of University graduates that ended up working in retail and hospitality outfits was six times higher than initially envisaged. This employment scenario rules out completely the applicability of the area of specialization of the young graduate except in a few specialized areas like medicine and engineering.

Owusu (2014) observed that the problem of unemployment in Ghana among University graduates and other tertiary institutions has reached a breaking point. The various public and private Universities turn out thousands of graduates each year who are unable to find job placements, to the consequence that most of the graduates become deeply frustrated that the graduate job market is chocked or that the course they studied is not in tone with employers' requirements. Owusu summed up the situation as a hopeless one for the fresh graduate. However University graduates and graduates from other equivalent tertiary institutions in Ghana who are yet to find job placement have closed ranks and formed the unemployed Graduates Association of Ghana (UGAG). The figure of unemployed graduates in Ghana is estimated at 600,000 (Owusu, 2014).

Unemployment constitutes the major challenge of graduating students in Nigeria though a global phenomenon. Chilee (2012) investigated unemployment and the problem of the Nigerian graduate. Relying on data from National Manpower Board and Federal Bureau of Statistics, Chilee reported that only about 10 percent of university and other tertiary institutions released annually into the labour market were able to secure paid employment in the period under observation. This agrees with Kolawole (2012) that not more than 10 percent of university graduates were able to secure employment in 2008 and 2009. But that the rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria is estimated at 25 percent according to Chilee's source may still require further verification.

Graduate unemployment in Nigeria is very disturbing and confusing, while unemployed graduates complain of lack of jobs, most employers complain of graduates' lack of employable skills, explaining that graduates are poorly prepared and thus unsuitable for employment.

Employers complain that today's graduates are poorly trained and their requisite skills have deteriorated greatly making them unproductive on the job (Chilee, 2012). Employers claim further that, the incompetence of fresh graduates becomes annoying where they manifest in severe shortcomings in verbal /written communication or in applied technical skills. They said in many cases, they (the employers) organize remedial courses for new employees. This measure they said increases the company's operating cost and reduces their profitability and competitiveness, hence they prefer to source for experienced and suitable hands even where it requires sourcing them from outside the country. Added to this is the fact that companies fear losing any employee they have trained and so prefer a prospective employee who is already trained at entry point (Chilee, 2012). Graduates today do not often seek to practice what they studied because in most cases, they do not meet the professional requirements. They therefore accept any offer they can find provided a form of remuneration is attached Chilee added.

Imeli (2013) opined that the causes of graduate unemployment in Nigeria are substantially the product of the consequences of government inadequate effort in the area of policy and programmes targeted at achieving sustainable, inclusive economic growth and full employment. Imeli added that many of the other causes of graduate unemployment in the country as enumerated by Elegbede and Shadare (2012) are actually symptoms of an ageing and declining system of Education that is inconsistent and unable to pace-up with the current realities. The purpose of university education in Nigeria had been to produce graduates for government ministries, parastatals and other agencies/departments. Little or nothing is in place concerning the production of graduates for the private sector, entrepreneurship and self employment. Preparing graduates for public jobs alone is faulty, especially in the 21st century economic setting. Our educational system is too rigid and too resistant to change Imeli observed.

Imeli (2013) asserted further that, the blame for graduate unemployment in Nigeria is not limited to the government and the university system alone. Graduates themselves are similarly implicated in the unemployment saga as they fail to take responsibility for their learning and self development when the government and the university fail in their own duties/expectations. This

opinion is logical especially if the reasoning is for the graduate not to lose out completely. It is equally logical however, to say that if the graduates had enough clues for personal self development, they probably would not have enrolled in any university to expend time, money and energy in pursuit of the same target they already know how to reach. Graduate unemployment in Nigeria is a nebulous issue with adverse effects on a very sizeable number of families nationwide. The flurry of opinions, views and comments cannot therefore be less divergent and contentious.

Describing youth unemployment in Nigeria as a chronic problem, Nwoku (2013) like Ogege (2011) and Kolawole (2012) noted that every year, thousands of graduates are turned out of our universities without any prospect of employment. Nwoku noted further that the streets are littered with youth hawkers who ordinarily should have found gainful employment in some enterprises or be demonstrating their resourcefulness and skills if the appropriate enabling environment is provided. To make ends meet, many university graduates now engage in commercial motor cycle riding while many others subsist as news paper vendors, photographers, and such similar trades (personal encounter). Nwoku acknowledged this trend as he remarked that given the insufficient job opportunities in the formal sector, young people in the country, (graduates inclusive) are forced to engage in one form of casual work or the other, leading to massive underemployment.

Even though reliable data on Nigeria's population, employment and unemployment are hard to come by, Nwoku (2013), Imeli (2014), and Ogunlusi (2015) put youth unemployment figure in Nigeria at about 64 million and underemployment at 1.6 million. They identified the major causes of graduate unemployment in Nigeria as the consequence of outdated school curricula and lack of employable skills. Nwoku reported that some observers and critics have argued that as far as the formal sector is concern, the average Nigerian graduate is not employable because he or she does not possess the skills needed by employers in the sector. The argument extends further that the course content of most tertiary institutions in Nigeria, lack entrepreneurial components that could enable graduates become job creators rather than job seekers.

Apart from aligning with this view point, Nwokwu (2013) added that graduate unemployment in Nigeria is also largely due to corruption that has crept into our education system whereby many university graduates now parade certificates they cannot defend. Nwokwu noted that corruption has permeated the entire social structure of Nigeria and has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base. Consequently, there is no vibrant manufacturing sector which has the capacity to absorb unemployed graduates or unemployed youths in general. Even as corruption seems the biggest problem in Nigeria, affecting almost every segment of the society including university education, other factors such as weak industrial support, graduate laziness, poor skill acquisition and very poor funding of education all fuel graduate unemployment in Nigeria (Uzochukwu 2015).

Emphasising the phenomenon of poor funding, Okon (2014), Uzochukwu (2015) and Abah (2015) noted that while UNESO recommends 26 percent of national budgetary allocation to education to quicken development, Nigeria's expenditure on Education over the years has always been less than 10 percent whereas our neighbouring country like Ghana commits 27 percent of her national budget to her education sector (Okon, 2014). Some other African countries like South Africa, Botswana, Tanzania, Malawi and Tunisia have similarly surpassed the limit recommended by UNESCO in their budgetary allocation for Education (Abah, 2015). Consequently only very little could be given in terms of quality of attention in all levels of education in Nigeria.

It is pertinent to add here that budgetary allocation is one thing while it is completely another issue if the said meager amount budgeted ever got to the institutions they were meant for as a result of weak monitoring and endemic corruption in the country, If there had been effective monitoring, and direct application of the funds for the purpose for which they were meant whether 26 percent or not, the sector would have fared better (Abah, 2015).

Awareness and Perception

Awareness and perception are two closely related constructs that tend to overlap when being defined. Some see the constructs as two sides of the same coin. However there are still some basic differences between the two. While awareness implies having the knowledge of the existence of a

thing, situation or any phenomena at all, perception involves the assessment, judgment or evaluation of the situation, thing or the phenomena based on one's knowledge of it.

Though constructs are generally difficult to define, Reinhardt, Mletzko, Sloep and Drachsler (2015) defined awareness as the cognitive ability of a person to discern, decipher and judge a given phenomenon with reference to the background knowledge about the object and situation of the phenomenon in question. Poole (2016) defined perception as how your awareness is shaped and how you feel it in your mind's eye. A similar definition says perception is the mind's way of understanding events within consciousness (Cosmar, 2016). Points of overlap could be noticed in the above definitions. Situation awareness theory and Huemer's theory of perception depict the inter-relatedness and the salient distinction between perception and awareness.

Situation awareness was identified during the World War I by Oswald Boelke who realized the importance of gaining awareness of the enemy before the enemy gains a similar awareness of you (Santon, Chambers & Piggott, 2001). The theory points out that for people to maintain an adequate awareness about a system/phenomenon, the development of events within and around the phenomenon must be tracked as they unfold. Situation awareness as explained by the theory is the appropriate awareness of a situation or event.

Awareness implies to directly know and perceive, feel or take cognizance of events. In other words, it is a state of being conscious of something (Wikipedia, 2017). This definition shows the inter-relatedness between awareness and perception. Huemer's theory of perception suggests that perception is directed awareness of external reality leading to the knowledge of that reality without inference to previous experience or knowledge (Idiegbonyon-ose, Nkiko & Osinulu (2016). This has however come under strong criticism because it implies that perception (the interpretation/evaluation) of the object of awareness should be "mind-independent" (Crane, 2005).

Egbule (2009) described perception as the ability of the individual to learn about his surrounding through his sense organs, and that what the individual perceives depends on the previous experience and what the present needs and wishes are as he or she faces the situation. It follows therefore, that it is the perception the graduating student develops about the challenges of

his new status that leads to rational thinking and understanding of the situation and how to forge ahead. Perception, Egbule added, is a very critical factor in the process of problem solving and very significant in the development of imaginative thinking and reasoning. It is the emotional force which helps in building our motivational tendencies to deal with challenges instead of giving up and resorting to some forms of psychological defensiveness. It is therefore ideal to find out the perception graduating students have about the wow as they prepare to commence their transition into it. Their perception no doubt will often influence their attitude and the eventual outcome of the transition process, which as Moon (2009) noted could range from smooth, to rough or somewhere in – between.

Perception of graduating students about the challenges of youth unemployment

Tomlinson (2012) investigated students and graduate perception and approach to future employment and employability in the United Kingdom. The study revealed that in the past, undergraduates were perceived as potential key players in the drive towards all round advancement of their nation and therefore demand sound skill-sets and advanced technical knowledge. They were seen as well preserved core of technocrats, professionals and managers. This recognition Tomlinson reported, has been lost due to the inter-play of massive expansion of higher educational institutions, massive production of graduates, and massive contraction of available jobs as a result of technological advancement and globalization. The perception students now have, based on the current economic reality is that; the labour market engenders high risks and uncertainties. They perceive the labour market as a hazardous process that requires astute planning, sound preparation and foresight as graduating with relevant credentials no longer guarantee graduate level job (Tomlinson, 2012).

The labour market is highly competitive. Graduating students must package themselves well, equipped with not only academic credentials but also with personal and inter-personal behavioural attributes if they desire to make it into the WOW (Tomlinson, 2012). In addition, the study noted that the perception of students about their employability is subjective. It is often the product of their self concept. Tomlinson concluded that the fact that students show interest in life-long learning indicates that they perceive employability as a life-long exercise.

Accepting that the real world is the world of work, Tomlinson (2008) undertook an investigation involving 53 final year undergraduate students to examine the way higher education students perceive the role of their credentials in relation to their future employability. The finding revealed that students perceived their academic qualifications as having a declining role in shaping their employment outcomes. They also perceived that the graduate labour market is congested and very competitive. While academic credentials are still seen as relevant in their employability, students see a compelling need for additional impetus. Moreau and Leathwood (2007) had noted in employability discourse that the general assumption that the level-playing field in which graduates' credentials, (skills and personal qualities) are key to their success in securing job placements no longer holds. Instead social class, ethnicity, university attended and many more, all now significantly influence opportunities available. This observation falls in line with what Okon (2014) described as personal connection being more vital than best results in Nigeria when it comes to securing graduate level employment in the present dispensation.

Perrone and Vickers (2003), in their research work titled "life after graduation as a very uncomfortable world: an Australian case study", reported that:

- Some University students may be completely unaware of the challenges awaiting them after graduation. (Awareness)
- Students' beliefs and expectations about the employment opportunities and privileges that awaited them after graduation led to disappointments and regrets. (Perception)
- Students tend to procrastinate with regards to life-altering decisions surrounding the direction of their career and employment future. (Attitudinal disposition)

It is clear from the above that the research report centered on the awareness, perception and the attitudinal disposition of their subjects. But in all, Perrone and Vickers concluded that life after graduation can be fraught with stress, anxiety, shock, fear, uncertainty, loss, loneliness, depression and low self worth. These are feelings according to the researchers not routinely anticipated by undergraduates. In other words as graduating students (fresh graduates in Perrone & Vickers, 2003) never anticipated the challenges that confronted them after graduation, they became prone to stress, fear, anxiety shock, depression and many other related psychological consequences.

According to Atfield and Purcell (2012), research reports on employers' perceptions of labour supply have consistently shown that graduate recruiters generally have a positive impression of graduates overall abilities. They also noted some deficiencies in the capacities and competencies of many job seekers and recruits, particularly in the area of business awareness and capacity for self-management. Atfield and Purcell reported that similar research findings by Institute of Director (IOD) in 2007 noted that only about 25 percent graduate recruiters believe that fresh graduates were well prepared for employment. 40 percent thought they were unprepared. Their employability skill was particularly lacking in areas such as team-working, IT and STEM generally. They noted that various attempts have been made to establish which skills are most sought after by employers and the most useful for graduates. Consequently, Atfield and Purcell (2012) undertook an investigation into graduating students' perception of the skills they have to offer and the skills employers seek. Their findings revealed that the list of skills provided by the students, while corresponding largely with general employability skills needed for entry-level graduate employment, a slight discrepancy was noticeable between the students' self evaluation of their skills and employment readiness when compared with employers' reported opinions about the skills and employability of new graduates. For instance, students identified that:

- Strong communication skill (both written and spoken)
- Strong work ethics and
- Ability to work in a team

are vital employability skills they need. Interestingly, while students are of the belief that they possess these skills, employers judge them as most deficient in these same areas, the research finding revealed.

Atfield and Purcell (2012) also reported that students are aware that the possession of specific "soft-skills are important to discriminate among similarly qualified applicants. Students in vocational areas such as medicine, law and education believe they have more advantage when looking for work. The research revealed that over 80 percent of students about to graduate think they have the skills employers are seeking for in recruitment for the job of their choice. But only

about 1/3 of the students felt they will readily secure the kind of jobs they wanted when they graduate. While 2/3 of the sampled students are not so sure they will readily find the kind of jobs they like and for which they possess the required skills.

