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## Public perception on the quality of locally made wooden furniture in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

Wooden furniture industries contribute significantly to a country's economic development. However, given the weaknesses in human resources, absence of advanced technologies and marketing capacity in Nigeria, the wooden furniture sector remains less than optimal. This study, therefore, assessed public's perception of locally made wooden furniture to recommend strategies to improve the sector and promote sustainable forestry. There are five urban local government areas in Ibadan Metropolis. Two urban local government areas were purposively selected based on the concentration of corporate bodies, local furniture producers, marketers of imported furniture. Random sampling was used to select twenty-five corporate bodies, furniture producers, marketers of imported furniture and fifty individual users in each urban local government area. Structured questionnaires were administered to a total of 250 respondents. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Likert scales. All furniture producers (100%) use wood and supplement their production with plywood (46%), particleboards (22%), HDF (26%) and MDF (26%). *Milicia elcelsa*, *Gmelina arborea*, *Khaya ivorensis* and *Tectona grandis* were the most common tree species used by furniture producers. Individual users (81.0%) and corporate users (20.0%) stated that only locally made furniture is used in their homes and organizations respectively. Thirty-six percent of corporate users and 58.0% of marketers claimed both locally made and foreign furniture are used and sold respectively. Marketers (100%), individual users (82.0%) and corporate users (86.0%) agreed that the appearance of foreign furniture influenced consumers' choice; marketers (76%), individual users (54%) and corporate users (80%) agreed that customers believed that the manufacturing quality of foreign furniture is the best, thus, the reason for their choice. Wood is a major raw material used in furniture production. To promote sustainable forestry; respondents should

engage in forest plantation development. The government should subsidize modern processing equipment so that locally made furniture can be of the best quality.

**Keywords:** Wooden furniture, Use, Sustainable, Production, Consumer, Preference, *Gmelina arborea*, *Khaya ivorensis*, *Tectona grandis*, *Milicia excelsa* *Nauclea diderrichii*, *Mansonia altissima*, *Cordia millenii*, *Terminalia superba*, *Nesogordonia papaverifera*, *Irvingia gabonensis*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Wood, as a natural and sustainable source, has remained an important substance throughout history for its unique and useful properties as well as its versatility. Wood's distinct technical characteristics and abundance have made it a sought-after natural material for furniture, tools, decorative objects, building construction, marine and sea applications, railway and musical instruments, and so on. However, due to the distinctive features and characteristics of individual wood species, utilization potentials or the choice of wood species for a specific purpose vary. Some of these characteristics are strength, natural durability, colour (appearance), ease of machine and workability, cost of construction, hardness, and availability of the wood species (Idumah and Awe, 2011; Awe *et al.*, 2019). The furniture industry is reliant on wood as the primary raw material for furniture production. The industry is an important branch of the processing industry that contributes significantly to country development by creating jobs, training workers, increasing foreign exchange earnings, and encouraging investment in a variety of secondary support industries (Famuyide *et al.*, 2012). To make furniture, solid wood, particleboard, fiberboard, and plywood can all be used. These materials are works of applied art that are used to furnish mobile and permanent residential interiors. Furniture can be used individually, in suites, or in sets, and if these wooden pieces are well and carefully constructed, they are easy to preserve and care for, and they may even become better looking over time (Vlosky and Shupe, 2012). Thus, the furniture industry is involved in the design, manufacture, distribution and sale of functional and decorative objects (Onyekachi, 2018; Gabriel, 2017).

Olorunnisola (2000) affirmed that the furniture industry is a major market for wood products, as well as a veritable tool in poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Nonetheless, the wood furniture industry is a growing sector and still at the artisanal and cottage level where they are labour oriented with a backward level of technology. In support of this report, Bello and Mijinyawa (2010) stated that the wood furniture industries in Nigeria primarily operate at the small and medium scale levels of production. According to the study, these furniture producers have their workshops along the roadside, within residential areas in cities and sub-urban settlements, while the few large-scale producers use specialized modern equipment and are mostly in the cities. However, the presence of these few large-scale producers in these areas is due to the availability of elite consumers with high income as well as nearness to various industrial and government administrative headquarters, where potential buyers can be found (Aiyeloja *et al.*, 2014). The study further stressed that the sector is volatile and confronted with numerous challenges that affect output and sustainability. For example, overexploitation of timber in forests has resulted in a scarcity of choice and preferred wood, inadequate infrastructure such as power supply, raw materials, access to finance, modern and efficient equipment, and skilled personnel pose a serious threat to proper and standard production in the furniture industry. In addition, the use of natural wood in the production of furniture, decorative

