

Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria: Causes, Effects and Remedies.

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Abstract

This paper examines causes of unemployment in Nigeria as well as the consequences and implications of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The paper also provides useful suggestion and recommendations on how to curb graduate in Nigeria. The paper adopts empirical analysis to examine the causes of unemployment in Nigeria. The data used in this study is of two type primary and secondary data. However, for the primary data the questionnaire was used to solicit responses from the respondents. In conclusion economic recession, governmental policy, employment of expatriates and trade union wage demand increase the rate of unemployment. The study emphasis that planning for human resources use in Nigeria has been based on guesswork and needs re-evaluation.

Keywords: Unemployment, Human resource planning, Graduates, Economy.

Introduction

Economists are unable to agree on the causes of or cures for unemployment (or anything else, it seems). The essence of the Keynesian explanation is that firms demand too little labour because individuals demand too few goods. The classical view was that unemployment was voluntary and could be cleared by natural market forces. The neo-classical theory is that there is a natural rate of unemployment, which reflects a given rate of technology, individual preferences and endowments. With flexible wages in a competitive labour market, wages adjust to clear the market and any unemployment that remains is voluntary. The latter view was that held by Milton Friedman and strongly influenced government policy in the early 1980s, but without success. There is, of course, no simple explanation of unemployment and no simple solution.

Unemployment is the greatest challenge to underdeveloped and developing countries. the phenomenon of graduate unemployment (GU) as it is being experienced in the developing countries constitute a peculiar problems to labor market and the general economy of these countries. From the content analysis perceptions of job seekers on the issue of graduate unemployment in a study conducted by Fajana (2000), the following factors were identified as the major causes of unemployment in Nigeria:

- the long period of initial unemployment among university graduates in Nigeria , faulty manpower planning and expansion of educational facilities that have unduly raised the expectations of Nigerian youths , the economic recession , continued proportionality of expatriates in employment , the institution of NYSC ,the collective bargaining process, graduate attitude to some type of jobs attitude to jobs in other location as well as search behaviour of employers and job seekers, use of capital intensive technology , wide rural-urban migration , formal – informal sectors differentials.

All these and many other factors contribute the causes of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The objective of this paper is to critically evaluates all these factors so as to determine their impacts graduate job seekers in Nigeria and other LDCs.

The purpose of this paper is to examine all the various factors that contribute to graduate unemployment with the view to provide suggestions and solutions on how to curb the problem of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. This paper will also examine how the actions of the industrial relations actors contribute to graduate unemployment in Nigeria. This paper intends to achieve the following:

- 1- To identify the causes of unemployment in Nigeria
- 2- To examine the consequences and implications of graduate unemployment in Nigeria.
- 3- To provide useful suggestion and recommendations on how to curb graduate unemployment.
- 4- To provide the framework for further studies in this area.
- 5- T o provide guidelines and information for policy formulation in curbing unemployment in Africa.

1. Previous Research

Fajana (2000), and Standing(1983) opined that unemployment can be describe as the state of worklessness experienced by persons who are members of the labour force who perceived themselves and are perceived by others as capable of work. Unemployed people can be categorized into those who have never worked after graduation from the university and those who and those who have lost their jobs thereby seeking reentry into labour market. However, most of the previous study on unemployment of youths especially of graduates unemployment in developing countries (Falae , 1971,Bhalla 1973;Diejomaoh,1979; Bear and Herve 1966;Bhagwati 1973; Diejomaoh and Orimolade 1971) have tended to ignore the special case of the university graduates that are first time job seeker.

This study makes an attempt to focus on the university graduate first job seeker. According to William (1976) the meaning of work to paid employment is the result of the development of capitalist productive relations.

However, according to Fajana (2002) the concept of work has partly shifted from productive effort itself to the predominant social relationship. For instance, it is only in the sense of social relationship that a woman running a house and bringing up children can be said not to be working (Hayes and Nutman,1981;Iyoha)

After the 1967-1970 civil war in Nigeria, the incidence of graduate unemployment was suspected, rumored and feared(Fajana 2000). In this regards professor Diejomaoh (1979) in a study conducted at the human resource unit of the university of Lagos found that the incidence of graduate unemployment between 1965 and 1972 was not a serious problem contrary to what is being dreaded. Similarly, Folayan Ojo (1979) attributed whatever level of graduate unemployment (presumably small) during the period 1965-1972 to ; slow bureaucratic machinery for the processing of application for jobs and the influence system might have caused some graduates to remain temporarily unemployed for the first few months after graduation.