Concerning long term career plan about 2/3 of the survey respondents believe they have the ability to achieve their long-term goals. Many of the students have short-term strategies of seeking employment in unrelated areas to their career aspiration, and show readiness to accept whatever job offer they can find. Another short-term strategy is going straight to graduate school to delay entry into the labour market, the findings revealed.

The conclusion of Atfield and Purcell (2012) is that the employment challenge of fresh graduates will persist whether their perception of the wow is correct or not. To secure employment will depend on the demand for labour in the economic and occupational context they find themselves as they graduate. Going by the current global economic trend, this conclusion will remain hard to fault.

Using a sample of 1019 respondents in an investigation into the perception of students as regards the importance of employability skills as provided in business undergraduate programme, Jackson (2013) discovered that in the perception of students, the skills they consider as important align closely with that of the employers and other stakeholders concerned with graduate employability. Jackson however noted that despite widespread initiatives in employability skill provision in higher education, gaps between graduate workplace performance and employers' expectations continue to persist. As a result of this, some research findings tend to conclude that fresh graduates are grossly lacking in employability skills.

In an attempt to unearth the root cause of this persistent gap between employability skills of students and the expectation of employers, Grasgreen (2013) noted that students often feel qualified in their own eyes as they graduate from school. They see themselves as capable of doing well in the wow. But from the synopses of articles on employment readiness of new graduates, Grasgreen found that a number of research, findings, including the findings reported in "Bridge that Gap: Analyzing the students skills index", all identified varying degrees of the gap in question.

Analyzing the findings reported in “Bridge that Gap” Bailey (2013) revealed that just 39 percent of the 1000 employers surveyed see fresh graduates as prepared for the WOW. But 50 percent of the 2001 student respondents think they are ready. Over 70 percent of the students think they have the required ability to communicate well. But only 44 percent of hiring authorities believe fresh graduates could communicate with authority figures or clients effectively. Managers and hiring authorities identified “prioritizing”, (both resources and time) as extremely important basic skill in the WOW. They observed that this quality is grossly lacking among young graduate entrants into employment fields. This has lead many observers to conclude that students seem to focus more on developing less important skills and end up graduating “over confident and underprepared” as well as not being aware of how unprepared they are (Bailey, 2013).

Similarly, Bentley Preparedness Studies (2014) in an on-line survey involving 3,149 respondents and about 307 questions covering 11 different themes attempted to find out how stake holders define career preparedness and how this definition shape fresh graduates in readiness for the wow. The findings of the research amongst other things revealed that three skills (integrity, professionalism and positive attitude) which business decision makers and corporate hirers rate as most important were significantly rated lower in importance by students and fresh graduates.

Stakeholders across the survey identified lack of preparedness as a real problem and blame higher education system for not doing enough to prepare graduates for the wow. The study thus slightly disagreed with Jackson (2013) that the perception of students and that of employers on skills vital for employment closely align. But to some extent, agrees with Grasgreen (2013) and Bailey (2013) that fresh graduates believe they are equipped with relevant skills for the WOW as the preparedness studies reported that only 50 percent of the student respondents share this belief.

Paadi (2014) also investigated the perception of what employability skills are necessary to enhance Human Resource management graduates prospects in securing placement in the labour market. The investigation which focused on South Africa revealed that, generic skills (sometimes called “character skills” or “soft skills”) are most sought after in the work place. Paadi noted that there is no correlation between the skills needed in the labour market to contribute to the economy

of the country and those produced by Higher Education Institutions, resulting in shortage of skills in some areas such as the Engineering field in South Africa. The situation has consequently placed universities in the country under increasing pressure to produce employable graduates, Paadi added.

The divergent perception of students from that of the employers and the various degrees of gaps reported by different researchers are indicative of the fact that employability being a major factor in transition from school into the work is a complex phenomenon. The perception of the challenges entailed in the transition process into the work cannot be separated from the degree of awareness the graduating student has about the entire situation.

Awareness of Challenges of entering the work after graduation

Transition from school into the world of work is safer where one is aware of the numerous challenges involved (Dalmia, 2009; Hogan, 2014). Metaphorically equating this transition with a road, Dalmia said if one is made aware of the 'pot holes' on the world of work road map, the journey might be safer, noting that "the school roads" do not help students appreciate ahead of time the realities of the challenges involved in navigating one's way while in transition into the world of work after graduation.

In specific terms, Hogan (2014) noted that graduation from the university may be followed by some floundering period, a feeling of some form of insecurity and a looming sense of lack of focus, all accentuated by the difficulty in finding a job especially in a career field of one's choice and location. Hogan emphasized that if students are aware in advance of these challenges, they gain a head start to reduce the impact of possible disappointing experiences they may encounter as they navigate through this phase of life.

Unfortunately, the awareness of the challenges entailed in life after graduation is not known to most students, leading to their unpreparedness. Vital as securing an employment after graduation is, Rae (2009) revealed that after spending four years in crowded lecture halls in the university, frantically scribbling down notes and struggling to memorize phrases that could come up in the semester examination, there was no privilege of being told of what qualities or skills an employer would consider valuable. Students graduate under this scenario, noted Bailey (2013), not only

unprepared for the workplace but also grossly unaware of how unprepared they are. This lack of awareness could lead to serious disappointment when confronted with the realities of life in the transition process. Most undergraduates do not seem to be aware of the vital skills they need for employment. They tend to focus their preparation emphasis on skills that do not appeal to employers (Bailey, 2013; Grasgreen, 2013; Bentley Preparedness Studies, 2013). The current huge graduate unemployment figure world-over is generally believed to be sustained by this employability skill deficiency.

Concerned about the general deficiencies in employability skills of the products of virtually all the faculties in Malaysian universities, Othman, Musa, Mokhtar, Azizah, Latiff, Hussein, Mohammad and Kaur (2011) undertook an investigation into undergraduate awareness and readiness towards employability. The researchers believed their findings will help to bridge the gap between the University and the Malaysian industry as a whole. Othman et al (2011) reported that earlier researchers into causes of graduate unemployment in Malaysia had revealed that graduates were grossly deficient in spoken and written English leading to serious communication problems in this international business language. Othman et al then decided to find out amongst other things; the awareness level of undergraduates on how university courses equip them with employability skills.

Othman et al (2011) found that respondents were well aware that they need to search for job opportunities after graduation. The respondents especially graduates from faculty of Islamic studies have the mind set of securing jobs in government establishments. While many want to start their own business and pursue further education, most of the respondents were aware of the need for necessary preparations to enhance performance at interview sessions. The researchers reported that most of the respondents were aware of the need to have a plan 'B' if they find themselves unemployed over a period of time. Most respondents were also reported to have shown awareness of attributes of employability. They identified soft skills, communication skills and personality as topmost attributes and believe they have these attributes which they acquired not in formal class settings as materials taught, but were acquired through interactions in extra-curricular activities and through interpersonal interactions with other students. Respondents were reported to be highly

aware that weak proficiency in English is responsible for low rate of graduate employability. The researchers noted that these undergraduate respondents were also highly aware of the relevance and importance of English to their potential jobs in writing and reading documents.

Even though Othman et al (2011) reported high level of awareness in the employability areas in question, the awareness reported has not translated into any reduction in unemployment. A sincere response matched with appropriate action is expected to have generated some drastic reduction in unemployment. Oludayo and Ibrahim (2011) while investigating the prevalence of cyber crimes among undergraduates in Nigerian universities found out that many students involved in cyber crimes do not hide their membership of this criminal network. The on-line fraudsters said they are in it to prepare for their future since there is no prospect of securing employment after graduation. In other words they have the awareness of what obtains in the WOW but chose an illegitimate process to brace – up to it.

In Singapore, Jacky (2014) noted that fresh graduates like their counterparts in most parts of the world, especially in the west, have enormous challenges of transition from school into the world of work after graduation. Amongst many other findings, Jacky discovered from a survey of 390 students of tertiary institutions that the respondents were substantially aware of the numerous challenges associated with life after graduation. As many as 80 percent of the respondents chose to narrow their concern to specific areas namely; finance, career and passion, instead of bothering themselves over the universe of problems that characterize this peculiar phase of their life.

Personal responsibility for one's career path through school in preparation to launch into the world of work is generally out of the scope of awareness of most students (Rae, 2009; Imeli, 2013; Elmore, 2013). Callahan (2009) observed that it is when the graduate comes face- to- face with the reality of the WOW that he/she comes to the realization that “everything is up to me now”. This according to Callahan is when the individual starts reflecting on what was learned in school. Time management skills for example, acquired through efforts to complete and submit assignments on schedule. Group projects and similar group activities as foundation for team work. Complex and tough class works as basis for critical and analytic thinking required for problem solving, all readily

come into retrospection. Callahan noted further that while in school, it might be difficult to pinpoint exactly what one might need to take from most of the courses offered. But in essence the school curricula are designed to prepare individuals for some aspects of the future. What this implies is that the awareness fresh graduates have about the world of work come to them only when they are face-to-face with the realities in it. They hardly have any fore-knowledge about it while in school and as such most could not make any deliberate preparation

Attitudes of graduating students towards the challenges of securing employment after graduating

Attitude is defined as a predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person or situation. It influences an individual's choice of action and responses to challenges, incentives and rewards (Business Dictionary.com). Main (2004) defined attitude as a readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way. Main maintained that attitudes very often come in pairs. Citing Carl Jung, Main (2004) identified some attitude dualities as follows: conscious and *unconscious* attitudes, extroversion and introversion attitude types, rational and irrational attitudes (and their sub divisions), individual and social attitudes, abstract attitudes and many more. Awareness as operationally defined in this study refers to the knowledge of the existence of something or a situation. And perception as also operationally defined refers to the evaluation of something or a situation based on one's knowledge of that phenomenon. The sum of one's awareness and perception largely determines one's attitude towards the phenomenon in question.

Harrell (2005) acknowledged the American Heritage Dictionary definition of attitude. The dictionary according to Harrell, defines attitude as "a state of mind or feeling with regard to some matter". Harrell however submitted that "attitude is life", in that it is the foundation and support of everything we do, and a key element in the process of controlling our destiny and achieving mastery in one's personal and professional life. Harrell argued further that:

the attitude (one) carries around makes an incredible difference in (one's) life. It can be a powerful tool for positive action or a poison that cripples (one's) ability to fulfill (one's) potential(s). Attitude determines whether you are on the way or in the way (p.2).

Though most of Harrell's assertions seem philosophical in outlook, they could be very helpful as road-map nuggets for graduating students as they confront the challenges of transition into the work.

Cherry (2017) defined attitude as a reasoned tendency to evaluate things in a certain way. And such evaluations are often positive or negative. This may include evaluation of people, issues, objects or events. Where one has mixed feelings about a particular person or issue, one's attitude may not be positive or negative but uncertain Cherry added. There are several components of attitudes such as; emotional component – how you feel about the phenomenon, cognitive component – this is your thought and beliefs about the phenomenon, and behavioural component – how the attitude influences your behavior (Main,2004; Cherry,2017). Attitude can be explicit or implicit. Explicit attitudes are those that we are consciously aware of and which clearly influence our behaviour and beliefs. While implicit attitudes are unconscious, but still have an effect on our beliefs and behaviours (Cherry, 2017).

Under the current economic situation, it is not always easy to get jobs in the career field and location of one's choice. But graduating graduates with the right attitude and skill set will be able to keep themselves afloat until better jobs come along (Hurd, 2009). Sometimes what may be available as a possible alternative may be jobs that require much lower qualification than the university degree. But according to Johnson and Nicastro (2012) and Hogan (2014) most times attitude gets in the way of accepting that alternative. There is often a strong tendency for both the graduate and their parents to think that such acceptance amounts to going backwards.

Johnson and Nicastro (2012) submitted that serious minded applicants must discountenance what is referred to as underemployment and start with whatever is available. They cited examples of numerous individuals who reached the pinnacle of success in various endeavours starting from such rudimentary humble levels. To Johnson and Nicastro, it is sheer pride and bloated ego that makes fresh graduates or applicants in general to classify any job as underemployment. As Hogan (2014)

similarly submitted, there is no shame in taking up primary jobs as the young graduate navigates through this phase of life into what he or she really wants. From the onset, even before graduation, students need to develop strong enough awareness to sustain the consciousness that doing something is better than doing nothing. This mentality has the potentials of averting the frustration that often accompany endless search for “dream” jobs.

Elden (2009) identified dedication and consistency as very important traits students need to develop to succeed in making a stable and enjoyable work and adult life. Elden explained that students who decided to join extra-curricular activities at school are most likely to be more focused and committed when in the WOW. According to Paadi (2014), career resilience is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances even when such circumstances are disturbing or disruptive. It is one’s attitude that plays a more decisive part in one’s employability especially as a fresh graduate. Paadi explained further that career resilient people generally elicit such obvious characteristics as; teamwork ability, effective communication, adaptability to change, positive and flexible attitudes, continuous learning, self confidence, willingness to take reasonable risks and a commitment to personal excellence – All of which are also characteristics of employability.

Laguador (2013) emphasized that students must realize the importance and objective of having knowledge, skill and attitude which are significant for their future life and employment. Laguador noted that research findings reveal that employers consider that students need the necessary practical skills, tolerance for uncertainty, knowledge and real-world preparation. Beyond these, students need to develop before graduation the right attitude toward squaring up to all hardships and trials of university education in preparation for a more challenging wow.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Logotherapy. Logotherapy is preferred because it is integrative and capitalizes on the unique human capacity to discover and create meaning and value out of the raw and often painful life experiences (Wong, 2010). Graduating into a harsh economic reality has turned anticipated “sweet success” and comfortable life after

graduation into a mirage. And having to confront graduate unemployment situation that has no regard, not even for good academic credentials, are no doubt hopeless, painful and bitter life experiences. Logotherapy is preferred because of its general assumptions, views of human nature and its therapeutic technique which is not restricted. The therapeutic technique draws from various other models of psychotherapy such as cognitive and behavioural models, and focuses on psycho-educational approach to equip the client (the graduating students) with necessary tools to navigate the inevitable negatives in the struggle to secure gainful employment after graduation, and create a life worth living. Logotherapy believes that any negative situation that confronts a man is an opportunity to respond to the situation with a strong hope for a better future and overcome the situation. This “never say die” approach to life makes Logotherapy a suitable theoretical framework for this study especially when one considers the enormity of the challenges graduating students must wade through to find job placement.