articles, and domestic appliances has been reported to be dwindling in the country because the use of imported furniture has been on the increase. Ahmed and d’Astous (2001) and Ahmed (2003) confirmed that consumers usually have several options in their choice of product consumption. Consumers make a rational choice by comparing and contrasting product features and performance (appearance, manufacturing quality, durability etc.). Kaputa *et al.* (2018) stated that consumer preferences for furniture are primarily determined by the materials, attributes, and styles of the furniture. According to the study, furniture materials could include solid wood, wood composites, plastic, metal, glass, and a combination of materials; attributes could include price, manufacturing quality, design, environmental attributes, country of origin, warranty, colour, brand, and safety; and styles may comprise rustic, modern, futuristic, and retro. Thus, consumers' preferences for visual appearance and tree species knowledge influence their preference for high-quality timber. As a result, consumers' perceptions of a specific product may be used to evaluate the product and make purchasing decisions.

This study, therefore, investigated people’s views on the quality of wooden furniture produced in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2. 1. Study Area

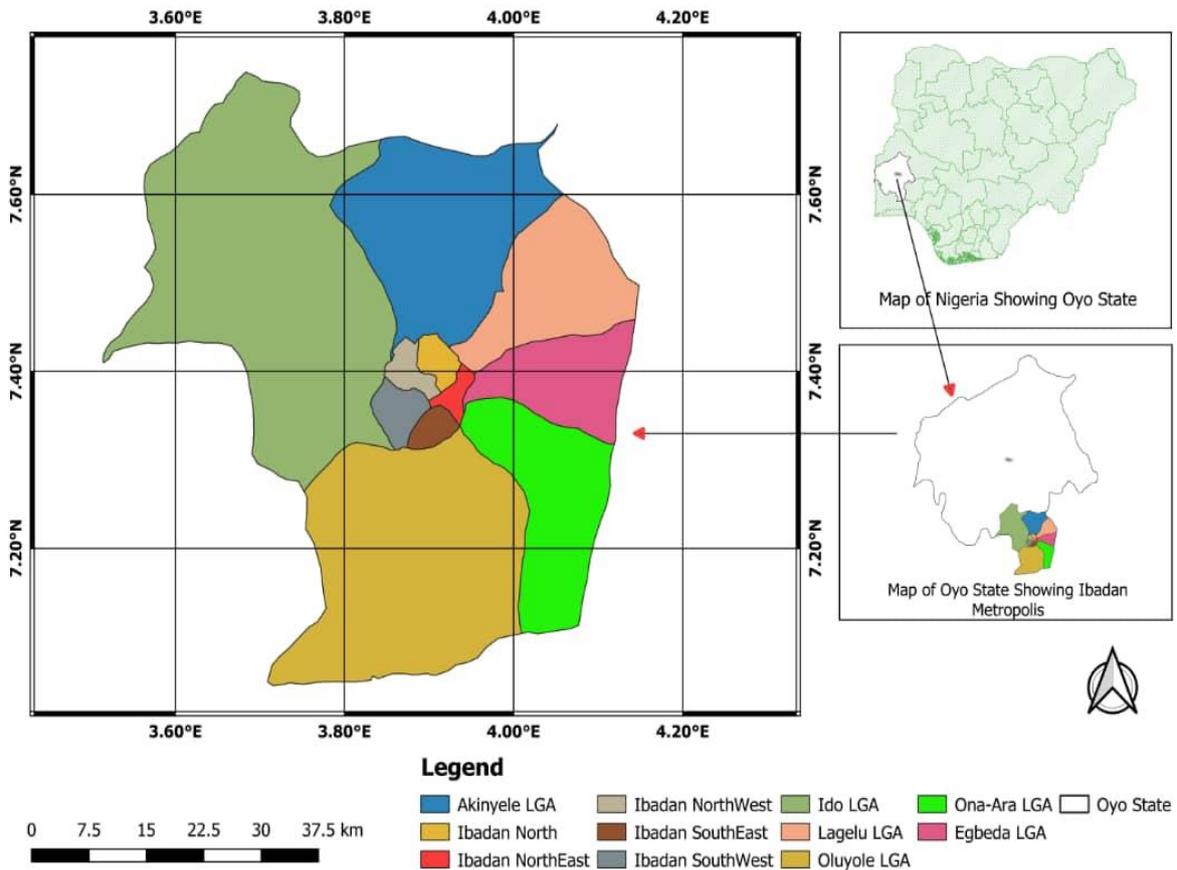


Figure 1. Map of the study area

Ibadan, the capital of Oyo state, is in the southwestern part of Nigeria. It is the most populous city of Oyo and the third most populous city in Nigeria after Lagos and Kano. It is 750m above sea level and has two distinct seasons: the rainy season being from March to October while the dry season runs through November to February. There are eleven local government areas in Ibadan metropolis consisting of five urban local government areas and six semi-urban local government areas in the city. The five urban local government areas are Ibadan North, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan South-West and Ibadan South-East, while the six-semi urban local government areas are Akinyele, Egbeda, Ido, Lagelu, Ona-Ara and Oluyole. It is located approximately on longitude 3.60° E – 4.20° E of the Greenwich Meridian and latitude 7.20° N- 7.60° N of the Equator.

## **2. 2. Sampling and Data Collection**

Primary data for the study were collected through the administration of a structured questionnaire. Within the eleven Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ibadan Metropolis, two urban local government areas were purposively selected based on the concentration of corporate bodies, local furniture producers, marketers of imported furniture. Simple random sampling was then used to select twenty-five corporate bodies, local furniture producers, marketers of imported furniture and fifty individual users in each urban local government area. A total of 50 corporate bodies, local furniture producers and marketers of imported furniture were each randomly selected while 100 individual users were also randomly selected making a total of 250 randomly selected respondents. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Likert scales.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages and tabular analysis were adopted. Likert scales were employed to gain insight into the decision-making process of producers, marketers and consumers in Ibadan metropolis.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3. 1. Raw Materials Used for Furniture Production**

