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## Article

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EuroEconomica

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*Reference:* Chigozie, Agu Osmond/Ojide, Makuachukwu Gabriel et. al. (2020). Graduate underemployment challenges and future labour market uncertainties in Nigeria. In: EuroEconomica 39 (3), S. 60 - 71.  
<https://dj.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/EE/article/view/588/705>.

This Version is available at:

<http://hdl.handle.net/11159/6225>

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## **Graduate Underemployment Challenges and Future Labour Market Uncertainties in Nigeria**

**Osmond Chigozie Agu<sup>1</sup>, Makuachukwu Gabriel Ojide<sup>2</sup>, Stella Ada Mbah<sup>3</sup>**

**Abstract:** This study examined the challenges of graduate underemployment and the dynamics of underemployment, as to know the emotional and the social effects of underemployment in Nigeria among graduates. Building on Peter Blau's Social exchange theory, this study analysed data from 389 respondents randomly drawn from underemployed graduates from different academic levels and qualifications in Nigeria. The results show that underemployment affects graduates of varied social status but particularly those that are between the ages of 21 and 28, the married and those that studied courses in Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. Remarkably, type of academic qualification, gender and level of education has non-significant impacts in determining the choice of jobs while underemployed graduates are unevenly distributed across different jobs. The level of remunerations either encourages the underemployed to stay in the job or quit their current jobs. Surprisingly and unnaturally, the result shows that the majority of the Bachelor's Degree holders never had the willingness to leave their underemployed jobs. The study therefore recommends that government and private sector players should improve the remunerations of their employees especially graduates.

**Keywords:** Graduates' underemployment; Social Exchange Theory; Remunerations; Nigeria

**JEL Classification:** E2; A23; N37

### **1. Introduction**

The global increase and escalating unemployment rate have been a phenomenon of great concern. The economic downturn in the late 2000s has compounded the problem of unemployment, as a number of fresh graduates cannot be gainfully employed with jobs that are commensurate with their academic qualifications (Abel, Deitz & Su, 2014). Surprisingly, in Nigeria, 50 percent of the labour force is either unemployed or underemployed and this scenario will be most likely worsened by the effects of COVID-19 (Nigeria Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2020). For example, the graduate unemployment rate increased from 23.1 percent in 2018 to 27.1% in 2020 while the underemployment rate as defined by those working less than 40 hours per week or those whose skills are underutilized has risen from 24.6 per cent in 2018 to 28.6 per cent in 2020 (NBS 2020). This alarming statistic is unprecedented. Graduate underemployment has a huge repercussion to the economy in terms of man-hour loss, loss of interest in education among the youths, lack of job satisfaction which leads to low productivity and low economic growth among others.

The job crunch in Nigeria has been attributed to too many factors, including gross under funding of education sector which results in the decline and decay in infrastructure and reduction in the quality of teachers in the economy, frequent industrial strike actions by lecturers in the tertiary institutions over

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unpaid allowances, poor salary and poor welfare packages and recently, by the lecturers' agitations and insistence for not joining the integrated payroll system in the country (Kazeem, 2016; Institute of International Education [IIE], 2020). These factors also affect the tertiary institutions' admission processes, as only 25 per cent of the prospective university applicants eventually get admission into the university. Consequently, a good number of the upper-class resort to sending their wards overseas for tertiary education. This action may be to give their wards an edge in the labour market over those that studied within the country (Kazeem, 2016). On this note, IIE, (2020) observed that in 2018/2019 academic session, Nigeria spent \$514 million for studentship in the United State of America (USA). This amount exceeded the amount spent by Germany, France, United Kingdom and other countries during the same academic session.

The dearth for job opportunity in Nigeria prompted the World Bank (2020) to predict that Nigeria is likely to face her worse economic recession in the last forty years in the face of Covid-19 effects and due to the near collapse of world oil market, since Nigeria heavily relies on crude oil for government revenue. Uncertain economic activities and increase in unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria would compound the already precarious poverty level. Despite the fortunes gained in 2010s as a result of increased oil prices, Nigeria overtook India in the rank of extreme poverty in 2019 (Brookling Institute, 2019; and World Bank, 2020).