Background to the Theory

Logotherapy / therapy through meaning is a form of existential psychotherapy developed by Viktor Frankl (1905 – 1997). Logotherapy is also known as third Viennese school of psychology. Frankl based the theory on the underlying need of humans to find meaning in life. Frankl’s many experiences in German concentration camps during the World War II had a great impact on his later thinking. Much suffering and meaninglessness led Frankl to wonder about meanings and their psychological importance, especially in relation to dealing with suffering in life. Normally, people have a collection of meanings that lend sense and purpose to their lives namely; health, approval of one’s peers, material wealth, good love-life, family relations, comfort, and happiness. But where none of these usual meanings are present, such as when in concentration camp, where suffering, poor health, brutality, deprivation, lack of material comfort is the daily experience, with imminent death looming, some people simply give up on life, while some others do not but continue fighting to live on (Bulka, 1997).

Basic assumptions of Logotherapy

Some basic assumptions, philosophy and concept of man according to Logotherapy are particularly germane here. For example:

- Suffering, like death is part of life. Without them, life cannot be completed.
- Hope in the future propels people forward.
- Life has meaning in all circumstances.
- If we cannot change a situation, we can at least choose our attitude toward the situation, and many more.

Logotherapy deals with the meaning of human existence and the human need for meaning as well as with specific therapeutic techniques for finding meaning in life. Frankl explained that lack of meaning in life results in existential vacuum. When life has no meaning, it becomes empty. The individual now lives in what Frankl calls an existential vacuum. It is a state of inertia, characterized by boredom and apathy. Where this condition persists, it progresses into existential frustration, resulting in efforts to fill the vacuum with drug, violence, aggression, criminality and other similar antisocial behaviours, thereby worsening the situation. In Frankl's view, the modern social situations help foster existential vacuum (Bulka, 1997).

The major aim of Logotherapy is for the individual to accept responsibility for himself. The techniques of therapy for achieving this goal are primarily, teaching, directing and guiding. Cases of high anxiety and phobic conditions are dealt with through a technique described by Frankl, 1960 cited in Uba (2009) as paradoxical intention to help in changing one's orientation to the situation. Similarly, Logotherapy applies dereflection to improve the ability to ignore unpleasant, tough and seemingly bitter situations by focusing on the positive aspect of the situation to derive meaning and see reasons to have a change of attitude and to forge ahead. This could be particularly helpful to graduating students as they confront the challenges of unemployment.

Logotherapy is applicable and suitable in both individual and group counselling settings. Knowledge of the basic principles of the theory could be very useful. It is imparted to the group members in brief lectures usually at the opening of the therapeutic sessions. Logotherapy makes active use of bibliotherapy (books on Logotherapy). An individual group member is expected to read these books. Reading them in a way provides therapy.

Handling graduating students' challenges of youth unemployment using Logotherapy

Unemployment and its harsh realities which most graduating students contend with in their effort to find gainful employment are situations they (the graduating students) cannot do anything to change. A central point in Logotherapy is that if one cannot change a situation or circumstance, one can still choose one's attitude towards the condition or situation. A person must find meaning and purpose in life to forge on. Life in-itself, consists of these series of experiences, situations and circumstances. As Frankl puts it, the best way to find meaning, especially in situations one cannot change is to change one's attitude. It is the meaning discovered that motivates towards a productive life. The meaning of life is not found by questioning the purpose of existence when one encounters suffering, hardship and other adverse situations. Meaning arises from the responses that the individual makes to the situations (Frankl, 1962)

Logotherapy sees man as consisting of body, mind and spirit. While the body and the mind (psyche) can be affected by aborted dreams, hardships, suffering, sickness and other adverse situations, the spirit (the Noetic core) remains unassailable (Bulka, 1997). It cannot be sick, it remains free. This is what gives man the ability to maintain a kind of disposition that makes him less vulnerable to the realities of harsh and hostile situations. Thus one is not changed by these obvious realities instead one is able as a free agent, to choose how to behave and how to react to these circumstances (Bulka, 1997; Uba, 2009). This knowledge is expected to be comforting to graduating students as they combat unemployment into the work world. They do not have to resort to crime or other forms of anti-social activities as strategies for coping with their present harsh economic circumstances.

Generally, Logotherapy is educative, this provides for the counsellor to educate undergraduates especially those about to graduate that human beings determine their own existence, not the environment or the circumstances around them. Frankl (1962) pointed out that man lives within the laws of his culture but his life is not bound by them. They do not control or determine his life. Rather, "self" transcends them. In other words, entering into the work world, the life of the graduating student is not determined by; unemployment, uncertainties, inability to figure out what

next to do in this new phase of life, and other prevailing endemic challenges. As a person, he has the capacity to maintain a sense of dignity and personal freedom, and in the face of it all the individual, through self discipline, determination and resilience is able to rise above the situation to discern the 'meaning' of the moment, and goes on to make responsible decisions within the available area of freedom. One's choice in this process will be based on one's values and the guidance received from the voice of one's conscience (Frankl, 1962). With reference to the power of the inner self, Simmonds (1998 -2004); and Dubois (2004) noted that people often look for external signs before embarking on a new beginning, but one's inner attitudes toward life, one's renewed self-knowledge and one's intuition are really the hallmarks of one's responses to the issues of life one is confronting. By relying on ones inner voice to reveal where to go in life, one is likely to have more motivation and meaning to life, than if one depend on traditional expectations provided to us by others which translates into nothing but conformism.

Other ways of finding meaning in life in Logotherapy are through Creativity, and Experiencing. Creativity is realized in creative and productive activity in any kind of work. This is another argument in favour of doing whatever legitimate thing one's hand finds to do. There is no need waiting endlessly for graduate level job and pay. Creative values can be expressed in all areas of life. Meaning is given to life of the individual through the act of creating values expressible in any given area of life. It could be through the creation of a tangible product or an idea, or by serving others. While creativity involves giving to the world, Experiencing involves receiving from the world by surrendering one's self to the beauty in the world of nature or Art. It is very possible according to Logotherapy to experience full meaning in life by appreciating the beauty of nature. When the awareness of graduating students are drawn to these levels of finding meaning in life, most of them are likely to begin to look inward and in the process discover the latent gifts of nature in them. Every human-being is believed to be gifted in one way or the other. Again the inner voice will play a useful role in identifying your gift.

Also, ‘experiencing’ nature could be highly rewarding in finding meaning to life. It enhances meditation, reflection, deep appreciation and many more. This value in individuals enhances the appreciation of aesthetic values in nature, humans and animals. When young graduates are exposed to this value and they fully imbibe it, they will not only see meaning in life and existence, they will appreciate the work of nature around them. This frame of mind is capable of generating affection for nature creative impressions, such as lawns, parks and gardens. Human lives will be held sacred, culminating in a drastic reduction in wanton killings, destruction of property, and reduction in the rate of violence being experienced throughout the country.

The World Health Organization 2002 report indicates that some 199,000 youth worldwide were murdered in year 2000. In other words, about 565 children and young people aged 10-29 years old died each day of that year (Shaw, 2007). This underscores the reason why aggressive awareness campaign is needed, targeting not only graduating students in transition to the world of work, but also the youths in general. The report cited above is the product of the effort of the world body at putting a check to this carnage. Only those who attach no meaning to life destroy lives for whatever reason. Such persons are most likely in a state of existential frustration.

Logotherapy holds that psychotherapy is about achieving an orientation toward the future, especially towards meaning to be fulfilled in the future. This makes it quite suitable for application at the undergraduate level even though the focus is helping graduating students to make smooth transition into life after school tagged the world of work. If the counselling programme commences from the year of entry into the university, it will afford the student enough time on the issues involved and the challenges of job placement before he/she graduates. The extended period of counselling on the phenomenon will enhance the effective coverage of the numerous principles and assumptions that underlie logotherapy.

Summary of the reviewed literature

Efforts have been made in this chapter to review the accessible relevant literature to this study. The concept of the world of work (wow) is a universal phenomenon also variously referred to as the “work world” or the “real world”. Work refers to any legitimate engagement to earn a

living either through self employment or paid job. But the global economic downturn has led to massive youth unemployment, especially in Nigeria thereby aggravating the challenges of youth unemployment in Nigeria to a seemingly uncontrollable level. Securing job placement now becomes a serious challenge to graduating students. Work is as old as mankind, the development of bipedal locomotion, and manual dexterity greatly enhanced productivity which in turn led to the development of more occupations, from hunting to fabrication of hunting tools, animal rearing, farming and many more. Trade and language development followed as well as property ownership and social class structure (Magdoff, 2008).

The world of work has continually been changing in response to technological development and advancement. Knowledge is identified by most literature as the most important factor for economic development with the capacity to enhance productivity. Knowledge constitutes the foundation for a country's growth and advancement (Saint, Hartnet & Strassner, 2003). In pursuance of this goal, universities were expanded to produce graduates for high level manpower capable of driving this advancement agenda. Subsequent upon this expansion, large number of graduates are turned out annually outstripping the available graduate level jobs. The situation is compounded with the much desired technological innovations. This product of knowledge began automating most jobs that were hitherto manually done.

The universities did not change their pedagogical approach. Most literature noted that the universities continued to produce more and more graduates yearly who now have difficulties in securing gainful employment mainly because the training received in school is out of tune with what is needed in the current labour market. Graduating from the university and entering into the work world is identified in the reviewed literature as an uphill task of a global dimension. Graduate unemployment and employability have become a serious concern to all - the government, the universities, the students and the society in general (Ewumi, 2014). Nigeria is particularly hard hit by this phenomenon and most of the available local literature reviewed focused on the dangers and socio-economic implications of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. Local literature on students' awareness and perception of the challenges of youth unemployment after graduation are still scanty. Filling this gap was the focus of this study.

Ajiboye, Oyeboji and Awoniyi (2013) gauged the perception of university lecturers on the influence of course of study on the employability of graduating students in Nigeria. Effiong and Agboola (2014) measured the employability of graduates of Nigerian universities. Like most other literature, the graduates were adjudged unsuitable for job placement by employers. Some other literature noted that what is taught in school (the universities) is at variance with what the employers require. Lack of synergy between the universities and the industrial sector was also identified by most literature as the cause of turning out unemployable graduates. These research efforts focused on the phenomenon under investigation from the standpoint of lecturers, employers and labour market observers/ analysts. Students and particularly graduating students are yet to attract similar attention despite the fact that the phenomenon being investigated centre round them.

On the perception and awareness of graduating students about the challenges of securing employment after graduating, the literature reviewed included; Perrone and Vickers (2003), Tomlinson (2008), Othman, et al (2011), Tomlinson (2012), Jackson (2013) Atfield and Purcell (2013), Grasgreen (2013), Bailey (2013), Brentley Preparedness Studies (2014) and Paadi (2014) amongst others. Most respondents in the reviewed studies tended not to perceive the enormity of the challenges until they were confronted with them. It is worthy of note that despite the spread of these studies, from America to Europe, Asia, Australia and to South Africa, the findings were similar in that deficiency in the employability skills of graduating students was identified as the major reason for graduate unemployment. This perhaps tends to give credence to the presumption that the university system is out of pace with technological advancement in preparation of students for the current graduate labour market. But paradoxically, technological breakthrough and advancements are products of universities and their affiliate institutions.

Most of the literature reviewed reported lack of awareness by students of the true state of the graduate labour market. Many students graduate from school with a perception of the graduate labour market and the employment world that left them confused and disappointed. Hanapi and Nordin (2013) reported some degree of awareness amongst students in Malaysia, but this was not matched with appropriate action plan and so the graduating students ended up like those who lacked

awareness of the situation. Oludayo and Ibrahim (2011) reported that some undergraduate cyber criminals in Nigeria proudly own up that they were in the anti-social venture as a way of preparing for their future since securing employment after graduation is virtually a mirage.

Attitudinal disposition was identified as one of the major components of employability. It was the consensus of most of the reviewed literature that the right attitude by graduating students toward the prevailing graduate labour market and the world of work in general is what can facilitate job placement. Viktor Frankl (1905-1997) logotherapy was the adopted theoretical framework. The knowledge of the basic assumptions and principles of logotherapy, that though graduate unemployment and other harsh realities may persist, one's future cannot be determined by them. The spirit of man gives man the ability to maintain a kind of stance that makes him less vulnerable to such hostile realities. Consequently, through logotherapy the graduating student can rise above the hard times with hope in a brighter future.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the method of investigation that was adopted for this study. It describes the research design, sampling procedure, instrumentation, psychometric properties of the instrument, procedure for data collection, procedure for scoring the instrument and the method of data analysis.

Research Design

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. A survey research is defined as the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to question (Schutt, 2015). It is a method acknowledged to be very efficient where systematic collection of data from a broad spectrum of individuals in numerous and diverse settings are involved. Schutt (2011) noted that survey research method is highly dependable for generalization of the attributes of the population from where the sample was drawn as. Cohen, Manoin and Morison (2007) noted that the larger a sample size, the greater its representativeness. That is, dependable generalization is often the function of sample size and its representativeness. Descriptive survey method is particularly preferred because the method is very suitable for the researcher to obtain the actual measurement of the variable under investigation free from the researcher's own biases (Schutt, 2011). In addition, it guarantees anonymity and thus encourages respondents to make candid responses.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

It is a common knowledge that accurate figure of graduating students across the universities in the country is often difficult to access. However, relying on data generated by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Okonjo-Iweala (2014) revealed that universities and similar tertiary institutions in Nigeria turn out 1.8 million graduates every year. This study thus took 1.8 million as the number of university final year students as at 2015/2016 academic year. For an insight into how reliable this adopted figure could be, the researcher harvested from the website of each of the twelve sampled universities the number of students that were graduated in 2015/2016 session. The

exercise yielded 88,040 first degree graduates. The details were presented in appendix ----- . The exercise also revealed that not all universities in Nigeria hold convocation yearly.

