ASSESSMENT OF VIABILITY OF INDIGENOUS FURNITURE MAKING IN IJEBU-ODE, OGUN STATE NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT
The sustainability of indigenous furniture enterprises is crucial because they make significant economic contributions to the livelihoods and well-being of a significant number of the operators, therefore this assessed the viability of indigenous furniture making in Ijebu-Ode Ogun state, Nigeria. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 68 respondents out of which 66 questionnaires were retrieved. Descriptive statistics tools such as frequency, percentage and weighted mean score were used. The result of the study showed that all (100%) of the respondents were male, with 72.7% had age range between 30-39 years. Most (87.9%) of the respondents had secondary education attainment. The result on the enterprise characteristics revealed that 80.3% of the respondents had technical training. Also, wood job engaged by respondents indicated that 47% were into only furniture making, 9.1% were carpenters alone while 43.9% engaged in both furniture making and carpentry. The result revealed the viability factors of furniture making indicated that most of the respondents strongly agreed that availability of choice of wood species (75.8%), nearness to market (80.3%), proximity to cheap and constant power supply (87.9%) were the major factors affecting viability of furniture making. It is therefore recommended that furniture producers should improve their skills and experience by engaging in further training and exposure.
Keywords: assessment, indigenous, furniture, viability,

INTRODUCTION
Forest-based enterprises activities as those that use any raw materials or products that occur in the forest or woodland or from trees outside the forest. Wood furniture industry or enterprises are thus forest-based enterprises (Falconer and Arnold 1989). According to FAO (1987), furniture is largely produced by small and medium size enterprises using simple technical know-how and technology coupled with low capital input. Small and medium scale furniture production alone provides employment up to 2,500,000 persons (FAO, 2005). They also constitute a reasonably big percentage of downstream wood users consuming approximately 245,000$m^3$of wood (Odokonyero, 2005).
Alao and Kuje (2012) discovered in their study that the furniture enterprise is characterized by a limited number of stages between production, processing, trade, and end use. In addition, small scale furniture production is easy to establish by would-be entrepreneurs. Small - scale furniture
enterprises therefore make significant economic contributions to the livelihoods and well-being of a significant number of the operators.
A number of factors and challenges affect production and sale of wooden furniture produced by small-scale furniture enterprise. For instance, Arowosoge and Tee (2010) reported that durability, design/finishing, colour/grain, wood species, and wood grade are the determinant of consumers' choice for wooden dining furniture in southwest Nigeria. On the other hand, Aroso *et al.* (2016) reported that poor funding, expensive tools, epileptic power supply, low valuation of furniture products and poor patronage, amongst others are the constraint faced in furniture production.
Recently, there is increase in the number and operators furniture industry in Ijebu-Ode. High concentration of furniture industry is observed alone in this area and other strategic locations in the city of Ijebu. The operators produce different types of furniture for domestic and other uses. However, information on what brought about the increase in number and its viability has not been recorded. This study provides information to those intend to venture into furniture production as a small-scale business.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The general objective of the study is to assess viability of indigenous furniture making in Ijebu-ode Ogun state.
Specific objective are:
1. To describe the personal characteristics of the respondents in the study area.
2. To examine the enterprise characteristics of the respondents in the study area.
3. To assess the viability of indigenous furniture making in the study area.

METHODOLOGY
Ijebu ode is a city located in South- Western Nigeria, close to the A121 highway. The city is located on latitude 6.8167^0 and longitude 3.9333^0 E at 110km by road north-east of Lagos; It is within 100km of the Atlantic Ocean in the eastern part of Ogun State after Abeokuta. The state has a wide area of undulating lowlands belonging to a coastal sedimentary rock of western Nigeria.
This study adopted a cross sectional research design of survey type. This allows questionnaires to be distributed across selected areas in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. The target population of the study comprised

all furniture producers. This includes those that engage in production of furniture in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. The sampling was based on purposely sampling to generate the list of those that engaged in production of furniture in the study area. Out of 85 indigenous furniture manufactures, 80% of them were randomly selected to give a total number of 68 respondents in which 66 questionnaires were retrieved in the study area. Data for the study were collected from primary data with the use of structured questionnaires administered to the respondents and personal interview. Information were collected based on the objectives of the study. The statistical tools used for this research work were descriptive statistical tools, which include frequency table and percentage.

Objective 3 used ranking by mean size of a Five (5) Point Likert scale rating technique

$$X_w = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{5} ni\ (5i)}{n}$$

Where Xw = Weighted Mean Score.
n = Number of respondents.

NOTE: The scale was in the following range of means;

a. Below: 2.95 .....Not Serious (NS)
b. Between: 2.95 – 3.05.....Serious (S)
c. Above: 3.05 .....Very Serious (VS)

RESULTS AND DISCUSIION

Personal characteristics of the respondents

The information obtained on the furniture manufacturer in Ijebu-ode (Table 4.1) reveals that all of the operators were male (100%) with majority married (100%) and within the age category of 30-39 years (72.7%) followed by age category of 40-49 with 22.7 %. This is in line with work of Ogunjobi *et al* (2018) who found that most of the furniture makers were below 60 years. Similar finding on gender and age of small-scale furniture operators have been obtained elsewhere (Babalola, 2018). According to Alao and Kuje (2012), all the sampled small-scale furniture makers in Lafia Nigeria were male with majority married. Likewise, Aiyeloja *et al.* (2014) discovered the age category of small-scale furniture makers in Port Harcourt, Nigeria to fall between 31 and 50 years. On the educational status of the furniture producers, majority (87.9 %) attended secondary school followed by those that had primary school and tertiary education (6.1 %). None of them had technical education that related to furniture manufacture. This is supported by the work of Ogunjobi *et al* (2018) who found that most of the respondents had secondary education.