Table 1 shows the distribution of raw materials used by furniture manufacturers. According to the Table, sawnwood was the most commonly used raw material in the production of furniture by all respondents (100%). Although, some respondents complement furniture production with the use of plywood (46%), particleboards (22%), and high-density fiberboards (26%), ditto for medium density fiberboards.

Results reveal that all furniture producers in the study area utilized sawnwood for furniture production and at the same time compliment their production with plywood, particleboards, HDF and MDF. The findings show that all furniture manufacturers in the study area used sawnwood for furniture production while complementing it with plywood, particleboards, HDF, and MDF. According to Kaputa *et al.* (2018), in Slovak and Croatian, interior and exterior furniture are made of solid wood, wood composites (wood-based panels), or a combination of the materials is preferred and utilized. Pirc *et al.*, (2008) also observed that when it comes to materials used in furniture making, most consumers (experts) consider wood to be a high-quality material, and in a hypothetical case of equal prices for all of the materials, most of the consumers would vote for wood as the most suitable material for different interior spaces.

**Table 1.** Frequency distribution of raw materials for locally made furniture

Raw Material	Frequency	Percentage
Sawn wood	50	100
Plywood	23	46
Particle Board	11	22
MDF	13	26
HDF	13	26

**3. 2. Availability and Quality of Raw Materials Used for Locally Made Furniture**

Tables 2 and 3 show the level of availability of raw materials as well as the quality of raw materials used in furniture production. The study revealed that 92% of the respondents considered sawnwood to be readily accessible to wooden furniture manufacturers. Plywood (88%), particleboard (100%), MDF (100%) and HDF (100%) were also considered to be readily available for wooden furniture production. Furthermore, all respondents (100%) stated that sawnwood used in furniture production was of good quality, as was particleboard, MDF, and HDF. However, 14% of respondents indicated that the plywood used for furniture making can sometimes be of poor quality.

It can be observed from the results that raw materials were of good quality and readily available when required, but some respondents stated that plywood can sometimes be scarce and of poor quality when available. Respondents also stated that plywood was imported into the country and that there is no guarantee that the plywood is of standard quality. As a result, the availability of a specific raw material doesn't guarantee quality. This corroborates the report of Arowosoge (2010) that plywood production in Nigeria has decreased drastically due to a significant decrease in the volume of economic wood species. The country's African Timber and Plywood Industry collapse resulted in a limited supply of veneer, which has severely harmed other allied industries.