The population of this study comprised all graduating students of universities in Nigeria. The target population consisted of graduating students drawn from public universities in Nigeria. There were 140 universities in the country as at May 2015. Between that time and now, the establishment of a few more universities had been approved, bringing the current total number of universities in Nigeria to 154. The distribution is as shown below.

| | | |
|----------------------|----------|------------|
| Federal Universities | - | 40 |
| State Universities | - | 40 |
| Private Universities | - | 60 |
| Total | - | 140 |

The current six geo-political structure of Nigeria came into effect following its adoption by the 1995 constitutional conference. Though not yet adopted into the constitution, allocation of resources, economic, political and educational resources are frequently shared using the zonal structure (Information guide in Nigeria, 2015). Many research efforts have of recent also tended to cover the country using this geopolitical zonal approach in their sampling procedure. Thus this study adopted the six geopolitical zone structure of the country as the sampling frame from where the population sample was drawn.

Table 2: Location and spread of public universities across the six geo – political zones in Nigeria as at February, 2016

| GEO – POLITICAL ZONES | STATES | FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES | STATE UNIVERSITIES |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| North East | Bauchi | 1 | 1 |
| | Gombe | 1 | 1 |
| | Taraba | 1 | 1 |
| | Yobe | 1 | 1 |
| | Borno | 1 | Nil |
| | Adamawa | 1 | 1 |
| North Central | Kwara | 1 | 1 |
| | Kogi | 1 | 1 |
| | Niger | 1 | 1 |
| | Benue | 1 | 1 |
| | Plateau | 1 | 1 |
| | Nasarawa | 1 | 1 |
| North West | Kaduna | 1 | 1 |
| | Kebbi | 1 | 1 |
| | Kano | 1 | 2 |
| | Katsina | 1 | 1 |
| | Sokoto | 1 | 1 |
| | Jigawa | 1 | 2 |
| | Zamfara | 1 | Nil |
| South East | Abia | 1 | 1 |
| | Anambra | 1 | 1 |
| | Enugu | 1 | 1 |
| | Ebonyi | 1 | 1 |
| | Imo | 1 | 1 |
| South South | Rivers | 2 | 2 |
| | Cross River | 1 | 1 |
| | Akwa Ibom | 1 | 1 |
| | Bayelsa | 1 | 1 |
| | Edo | 1 | 1 |
| | Delta | 1 | 1 |
| South West | Osun | 1 | 1 |
| | Oyo | 1 | 2 |
| | Ogun | 1 | 2 |
| | Ondo | 1 | 2 |
| | Ekiti | 1 | 1 |
| | Lagos | 1 | 1 |
| F. C. T. | | 1 | Nil |
| TOTAL | | 40 | 40 |

Adopted from: Fapounda, 2015 Retrieved from: <http://www.myscholgist.com.ng/ng/list-of-accredited-universities-in...>

Table 2 shows the geopolitical zones in Nigeria, the component states, and the distribution of universities across the zones without the private universities. Both the federal and state universities were considered in this study as public universities. The target population of this study comprised of graduating students drawn from the public universities randomly selected from each of the six zones in the country. Private universities did not form part of the sampling frame. Most of them are owned by religious bodies and are relatively new. A good number of them have deliberate agenda of building into their students a view and approach to life different in many regards from

those cultivated by the products of public institutions. Such views of life are often in consonance with the philosophy of life of their proprietors/founders. Moreover, admission of candidates into private universities in Nigeria constitutes only 1.5 percent of the total number of applicants (Clark & Asukuya, 2013)

A multistage sampling procedure was used to draw respondents for the study. Multistage sampling is a sampling plan where the sampling is carried out in stages using smaller and more targeted groupings for the purpose of ensuring the inclusiveness of the survey (Kaplan, 2014). It is a procedure in which several sampling techniques are used at different levels of sample selection. This allows the multistage technique to generate more representative samples than a single sampling technique.

In Stage One, Dip-hat sampling technique was used to select two public universities from each geo-political zone. The process entailed writing the names of the universities in a zone on different small pieces of paper, carefully squeezed and thoroughly mixed together in a container. Then after, the researcher picked two pieces of the paper at random and whichever university names appear on the paper was sampled. The procedure was repeated for all the six geo-political zones to select a total of 12 universities. This selection technique was preferred because it gave each public university in the zone equal opportunity to be selected. Through this procedure the following universities were selected:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| North East- | Abubakar Tafawa University, Bauchi. Gombe state university, Gombe. |
| North Central- | University of Ilorin, Ilorin. Nasarawa state university, Keffi. |
| North West- | Ahmadu Bello university, Zaria. Kaduna state university, Kaduna. |
| South East- | University of Nigeria, Nsuka. Enugu state university, Agbani. |
| South South- | University of Benin, Benin City. Ambrose Ali university, Ekpoma. |
| South West- | University of Ibadan, Ibadan. Adekunle Ajasin university, Akungba. |

In stage two, purposive sampling was used to select five faculties each from the twelve universities selected in stage one. On the average, most universities have nine (9) faculties. JAMB (2016) brochure listed them as faculties of:

- Administration
- Agriculture
- Arts
- Education
- Engineering
- Law
- Medicals/Pharmacy
- Sciences
- Social science

Some universities such as Gombe state university and Federal university Dutse, have Arts and Social Science as one faculty. Kaduna state university has social and Management Science as a faculty. Most first and some second generation universities in Nigeria including university of Ilorin have faculty of social Sciences standing alone, while Edo university, Iyamho,(established 2016) operates Arts, Management and Social Sciences as a faculty. Also, some universities have faculties of Physical Science, Natural Science, Environmental Science, Life Science, Biosciences and many more. These were subsumed as faculty of science in this study. These variations informed the preference for purposive sampling method at this stage. Thus the sampled faculties were restricted to faculties listed in JAMB brochure (2016). Of the strictly vocational faculties in the brochure, made up of Agriculture, Engineering, Law and Medicine, faculty of Agriculture was purposively selected using first letter alphabetical seniority. Through purposive sampling procedure the 5 faculties selected were:

- Agriculture
- Arts
- Education
- Management Science
- Science

In stage three, stratified random sampling was used. The target population was stratified on the basis of gender, age and academic programme of study.. Guided by the Research Advisors (2006), the researcher used a sample size of 1,800 respondents. The Advisor recommends a minimum of 1,536 sample size where the population size of the research is about two million. The 2 million population size of graduating students was derived by rounding up the 1.8 million figure adopted as the number of students graduating from the universities each year in Nigeria. With the use of simple random sampling technique, 30 respondents were drawn from each faculty, giving a total of 150 from each university. In all (150 x 12) 1,800 respondents were projected and the same number of questionnaires shared. However, 1,582 correctly filled questionnaires were recovered and analyzed. This number was quite adequate for the study as it was slightly above what the Research Advisors (2006) recommends.

Instrumentation

The value of any instrument depends on how trustworthy the instrument is in delivering the desired outcome. An instrument, in research (often called evaluation instrument) refers to the tools employed in gathering information about specific aspects of human behaviours and functioning (Olasehinde, 1995). It is a device for measuring a given phenomenon. Such instrument could be; a questionnaire, inventory, an interview, a set of guidelines for observation and many more (Ajiboye, 2013). Instrumentation therefore is the process of developing measuring devices and methods appropriate in respect of a given evaluation or research endeavour Ajiboye added.

For the purpose of this study a self developed instrument titled “Graduating students’ Awareness Perception and Attitude toward the Challenges of Youth Unemployment” (GAPACYU) Questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was divided into sections A, B, C, D and E. Section A contains socio-demographic items such as age, gender and faculty of study. Section B contained 20 items. Each item stated what was considered as a typical challenge of securing employment after graduation. Respondents were expected to indicate their level of agreement with each of the statements. A four point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) was used for the rating. Section C consisted 20 items which elicited information on the awareness level of the

respondents on the challenges of youth unemployment. It was rated using a four-point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). Section D also contained 20 items designed to find out the perception of respondents concerning challenges associated with youth unemployment after graduation. This also was rated using a four point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree and Strong disagree).

Section E likewise, contained 20 items designed to measure the attitudinal dispositions of the respondents toward the challenges of youth unemployment after graduation from school. The item selection for this section covered cognitive emotional and behavioural components of attitude. Emotional component refers to how the situation makes the respondent feel or what he/she feels about the given situation. The cognitive component deals with the respondents' thought and beliefs about the situation in question while the behavioural component deals with how the situation influences the respondents' behaviour (Cherry, 2014). The items selected were also rated using a four point scale; strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Pilot Testing

A pilot study is a preliminary study intended to test the feasibility of the larger study (Thabane, 2004). It is a study that could be called a run through or a dress rehearsal of the actual study (Nordine, 2014). Pilot study is often a good means of detecting equipment problem before undertaking the main research. It familiarizes the research team with the procedures and helps to see if the design has any potential flaws. Tappin (2014) noted that while Pilot study could help to refine methodologies, there is however, no general consensus on the size of a pilot study in relation to the main study.

The instrument for this study was pilot tested using 100 respondents from the research population in University of Abuja. The University was not part of the sample used in the main study. The result of the pilot testing indicated that the instrument was appropriate for use.

Psychometric Properties of the Instrument

Validity

Validity is the extent to which an instrument can be relied upon to measure accurately what it purports to measure. The validity of the instrument for this study was established by giving copies to five test experts in the Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin for vetting. The corrections and suggestions offered by these experts were effected. Thus the face and content validity of the instrument were established.

Reliability

Reliability of a measuring instrument is the extent to which the instrument is free from random errors, thus measuring (with consistent outcome) over time, the variables of interest (Stangor, 2004). Trochim (2006) defined reliability as the consistency, accuracy, stability and trustworthiness of a measuring instrument. In other words it is the ability of a measuring instrument to yield same result when used again on the same set of respondents on a different occasion but under the same condition (Ajiboye, 2013). To determine the reliability of the instrument for this study, forty (40) graduating students drawn from University of Abuja were given the questionnaire in a test retest at the interval of four weeks. The two results obtained were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation formula. A correlation co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained, showing that the instrument was reliable.

Procedure for Test Administration

It is a common knowledge that however adequate an instrument may be, if its administration is defective, it may not produce an accurate or dependable result. To avoid this pit fall, the questionnaire for this study was personally administered by the researcher with the assistance of three research assistants that were thoroughly groomed for the exercise. In company of these research assistants, the researcher went first to Nasarawa state university, Keffi. There, the questionnaire was administered faculty by faculty within the sample. Before this, clearance was

obtained from the Dean, Students affairs division of the institution following the presentation of the researcher's letter of introduction signed by the Head of Department of Counsellor Education, university of Ilorin, Ilorin.

At each faculty, Snowball sampling procedure evolved. One or two willing respondents identified, helped to mobilize their colleagues to fill the questionnaire. Most of the respondents were very enthusiastic about the questionnaire, especially the section B which catalogued the challenges of youth unemployment. In Nasarawa state university, Keffi, Abubakar Tafabalewa university Bauchi and University of Nigeria Nsuka, some respondents requested for personal copies of this section of the questionnaire.

The administration of the questionnaire in Keffi, further prepared the research assistants the more for the exercise. One of them went to the North - East and the other North - West geopolitical zones. The researcher himself handled South - East, South - South and the remaining half of North - Central zones. A third research assistant took charge of the South - West geopolitical zone. In all, of the 1,800 copies of questionnaire administered, those not properly filled and those not returned were 218.

Procedure for Scoring the Instrument

In scoring the test items, the four-point Likert type rating scale was adopted.

| | | |
|-------------------|---|----------|
| Strongly Agree | - | 4 points |
| Agree | - | 3 points |
| Disagree | - | 2 points |
| Strongly Disagree | - | 1 point |

The method was adopted because it afforded the respondents the opportunity to respond candidly to each item in the questionnaire since the range of options available to choose from was wide enough to accommodate whatever level of impressions they had about the phenomenon under investigation. The mean score of this four- point scale was 2.50 which marked the decision point. A mean score of 2.50 and above on the awareness subscale indicated high awareness level of the respondents about the phenomenon being investigated. A corresponding score on the perception subscale indicated that the perception of the respondents was negative. Similarly a mean score above the decision point

on the attitude subscale inferred that the attitude of the respondents toward the phenomenon under investigation was negative. This scoring applied only to sections B, C, D and E of the instrument. Frequency counts and percentages were used for the demographic data in Section A.

Method of Data Analysis

For the demographic data, descriptive statistics involving frequency counts and percentages were used. For hypotheses testing, inferential statistical techniques were used. For hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 involving two moderating variables each, t- test was used. While Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for testing hypotheses 7, 8 and 9 on account of the multiple groups (four courses of study) involved. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The main purpose of this study was to determine the awareness, perception and attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities towards the challenges of youth unemployment after graduating. The study also sought to investigate the influence of gender, age and faculty of study on the awareness, perception and attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities towards the challenges of youth unemployment. The data collected from one thousand five hundred and eighty two (1582) respondents were analyzed. Four main research questions were raised and nine null hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 alpha. This chapter presents the results obtained from the analyzed data and the interpretation of the findings of the study.

The results in this chapter are presented in three sections: the first section provides the descriptive data analyses in a frequency chart; the second section contains the inferential statistics where the research questions were answered, and the results of the nine (9) null hypotheses tested were presented. The third section provides a summary of the findings.

Demographic Data

The distribution of respondents by the moderating variables of the study (gender, age, and faculty of study) are presented in this section.