Nigeria Universities produce an average of 500,000 graduates annually, adding to the graduates who studied outside the country and returned home to compete for limited jobs within the country. About 47 per cent of those graduates are unemployed (Kazeem, 2016). Moreover, Statistic South Africa [SSA], (2015) maintained that about 5 per cent of the annual graduates end up being discouraged from seeking for job as a result of several years of unsuccessful job search. Such discouraged job seekers often times rely on their families for support or resort to any job that could put food on their table. This action most often gets graduates underemployed. Most job recruiters do not only rely on certificate qualifications for job employment, they also focus on years of experience and expertise in certain fields of study. On this note, News24, (2012) advocated that prospective students should choose the courses that are in high demands in the economy while applying for university admission.

Though underemployment is a global phenomenon and has been regarded as a structural problem in the world, as Zhang (2020) observed that the underemployment rate in the US in 2013 was 13.5 per cent and stood at 17.4 per cent in 2019. This is because increasing university graduates find it difficult to get jobs that are commensurate with their academic qualifications within the five years of their graduation.

The focus of this study is to examine the challenges of graduate underemployment in Nigeria and to evaluate the dynamics of underemployment in Nigeria, as to know the emotional and the social effects of underemployment in Nigeria among the graduates. The novel of this study, in the Nigerian context, is because only little attention has been paid in the scholarly research in terms of the ordeals the underemployed graduates go through after graduation.

The subsequent sections of this study have section two focusing on the relevant literature. Section three presents the research design and methodology. Section four is the discussions of the results while section five presents conclusion and policy recommendations.



## **2. Relevant Literature**

This study found Blau's Social Exchange Theory very appropriate, as it is a psychological theory which describes the social factors that influence the human interaction in the reciprocity (give and take) environment (Blau, 1964). This theory noted that though people are controlled by role expectation. They are bound to operate within this role as to maximize their satisfaction with minimal cost. The theory noted that social exchange reflects any behaviour geared towards achieving a set social objective, arguing that it promotes and strengthens friendship ties and enhances social status among colleagues and subordinates in any organization. The novel of social exchange is that people can sacrifice their time and status to maintain a cordial relationship with others within the organization, while the people outside the organization may not understand the reason for the strong friendship ties within the organization. Consequently, human decisions and relationships can be understood in the lenses of self-sacrifices in terms of mutual exchange of rewards. This theory corroborates George Simmel's assertion that every mutual relationship can be lubricated by personal sacrifices, by considering others better than oneself (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Blau's social exchange principle hinges on fairness, mutual benefit, rationality and marginal utility.

In connection with this study, the underemployed graduates have the options to either accept the jobs that are below their academic qualification or stay jobless. In light of this, rationality in thinking before decision making is advocated within the available information in the labour market. This decision and information to be considered may be in terms staying jobless or accepting being underemployed with the prevailing wages and the psychological effects of engaging in underemployment status among others. Their job satisfaction or otherwise depends largely on their feelings on what they get from the jobs, fairness in allocating their wages or salaries and finally on the utility they get in term of the job they do.

A good number of empirical studies have been carried out on unemployment and underemployment in the light of associated factors. For instance, Slack and Jensen (2011) studied the nexus between age, race and employment in America and noted that unemployment or underemployment is more prevalent among the young people. The study observed that as people advance in age, the problem of unemployment and underemployment declines. This is because people must have been acclimatized with the kind of jobs they have been engaged in at their early age. The study however noted that the effect of race in employability has significant effects in either encouraging or discouraging employability. The study concluded that in America, the blacks have greater chances to be underemployed than the whites. Trading Economics (2018) enumerated the underemployment situation in South Africa and concluded that young graduates face the challenge of underemployment which resulted from the general unemployment rate of 52.8 per cent in South Africa.

Feldman (1996) examined the relationships among underemployment, graduates' marital statuses, flexibility in job search and the types of qualifications these underemployed graduates possess. The study noted that about 57 per cent of the underemployed graduates were married; while 52 per cent hold Bachelor's Degree in the social sciences 42 hold Bachelor's Degree in the Arts while about 5 per cent hold Bachelor's Degree in the Sciences and Engineering. In terms of family status and flexibility in job search, the study noted that active job seekers that are willing to move to other states in search of job are most likely to get gainful employment easily. Also, Mortensen (1986) examined the nexus between the educational status and underemployment in Chicago and concluded that education

status/level and underemployment have a negative relationship. Put differently, the level of education and rate of underemployment vary inversely.