**Table 2.** Frequency distribution of availability of raw materials for furniture production.

Raw Material	Availability					
	Readily available		Slightly Available		Not Available	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Sawn wood	46	92	4	8	0	0
Plywood	44	88	0	0	6	12

Particle Board	50	100	0	0	0	0
MDF	50	100	0	0	0	0
HDF	50	100	0	0	0	0

**Table 3.** Frequency distribution of raw materials’ quality.

Material	Quality					
	Good		Fair		Poor	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Sawn wood	50	100	0	0	0	0
Plywood	43	86	0	0	7	14
Particle Board	50	100	0	0	0	0
MDF	50	100	0	0	0	0
HDF	50	100	0	0	0	0

### 3. 3. Wood Species Used in Furniture Production

Table 4 shows the most common wood species used for furniture production in the study area. Respondents identified ten (10) different species which are *Gmelina (Gmelina arborea)*, Teak (*Tectona grandis*), Iroko (*Milicia excelsa*), *Mansonia (Mansonia altissima)*, Omo (*Cordia millenii*), Afara (*Terminalia superba*), Oron (*Nesogordonia papaverifera*), Mahogany (*Khaya ivorensis*), Opepe (*Nauclea diderrichii*) and Oro (*Irvingia gabonensis*). Results in Table 4 also indicate that 68% of respondents made use of *Milicia excelsa*, 64% of respondents used *Gmelina arborea*, ditto *Khaya ivorensis*, 62% of respondents used *Tectona grandis* and 52% of respondents used *Mansonia altissima* for furniture production. Among the identified wood species, *Irvingia gabonensis* (20%) and *Nesogordonia papaverifera* (22%) are the least used. However, the number of species identified by Arowosoge *et al.* (2006) in Lagos, Ibadan, and Benin were lower. According to the study, 33, 28 and 18 wood species were used to make furniture in Lagos, Ibadan, and Benin, respectively. This study shows that both exotic and indigenous species are suitable for furniture production and the most commonly used are *Gmelina arborea*, *Khaya ivorensis*, *Tectona grandis* and *Mansonia altissima*. This is similar to the findings of Ogunjobi *et al.* (2018) which stated that *Gmelina arborea* (80.0%) was the most commonly preferred wood species for furniture, followed by *Mansonia altissima* (32.0%), *Azelia africana* (22.0%) and *Tectona grandis* (20.0%) in Ogun State, Nigeria. Thus, the development of more exotic wood species plantations will supplement while also reducing indigenous tree species used in furniture production.

**Table 4.** Frequency distribution of common wood species used for Locally Made Furniture

Species	Common/local names	Frequency (n=50)	Percentage
<i>Gmelina arborea</i>	Gmelina	32	64
<i>Khaya ivorensis</i>	Mahogany	32	64
<i>Tectona grandis</i>	Teak	31	62
<i>Milicia excelsa</i>	African teak /Iroko	34	68
<i>Nauclea diderrichii</i>	Bilinga/Opepe	13	26
<i>Mansonia altissima</i>	Mansonia/ African black walnut	26	52
<i>Cordia millenii</i>	Drum tree/Omo	19	38
<i>Terminalia superba</i>	Shinglewood/Afara	18	36
<i>Nesogordonia papaverifera</i>	Redwood/Oron	11	22
<i>Irvingia gabonensis</i>	Wild mango/Oro	10	20

### 3. 4. Properties of Wood Used in Furniture Production

**Table 5.** Frequency distribution of wood properties used for furniture production

Tree species used	Machineability / Workability	Natural colour	Amenability to finishing	Durability
	(Frequency) %	(Frequency) %	(Frequency) %	(Frequency) %
<i>Gmelina arborea</i>	(50) 100	(50) 100	(50) 100	(50)100
<i>Khaya ivorensis</i>	(47) 94	(44) 88	(50) 100	(47) 94
<i>Tectona grandis</i>	(48) 96	(50) 100	(50) 100	(50) 100
<i>Milicia elcelsa</i>	(50) 92	(50) 100	(50) 100	(50) 100
<i>Nauclea diderrichii</i>	(50) 100	(44) 88	(50) 100	(50) 100
<i>Mansonia altissima</i>	(46) 92	(50) 100	(50) 100	(50) 100
<i>Cordia millenii</i>	(45) 90	(50) 100	(50) 100	(50) 100