Figure 4: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

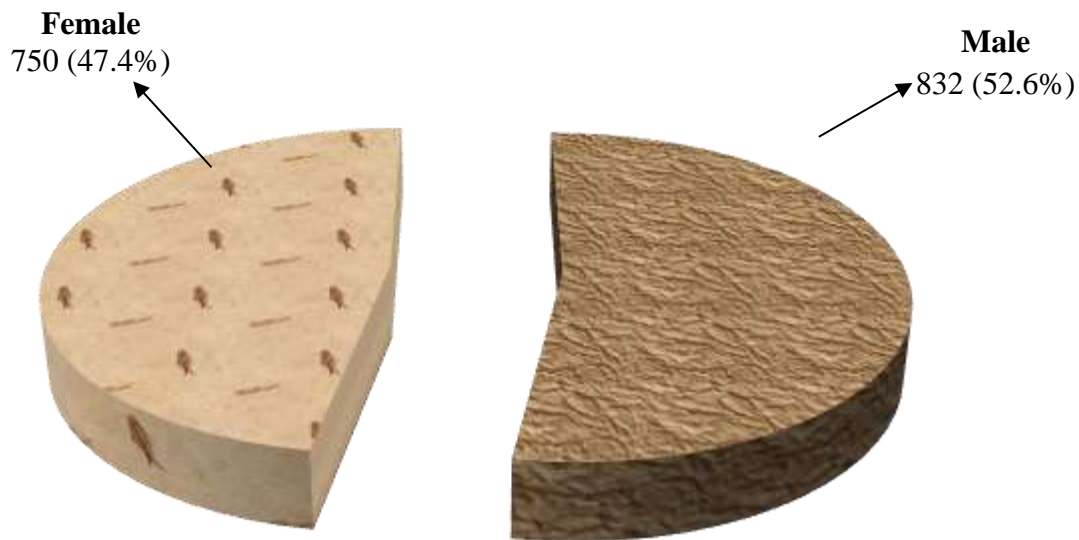


Figure 4 showed that male respondents in the study were 832 (52.6%) while female respondents were 750 (47.4%). This implies that more males participated in the study than females.

Figure 5: Distribution of Respondents by Age



Figure 5 shows that respondents who are 24 years and below in the study were 879 (55.6%) while respondents who are 25 years and above were 703 (44.4%). This implies that there were more respondents who were 24 years and below in the study. Most graduating students in Nigeria cluster around age 20-29. This range of 10 years is divided into two groups (5years each) so as to generate enough sample from each group.

Figure 6: Distribution of Respondents by Faculty of study

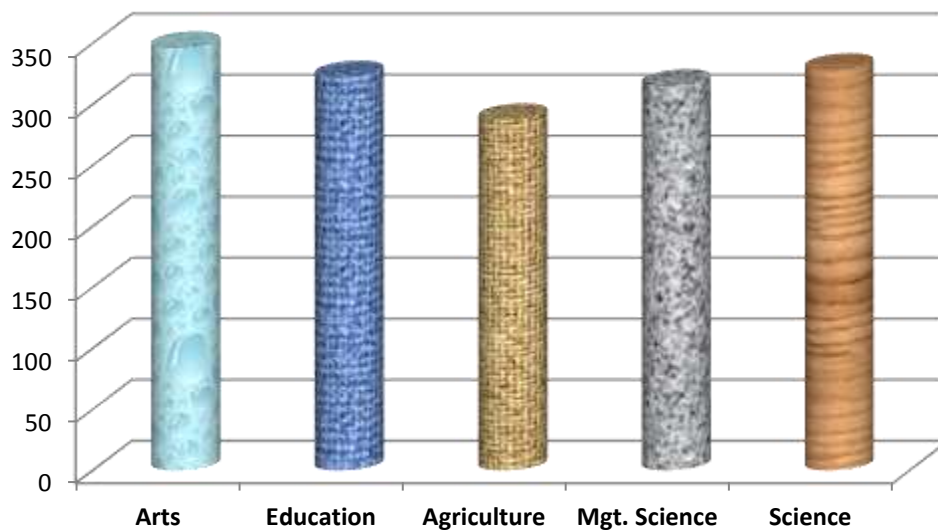


Figure 6 shows that 346 (21.9%) of the respondents were from the Faculty of Arts, 322 (20.4%) of the respondents were from the Faculty of Education, 284 (17.9%) of the respondents were from the Faculty of Agriculture, 302 (19%) of the respondents were from the Faculty of Management Science, while 328 (20.8%) of the respondents were from the Faculty of Science. This indicates that there were more respondents from the Faculty of Arts that participated in the study. The faculty recorded sixty two (62) more respondents than the faculty of Agriculture which had the lowest number of respondents, indicating that the spread of respondents by faculty was fairly close.

Figure 7: Distributio0n of respondents by gender across faculties

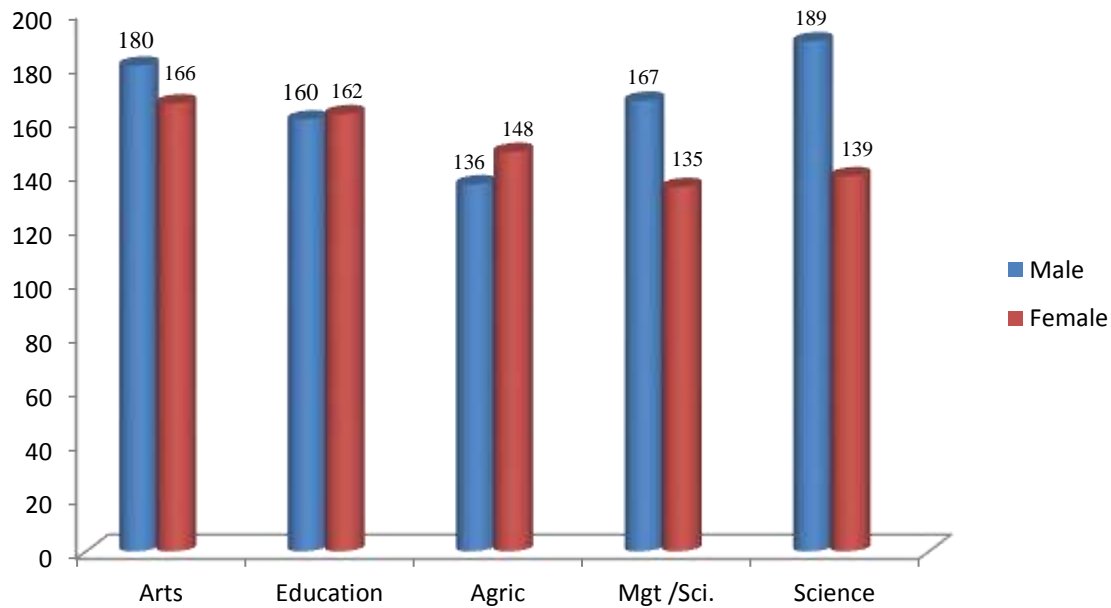


Figure 7 showed that faculties of Science, Management Science and Arts had 50, 32 and 14 respectively more males than female respondents. While faculties of Agriculture and Education recorded 12 and 2 respectively more female than male respondents. The general picture of the distribution by gender across the faculties seems even suggesting that the five courses in this study have almost the same attraction to both male and female students.

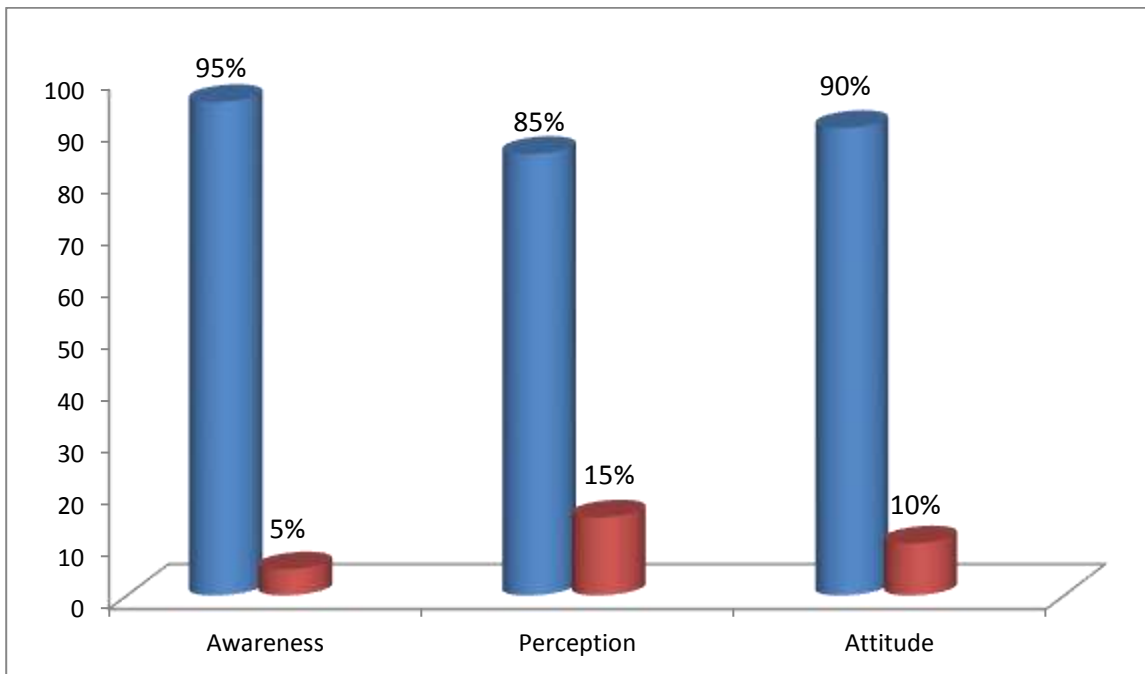
Research Question 1: *What are the challenges of graduating students of Nigerian universities about youth unemployment?*

Table 3: Mean Scores, frequency counts and Rank Order of the challenges of Graduating students in Nigeria about the youth unemployment

| Item No | Statement of items | Mean | Agree | Disagree | Rank |
|---------|--|------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| 17 | Unsuccessful efforts to gain employment do frustrate graduating students | 2.96 | 1156 (73.1%) | 426 (27%) | 1 st |
| 1 | The global economic recession has drastically reduced employment opportunities for graduating students especially in Nigeria | 2.95 | 1135 (71.7%) | 447 (28.3%) | 2 nd |
| 6 | Employers tend to prefer applicants with years of experience which the graduating students lack | 2.91 | 1163 (73.5%) | 419 (26.5%) | 3 rd |
| 20 | Uncertainty in the labour market reduces self worth of graduating students | 2.91 | 1125 (71.1%) | 457 (28.9%) | 4 th |
| 2 | It is very tough securing job placement immediately after graduation | 2.91 | 1175 (74.3%) | 407 (25.7%) | 5 th |
| 18 | Graduating students become vulnerable to criminality because of unemployment | 2.86 | 1108 (70%) | 474 (30%) | 6 th |
| 15 | Many graduating students have the challenge of coming to terms with their career plan and what they encounter in the process of trying to secure employment. | 2.83 | 1113 (70.4%) | 469 (29.6%) | 7 th |
| 16 | Graduating students often face confusion on how to match their career plans with different jobs | 2.81 | 1163 (73.5%) | 419 (26.5%) | 8 th |
| 14 | Many graduating students with entrepreneurship ideas lacked the corresponding idea of how to access needed fund | 2.80 | 1120 (70.8%) | 462 (29.2%) | 9 th |
| 12 | Graduating students seeking job placement could be forced to accept jobs below their qualification and pay level | 2.79 | 1121 (70.7%) | 461 (29.3%) | 10 th |
| 10 | Sentiment limits job opportunities for graduating students | 2.79 | 1170 (74%) | 412 (26%) | 11 th |
| 9 | There is not enough information on job vacancies for graduating students | 2.78 | 1078 (68.1%) | 504 (31.8%) | 12 th |
| 13 | Many graduating students do not have entrepreneurship orientation suitable for self employment | 2.78 | 1052 (66.5%) | 530 (33.5%) | 12 th |
| 3 | Securing job placement brings graduating students into unhealthy competition | 2.75 | 1067 (67.4%) | 515 (32.6%) | 14 th |
| 5 | Employers tend to rate graduating students as incompetent | 2.70 | 1071 (67.7%) | 511 (32.3%) | 15 th |
| 8 | There is a prevalence of secretive recruitment exercise which puts many graduating students at a disadvantage | 2.70 | 1036 (65.5%) | 546 (34.6%) | 15 th |
| 11 | Graduating students seeking job placement may face the challenge of having to work with difficult co-workers | 2.69 | 962 (60.8%) | 620 (39.2%) | 17 th |
| 7 | Screening for job placement is often too rigorous for graduating students | 2.63 | 993 (62.8%) | 589 (37.2%) | 18 th |
| 19 | Some graduating students suffer stigmatization because of unemployment | 2.58 | 1016 (64.3%) | 566 (35.7%) | 19 th |
| 4 | It is almost impossible in the present graduate labour market to secure jobs that commensurate with graduate level dues | 2.56 | 883 (55.8%) | 699 (44.2%) | 20 th |

Table 3 shows the mean scores and rank order of respondents' challenges of youth unemployment. Items 17, 1, 6, 20 and 2 ranked 1st to 5th respectively and they state that "Unsuccessful efforts to gain employment do frustrate graduating students; The global economic recession has drastically reduced employment opportunities for graduating students especially in Nigeria; Employers tend to prefer applicants with years of experience which the graduating students lacked; Uncertainty in the labour market reduced self worth of graduating students; and It is very tough securing job placement immediately after graduation". All the twenty items representing 100 percent have mean scores that were higher than 2.50 (cut-off point) hence, it can be inferred that the graduating students attest to all the items as being the challenges graduating students in Nigeria encounter in their efforts to secure viable employment.