Aston, Maguire and Spilbury (1990) studied the relationship between graduate employability and gender in England and concluded that gender plays a significant role in certain labour sector. The study maintained that in some certain segments of labour market for instance, in the marketing sectors of the banking industry; females have more opportunities to be employed in such sectors than male counterpart. On the other hand, Bluistein (2006) studied the relationship between job satisfaction, justice, interrelationship as well as remuneration and observed that individuals with low remuneration are likely to be discouraged and also have a higher desire to quit their jobs than those that receive commensurate rewards in the job. The study however added that the graduates who have stayed so long in the underemployment jobs may get acquainted with the jobs due to the long interpersonal relationship that they have built in the organization over such long years in the job.

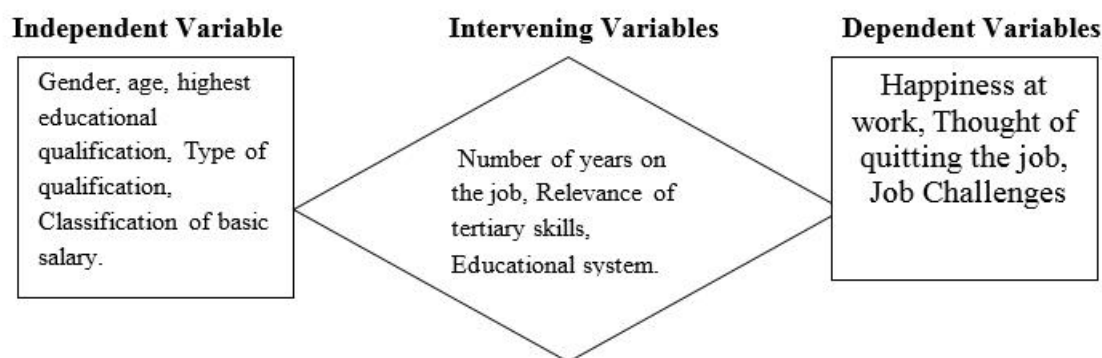
Meyer and Allen (1997) examined the psychological state of the underemployed graduates in Germany. The study noted that every organization has “organizational commitment” which was divided into three parts, such as affective (workers have emotional ties to the organization), continuity (employees’ ability to stick to or leave the organization) and normative (having a sense of commitment to the organization. Getting an underemployed graduate to be committed to the organization that does not satisfy his/her financial need is very difficult. They rather get attached to their fellow workers in the organization due to the personal relationship that exists between them, than to the organization itself.

In Nigeria and many other emerging economies of the world, there is dearth of studies on the challenges of graduate underemployment in terms of the emotional and the social effects. This is study, however, seeks towards the bridging of this gap with focus on Ekiti State of Nigeria.

### 3. Research Design and Methodology

#### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework below shows the relationship that exists among the dependent, intervening and independent variables. This study employed a survey design since, the main aim of this study is to examine the challenges of graduate underemployment and to evaluate the dynamics of underemployment as to ascertain the emotional and the social effects of underemployment in Nigeria among the graduates.



The study employed some statistical tools such as Factor Analysis, T-Test, Multiple Regression and Factorial ANOVA in the data analysis. The study is in line with the studies of Yamane (1967); Cochran (1977); and Almeda, Capistrano and Sarte (2010). The population of the study consists of the underemployed graduates in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State Nigeria. The sample would have been spread all over the 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), however, Ado Ekiti was chosen because of the interstate restrictions in Nigeria due to Covid-19 lockdown during the study. Since the population of undergraduate in Ado Ekiti is assumed to be a finite population, the study used Slovin's formula. This formula is applicable only when estimating a population proportion and when the confidence coefficient is 95%. Additionally, it is optimal only when the population proportion is suspected to be close to 0.5. (Tejada and Punzalan, 2012).

The sample size was derived using Slovin's formula given as:

$$s = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \quad (1)$$

Where: s = Sample size, N = Finite population, e = Margin of error = 5% (0.05),

1 = Constant (Almeda, Capistrano, Sarte, 2010). The sample size is approximately 389 which stand for the population. Therefore, 430 questionnaires were distributed but 390 were retrieved while 389 were analyzed. The questionnaire was designed in a 5-Point Likert Rating Scale (PLRS) showing Strongly Agreed (SA) = 5, Agreed (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1.