<i>Terminalia superba</i>	(50) 100	(50) 100	(50) 100	(50) 100
<i>Nesogordonia papaverifera</i>	(50) 100	(50) 100	(50) 100	(48) 96
<i>Irvingia gabonensis</i>	(45) 90	(45) 90	(44) 88	(45) 90

From Table 5, it can be observed that all respondents (100%) considered *Gmelina* (*Gmelina arborea*), *Opepe* (*Nauclea dideriichii*), *Afara* (*Terminalia superba*) and *Oron* (*Nesogordonia papaverifera*) to have great quality in terms of machinability and workability. The natural colour of *Gmelina arborea*, *Tectona grandis*, *Milicia elcelsa*, *Mansonia altissima*, *Cordia millenii*, *Terminalia superba*, *Nesogordonia papaverifera* were considered by respondents (100%) to be beautiful. All the respondents (100%) affirmed that all the listed species are docile to the end except *Irvingia gabonensis* which was claimed by 88% of the respondents to be less amenable. Also, all the listed species were confirmed by the respondents to be durable except *Khaya ivorensis*, *Nesogordonia papaverifera* and *Irvingia gabonensis* species which some respondents believed were less durable than others.

This study revealed that most of the common wood species used in the study area possessed the features and characteristics required for furniture production. Corroborating this finding is the study of Rowell (2006) and Guzel (2020) which reported that the choice of wood species for a particular purpose or utilization potentials varies and it is due to different features and characteristics of the wood.

### 3. 5. Specification on the Type of Furniture Used and Sold by Respondents

**Table 6.** Frequency distribution of respondents’ choice of furniture

Furniture used	Respondents		
	Individual users (N=100) % (Freq)	Corporate users (N=50) % (Freq)	Marketers (N=50) % (Freq)
Locally made furniture	81.0 (81)	20.0 (10)	0
Foreign furniture	17.0 (17)	40.0 (20)	42.0 (21)
Both	0	36.0 (18)	58.0 (29)
No response	2.0 (2)	4.0 (2)	0

Table 6 revealed that 81.0% of individual users indicated that only locally made furniture is used in their homes while 17.0% claimed they mainly use foreign furniture in their homes. Corporate users (20.0%) stated that their organizations only use locally made furniture, 40.0% confirmed that the organization exclusively use foreign furniture while 36.0% affirmed that

both (locally made and foreign) furniture are used by their organization. In addition, 58.0% of marketers claimed their companies sell both foreign and locally made furniture while 42.0% stated that they only sell foreign furniture.

The results show that locally made furniture is used in many households and organizations throughout the Ibadan metropolis. This affirms the report of Holopainen *et al.* (2014) that many consumer value dimensions for sustainable products.

### **3. 6. Respondents’ Perception on Consumers’ Preference for Foreign Furniture**

Kaputa *et al.* (2018) reported that individual experiences the world differently and the reality for an individual is based on what is perceived to exist or what occurs. However, this experience could be centered on personal needs, desires, values, and exposures. As a result, consumer preferences for furniture are primarily determined by the materials, attributes, and styles of the furniture. In addition, Bumgardner and Nicholls (2020) stated that furniture is one of the leading types of secondary wood products manufactured globally, however, the attitude of consumers toward product choices may be influenced by innovative design. Sotannde *et al.* (2011) also reported that in Nigeria, preference for high-quality timber is influenced by consumers’ preference for visual appearance and the knowledge of the species. Thus, this study considered consumers’ preference for foreign furniture based on colour, cost-effectiveness, durability, manufacturing quality, socioeconomic status (age, education etc.)

#### **3. 6. 1. Marketers Perception of Consumers’ Choice for Foreign Furniture**

Results in Table 7 show that 18% and 82% of marketers agreed and strongly agreed that the appearance (colour) of foreign furniture influenced consumers’ choice; 25% and 35% of marketers respectively agreed and strongly agreed that consumers perceived foreign furniture to be cost-effective; 23% and 65% of marketers respectively agreed and strongly agreed that foreign furniture’s durability is the reason for consumer’s choice; 54% and 28% of marketers agreed and disagreed respectively that socio-economic status influence people’s preference for foreign furniture and 12% and 76% of marketers agreed and strongly agreed respectively that consumers believed that the manufacturing quality of foreign furniture is the best.

