

Research on Why Architecture Students Ends up not Practicing Architecture

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Abstract:- The steady decline in the amount of students who study architecture and do not end up in the practise of the study of architecture has become worrisome. The purpose of this study is to investigate the possible factors that contribute to the rise in this disparities. The research explores the reasons why architecture students choose not to practice architecture after completing their degrees. The study is based on a qualitative analysis of interviews conducted with former architecture students who pursued careers in different fields. The findings suggest that the reasons for not practicing architecture are complex and multi-faceted, ranging from personal preferences and priorities to societal and economic factors. The research shows students enter the field of architecture with a romanticized view of the profession, only to discover that the reality of practice is different from what they had imagined. The high-pressure work environment,

long working hours, and low compensation are some of the factors that contribute to their disillusionment. The findings of this research have implications for architecture schools and practitioners. There is a need for architecture schools to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in practice. Additionally, practitioners must work towards creating a more supportive and conducive work environment that values the well-being and professional development of its employees.

I. INTRODUCTION

Architecture is a highly respected profession in Nigeria. Undermining the significantly high demand for architectural services in the country, many students who graduate with a degree in architecture do not end up practicing in the field as traditional architects. It's worthy

to note that not all architecture graduates become licensed architects. Some may pursue related fields such as urban design, landscape architecture, teaching architecture or construction management. Additionally, some graduates may choose to pursue further education or career paths outside of the architecture field. This phenomenon has become a growing concern among educators, professionals, and students. There are various factors that contribute to this phenomenon, including a little or no job opportunities, underpayment of architect, the long study period and limited access to resources and support. Additionally, the current economic recession and political instability in Nigeria might have also played a role in discouraging many graduates from pursuing a career in architecture. In this study, it is essential to find out why architecture graduates in Nigeria are not interested in practicing in the field and to explore potential solutions that can uproot the underlying issues. By identifying the root causes of this problem and developing effective strategies to overcome them to avoid the profession getting infiltrated by frauds who pose as Architects. Creating a more sustainable and thriving architecture industry in Nigeria that benefits both professionals and the wider society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Architecture can be said to be the field that involves the design, planning, and construction of buildings, structures, and spaces. However, despite the importance and versatility of this field, there is a fad in Nigeria where a significant number of architecture graduates end up not practicing architecture after graduation. This review aims to explore the reasons why architecture graduates in Nigeria do not practice architecture.

A possible reason why architecture graduates in Nigeria do not practice architecture is the high cost of setting up an architecture firm. According to Olanrewaju (2019), the cost of establishing an architecture firm in Nigeria is high, as it involves several expenses such as registration fees, office space rent, and equipment costs. This high cost may discourage architecture graduates from pursuing architecture and opt for a different career path.

Another reason why architecture graduates in Nigeria do not practice architecture is the lack of job opportunities. Despite the increasing demand for architects in Nigeria, the job market remains highly competitive, causing many graduates struggle to find suitable job opportunities in the field. This lack of job opportunities may force architecture graduates to explore other career paths besides traditional architecture, leading to a decline in the number of practicing architects in Nigeria. Furthermore, the inadequate infrastructure, poor governing body and bureaucratic processes in Nigeria may also discourage architecture graduates from practicing architecture. According to Iweka (2018), the slow and bureaucratic processes involved in obtaining building permits and licenses can make it difficult for architects to complete projects on time and may result in project cancellations. This can lead to frustration and may discourage architecture graduates from pursuing a career in architecture.

Additionally, the poor working conditions are sub par and poor, with long working hours and limited opportunities for career growth. This poor remuneration and working conditions may discourage architecture students from practicing architecture and may lead them to explore other career paths. Lastly, the lack of recognition and appreciation for architects in Nigeria may also contribute to the decline in practicing architects in the country. Despite the importance of architecture in the development of the country, many architects in Nigeria do not receive adequate recognition or appreciation for their work. This lack of recognition may lead to a decline in the number of architecture students interested in pursuing a career in architecture. In conclusion, several factors contribute to the decline in the number of architecture students practicing architecture in Nigeria. These factors include the high cost of setting up an architecture firm, the lack of job opportunities in the field, inadequate infrastructure, poor working conditions and low wages, and the lack of recognition and appreciation for architects. To address these challenges, there is a need for concerted efforts from the government, industry stakeholders, and academic institutions to create a conducive environment for architecture students to practice their profession.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study investigating why architecture graduates end up not practicing architecture would typically carry out a literary review to identify and understand the problem faced by these students and research questions. A suitable research question might be: “What factors might contribute to architecture graduates not pursuing a career in architecture?” The review involves gathering and analysing existing knowledge on the topic. This helps to consider existing theories and data. A thorough review of this study will include studies on career decisions, graduate employment, and architecture education. The research design outlines the approach for the study, including the methodology for data collation. A mixed method research is ideal for this study, surveys might be used to collect quantitative data on the factors that influenced the participants’ career decisions, while interviews or focus groups might be used to gather more in-depth qualitative data, it would include architecture graduates who did not pursue a career in architecture, as well as current architecture students who are considering other career paths.