Table 1 presents the result of the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test, done during the pilot study showing that the questionnaire responses from the 10 per cent of the respondents (40 respondents) are reliable and consistent.

**Table 1. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test**

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.8745	389

## 4. Discussions of Results

### Demographic Analysis

The data showed that the majority of the respondents (75.5 per cent) were between 21 and 28 years. Those between 29 and 32 years constitute 20.5 per cent of the sample size while those between 33 and 36 years were the least (4 per cent). Majority (78.4 per cent) were married while 21.6 per cent were not married. There were no widowed or divorced respondents in the sample. While majority of the underemployed (33.4 per cent) studied Social sciences, Humanities and Arts, those that studied in the faculty of Science constitute 26.6 per cent, Health Sciences represents 24.4 per cent and those that studied in the Faculty of Education represents 15.6 per cent.

In terms of academic qualification, majority of the respondents (56.7 per cent) holds Bachelor's Degree, 20.1 holds Higher National Diploma (HND) while 23.2 per cent holds ordinary Diplomas. These underemployed graduates are working in different trades and occupations including: commercial cyclists, bank tellers, private school teachers, shop attendants, hawkers, petty traders, shop clerks, cleaners in schools and hospitals among others.

The high level of underemployment in Nigeria was unarguably as a result of high employment rate which in turn resulted from several factors earlier mentioned. The demographic analysis shows that the majority (75.5 per cent) of the underemployed graduates are those between the ages of 21 and 28 while those between the ages of 33 and 36 are the least (4 per cent) among the underemployed. This corroborates the previous findings by Slack and Jensen (2011) who noted that the relationship between age and underemployment are inversely related, noting that the younger graduates are most likely to be affected by unemployment and underemployment. Furthermore, the findings show that the majority (78.4 per cent) of the underemployed graduates are married. This is in line with the study of Feldman (1996) who observed that in terms of family status and flexibility in job search, active job seekers that are willing to move to other states in search of job are most likely to get gainful employment easily. The implication is that a married person will definitely find it more difficult to relocate to other cities in search of job than the unmarried person. Though, this calls for a rational choice according to Blau's Social Exchange theory. The study infers, therefore, that the married job seekers will have to make a choice, either to stay with their spouses and families or relocate to another state in search of a better job opportunity. As regards the field of study, the finding shows that the majority (33.4 per cent) of the underemployed graduates studied in the faculties of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts while the least (23.2 per cent) studied in the faculty of Education. The study infers that as there were no responses from some fields of study, the choice for courses of study is paramount in Nigeria bearing in mind that there are courses that are not competitive in the labour market. Remarkably, majority (56.7 per cent) holds Bachelor's Degree, 20.1 per cent holds HND while only 23.2 holds Diplomas. No respondent has a Master's Degree and other higher Degrees. This result corroborates the study of Mortensen (1986) who noted that education status/level and underemployment have negative relationship. Put succinctly, the level of education and rate of underemployment varies inversely. The study infers that employability depends largely on the level of education of the job seeker.

### **The Relationship between Underemployment, Gender and Academic Qualification**

An insignificant relationship was found between gender and the kind of jobs the graduates engage in. This is obvious from the percentages of the males and females engaged in different types of jobs (see Table 1).

Table 1 shows that higher percentage of females were employed as bank tellers while higher percentage of males work as commercial cyclists and shop attendants than the female counterparts. There is a statistically significant nexus between types of jobs and academic qualifications on the underemployed graduates. Aside the graduates of health sciences that work mainly as shop attendants, others work either as hawkers, private school teachers or as cleaners. The implication is that despite the category of jobs these graduates engage in, they are all underemployed.