**Table 7.** Frequency Distribution (%) of Marketers Perceived Reasons for Consumers' Preference for Foreign Furniture

Statements	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	Total
Appearance (colour)	82	18	0	0	100
Cost	35	25	33	7	100
Durability	65	23	0	12	100
Socio economic status	28	54	18	0	100
Manufacturing quality	76	12	12	0	100

In essence, 100%, 60%, 88%, 82% and 88% of marketers agreed that consumers chose foreign furniture for reasons such as appearance, cost, durability, socioeconomic status, and manufacturing quality. All of these furniture characteristics influence consumers' preference for foreign furniture. Foreign furniture is also not cheap, so people's socioeconomic status influences their purchasing decisions.

**3. 6. 2. Individual Users’ Perception on Consumers’ Preference for Foreign Furniture**

According to Table 8, 51% and 31% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the appearance of foreign furniture contributes to consumers' preference for foreign furniture. This means that 82% of respondents believed that the appearance of foreign furniture influences consumer choice. Respondents agreed (20%) and strongly agreed (24%) that the price of imported furniture influences consumer choices.

This demonstrates that only 44% of respondents agreed that the cost of foreign furniture influences consumer choice, while 56% disagreed, owing to respondents' belief that the cost of a product may not necessarily influence consumer choice once some factors (e.g country of origin) are considered. Furthermore, 45% and 12% of respondents, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed consumers could use durability to evaluate their preference for foreign furniture.

In essence, 57% of the respondents believed that the durability of furniture influences consumers’ purchasing decisions. Individual users (31% and 23%) stated that consumers’ preference for foreign furniture may be based on the manufacturing quality, that is, 54% of the respondents agreed while 46% disagreed that manufacturing quality influences consumers’ decisions.

Similarly, 47% and 26% of individual users agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that the socioeconomic status of the consumer influences their preference for foreign furniture. The foregoing implies that 73% of the respondents agreed that socioeconomic status such as age, income, education etc. influences consumers’ preference for foreign furniture.

The findings show that that there is little disparity between agreed and disagreed statements. Although, some individual users disagreed that consumers’ preference for foreign furniture is based on price, durability, manufacturing quality and socioeconomic status.

**Table 8.** Frequency Distribution (%) of Perceived Reasons by Individual user on Consumers’ Preference for Foreign Furniture

Statements	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	Total
Colour (appearance)	31	51	18	0	100
Cost effectiveness	24	20	36	20	100
Durability	12	45	40	3	100
Socio economic status	26	47	27	0	100
Manufacturing quality	23	31	38	8	100

**3. 6. 3. Corporate Users’ Perception on Consumers’ Preference for Foreign Furniture**

From Table 9, 40% and 46% of corporate users respectively agreed and strongly agreed that the appearance of foreign furniture influences consumers’ choice; 39% and 9% of corporate users, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed that the cost of foreign furniture influences consumer choice, 33% and 50% of corporate users, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed that durability of foreign furniture influences the choice of consumers; 50% and 28% of corporate users respectively agreed and strongly agreed that socioeconomic status influences consumer preference, and 34% and 46% of corporate users, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed that manufacturing quality of foreign furniture influences consumer choice.

In summary, 86% agreed while 14% disagreed that the appearance of foreign furniture can influence consumers purchasing intentions, 48% agreed while 52% disagreed that foreign furniture is cost has an impact on consumers’ preference, 83% agreed while 17% disagreed that consumers’ preference is associated with durability, 78% agreed while 22% disagreed that socio-economic status influence consumers’ choice and 80% agreed while 20% disagreed that manufacturing quality influences consumers’ choice.

The study revealed that the major factor influencing the production of wood-based furniture in Nigeria is consumer’s taste and perception, which invariably affects the market. The findings of the study on consumers' preference for foreign furniture support this assertion.