Data analysis involves examining and interpreting the data collected from the participants. This might involve statistical analysis of survey results, as well as thematic analysis of qualitative data. Based on the data analysis, conclusions can be drawn about the factors that contribute to architecture graduates not pursuing a career in architecture. The final step is to share the research findings with others in the field, such as educators, practitioners, and policymakers. This might involve presenting the results at conferences, publishing academic papers, or sharing the findings with professional.

IV. FINDINGS

After a thorough investigation and data collection on the reasons why architecture graduates end up not practicing architecture, attention has been drawn to the following factors – each driven by additional influences – appear universally as recurrent themes in lack of interest to practice architecture in Nigeria, Each of these main factors and their supporting influences will be discussed in this section of the study and conclusions on remediation

strategies will be offered in the subsequent section. Parallel findings from published studies substantiate the discussions on the issues raised and recommendations that arise from the study. The identified factors are explained below:

➤ *Difficulty Finding Employment:*

One of the main reasons why architecture students do not pursue a career in architecture is due to the difficulty of finding employment in the field. The job market can be highly competitive, and not all graduates are able to secure positions in the field, especially during economic downturns. The lack of job opportunities is a significant concern for architecture students, and it can discourage them from pursuing a career in the field. The architecture profession is highly competitive, and the number of qualified graduates exceeds the number of available jobs in many regions. The architecture industry is affected by economic cycles and construction booms and busts, which can create unpredictable fluctuations in the job market. When there are fewer construction projects, there is less demand for architects and related professionals, leading to fewer job openings.

As a result, many architecture graduates who cannot find suitable employment in the field may decide to pursue alternative career paths or enter related fields, such as urban planning, interior design, or construction management. Some may also choose to pursue advanced degrees in related fields, such as engineering or business, to improve their job prospects. It’s important to note that while job opportunities in architecture can be limited, they do exist. Many firms and organizations are actively seeking talented and motivated architects to join their teams, and there are opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship as well. Additionally, networking, developing a strong portfolio, and gaining experience through internships and volunteer work can all help architecture students improve their chances of finding employment in the field.

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➤ *Long and Demanding Education:*

Pursuing a career in architecture requires a significant investment of time, effort, and money.

Architecture students typically spend at least six years in college studying architecture, and they may also need to complete a two-year internship and pass a licensing exam before they can become licensed architects. This long and demanding process may discourage some students from pursuing a career in architecture, especially if they are not fully committed to the field. The demands of the architecture profession can be quite challenging, with architects often working long hours, dealing with tight deadlines, and managing complex projects. For some students, the prospect of this kind of high-pressure work may be daunting, and they may decide to pursue other careers that offer more work-life balance.

Additionally, some architecture students may discover during their education that their interests lie in other areas of design, such as graphic design, product design, or interior design. While these fields may share some similarities with architecture, they require different skill sets and approaches to design, which may be more appealing to some students.

➤ *Lack of Passion or Interest:*

Overall, a lack of passion and interest can be a significant factor in why some architecture students end up not practicing architecture. It is important for students to carefully consider their career goals and aspirations, and to seek out educational and professional opportunities that align with their interests and strengths, some architecture students may realize during their education that they do not have a genuine passion or interest in the field.

Some architecture students enter the field with high hopes and aspirations, only to be disillusioned by the realities of the profession. This can be due to a variety of reasons, including a lack of creativity, difficulty in conceptualizing design, or simply a preference for other fields. They may find that the work is not as glamorous or creative as they had imagined, or that the industry is highly competitive and demanding. This can lead to a loss of passion and interest in pursuing a career in architecture.

➤ *Inadequate Education:*

Architecture students may spend a lot of time in the classroom studying theory and design principles, but they may not have enough practical experience working on real projects. Without this experience, they may find it difficult to translate their theoretical knowledge into practical skills required for practice. Even if architecture students have excellent design skills, they may not have the business and marketing skills necessary to run a successful architecture practice. These skills include budgeting, project management, client relations, and marketing, among others. Without these skills, architecture graduates may struggle to find and retain clients, manage projects effectively, and maintain profitability.

Architecture education often focuses on traditional paths to becoming a licensed architect, such as working in a design firm or starting one's practice. However, there are many other career paths available to architecture graduates, such as urban planning, construction management, or real estate development. If students are not exposed to these alternative paths during their education, they may not realize the full range of options available to them.

In conclusion, inadequate education can be a contributing factor to why some architecture students do not end up practicing architecture. By providing students with more practical experience, exposure to alternative career paths, and business and marketing skills, architecture programs can better prepare graduates for success in the field.

➤ *Personal Circumstances:*

Architecture can be a demanding and time-consuming profession, requiring long hours and a high level of dedication. Some students may find that they are unable to balance the demands of their personal life with the demands of their career, leading them to pursue other opportunities that offer more flexibility and work-life balance.