Figure: 8 Research questions 2, 3 and 4



Research Question 2: *What is the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment.*

Table 4: Mean Scores and Rank Order on the Awareness Level of Graduating students in Nigeria on the challenges of youth unemployment

| Item No | As a graduating student, I am aware that: | Mean | Rank |
|---------|---|------|------------------|
| 14 | it is very competitive looking for job | 3.43 | 1 st |
| 7 | there are several hundreds of my graduate predecessors still looking for employment | 3.33 | 2 nd |
| 12 | many employers prefer experienced applicants | 3.30 | 3 rd |
| 18 | regardless of my employment status the society expects a standard from me | 3.29 | 4 th |
| 4 | it is tough finding a job | 3.27 | 5 th |
| 6 | one would have to search for job before he/she gets it | 3.27 | 6 th |
| 5 | job search after graduation takes a lot of time | 3.13 | 7 th |
| 11 | I may have to start my own business after graduation | 3.12 | 8 th |
| 8 | it is possible not to secure a job several years after graduation | 3.05 | 9 th |
| 19 | it is difficult to learn about the challenges of youth unemployment when in school | 3.00 | 10 th |
| 2 | Securing employment is full of hurdles | 2.99 | 11 th |
| 17 | whether I fail or succeed in securing employment is my personal responsibility | 2.99 | 12 th |
| 1 | the labour market is an adult world | 2.98 | 13 th |
| 10 | my academic skills may not be a guarantee for getting many job opportunities | 2.94 | 14 th |
| 16 | Securing employment is an individual race | 2.91 | 15 th |
| 9 | brilliant academic performance may not facilitate immediate job placement | 2.86 | 16 th |
| 20 | I will learn about the challenges of youth unemployment better when I am confronted with them | 2.84 | 17 th |
| 3 | in the process of securing employment, you think for yourself | 2.79 | 18 th |
| 15 | one's certificate is not a guarantee for a high profile job placement | 2.66 | 19 th |
| 13 | University education is a guarantee for job placement | 2.32 | 20 th |

Table 4 shows the mean scores and rank order of respondents' awareness level of the challenges of youth unemployment. Item 14 ranked 1st with a mean score of 3.43 and it states that "As a graduating student, I am aware that it is very competitive looking for job". Item 7 ranked 2nd with a mean score of 3.33, and it states that "As a graduating student, I am aware that there are several hundreds of my graduate predecessors still looking for employment". Item 12 ranked 3rd with a mean score of 3.30, and it states that "As a graduating student, I realize that many employers prefer experienced applicants". Meanwhile, item 13 ranked 20th with a mean score of 2.32, and it states that "As a graduating student, I realize that University education is a guarantee for job

placement”. Nineteen out of the twenty items representing 95 percent have mean scores that are above 2.50 (the decision point), implying that the graduating students’ awareness level of the challenges of youth unemployment was high.

Research Question 3: *What is the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment?*

Table 5: Mean Scores and Rank Order on the Perception of Graduating students in Nigeria about the challenges of youth unemployment.

| Item No | As a graduating student, I perceive that the process of securing employment after graduation could: | Mean | Rank |
|---------|---|------|------------------|
| 1 | be very difficult | 3.29 | 1 st |
| 10 | compel me into managing my time without enough experience | 3.19 | 2 nd |
| 2 | be very easy if I am prepared for it | 3.16 | 3 rd |
| 3 | be very smooth if I have a guide | 3.16 | 3 rd |
| 9 | make me untimely economically independent | 3.10 | 5 th |
| 6 | make me responsible for the affairs of my life beyond what I can cope with | 3.07 | 6 th |
| 16 | compel me to shoulder adult problems unprepared | 2.99 | 7 th |
| 19 | make people’s expectation from me higher | 2.98 | 8 th |
| 12 | compel me to be responsible for my personal safety | 2.94 | 9 th |
| 15 | ascribe adult responsibility to me | 2.89 | 10 th |
| 7 | lead me to a successful life | 2.83 | 11 th |
| 14 | make people see me as an adult | 2.83 | 11 th |
| 13 | expose me to a hostile world | 2.83 | 11 th |
| 5 | be very unpredictable | 2.80 | 14 th |
| 18 | bring an end to all the supports and concessions I have been receiving as a student | 2.73 | 15 th |
| 11 | result to my exposure to unemployment hazards | 2.66 | 16 th |
| 4 | depend on individual’s luck | 2.60 | 17 th |
| 8 | be very frightening | 2.35 | 18 th |
| 20 | make no one care about me | 2.22 | 19 th |
| 17 | expose me to exploitation | 2.14 | 20 th |

Table 5 shows the mean scores and rank order of respondents’ perception of the challenges of youth unemployment. Item 1 ranked 1st with a mean score of 3.29, and it states that “As a graduating student, I perceive that the process of securing employment after graduation could be very difficult. Item 10 ranked 2nd with a mean score of 3.19, and it states that “As a graduating student, I perceive that securing employment after graduation could compel me into managing my time without enough experience”. Items 2 and 3 ranked 3rd with same mean score of 3.16 and they state that “As a graduating student, I perceive that securing employment after graduation could be

very easy if I am prepared for it; and could be very smooth if I have a guide” respectively. Item 17 ranked 20th with a mean score of 2.14, and it states that “As a graduating student, I perceive that securing employment after graduation could make me need a strong godfather connection to make it”. Seventeen out of the twenty items representing 85 percent have mean scores that are greater than 2.50 (the decision point). Most items on this scale were framed in the negative. A high score on the scale implies a negative perception. It can thus be inferred that the graduating students of Nigerian universities have negative perception about the challenges of securing employment after graduation.

Research Question 4: *What is the attitude of graduating students in Nigeria towards the challenges of securing employment after graduation?*

Table 6: Mean Scores and Rank Order of the Attitude of Graduating students in Nigeria towards the challenges of securing employment after graduation

| Item No | I believe that the challenges of securing employment after graduation: | Mean | Rank |
|---------|--|------|------------------|
| 11 | would make graduating students become restive | 2.95 | 1 st |
| 9 | involve searching for appropriate employment in an already congested labour market | 2.94 | 2 nd |
| 12 | would be frustrating | 2.90 | 3 rd |
| 5 | would invoke anxiety in graduating students | 2.87 | 4 th |
| 15 | would make one develop a feeling of inadequacy | 2.83 | 5 th |
| 3 | would invoke fear of the unknown in graduating students | 2.78 | 6 th |
| 7 | represent what graduating students are not fully prepared for | 2.76 | 7 th |
| 17 | would compel graduating students to settle for wrong decisions | 2.71 | 8 th |
| 10 | would exert enormous pressure on graduating students | 2.70 | 9 th |
| 13 | would be regrettable without a mentor | 2.68 | 10 th |
| 19 | would influence graduating students to compromise their integrity | 2.67 | 11 th |
| 14 | would launch graduating students into a battle field of confusion | 2.66 | 12 th |
| 6 | would generate mixed feelings | 2.66 | 12 th |
| 2 | would be unbearable | 2.65 | 14 th |
| 4 | would fill one’s life with uncertainties | 2.63 | 15 th |
| 8 | would leave graduating students with no idea of what they should do | 2.63 | 15 th |
| 18 | would exert undue pressure from parents | 2.60 | 17 th |
| 1 | would make students develop suicidal tendency | 2.51 | 18 th |
| 16 | would make one to lose hope in the future | 2.36 | 19 th |
| 20 | decrease the value of the university degree | 2.31 | 20 th |

Table 6 shows the mean scores and rank order of respondents’ attitude towards the challenges of securing employment after graduation. Item 11 ranked 1st with a mean score of 2.95, and it states that “I believe that the challenges of securing employment after graduation would

make graduating students become restive”. Item 9 ranked 2nd with a mean score of 2.94 and it states that “I believe that the challenges of securing employment after graduation involve searching for appropriate employment in an already congested labour market”. Item 12 ranked 3rd with a mean score of 2.90, and it states that “I believe that the challenges of securing employment after graduation could be frustrating”. On the other hand, item 20 ranked 20th with a mean score of 2.31. The item states that “I believe that the challenges of securing employment after graduation decrease the value of the university degree”. Eighteen out of the twenty items representing 90 percent, have mean scores above 2.50 (cut-off point) hence, it can be inferred that majority of the graduating students have negative attitude towards the challenges of securing employment after graduation because the items were negatively worded.

Hypotheses Testing

Nine (9) null hypotheses were formulated for the purpose of this study. Hypotheses 1 to 6 were tested using t-test while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test hypotheses 7, 8 and 9. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.*

Table 7: Means, Standard Deviations and t-value of the Awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment Based on Gender

| Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | Cal. t-value | Crit. t-value | p-value |
|--------|-----|-------|------|------|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| Male | 832 | 60.38 | 8.99 | 1580 | 0.95 | 1.96 | 0.27 |
| Female | 750 | 60.80 | 8.38 | | | | |

Table 7 shows a calculated t-value of 0.95, critical t-value of 1.96 and a p-value of 0.27 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated p-value of 0.27 is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.

Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.*

Table 8: Means, Standard Deviations and t-value on the Perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment Based on Gender

| Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | Cal. t-value | Crit. t-value | p-value |
|--------|-----|-------|------|------|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| Male | 832 | 56.55 | 9.27 | 1580 | 1.28 | 1.96 | 0.09 |
| Female | 750 | 57.13 | 8.52 | | | | |

Table 8 shows a calculated t-value of 1.28, critical t-value of 1.96 and a p-value of 0.09 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated p-value of 0.09 is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.

Hypothesis 3: *There is no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.*

Table 9: Means, Standard Deviations and t-value on the Attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment Based on Gender

| Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | Cal. t-value | Crit. t-value | p-value |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|------|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| Male | 832 | 53.54 | 14.19 | 1580 | 1.04 | 1.96 | 0.06 |
| Female | 750 | 54.26 | 13.16 | | | | |

Table 9 shows a calculated t-value of 1.04, critical t-value of 1.96 and a p-value of 0.06 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated p-value of 0.06 is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the attitude of Nigerian university undergraduates toward the challenges of transition from school into the world of work based on gender.

Hypothesis 4: *There is no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of transition from school into the world of work based on age*

Table10: Mean scores, Standard Deviations and t-value on the Awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of transition from school into the World of Work Based on Age

| Age | N | Mean | SD | Df | Cal. t-value | Crit. t-value | p-value |
|--------------------|-----|-------|------|------|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| 24 years and below | 879 | 60.57 | 8.78 | 1580 | 0.06 | 1.96 | 0.51 |
| 25 years and above | 703 | 60.60 | 8.61 | | | | |

Table 10 shows a calculated t-value of 0.06, critical t-value of 1.96 and a p-value of 0.51 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated p-value of 0.51 is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of transition from school into the world of work based on age.

Hypothesis 5: *There is no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of transition from school into the world of work based on age*

Table 11: Mean scores, Standard Deviations and t-value on the Perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of transition from School into the World of Work Based on Age

| Age | N | Mean | SD | Df | Cal. t-value | Crit. t-value | p-value |
|--------------------|-----|-------|------|------|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| 24 years and below | 879 | 56.71 | 9.23 | 1580 | 0.58 | 1.96 | 0.14 |
| 25 years and above | 703 | 56.98 | 8.53 | | | | |

Table 11 shows a calculated t-value of 0.58, critical t-value of 1.96 and a p-value of 0.14. Since the calculated p-value of 0.14 is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on age.

Hypothesis 6: *There is no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment based on age*

Table 12: Mean scores, Standard Deviations and t-value of the Attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment based on age.

| Age | N | Mean | SD | Df | Cal. t-value | Crit. t-value | p-value |
|--------------------|-----|-------|-------|------|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| 24 years and below | 879 | 53.84 | 14.16 | 1580 | 0.15 | 1.96 | 0.06 |
| 25 years and above | 703 | 53.94 | 13.15 | | | | |

Table 12 shows a calculated t-value of 0.15, critical t-value of 1.96 and a p-value of 0.06 at 0.05 alpha. Since the calculated p-value of 0.06 is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment based on age.

Hypothesis 7: *There is no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment based on course of study*

Table 13: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the influence of course of study on the Awareness of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment

| Source | SS | df | Mean Squares | Cal. F-ratio | Crit. F-ratio | p-value |
|----------------|------------|------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| Between Groups | 113.528 | 4 | 28.38 | 0.37 | 2.37 | 0.82 |
| Within Groups | 119808.452 | 1577 | 75.97 | | | |
| Total | 119921.980 | 1581 | | | | |

Table 13 shows the calculated F-ratio of 0.37, a critical F-ratio of 2.37 and a p-value of 0.82 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated p-value of 0.82 is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment on the basis of course of study.

Hypothesis 8: *There is no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment on the basis of course of study.*

Table 14: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the influence of Academic programme on the Perception of graduating students of Nigerian Universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment

| Source | SS | df | Mean Squares | Cal. F-ratio | Crit. F-ratio | p-value |
|----------------|------------|------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------|
| Between Groups | 169.303 | 4 | 42.32 | 0.53 | 2.37 | 0.71 |
| Within Groups | 125922.641 | 1577 | 79.84 | | | |
| Total | 126091.944 | 1581 | | | | |

Table 14 shows the calculated F-ratio of 0.53, a critical F-ratio of 2.37 and a p-value of 0.71 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated p-value of 0.71 is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian Universities about the challenges of youth unemployment on the basis of course of study.

Hypothesis 9: *There is no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities towards the challenges of youth unemployment on the basis of course of study*

Table 15: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing the influence of Academic programme on the Attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment

| Source | SS | df | Mean Squares | Cal. F-ratio | Crit. F-ratio | p-value |
|----------------|------------|------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------|
| Between Groups | 700.254 | 4 | 175.06 | 0.93 | 2.37 | 0.44 |
| Within Groups | 296886.943 | 1577 | 188.26 | | | |
| Total | 297587.197 | 1581 | | | | |

Table 15 shows the calculated F-ratio of 0.93, a critical F-ratio of 2.37 and a p-value of 0.44 at 0.05 alpha. Since the calculated p-value of 0.44 is greater than the alpha p-value at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian Universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment on the basis of course of study.