Table 4.1: Personal characteristics of respondents

Personal characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20-29 years	3	4.5
30-39 years	48	72.7
40-49 years	15	22.7
Total	**66**	**100**
Sex		
Male	66	100
Female	0	0
Total	**66**	**100**
Marital Status		
Married	66	100
Separated	0	0
Divorce	0	0
Single	0	0
Total	**66**	**100**
Educational Level		
Primary Education	4	6.1
Secondary Education	58	87.9
Tertiary Education	4	6.1
Total	**66**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2018

ENTERPRISE CHARACTERISTICS

Those that had received technical training before were 80.3 % while the responsible indicates their category of wood job that they offered with furniture maker (47 %), carpenter only (9.1 %) and combined of furniture and carpenter (43.9). it is evidence from the Table 2 that the main job description of the respondents is planner and machine operator (87.9) follow by finish sprayer and supervisor 7.6 and 4.5 % respectively.

The results on work experience revealed that most of the furniture producers had been into the furniture production for over 10 years (77.3 %) followed by 16.7% of those that are in furniture production for just 6-10 years. This means quite a number of the furniture makers have been in production for over a decade. Having longer years in a profession has been discovered to contribute to the level of experience and skill put into quality of production (Ajayi and Ojutiku, 2008). Holzer (1988) stated that the higher the experience and length of training, the better skills on the job and better chances of higher return on investment.

The respondents indicate that furniture production is viable in the study area (Fig 4.1), This can be attributed to their year of experience that the longer they have stay in production the more they know (Table 3.3). Agbeja *et al.*, 2007 and Babalola, 2018 reported small-scale furniture enterprise in the Lagos and Ilorin respectively as a viable enterprise study area is a profitable venture.

Table 4.2: Enterprise characteristics of the respondents

Enterprise Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Have you received any technical training before		
Yes	53	80.3
No	13	19.7
Total	**66**	**100**
Categories of wood job		
Furniture maker only	31	47
Carpenter Only	6	9.1
Combined Furniture/Carpenter	29	43.9
Total	**66**	**100**
Main job description		
Finish Sprayer	5	7.6
Planner/ machine operator	58	87.9
Supervisor	3	4.5
Total	**66**	**100**
Number of years worked in the workshop		
2-5 years	4	6.1
6-10 years	51	77.3
11-15 years	11	16.7
Total	**66**	**100**
Time spent at work		
3-5 hours	4	6.1
6-7 hours	29	43.9
8-10 hours	33	50
Total	**66**	**100**

4.4 VIABILITY FACTORS OF FURNITURE MANUFACTURE IN THE STUDY AREA

Table 4.4 below summarized the identified factors of viability of furniture manufacturing in Ijebu-Ode. These factors ranged from available choice of wood species, quality of wood species, nearness to market, proximity to cheap and constant power supply, labour sources, cost of choice of wood species, Cost of other raw materials. A five (5) point likert rating

scale was applied to rank the factors in order of their mean sizes. This was necessary to enable us identify which of these factor were major and posed serious viability of furniture manufacturer in Ijebu-Ode.

In this part of the study, the mean ratings of each of the seven factors identified by respondents in were computed and compared with the theoretical mean of 3.0 for the five-point likert scale. The mean ratings of the factors as indicated in Table 3.4 shows that the ratings of the respondents' viability of furniture production in Ijebu-Ode ranged from 3.06 (*SD* = 1.32) to 4.21 (*SD* = 1.43).

All the items had mean ratings greater than the theoretical mean of 3.0. The mean ratings for the other items being greater than 3.0 suggest that the furniture manufacture or production in the study area is viable with all the factors identified. Meanwhile, proximity to cheap and constant power supply, nearness to market, available choice of materials and cost of choice of wood species had the highest mean rating of 3.88 (SD = 0.33), 3.80 (SD = 0.40), 3.76 (SD = 0.43) and 3.62 (SD = 0.52) respectively. The result obtained in this study corroborate Agbeja *et al.*, 2007 who conformed the identified factors in this study as part of factors that could contribute to viability of furniture manufacturing in the study area.

Table 4.4: Viability factors of furniture manufacture in the study area

S/No	Factors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean(SD)	Remark
1	Available choice of wood species	0(0)	0(0)	16(24.2)	50(75.8)	3.76(0.43)	VS
2	Quality of wood species	0(0)	0(0)	56(84.8)	10(15.2)	3.15(0.36)	VS
3	Nearness to market	0(0)	0(0)	13(19.7)	53(80.3)	3.80(0.40)	VS
4	Proximity to cheap and constant power supply	0(0)	0(0)	8(12.1)	58(87.9)	3.88(0.33)	VS
5	Labour sources	0(0)	0(0)	62(93.9)	4(6.1)	3.06(0.24)	VS
6	Cost of choice of wood species	0(0)	1(1.5)	23(34.8)	42(63.6)	3.62(0.52)	VS
7	Cost of other raw materials	0(0)	0(0)	53(80.3	13(19.7)	3.20(0.40)	VS

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study pointed out that most of the respondents were male (80.0 %) having received technical training (80.3 %) regarding furniture production thus their main job description was planner /machine operators (87.9 %) with 6-10 years of experience (77.3 %).

The result of this study suggests that the respondents were not ignorant of the factors that make furniture manufacture/production in the study area viable. Among very important factors are proximity to cheap and constant power supply, nearness to market, available choice of materials and cost of choice of wood species. The furniture manufacture/production in the study area is a viable.

The furniture producers also need to improve their skills and experience through engaging in further training and exposure on the current technique of furniture production. They need to frequently visit other established medium and big furniture companies to learn new things

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