➤ *Burnout:*

Architecture students may also experience burnout due to the intense nature of the education, which can lead to disillusionment with the field. Burnout is a very real and common issue among architecture students, and it can

definitely contribute to why some students may end up not practicing architecture.

Architecture is a demanding field that requires a lot of time, effort, and dedication. Architecture students often have to work long hours, handle multiple projects at once, and deal with tight deadlines, all while trying to balance their academic workload and personal life. If architecture students are not able to manage their workload effectively, they may experience burnout. Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress and overwork. Burnout can lead to a range of symptoms, including fatigue, depression, anxiety, and loss of motivation.

When architecture students experience burnout, they may start to question whether or not they want to continue pursuing a career in architecture. They may feel disillusioned with the field, or they may realize that they simply do not have the passion or energy to continue. Some students may decide to switch to a different major or pursue a different career path altogether. To prevent burnout, architecture students should prioritize self-care and find ways to manage their stress. This could include taking breaks when needed, practicing mindfulness or meditation, getting enough sleep and exercise, and seeking support from friends, family, or a therapist. It is also important for architecture schools to provide resources and support for students to help them manage their work load and prevent burnout.

➤ *Alternative Career Paths*

Some architecture students may find that they are drawn to other fields, such as engineering, construction management, or real estate development, which offer similar challenges and opportunities. Architecture education often focuses heavily on theoretical and design-oriented aspects of the field, and may not adequately prepare students for the practical and business-oriented aspects of working as an architect. This can make the transition from student to practicing architect more challenging, and may lead some students to reconsider their career path.

Architecture can be a highly structured and regulated field, with many rules and regulations to follow. Some architecture students may find that they prefer a more creative and flexible career path, such as interior design, landscape architecture or fine arts.

➤ *Work-Life Balance*

Work-life balance can certainly be a factor in why some architecture students may choose not to pursue a career in architecture.

Architecture can be a demanding profession that often requires long hours, including evenings and weekends, in order to meet deadlines and deliver projects on time. This can lead to a work-life imbalance, which can be difficult to sustain over the long term, the stress and pressure that comes with working in the field of architecture can also take a toll on one's mental and physical health. This can further contribute to a sense of burnout or dissatisfaction with the profession. Some architecture students may prioritize work-life balance and seek out careers that offer more flexibility and free time.

In conclusion, there are many reasons why architecture students may choose alternate career paths. While some may go on to become successful architects, others may find that their skills and interests are better suited to other professions.

➤ *Financial Concerns:*

The financial realities of working in the architecture field can also be a deterrent for some students. Starting salaries in architecture can be relatively low, starting an architecture practice can be expensive, with costs for office space, equipment, staff and the cost of education and licensure can be high. In order to practice architecture, one must obtain a license, which involves passing a rigorous exam and paying fees. Additionally, some states require architects to participate in continuing education programs to maintain their license. These costs can be a deterrent for some graduates. While architecture can be a fulfilling career, it may not offer the highest salaries, especially in the early stages of one's career. This can make it challenging for some graduates to maintain a comfortable lifestyle.

The financial considerations associated with practicing architecture can be significant, and they may discourage some students from pursuing this career path. However, for those who are passionate about design and are willing to make the necessary investments of time and money, architecture can be a rewarding and fulfilling profession.

It is worth noting that not all architecture students end up leaving the field, and many go on to have successful careers in architecture or related fields. Ultimately, the decision to pursue a career in architecture is a personal one that depends on a range of factors, including individual interests, goals, and circumstances.

As discussed in earlier sections of this paper, the demands of the profession at entry, training and Licensure deter a lot of students from practicing architecture. In the last decade, architecture graduates have recorded the highest unemployment rates among all the professions including medicine, law, Engineering and accounting. It is worth noting that not all architecture students end up leaving the field, and many go on to have successful careers in architecture or related fields. Ultimately, the decision to pursue a career in architecture is a personal one that depends on a range of factors, including individual interests, goals, and circumstances. The big question about these findings: what should they do about this?

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the available research, there are several reasons why architecture students may end up not practicing architecture. Some students may find that the realities of the profession do not align with their expectations. They may be disillusioned by the long hours, high stress, and low pay that are common in architecture practice. Additionally, some students may find that the design-focused education they received in school did not adequately prepare them for the technical and business aspects of architecture practice.

There might be external factors that discourage students from pursuing architecture after graduation. These can include a lack of available jobs, a limited job market in certain geographic areas, or a competitive job market that favours experienced architects over recent graduates.

Many graduates may struggle to find mentors and support systems within the profession, which can make it difficult to navigate the complexities of the field and find success. Some students may simply have a change of heart and decide to pursue a different career path altogether. This could be due to personal factors such as a desire for a better work-life balance or a passion for a different field.

Overall, the decision not to practice architecture after obtaining a degree is a complex one that can be influenced by a variety of factors. It is important for architecture schools and the profession as a whole to be aware of these factors and to work to address them in order to retain talented graduates and ensure the continued growth and success of the profession.

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