Summary of the Findings

This chapter dealt with the analysis of the data gathered in the process of the study. They were analyzed in three parts, namely; demographic data, item ranking analysis and hypotheses testing. Nine null hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that:

- Respondents attested to numerous challenges of youth unemployment such as; frustration resulting from unsuccessful efforts to secure employment, drastic reduction of employment opportunities as a result of global economic recession, lack of cognate experience which employers prefer, uncertainty in the labour market with its attendant psychological effects, and many more.
- Respondents have high awareness level of the challenges of youth unemployment.
- Respondents' perception of the challenges of youth unemployment after graduation was negative.
- Respondents' attitude toward the challenges of youth unemployment was negative.

The data analyzed also indicated that:

- ❖ There was no significant difference in the awareness level, of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.
- ❖ There was no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.
- ❖ There was no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian Universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender.

- ❖ There was no significant difference in the awareness of graduating students of Nigerian Universities on the challenges of unemployment based on age.
- ❖ There was no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian Universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on age.
- ❖ There was no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian Universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment work based on age.
- ❖ There was no significant difference in the awareness of graduating students of Nigerian Universities on the challenges of youth unemployment based on course of study.
- ❖ There was no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian Universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on course of study
- ❖ There was no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian Universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment based on course of study.

All the tested hypotheses were accepted as there were no significant differences in the variables tested.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of Findings

The focus of this study was to find out the awareness level, perception and attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities toward the challenges of youth unemployment. The study also sought to find out the responses of the participants in line with the demographic variables of gender, age and programme of study.

Table 3 showed the frequency count and rank order of the challenges of securing employment in Nigeria after graduating from the university. All the 20 items were identified by the respondents as typical challenges they have to navigate through in their bid to find job placement. While it could be generally inferred that respondents rated the challenges high, the most highly rated include; “it is very tough securing job placement immediately after graduation,” “sentiments limit job opportunities for graduating students” and that “employers tend to prefer applicants with experience to graduating students”.

That it is very tough securing job placement immediately after graduation strongly agreed with Ogege (2011) and Kolawole (2012) who noted how graduates roam the cities for years looking for job. It also buttressed Akande (2014) who, in a situation analysis of youth unemployment in Nigeria noted too, that most graduates remained unemployed for upward of five years after graduation.

The second highest rated challenge stated that “sentiments limit job opportunities for fresh graduates” aligned strongly with Moreau and Leathwood (2007) who discovered through employability discourse that in UK, the level-playing-field in which graduates’ credentials (skills and personal qualities) were vital to their success in securing employment no longer applied. Instead, social class, ethnicity, university attended and many more now significantly influence opportunities available. This also agreed with Okon (2014) who observed that when it comes to securing graduate level employment in the present dispensation in Nigeria, personal connection becomes more vital than best results.

That employers tend to prefer applicants with experience to fresh graduates is the third highest rated challenge of graduating students in their effort to secure employment. This agreed with Chilee (2012) who reported that employers were apprehensive in employing fresh graduates due to their lack of experience. The employers complained that in most cases whenever they employed fresh graduates, they had to organize remedial courses for them. This measure they said, increased the company's operating cost and reduced their profitability and competitiveness hence they prefer to source for experienced and suitable hands even where it required sourcing them from outside the country. Added to this according to Chilee, is the fact that companies fear losing any employee they have trained and so they prefer a prospective employee who is work ready and already trained at entry point.

Table 4 showed the mean score and rank order of the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment. The result indicated that the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment after graduation was high. This finding agreed with Othman, Musa, Mokhtar, Azizah, Latiff, Hussein, Mohammad and Kaur (2011) who investigated the awareness and employability readiness of University undergraduates in Malaysia with specific focus on how English language and other University courses prepare them for employment after graduation. The study found that most respondents were adequately aware that they will need to search for job after graduation. The respondents were also reported to have shown high awareness of employability attributes and need for good communication skill in English as vital for job placement after graduation. Respondents believed there was the need for an alternative plan (plan 'B') to fall back to if the anticipated job does not come within a reasonable time limit after graduation.

The present finding also agreed with Oludayo and Ibrahim (2011) who did not directly investigate the awareness of undergraduates about the challenges of securing employment after graduation. But while studying the social organization of internet fraud amongst undergraduates in Nigeria, some of the respondents revealed that since the prospect of securing employment after graduation is near zero percent, they have chosen to engage in internet fraud to make preparation

for their envisaged jobless future. In other words, respondents were aware of the difficulties entailed in securing job placement after graduating and so opted for a non-legitimate approach as a way out. Such involvement in cyber crime may be considered a typical instance of an incorrect application of knowledge (awareness) and this requires counselling intervention. The finding of the present study was also in consonance with Atfield and Purcell (2012) who reported that final year students in the UK were aware that securing an employment as a graduate is highly competitive due to limited graduate level job vacancies. It is most likely that the global spread of graduate unemployment is responsible for these wide-spread high levels of awareness.

However, the high awareness level elicited in the present study by graduating students in Nigeria on the challenges of securing employment after graduating is in sharp contrast to the findings of Perrone and Vickers (2003). In their Australian case study, Perrone and Vickers reported that some University students were completely unaware of the challenges awaiting them after graduation. Consequent upon this unawareness, the students graduated with the beliefs and expectations about employment opportunities and privileges that eventually led to disappointments and regrets. The difference in the setting of the previous research (Australia) and the present (Nigeria) might be responsible for the dissimilarity noticed. Perhaps, a more probable reason could be the time lag between the two research efforts. Perrone and Vickers undertook their study in 2003, fourteen years earlier than the present study in 2017. In addition, Perrone and Vickers (2003) adopted a qualitative research design and used a semi-structured interview to capture the personal experiences of their respondents. Their research method, referred to as Heideggarian phenomenology, allowed the respondents (fresh graduates) to narrate their personal experiences in their bid to find job placement since they graduated. While doing this, the researchers paid attention to the whole story, the views, interpretation and judgment of each narrator. All these factors may have been responsible for the difference between the result of their study and the present one.

One can thus sum up that although the present study reveals a high level awareness by graduating students on the challenges of securing employment after graduation, most graduates in Nigeria still similarly experience regrets and disappointments like their counterparts in Perrone and

Vickers (2003) who were completely unaware of the challenges beforehand. Awareness of the challenges involved in securing employment after graduation is expected to lead to appropriate preparation for it and not be taken by surprise (Dalmia, 2009; Hogan, 2014).

Table 5 showed the mean scores and rank order of the perception of graduating students in Nigeria about the challenges of youth unemployment. The result indicated that the respondents scored high in this scale. A high score in this scale implies a negative perception as the items on the scale were mostly framed in the negative. The high score also reflected the enormity of the challenges in the eyes of the respondents. Respondents in this study specifically perceived the graduate labour market as unpredictable and securing employment as a very difficult task.

This finding agreed with Tomlinson (2008, 2012). Tomlinson (2008) investigated the way higher education students perceive the role of their credentials in relation to their future employment. Using a sample of 53 final year undergraduates in the United Kingdom (UK), it was reported that the respondents perceived that the graduate labour market ahead of them was congested. In a further study, Tomlinson (2012) investigated the perception as well as the approach of students and graduates as regards their future employment and employability. The study reported that the respondents perceived the graduate labour market as congested, full of uncertainties, requiring unusual effort to navigate it.

Graduating students in Nigeria as revealed in the present study perceived them-selves as being compelled to take personal responsibility for every affairs of their lives including personal safety in the process of navigating through the challenges of youth unemployment. This finding agrees with Tomlinson (2012) who reported that undergraduates in UK were increasingly seeing (perceiving) their future employability as a personal responsibility. It must be acknowledge however that personal responsibility, when not perceived as an imposition is an asset needed to deal with challenges of all kinds including youth unemployment.

Table 6 showed the mean scores and rank order of the attitude of graduating students in Nigeria toward the challenges of youth unemployment. The result indicated that the respondents' attitude was negative. Respondents expressed that having to search for employment in an already

congested graduate labour market could invoke frustration, anxiety, restiveness, fear of the unknown, confusion and many more. This finding agreed largely with Perrone and Vickers (2003) who reported in their findings that life (immediately) after graduation in Australia could fill the fresh graduate with stress, anxiety, shock, fear, uncertainty, depression, low self worth and many more. Eshiet (2015) is also corroborated by the present study. Eshiet reported that in the process of navigating their way into the graduate labour market, many fresh graduates in Nigeria could be at risk of culture shock, manifesting in stress reactions such as anger, anxiety, short temper, confusion, frustration and desperation. The finding also aligned with Ipaye (1998) who observed that unemployment could lead to depression, low self esteem, and frustration among other negative consequences.

The result of this study also indicated that the challenges of finding employment after graduation would influence graduating students to compromise their integrity and become vulnerable to criminality. This finding is corroborated by Rohland (2016) who submitted that the cost of youth unemployment to economic and social development is extremely high. According to his submission, youth unemployment perpetrates the inter-generational circle of poverty and is associated with high level of crime, violence, substance abuse and the rise of political extremism. The reported cases of involvement of a number of graduates in crimes, suicide and suicide attempts, involvement in scamming, falling victim of job scammers, involvement in cyber crimes, kidnapping, robbery, car snatching and many more (Oludayo & Ibrahim, 2011; *Naijagist.com*, April, 2013; *PM news September, 2013*; *This Day Live May, 2013*; *Punch newspaper May, 2015*) could be seen as products of negative attitude toward the challenges of unemployment.

The result of hypothesis 1 revealed that there was no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian Universities on the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender. This finding agreed with Tomlinson (2008) who reported that regardless of gender, final year undergraduates (in U K) have similar understanding (awareness) that acquisition of higher educational qualification is a boost to their employability in the labour market. Tomlinson also reported that the students (both female and male) have the understanding that the graduate

labour market was congested and would be hard to navigate through. The enormity of the challenges of finding employment after graduation in the two research settings seems to have overwhelmed the graduating students irrespective of gender. Hence there was no significant difference in the awareness level of the respondents based on gender.

The result of hypothesis 2 revealed that there was no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian Universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender. The perception of the respondents (female and male) about youth unemployment was negative.

This finding aligned with Tomlinson (2008) who reported that respondents without gender disparity perceived the graduate labour market as highly competitive, hazardous, engendering high risks and uncertainties. But the finding however differed from Atfield and Purcell (2012) as they reported a gender difference in the self assessment of the employability skills students think they possess. Females rated their skill lower than males except in the area of self discipline where they rated themselves higher than the males. This difference anchors on the fact that while respondents in Tomlinson (2008) and the present study focused on respondents' perception about the challenges of securing employment in the graduate labour market, the respondents in Atfield and Purcell (2012) focused on their perceived readiness to engage the labour market.

The result of hypothesis 3 revealed that there was no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian universities towards the challenges of youth unemployment based on gender. This result contradicted the findings of the American National Association of Colleges and Employers' report 2014, which revealed that female respondents seemed more undecided and uncertain about the direction to follow after graduation. The report further revealed that female respondents had a less positive disposition towards entrance into the graduate labour market than their male counterparts. About 58 percent of the female respondents express readiness to start job search immediately after graduation as against almost 70 percent of their male counterparts. The result of the present study was however in agreement with Tomlinson (2012) who reported that

graduating students, irrespective of gender, have the same attitudinal disposition toward the challenges of the graduate labour market.

The result of hypothesis 4 revealed that there was no significant difference in the level of awareness of graduating students of Nigerian Universities on the challenges of youth unemployment based on age. This result differed from Alafin (2014), who investigated the awareness and perception of graduating students of University of Abuja about the challenges of transition from school into the real world, and reported a significant difference on the basis of age. What the respondents in Alafin (2014) considered as the “real world” was perhaps responsible for this disparity. Similarly, Oxenbridge and Eveson (2012) in an on-line survey of young people entering work in the UK reported some differences in the awareness level of their respondents based on age. Oxenbridge and Eveson reported that respondents in age 22-24 years showed higher awareness than respondents in age 16-18 year bracket. In the present study, the overwhelming impact of the challenges of youth unemployment in Nigeria seems to have eliminated any possible diversity in the awareness level of respondents in the two age groupings.

The result of hypothesis 5 revealed that there was no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian Universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on age. This result is inconsistent with Alafin (2014) who found a significant difference in the perception of graduating students of University of Abuja about the challenges of transition from school into the real world on the basis of age. It is possible that what respondents in each age range perceived as the meaning of the “real world” accounted for this difference.

The result of hypothesis 6 revealed that there was no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian Universities towards the challenges of youth unemployment on the basis of age. This finding was consistent with Smith (2003) who investigated the experiences of youths starting full time work in Australia. Smith reported that 100 percent of the respondents cutting across gender and age expressed that attitudinal attributes of enthusiasm, punctuality and many more were the most valued skills by employers. The result of this hypothesis also corroborated Tomlinson (2012) who reported that consequent upon the challenges in the current graduate labour market, students, irrespective of age now show more determination to engage in life-long learning.

The result of hypothesis 7 revealed that there was no significant difference in the awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian Universities on the challenges of youth unemployment based on the course of study. This result was consistent with Jacky (2014) who in a survey of 390 tertiary students in Singapore reported that the respondents were substantially aware of the challenges involved in the transition from school into employment irrespective of their course of study. The result of the present study was also consistent with Othman, Musa, Mokhtar, Aziza, Latiff, Hussein, Mohammad and Kaur (2014) who reported that cutting across all disciplines, respondents were highly aware that weak proficiency in English language was responsible for low rate of graduate employability in Malaysia.