However at that time there had been shortage of medical doctors, graduate teachers and engineers while agriculture graduate are under-utilized.

However, the trends have changed greatly from late 1970s till date. Currently the number of universities has increased and their curricular have expanded. The motivation for the establishment of private universities was in part a response to unprecedented demand by Nigerians for higher education (Sylvester Ugoh ,1982) with phenomenal expansion in education, the demand for this service and students enrollment had become so rife that by 1985 the turn out figure had risen to 30,000 per year even into the 1990s (federal ministry of labour ,1985) the trend of undergraduate application and admission into universities is shown in table 1 and 2 below:

2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/2006		2006/2007		2007/2008	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
603,176	443,764	484,217	353,834	527,180	390,780	521,170	391,180	578,715	455,368

TABLE 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES ENROLMENT BETWEEN 2003 AND 2008. SOURCE: JOINT ADMISSION AND MATRICULATION BOARD, 2009

2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/2006		2006/2007	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
62,023	43,984	60,049	45,906	39,743	25,775	42,953	28,044

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF ADMISSION OFFERED BETWEEN 2003 AND 2007. SOURCE: JOINT ADMISSION AND MATRICULATION BOARD, 2009

The trend of undergraduate application and admission into all universities in Nigeria between 2003 and 2008 shows that between 2003/2004 sessions 603,176(male) and 443,764(female) candidates applied for different degree programmes and only 62,023(male) and 43984(female) candidates were offered admissions.

TOTAL ENROLMENT IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES BY MAJOR DISCIPLINE, (2001 - 2006)

DISCIPLINES	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006
ADMINISTRATI ON	29,407	29,741	45,247	47,886	29,757
AGRICULTURE	18,557	27,201	30,457	26,455	22,022
ARTS	31,182	31,456	35,585	38,589	33,998
EDUCATION	33,782	33,798	48,230	48,889	49,247
ENGR/TECHN OLOGY	47,278	50,983	51,816	59,702	57,824
ENVIR. SCIENCE	10,864	14,676	18,036	18,853	17,968
LAW	14,395	13,896	15,430	18,506	16,299
MEDICINE	26,360	25,426	28,001	31,540	25,884
PHARMACY	5,727	5,873	5,967	5,538	4,740
SCIENCE	59,361	74,933	78,761	97,724	75,187
SOCIAL SCIENCE	45,320	38,154	54,450	52,924	56,725
VETERINARY MEDICINE	3,474	3,365	7,273	3,771	3,735
TOTAL	325,707	349,502	419,253	450,377	393,386

Source: National Universities Commission, Abuja.

TABLE 3: TOTAL ENROLMENT IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES BY MAJOUR DISCIPLINE.

GRADUATE OUTPUT (BACHELOR'S DEGREE, POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA, MASTER'S DEGREE AND DOCTORATE DEGREE, 2000/2001-2004/2005

DISCIPLINES	2000/20001		2001/2002		2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
ADMINISTRATION	10,247	4,600	9,080	4,998	12,670	6,843	7,777	5,116	5,315	3,215
AGRICULTURE	1,558	689	2,058	908	1,939	1,073	1,882	987	690	284
ARTS	3,885	2,771	4,242	3,403	4,433	4,310	3,538	3,154	2,104	1,725
EDUCATION	5,370	5,150	5,575	4,783	5,313	4,713	3,958	4,405	3,031	2,634
ENGR/TECHNOLOGY	5,215	637	5,665	832	6,199	1,028	4,989	819	1,824	188
ENVIR. SCIENCE	1,343	444	1,347	464	1,488	699	1,335	487	1,105	397
LAW	1,797	1,130	2,459	1,939	3,099	2,797	2,233	1,644	1,043	638
MEDICINE	1,316	605	1,890	775	1,821	1,074	1,776	868	448	284
PHARMACY	269	86	340	154	245	172	433	277	25	17
SCIENCE	6,020	3,154	5,781	3,279	6,715	4,593	5,375	2,978	5,092	1,610
SOCIAL SCIENCE	7,633	4,056	12,708	6,201	10,693	6,662	8,853	5,269	4,170	3,113
DENTISTRY	29	12	46	22	67	30	57	22	2	na
VETERINARY MEDICINE	98	21	152	53	190	64	86	32	48	13
OTHERS	832	423	1,278	512	1,152	497	681	269	280	211
TOTAL	45,612	23,778	52,621	28,323	56,024	34,555	42,973	26,327	25,177	14,329

Source: National Universities Commission, Abuja.