**Table 1. Results of the Relationship between Underemployment, Gender and Academic Qualification**

Features	Classifications	Job Types				Total %
		Bank Tellers M(SD)	Commercial Cyclists M(SD)	Shop Attendants M(SD)	Hawkers, (PS) Teachers, Cleaners M(SD)	
Gender	Female	7 (27.6)	3(24.8)	3 (11.8)	14 (30.7)	100
	Male	2 (3.4)	12 (40.3)	5(17.2)	18 (42.5)	100
	TOTAL	6 (17)	15 (26.3)	12 (26.7)	29 (35)	100
Qualification Type	Social Sciences Humanities and Arts	2 (6.3)	8 (41.6)	5 (22.1)	8 (32.1)	100
	Faculty of Science	5 (25)	5 (25)	2 (6.2)	8 (33.8)	100
	Health Science	1 (7.8)	3 (13.1)	5 (38.5)	4 (40.8)	100
	Faculty of Education	3 (28)	1 (8.7)	0	8 (6.7)	100
	TOTAL	9 (15)	14 (23.3)	10 (16.7)	27 (45)	100
Highest Qualification	Diploma and NCE	2 (16.7)	3 (25)	2 (16.7)	5 (41.7)	100
	Bachelor's Degree	6 (17.1)	10 (28.6)	6 (17.1)	13 (37.1)	100
	Higher National Diploma (HND)	1 (7.7)	1 (7.7)	2 (15.4)	9 (69.2)	100
	TOTAL	9 (15)	14 (23.3)	10 (16.7)	27 (45)	100

*M denotes Mean while SD denotes Standard Deviation*

Whereas the majority of the underemployed graduates were employed either as hawkers, private school (PS) teachers or cleaners, the graduates of HND constitutes more in number than other lower educational levels. The Higher National Diploma (HND) graduates were seen less as Bank Tellers. Table 2 presents the result of Factorial ANOVA Analysis on the effects of gender and academic qualification on the choice of jobs the underemployed graduates engage in. The result shows that all the variables have non-significant impacts on choice of jobs of the underemployed graduates, either singly or as combined variables. Nevertheless, the result shows there is an uneven distribution of gender of underemployed graduates in different job lines. This finding corroborates the study of Aston *et al.* (1990) who maintained that in some certain segments of labour market, for instance, in the marketing unit of the banking industry and certain feminine trades; females have more opportunities to be employed in such sectors than the male counterpart, while the males dominate the commercial cyclist industry or the masculine trade. This study therefore infers from the foregoing that by nature, while some jobs are meant for the females majorly, some are mainly for males.

**Table 2. Factorial ANOVA Analysis**

Tests of Between-Variable Impacts					
Dependent Variable: types of jobs					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	26.533 <sup>a</sup>	19	1.344	1.053	.430
Intercept	275.934	1	280.944	212.297	.000
Type of Qualification	.340	3	.113	.089	.966
Highest qualifications	5.676	2	2.838	2.224	.121
Genders	.807	1	.807	.633	.431
Type of Qualification * Highest Qualification	8.550	6	1.425	1.117	.370
Type of Qualification * Genders	3.283	3	1.094	.858	.471
Highest * Genders	1.202	2	.601	.471	.628



Type of Qualification * Highest qua * Genders	.101	2	.050	.039	.961
Error	51.050	40	1.276		
Total	587.000	60			
Corrected Total	76.583	59			
<i>a. R Squared = .333 (Adjusted R Squared = .017)</i>					

### The Impacts of Gender, Years on the Job and Academic Qualification on Happiness on the Job

Table 3 shows the different gender and their levels of happiness in their chosen jobs. Majority of both genders 24 (77.8) for females and 28 (72.7) for males are sometimes happy in their chosen jobs. However, lesser proportion is never happy in their chosen jobs while a number of them are always happy in their chosen jobs. Furthermore, the findings show the same trend in underemployed happiness based on the kind of academic qualifications they possess. For instance, regardless of their type of academic qualifications, majority are sometimes happy in their chosen jobs. Interestingly, non-from the Faculty of Education expressed unhappiness in their chosen jobs. The result also shows that while the underemployed graduates from the faculty of education are the happiest in the chosen jobs, those from the faculty of health sciences are the saddest of them all. This finding is in line with the study of Altonji, Kahn and Speer (2016) who observed that it is necessary for prospective students to check for more lucrative courses before applying for university admission. This, according to the study would enable the graduate obtain a good and satisfactory job after graduation. The study can infer that, this is one of the reasons many graduates in Nigeria do not easily secure good jobs after graduation, as not all the courses offered in the university are in high demands. In relation to happiness and the number of years of being underemployed, there are varied levels of happiness experienced. For example, while the majority of the underemployed graduates claimed that they are sometimes happy, none among those with one year and four years working experience as underemployed graduates agreed to have been sad at any time.