The result of hypothesis 8 revealed that there was no significant difference in the perception of graduating students of Nigerian Universities about the challenges of youth unemployment based on course of study. This result was in line with Tomlinson (2012) who investigated the perception of undergraduates and fresh graduates about their employability. The investigation cut across the following four disciplines; social science, Art/Humanities, Physical and Vocational Science. Across the disciplines, respondents perceive higher education as a boost which could give them some advantages in the labour market which in their perception was very congested. The result of the present study however varied from Atfield and Purcell (2012) who reported that students in vocational courses believed they have advantage in the process of job search especially in their vocational area. This perception could however be deceptive some times. Hanapi and Nordin (2013) for instance, reported that unemployment cuts across every discipline in Singapore, including the highly vocational disciplines. The highest unemployment figure was recorded in Dentistry (97.4%), followed by Medicine with (88.8%) unemployment rates whereas these are no doubt strong vocational areas. What these research findings, including the current one seem to suggest is that regardless of the course of study, and whether the graduating students hold the right or deceptive perception, the economic situation and the graduate labour market into which the graduating student is launched remain the major deciding forces.

The result of hypothesis 9 revealed that there was no significant difference in the attitude of graduating students of Nigerian Universities towards the challenges of youth unemployment on the basis of course of study. This finding buttressed Smith (2003) who reported that all respondents across different fields in their first full-time jobs identified some specific soft skills (punctuality, enthusiasm, obedience/loyalty to work place authority and many more) as most important attitudes needed to remain employed regardless of one's specialized training and area of deployment. The result of this hypothesis also agreed with Tomlinson (2012) that students with appropriate orientation toward employment will be able to navigate through the challenges of securing employment however tough. According to Tomlinson, this orientation is not based on course of study but on the self concept of the graduating student. However, the finding reported by Othman et al (2011) was at variance with the result of the present study. In an investigation of graduate employability in Malaysia, Othman et al reported that while unemployment and graduate employability problems cut across disciplines, Malaysian graduates from the faculty of Islamic studies have the mind set of securing jobs in government establishments in that country.

In the light of the fact that all the nine hypotheses tested in the present study were accepted, one could deduce that the challenges or problems of youth unemployment in Nigeria as they affect graduating university students do not discriminate between gender, age and course of study. Furthermore, how the students wade through these challenges may not seem to depend on their level of awareness, perception and attitude toward the challenges as much as on the overall prevailing economic and graduate labour market into which they graduate.

Conclusion

This study investigated the awareness level and the perception of graduating students in Nigeria about the challenges of youth unemployment. It also assessed their attitude towards the same phenomenon. Based on the findings of this study and the above discussion, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The awareness level of graduating students of Nigerian universities on the challenges of youth unemployment after graduation was high.

- They were aware that it is highly competitive finding a job.
- They were aware that most employers prefer applicants with cognate experience which they (the graduating students) do not have.
- They were aware that most of their graduate predecessors were still looking for employment.
- They were also aware that it is possible not to secure a job several years after graduation.
- The perception of graduating students of Nigerian universities about youth unemployment was negative.
- They perceived that getting an appropriate job after graduation could be very difficult.
- They perceived that the challenges could expose them to a hostile world.
- They perceived that the challenges of securing a job after graduating could be unpredictable.
- Graduating students had the perception that the challenges of securing a viable job after school could mean exposure to unemployment hazards.
- Graduating students of Nigerian Universities have a negative attitude towards the challenges of youth unemployment.
- Many graduating students of Nigerian universities become restive as a result of youth unemployment challenges.
- The challenges of securing employment invoked confusion, frustration anxiety and feeling of inadequacy in graduating students.
- The graduating students of Nigerian universities are put under enormous pressure by the challenges of youth unemployment.
- The challenges of youth unemployment tend to influence some graduating students of Nigerian universities to compromise their integrity.

Implication for Counselling

- Since graduating students of Nigerian Universities have high awareness level of the challenges of youth unemployment, there should be more adequate counselling by a professional counsellor to prepare them ahead.

- A robust counselling intervention, adopting logotherapy assumptions that challenges and difficulties are part of life could be applied by the professional counsellor to effect a cognitive restructuring of the perception and attitude of graduating students about the challenges of youth unemployment.
- The professional counsellor should counsel graduating students to see the need to think away from looking for employment in favour of self employment through entrepreneurship.
- The counsellor should endeavour to enlighten and sensitise graduating students on the advantages of being self employed over being an employee.
- Since this study did not yield any significant difference in the awareness level, perception and attitude of the respondents about the phenomenon investigated based on gender, age and course of study, a uniform counselling treatment in group setting cutting across gender, age and course of study could be adequate without ruling out specific attention to any peculiar need of any individual.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Since lack of cognate experience was identified as a serious challenge graduating students of Nigerian universities face in the process of trying to secure employment, work integrated learning (wil) should be further intensified by the university system to bridge the gap between what is learnt in school and the workplace reality.

This study revealed that graduating students of Nigerian universities were aware that the prevailing economic situation has drastically limited the employment chances of university graduates. A multi-pronged approach involving the counsellor, the university and the government is recommended as follows to address the situation:

- University curriculum developers should re-strategise the teaching of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) to demystify it and make it more appealing to students in general and graduating students in particular.
- To enhance job placement for graduating students in what they considered as congested, tough and highly competitive graduate labour market, it is recommended that employability should be embedded in the Nigerian University undergraduate curriculum.
- Nigerian universities should in addition consider mounting employability as a degree awarding discipline of study.
- Government programmes such as youth empowerment in Nigeria (You.Win), Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment (SURE-P), Graduate Entrepreneurship Fund (GEF), Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) and many more should be reviewed and repackaged for effective delivery.
- Guidelines and regulations for participation in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) should be graduating students- friendly, clear, free of ambiguities and bureaucratic bottlenecks.

Limitation of the study

The focus of this study was to find out the awareness level, perception and the attitude of graduating students in Nigerian Universities towards the challenges of youth unemployment. The bulk of the challenges centre round how to secure a viable graduate level job after graduating. Graduate unemployment being a contemporary national and global issue, responds to the dynamics in both the local and global settings. Some data collected at some point in time were in no time overtaken by events, necessitating corrections and updating the body of the work. The economic profile of the country for instance, changed more than once in the course of the study, same for the number of universities, these had to be accounted for.

The impact of politics on the socio-economic tone of the country especially on education, youth unemployment and particularly graduate unemployment, should not be under stressed. The changes in government and the ruling political party in the country in the course of this study also imposed some form of alterations and amendments in the information available especially in the area of policies designed to address youth and graduate unemployment.

Through personal encounters there was an appreciable number of people who believe that securing job placement in the present dispensation in Nigeria takes divine intervention and not how much awareness of the challenges involved in the process is possessed. They also do not believe that it is the function of one's perception or attitudinal disposition. Nevertheless, this study did not include religion as one of the moderating variables because of its sensitive nature in the country.

Suggestions for further studies

- Follow-up or tracer studies should be undertaken to assess how well graduates are faring in their transition efforts into the world of work.
- More studies are required to gauge the awareness, perception and attitude of University students toward EE
- Studies should be conducted to unearth what could be hindering students from embracing entrepreneurship.
- More studies should be undertaken to bring entrepreneurship to lime light amongst students.
- More studies focusing on the effective methods for teaching entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions in Nigeria should be undertaken.

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University of Ilorin
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Awareness, Perception and Attitude of Graduating Students of Nigerian Universities Towards Challenges of the World of Work Questionnaire (APAGSNUTCWOWQ)

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to obtain information on Awareness, Perception and Attitude of Graduating Students of Nigerian Universities towards challenges of the world of work. Kindly respond sincerely and carefully to the items contained in the questionnaire. Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used for research purposes only. Thank you.

Section A: Personal Data

Direction: Kindly tick (✓) the appropriate response as most applicable to you

1. **Gender:** Male (); Female ().
2. **Age:** 24 years and below (); 25 years and above ().
4. **Faculty:** Arts (); Education (); Agriculture (); Management Sciences ()
Sciences ().

SECTION B: Challenges of Youth Unemployment Scale (COYU)

Direction: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements concerning challenges of graduating students into the world of work (WOW) in Nigeria. Ticking (✓) in the most appropriate column to you:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | The global economic recession has drastically reduced employment opportunities for graduating students especially in Nigeria | | | | |
| 2 | It is very tough securing job placement immediately after graduation | | | | |
| 3 | Securing job placement brings graduating students into unhealthy competition | | | | |
| 4 | It is almost impossible in the present graduate labour market to secure jobs that commensurate with graduate level dues | | | | |
| 5 | Employers tend to rate graduating students as incompetent | | | | |
| 6 | Employers tend to prefer applicants with years of experience which the graduating students lack | | | | |
| 7 | Screening for job placement is often too rigorous for graduating students | | | | |
| 8 | There is a prevalence of secretive recruitment exercise which puts many graduating students at a disadvantage | | | | |
| 9 | There is not enough information on job vacancies for graduating students | | | | |
| 10 | Sentiment limits job opportunities for graduating students | | | | |
| 11 | Graduating students seeking job placement may face the challenge of having to work with difficult co-workers | | | | |
| 12 | Graduating students seeking job placement could be forced to accept jobs below their qualification and pay level | | | | |
| 13 | Many graduating students do not have entrepreneurship orientation suitable for self employment | | | | |
| 14 | Many graduating students with entrepreneurship ideas lacked the corresponding idea of how to access needed fund | | | | |
| 15 | Many graduating students have the challenge of coming to terms with their career plan and what they encounter in the process of trying to secure employment. | | | | |
| 16 | Graduating students often face confusion on how to match their career plans with different jobs | | | | |
| 17 | Unsuccessful efforts to gain employment do frustrate graduating students | | | | |
| 18 | Graduating students become vulnerable to criminality because of unemployment | | | | |
| 19 | Some graduating students suffer stigmatization because of unemployment | | | | |
| 20 | Uncertainty in the labour market reduces self worth of graduating students | | | | |

SECTION C: Graduating Students' Awareness of the Challenges of the world of work (WOW) scale

Direction: Kindly indicate your level of awareness of the following issues concerning world of work challenges by ticking (✓) the column most appropriate to you using the following rating scale:

SA = Strong Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SA = Strongly Disagree

| S/N | As a graduating student, I am aware that | SA | A | D | SA |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | the labour market is an adult world | | | | |
| 2 | Securing employment is full of hurdles | | | | |
| 3 | in the process of securing employment, you think for yourself | | | | |
| 4 | it is tough finding a job | | | | |
| 5 | job search after graduation takes a lot of time | | | | |
| 6 | one would have to search for job before he/she gets it | | | | |
| 7 | there are several hundreds of my graduate predecessors still looking for employment | | | | |
| 8 | it is possible not to secure a job several years after graduation | | | | |
| 9 | brilliant academic performance may not facilitate immediate job placement | | | | |
| 10 | my academic skills may not be a guarantee for getting many job opportunities | | | | |
| 11 | I may have to start my own business after graduation | | | | |
| 12 | many employers prefer experienced applicants | | | | |
| 13 | University education is a guarantee for job placement | | | | |
| 14 | it is very competitive looking for job | | | | |
| 15 | one's certificate is not a guarantee for a high profile job placement | | | | |
| 16 | Securing employment is an individual race | | | | |
| 17 | whether I fail or succeed in securing employment is my personal responsibility | | | | |
| 18 | regardless of my employment status the society expects a standard from me | | | | |
| 19 | it is difficult to learn about the challenges of youth unemployment when in school | | | | |
| 20 | I will learn about the challenges of youth unemployment better when I am confronted with them | | | | |

SECTION D: Perception of World of Work (WOW) Challenges of Graduating Students**Scale (POWOWCOGSC)**

Direction: Kindly read the following statements carefully, respond by ticking (✓) the column most appropriate to you.

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

| S/N | As a graduating student, I perceived that entering into the WOW from school could | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | be very difficult | | | | |
| 2 | be very easy if I am prepared for it | | | | |
| 3 | be very smooth if I have a guide | | | | |
| 4 | depend on individual's luck | | | | |
| 5 | be very unpredictable | | | | |
| 6 | make me responsible for the affairs of my life beyond what I can cope with | | | | |
| 7 | lead me to a successful life | | | | |
| 8 | be very frightening | | | | |
| 9 | make me untimely economically independent | | | | |
| 10 | compel me into managing my time without enough experience | | | | |
| 11 | result to my exposure to unemployment hazards | | | | |
| 12 | compel me to be responsible for my personal safety | | | | |
| 13 | expose me to a hostile world | | | | |
| 14 | make people see me as an adult | | | | |
| 15 | ascribe adult responsibility to me | | | | |
| 16 | compel me to shoulder adult problems unprepared | | | | |
| 17 | expose me to exploitation | | | | |
| 18 | bring an end to all the supports and concessions I have been receiving as a student | | | | |
| 19 | make people's expectation from me higher | | | | |
| 20 | make no one care about me | | | | |

SECTION E: Attitude of Graduating Students Towards World of Work (WOW) Challenges Scale (AGSTWOWCS)

Direction: Kindly indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking (✓) in the most appropriate column to you, using the following rating scale:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

| S/N | I believe that the challenges of entering the WOW after graduation | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | would make students develop suicidal tendency | | | | |
| 2 | would be unbearable | | | | |
| 3 | would invoke fear of the unknown in graduating students | | | | |
| 4 | would fill one's life with uncertainties | | | | |
| 5 | would invoke anxiety in graduating students | | | | |
| 6 | would generate mixed feelings | | | | |
| 7 | represent what graduating students are not fully prepared for | | | | |
| 8 | would leave graduating students with no idea of what they should do | | | | |
| 9 | involve searching for appropriate employment in an already congested labour market | | | | |
| 10 | would exert enormous pressure on graduating students | | | | |
| 11 | would make graduating students become restive | | | | |
| 12 | would be frustrating | | | | |
| 13 | would be regrettable without a mentor | | | | |
| 14 | would launch graduating students into a battle field of confusion | | | | |
| 15 | would make one develop a feeling of inadequacy | | | | |
| 16 | would make one to lose hope in the future | | | | |
| 17 | would compel graduating students to settle for wrong decisions | | | | |
| 18 | would exert undue pressure from parents | | | | |
| 19 | would influence graduating students to compromise their integrity | | | | |
| 20 | decrease the value of the university degree | | | | |