TABLE 4: GRADUATE OUTPUT IN NIGERIA

The identified developmental problem by the Nigerian developmental plans of 1962-85 includes shortages of skilled manpower, uneven distribution of available manpower among regions and between urban and rural areas, unemployment in the informal sector as well as widespread under-employment particularly in the informal sector, inadequate or undeveloped organizations and institutions for mobilizing human effort, lack of incentives for people to engage in particular activities which are important for national development, and a rapidly growing population (Folayan Ojo, 1979) and (Fajana, 2000).

Since the middle of the 1970s, the policy of increased enrolment and turnout of university graduates was aimed at easing some of the development problems identified above. It was hoped that by providing the required quality and quantity of different manpower the nation can advance at a faster pace. Hence the incidence of graduate unemployment is indeed an unfortunate problem, as these graduates find it difficult to enter labour activities to generate growth and development for the economy (Fajana, 2000).

The yearbook of labour statistics (1984, 1985, 1986) reports that unemployment rate has generally risen during the world wide recession of the 1980s and 90s. The rational steps taken by most management to cope with the recession includes ban on recruitment. Since graduates are mostly first job seekers, this practice of natural wastage, which involves the refusal to fill vacancies imply that graduates directly hit.

The annual reports of civil service commission (1981, 1982) show that overseas recruitment were carried out ostensibly because of the absence of qualified Nigerians to fill some technological and professional jobs. This may have contributed to the problem of unemployment in Nigeria. Contrary to this, Fajana (2000) argued that the presence of expatriates in jobs may not cause graduate unemployment. Nevertheless, this factor become very important when solutions to the problem are being sought.

One of the measures adopted by governments in developing countries as part of their policy package to solve manpower problems is the establishment of national youth service programmes (Godfrey, 1970). The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Nigeria came into being in 1973 in response to the particular urgent needs of fostering national unity, a means of recouping government investments in graduates. Unfortunately, the NYSC scheme has encouraged employers (private and public) to shy away from employing graduates. It can be said that it has contributed to graduate unemployment in Nigeria.

The labour decree (1974, section 19) protects older workers from being laid off in a situation of redundancy. As labour and management makes an attempt in trying to cope with the recession, they adopt the policy of last-in-first out, coupled with the ban on recruitment during recession. These seemed to have combined to exert a great impact on the employment situation for graduates trying to seek first jobs.

Industrialization in Nigeria has been pursued haphazardly with little or no attention paid to manpower development implications of the adopted strategies. For instance, after independence, a battery of incentives were offered to industrialists to lure foreign investment into Nigeria. But, the industrialists that came were capital intensive in their operation and could not absorb proportional size of the growing labour force in gainful employment (Yesufu, 1971).

Graduate initial unemployment and idleness have adverse psychological, social, occupational and financial effects on them (Fashoyin (1987) and Fajana (2000)). Unemployment has serious effects both on their present living conditions and their outlook in the future and on the society in which they are supposed to be part.

Unemployment is the undoing of graduates because it literally destroys them morally and ruptures the ties and relationship they form. People who have no jobs feel insignificant and inferior. And always having the feeling that they are ostracized from the rest of the society, and most often they are regarded as parasites by other people.

In most societies conventional work ethic suggests that unemployment is unwelcome because of the special role and meaning work has. In particular, young people in this situation feel that they must find work, no matter what. At the beginning of the search period, they look for jobs suited to their qualifications, training or trade but later on they look for any kind of work (Hayes and Nutman, 1981) and any kind of pay (Kasper, 1987)

Unemployment and under-employment may cause people to flee the rural areas, move about or migrate. The later effect will tend to explain some of the current wave of brain drain to the advanced countries from less developed world. The unemployed produce an unsettled labour force, and in urban areas they may lead to overcrowding and crimes.

Research findings by Hayes and Nutman (1980) indicated that in a period characterized by a permanent stable high unemployment situation, there will be considerable increase in deaths due to cardiovascular diseases and cirrhosis of the liver and murders too. According to Banks and Ullah (1988) there will also be increase in admission into psychiatric hospitals (for mental illness) and also imprisonment arising from the criminal tendencies of idle hands.