**Table 3. Results of graduates' happiness, Years of being Underemployed, Gender and Academic Qualification**

Features	Classifications	Reactions on Happiness in the job			
		Never	Sometimes	Always	Total %
Gender	Female	1 (3.7)	24 (77.8)	5 (18.5)	100
	Male	2 (6.1)	28 (72.7)	7 (21.2)	100
	Total	3 (5)	45 (75)	12 (20)	100
Type of Qualification	Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts	1 (5.3)	14 (73.7)	4 (21)	100
	Faculty of Science	1 (6.3)	13 (81.2)	2 (12.5)	100
	Faculty of Health Sciences	1 (7.7)	10 (76.9)	2 (15.4)	100
	Faculty of Education	0	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3)	100
	Total	3 (5)	45 (75)	12 (20)	100
Years on the job	1 year	0	5 (100)	0	100
	2 years	2 (11.8)	15 (88.2)	0	100
	3 years	1 (5.9)	12 (70.6)	4 (23.5)	100
	4 years	0	13 (61.9)	8 (38.1)	100
	Total	3 (5)	45 (75)	12 (20)	100

*M denotes Mean while SD denotes Standard Deviation*

For inferential purpose, the study used Multiple Regression analysis to examine how the exogenous variables (number of years, salary, qualification and others) impact on underemployed graduates' happiness in their chosen jobs. Table 4 presents the result of the multiple regressions.

**Table 4. Result of the Impact of Gender and Other Variables on Happiness on the Chose Job**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
(Constant)	1.103	.310		3.562	.001			
Gender	-.026	.101	-.027	-.255	.799	.004	-.035	-.027
Age	.158	.107	.174	1.479	.145	.419	.199	.154
highest qualification	.124	.080	.167	1.538	.130	.263	.207	.160
Basic salary	.231	.061	.582	3.705	.000	.589	.463	.395
Length of service	.032	.060	.066	.537	.593	.389	.074	.056

*a. Dependent Variable: Are you happy at work?*

$R = 0.754$ ,  $R\text{ Squared} = 0.4653$ ,  $Adjusted\ R\text{ Squared} = 0.3453$ ,  $F = 5.680$ ,  $P = 0.000$

The result shows that none of the variables impacted significantly on underemployed graduates' happiness on their chosen jobs except basic salary ( $B = 0.582$ ,  $t = 3.705$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). The study infers therefore that gender, number of years in the job as an underemployed graduate, and academic do not contribute to the happiness of the underemployed graduates on their chosen jobs. The study also infers that the reason most people are not often happy with their underemployment status is basically due to lack of proportionate remuneration of work. Karl Max opined that work should attract a commensurate reward, without which, the workers shall not be happy and fulfilled. Also, Bluistein (2006) corroborated Karl Max's view, noting that people engage in work for survival and personal happiness.

#### ***The Willingness of Quitting the Job relative to Academic Qualification and Number of Years of Being Underemployed.***

The section considers the willing or unwilling of the underemployed graduates to leave their current job even when they do not have an alternative job. Table 5 shows that higher proportion of the underemployed graduates with varied academic qualifications, though without any available job, sometimes consider quitting their current job.

**Table 5. Results of the Willingness to Quit the Job relative to Academic Qualification and Number of Years of Being Underemployed**

		Response on Willingness to Quit the Job			
		Never M(SD)	Sometimes M(SD)	Always M(SD)	Total%
Qualification Level	Diploma	2 (16.7)	10 (83.3)	0	100
	Bachelor's Degree	9 (25.7)	26 (74.3)	0	100
	HND	4 (30.8)	8 (61.5)	1 (7.7)	100
	TOTAL	15 (25)	44 (73.3)	1 (1.7)	100
Years on Job	1 year	0	5 (100)	0	100
	2 years	1 (5.9)	16 (94.1)	0	100
	3 years	5 (29.4)	12 (70.6)	0	100
	4 years	9 (42.9)	11 (52.4)	1 (4.7)	100
	TOTAL	15 (25)	44 (73.3)	1 (1.7)	100

*M denotes Mean while SD denotes Standard Deviation*

Surprisingly and unnaturally, the result shows that the majority of the Bachelor's Degree holders never had the willingness to leave their jobs. In the same group (Bachelor's Degree holders), no one expressed willingness to quit their jobs. It is only on the category of HND that unemployed graduates expressed willing to leave their jobs. This is unnatural; the group of people that would naturally agitate for a better working condition was seen here to be docile and complacent about their working condition. Economically, we can infer here that it seems that the job market is already saturated with Bachelor's Degree holders or that the industries prefer those of lower qualifications who they could pay less, as to maximize their profit, hence, employing majority of the lower academic qualification as opposed to Degree holders.