**Table 9.** Frequency Distribution (%) of Corporate Users' Perceived Reasons for Consumers' Preference for Foreign Furniture

Statements	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	Total
Colour (appearance)	46	40	8	6	100
Cost effectiveness	9	39	42	10	100
Durability	50	33	15	2	100
Socio economic status	28	50	22	0	100
Manufacturing quality	46	34	20	0	100

**3. 7. Public Perception on Locally Made Furniture in the Study Area**

Most consumers have been reported to view their home and furniture as extensions of themselves, thus, the respondents’ perceptions of the appearance (colour), manufacturing quality (technological design) and durability (permanency) of locally made furniture’s were the attributes considered to differentiate locally made furniture from foreign furniture.

Table 10 reveals that 51% and 31% of individual users, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed that locally made wooden furniture is perceived to be less attractive than foreign furniture. Only 18% of individual users disagreed that locally made furniture is less attractive. A large percentage of marketers (82%) strongly agreed while 18% agreed that the observation is correct. Unfortunately, no marketer disagreed nor strongly disagreed that local furniture is

less attractive, instead, they all agreed that foreign furniture is more attractive than locally-made furniture. Furthermore, 40% and 46% of corporate users agreed and strongly agreed that foreign furniture is very attractive while locally made furniture is less attractive. However, 8% and 6% disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively, with the statement.

**Table 10.** Frequency Distribution (%) of Public Perception on the Quality of Locally Made Furniture

Users	Perception	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Strongly disagreed	Disagreed	Total
Marketers	Less attractive	82	18	0	0	100
	Low Manufacturing quality	76	12	12	0	100
	Less durable	18	60	20	2	100
Individual users	Less attractive	31	51	18	0	100
	Low Manufacturing quality	23	31	38	8	100
	Less durable	6	38	28	28	100
Corporate	Less attractive	46	40	8	6	100
	Low Manufacturing quality	46	34	20	0	100
	Less durable	6	30	58	6	100

Manufacturing quality is of great importance when making a purchasing decision. It is one of the major attributes that determine consumers' preferences. From Table 10, 31% and 23% of individual users agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that the manufacturing quality of foreign furniture is superior to locally-made furniture. While 38% and 8% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This implied that 54% of individual users agreed that the manufacturing quality of foreign furniture is superior to locally-made furniture while 46% disagreed.

The narrow margin between individual user responses in the study area suggests that some respondents believe locally made furniture is also of high manufacturing quality. Twelve percent (12%) and 76% of marketers, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed that the manufacturing quality of foreign furniture is superior to that of locally made furniture. Only 12% of respondents disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, 34% and 46% of corporate users agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that local manufacturing quality is low while 20% of

the respondents disagreed with the statement. In summary, 88% of marketers believed the manufacturing quality of locally made furniture was poor while 80% of corporate users agreed with the statement.

The durability of products determines their longevity and suitability as it ages. Results in Table 7 show that individual users 38% and 6% agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that locally made furniture is inferior while 28% and 28%, respectively, disagreed and strongly disagreed that locally made furniture is inferior. Marketers in the study area agreed (60%) and strongly agreed (18%) that locally made furniture is inferior, while 20% and 2% of marketers disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement, respectively. In addition, 30% and 6% of corporate users agreed and strongly agreed that locally made furniture is inferior, while 58% and 6% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the statement. In summary, 56% of individual users were of the view that locally made furniture is not inferior, while 44% disagreed. Twenty-two (22%) of marketers and 64% of corporate users disagreed that locally made furniture are inferior while 78% and 36% of marketers and corporate users, respectively, claimed that locally made furniture is inferior.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The study revealed that all the furniture producers utilized sawnwood in manufacturing, thus, to promote sustainable forest development and increase wood supply to the industry, furniture producers should be encouraged to invest in forest plantation development and participate in the reforestation of the natural forests. Respondents stated that furniture attributes such as manufacturing quality, colour, and durability influence the public's preference; thus, the furniture industry should create specific offers for different consumers based on their preferences, and most importantly, create a very distinguishable offer from their competitors (foreign companies). In addition, many respondents stated that foreign furniture is superior to locally-made furniture. This is due to the use of obsolete processing equipment and technology by many furniture industries; however, if modern processing equipment and technology are used, locally-made furniture will not only match that of foreign furniture but will be of superior quality in some cases. This means that if furniture producers have access to better machines and loan facilities, the Nigerian furniture industry will thrive. Advanced technology will improve and promote the country's high-quality, well-designed locally-made furniture. As a result, the national government should provide or subsidize modern manufacturing equipment and technology to furniture manufacturers.

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