In summary, Fajana (2000) opined that unemployment can lead to the following: loss of status, loss of prestige and economic strength or power as a result of the loss of wages and benefits of job, infliction of psychological injury as result of the breakdown in social contacts and isolation from the world of work, loss of responsibility, identity and respect which the position at work ensures, loss of purchasing power, loss of union check off dues, loss of production and stunting of gross national product, reduction in the pay-roll tax revenues of the state.

2. HYPOTHESIS

SPSS data analysis was used to test the hypothesis for this study. The major hypotheses tested are as follows:

Hypothesis one

H0: Governmental policy, economic recession, employment of expatriates and trade unions wage demands does not significantly contribute to the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

H1: Governmental policy, economic recession, employment of expatriates and trade unions wage demands significantly contribute to the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

Hypothesis two

H0: rural urban migration, imposition of minimum wage and influence system does not significantly contribute to the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

H1: rural urban migration, imposition of minimum wage and influence system significantly contribute to the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

3. Research Method

The data used in this study is of two type primary and secondary data. However, for the primary data the questionnaire was used to solicit responses from the respondents. It has been structure objectively, considering the time lag and its relative advantage to minimize cost. The questionnaire is divided into two main parts i.e. part I and part II. Also interviews was conducted among graduate job seekers.

Part I seeks personal data of the respondent ranging from age, sex to educational qualification. These were used to compare the characteristics of the sample with that of the population.

Part II is structured basically to delve into the opinion of the respondents so as to have a logical yardstick to refute or accept our research hypothesis.

The population of this study was Stronix Consults Nigeria Limited (SCNL). SCNL is a recruitment and employment firm with focus on recruitment, selection and placement of job applicants into different organizations. The total number of job applicant including unsolicited applications is 1500 job applicants. This number is assumed to be the study population and 10 percent of this number was used as the sample size which is 150.

Stratified sampling method was used for this study. The stratified methods group the population into some definite characteristics (strata). This is suitable for the purpose of this research as it makes it possible for our random selection to be done across all disciplines (Art/Humanities, Sciences and Education).

As mention earlier the data for this study was collected basically through the questionnaire and interview method. The questionnaire was administered at random among job seeker. The study population consists of unemployed graduate in Gbagada, Lagos.

3.1 Hypothesis Testing

4.1.1H0: Governmental policy, economic recession, employment of expatriates and trade unions wage demands does not significantly contribute to the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

H1: Governmental policy, economic recession, employment of expatriates and trade unions

TABLE 4.1.1 Model Summary

Mode	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.255(a)	.065	.019	1.231
2	.251(b)	.063	.029	1.224
3	.244(c)	.060	.037	1.219
4	.218(d)	.048	.036	1.220

Regression coefficient was used to test if there is any significant relationship between unemployment (criterion/ dependent variable) and governmental policy, economic recession, employment of expatriates and trade unions wage demand (predictor / independent variables)

The backward regression analysis was used and from table 4.1 above the first model has the best fit for the purpose of analysis because it has the highest percentage of R square of 0.065. Therefore, the first model was used to analyze major findings.

TABLE 4.1.2 Coefficients(a)

Mode		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	3.451	.550		6.269	.000
	Unemployment rate in Nigeria is as a result of economy recession	-.168	.094	-.201	-1.790	.077
	Do you think that government economic policy brings about unemployment in Nigeria?	-.101	.103	-.108	-.986	.327
	Do you think that employment of expatriates contribute to the graduate unemployment in the country?	-.053	.092	-.063	-.578	.565
	Do you agree that trade unions wages demand increase the rate of unemployment?	.047	.125	.042	.376	.708

From table 4.1.2 it is only trade union wage demand that has the highest impact on the rate of unemployment in Nigeria. That is trade union wage demand is significant than the other three variables. However, the first hypothesis was tested using 5% level (alpha) of significance. Since alpha is less than p value (table 4.2, 0.077, 0.327, 0.565, 0.708) In conclusion economic recession, governmental policy, employment of expatriates and trade union wage demand increase the rate of unemployment.