In view of the number of years of being unemployed relative to the willingness of leaving the jobs, the result shows that higher proportion of graduates were willing to leave their jobs in the first year of their being underemployed. It seems that the willingness to quit the jobs fizzles away as the years in underemployment go by. Notwithstanding the fact that fewer (4.7 per cent) underemployed graduates with four years underemployment experience always have the willingness of leaving their jobs, greater proportion (42.9 per cent) never had the willingness to quit their jobs. The situation seems to be a trade-off relationship between the years of being underemployed and the willingness to quit. Put simply, it seems the underemployed graduates "enjoy" their underemployment situation the more they stay in their chosen jobs. However, the result shows that on the average, underemployed graduates are willing to quit their jobs.

Having justified that on the average, the underemployed graduates are usually willing to quit their jobs, the study considered the gender, academic qualification, salary and number of years in being underemployed that are most likely to consider or express willingness to quit their jobs. In order to achieve this, the study employed Multiple Regression Analysis. The results in Table 6 show that apart from basic salary, other variables do not have significant relationship with willingness to quit from the job. The implication is that, largely, basic salary impacts ( $B = 0.631$ ,  $t = -3.844$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ) determines who is most likely to leave their job.

**Table 6. Multiple Regression Results of the Influence of Gender, Academic Qualification and Other Variables on the Willingness to Quit Their Jobs**

Model		Unstandardized Measurements		Standardized Measurements	t	Sig.	Associations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.244	.329		6.823	.000			
	Gender	.109	.107	.118	1.024	.311	.124	.139	.117
	Age	.015	.113	.017	.128	.899	-.193	.018	.015
	highest qualification	.000	.085	.000	.004	.997	-.043	.000	.000
	Basic salary	-.241	.064	.631	-3.844	.000	-.537	-.456	-.427
	Number of years	-.027	.063	-.058	-.427	.671	-.311	-.059	-.049

a. Dependent Variable: Have you ever considered quitting your job?

$R = 0.655$ ,  $R\text{ Squared} = 0.608$ ,  $Adjusted\ R\text{ Squared} = 0.240$ ,  $F = 3.935$ ,  $P = 0.000$

This finding is in line with the study of Karl Max who observed that one of the features of work is to attract a commensurate reward (salaries and wages), without which, the workers shall neither be happy



nor be fulfilled. Also, Bluistein (2006) corroborated Karl Max's view, noting that people engage in work for survival and personal happiness.

## 5. Conclusions

This study shows that underemployment affects graduates of varied social status but majorly affects those that are between the ages of 21 and 28 in Nigeria. The impacts of the underemployment also mainly affect the married and those that studied in the Faculties of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. It is interesting to also know that those from the Faculty of Education were least represented, showing that they are easily absorbed in the labour market than the others qualifications. No one with postgraduate qualification was captured as being underemployed. Remarkably, type of academic qualification, gender and level of education has non-significant impacts in determining the choice of jobs either as single or joint factors. Underemployed graduates are unevenly distributed across different jobs. Despite the fact that these graduates were underemployed and not engaged in their desired jobs, most of them were happy with their jobs, this is predicated on the salary or rewards they get from the jobs. Regardless of the academic qualification, the willingness to quit from the current underemployment is prevalent among the higher proportion of the graduates; to a large extent, salaries determine whether an underemployed graduate would stay on the jobs or quit the current jobs. The study therefore recommends that the government should, through legislations, encourage employers to improve the remuneration packages of the graduates. Periodic conferences should be encouraged between the employers and the employees, as this will help foster synergy between the employers and the employees; such conferences should also stress on the need for higher productivity from graduate employees as to justify their demand for higher remuneration. Finally, prospective students should be encouraged go for university courses that are in high demands. This will most likely give them better opportunity to secure gainful employment earlier than expected.

	Authors	Contribution
1.	Dr. Osmond Chigozie Agu	Conceptualization; Methodology, Formal analysis, Roles/Writing, Writing - review & editing and Project Administration.
2.	Dr. Makuachukwu Gabriel Ojide	Methodology, Supervision, Writing - review & editing.
3.	Mrs. Stella Ada Mbah	Data curation, Writing - review & editing

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