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: For how long have you been unemployed

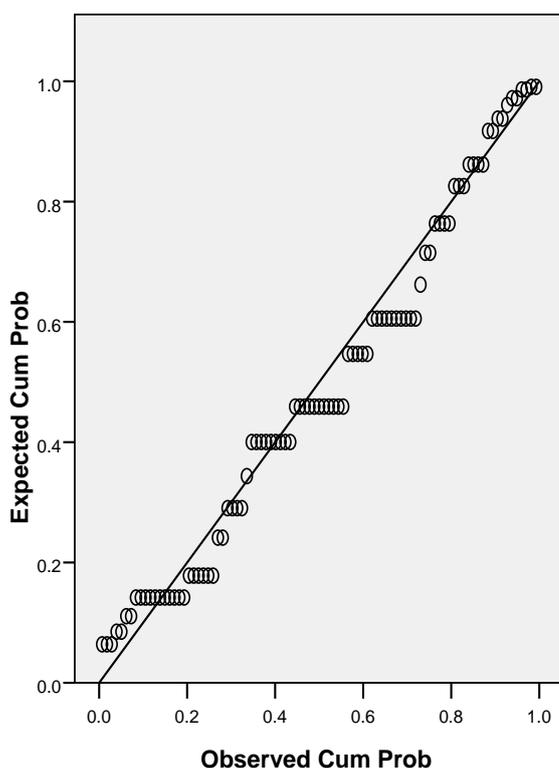


Figure 1

4.1.2 H0: rural urban migration, imposition of minimum wage and influence system does not significantly contribute to the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

H1: rural urban migration, imposition of minimum wage and influence system significantly contribute to the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

Table 4.2.1 Model Summary

Mode	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.214(a)	.046	.013	1.218
2	.209(b)	.044	.022	1.213
3	.162(c)	.026	.015	1.217
4	.000(d)	.000	.000	1.226

Regression coefficient was use to test if there is any significant relationship between unemployment (criterion/ dependent variable) rural-urban migration, lack of labour market information, imposition of minimum wages (predictors / independent variables)

The backward regression analysis was used and from table 4.3 above the first model has the best fit for the purpose of analysis because it has the highest percentage of R square of 0.046 Therefore; the first model was used to analysis major findings.

Table 4.2.2 Coefficients(a)

Mode 1		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	2.439	.474		5.150	.000
	Do you agree that rural-urban migration bring about graduate unemployment?	-.165	.093	-.192	-1.782	.078
	Do you agree that lack of labour market information is a contributory factor to graduate unemployment in Nigeria?	.052	.110	.052	.469	.640
	Do you agree that imposition of minimum wages contribute to the rate of unemployment?	.103	.096	.119	1.069	.288

From table 4.2.2 it is only rural –urban migration that has the highest impact on the rate of unemployment in Nigeria. That is rural-urban migration is significance than the other two variables. However, the second hypothesis was also tested using 5% level (alpha) of significance. Since alpha is less than p value (table 4.4. 0.078, 0.640, 0.288,) In conclusion rural-urban migration, lack of information and imposition of minimum wage bring about unemployment.

5.CONCLUSIONS

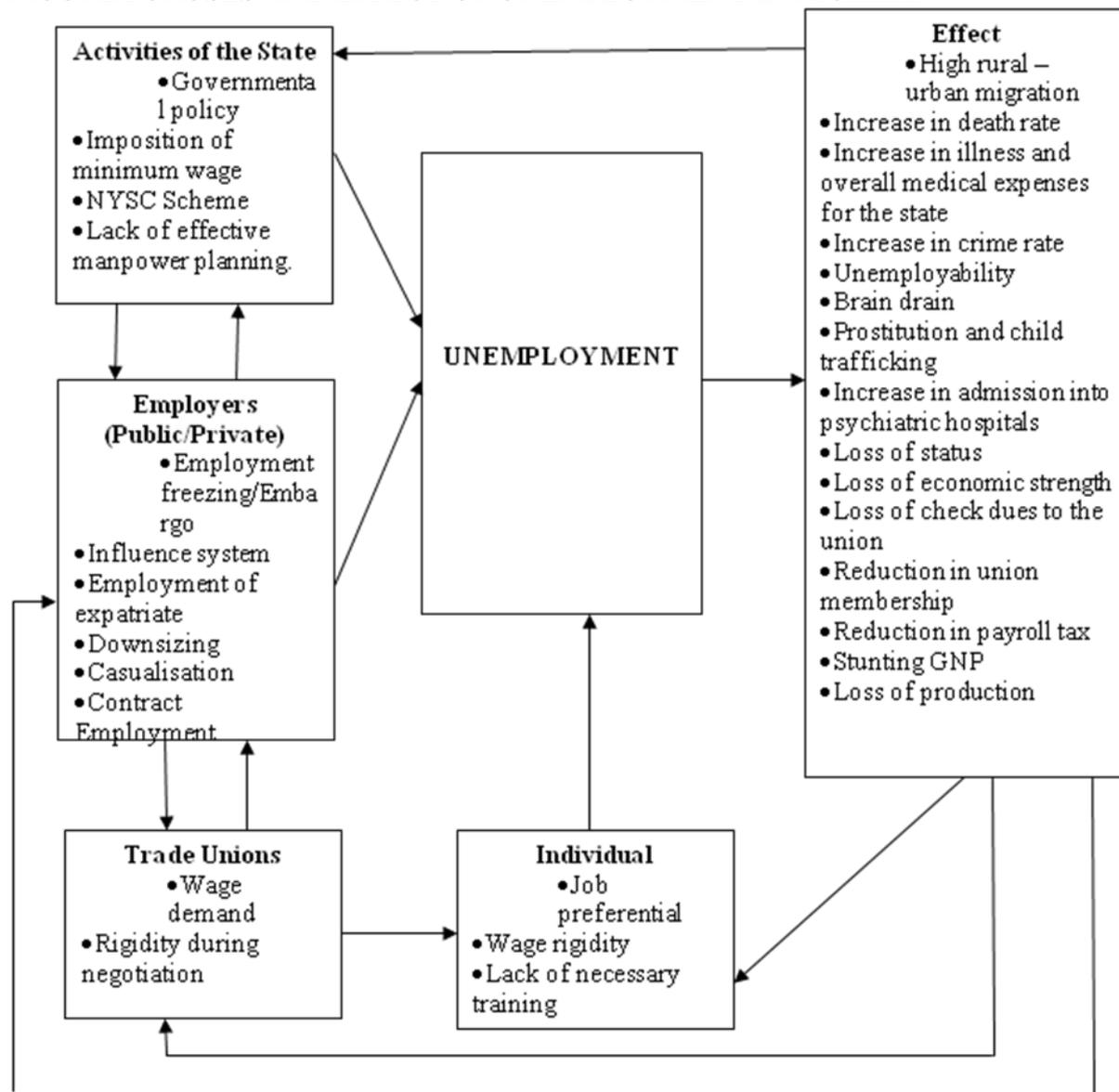
Planning for human resources use in Nigeria has been based on guesswork. Rational steps taken by most management to cope with the recession include ban on recruitment. The practice of natural wastage, which involves the refusal to fill vacancies imply that job seekers are directly hit. Though the rate of appointment of expatriates has been slowed since 1982, presently a reasonable percentage of the labour force in Nigeria is still dominated by foreigners. Most private and even public institutions tend to see the NYSC as a means of securing cheap labour. They utilize the services corp members each year but tend not to absolve any substantial number at the end of the service year. The adoption of the policy of last –in – first out by labour and management, coupled with ban on recruitment seemed to exert a great impact on the employment situation of university graduates.

Existence of artificial barriers to geographical mobility of labour, cultural employment practices , localization and truncating of potentials along tribal lines , marginalization of the poor and the poor state of social infrastructure (Ukpong,1994). Femi Fajana (1994) and Anyanwu (1994) argued that

failure of the Nigerian government to appraise the employment implications of international trade policies, monetary and fiscal policies immensely contribute to unemployment rate in the country. Notwithstanding the above mentioned adverse effect and consequences of unemployment in the Nigerian economy, a number of general approaches are being recommended for the purpose of curbing the unemployment menace (Fajana, 2000) these are approaches are:

- The defective approach to hr planning should reverse ,i.e coordinated planning for human resources should be encourage at all level of the economy.
- Coordinated effort towards labour intensive project
- Resuscitate labour exchanges programmes based on comparative cost advantage
- Orientation of university graduates to change their perceptions about menial jobs
- Elimination of rigid job and wage preference
- Graduate should be encourage to study for a higher degree in a more relevant discipline to reduce skills-mismatch
- Validation of selection instrument and deemphasize reliance on the influence system
- In a situation of massive unemployment, the union's role is to protect the interest of members; the labour is segmented in the process. But unions must broaden their aims in such circumstances to include social justice for all employed and unemployed people.
- The trade unions can also help in creating more jobs by instating as far as possible on labour intensive project.
- Population control, reduction in the rate of expansion of higher education, review of funding for higher education, diversification of the economy, exploring the possibility of labour exports.

FIGURE I CAUSES AND EFFECT OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA



SOURCE: ELEGBEDE TUNDE, 2011

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