FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF TIMBER FOR FURNITURE AND JOINERY PRODUCTION IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The local timber industry in Ghana has for some time now experienced major challenges that have subjected the sector to severe pressure regarding raw material unavailability and a struggle for efficient use of the limited available timber. This study investigated the availability of timber species and their sizes in two local timber markets and the factors that influence their selection for furniture and joinery production. A cross-sectional survey study which used questionnaire, observation and photography was employed. Random Systematic sampling methods was used to select a realised sample of 306 respondents from an infinite population comprising of timber processors, timber sellers and consumers from the study sites. From the study, out of thirty-two species that were outlined, twenty-two of them were found to be available on the markets. Durability, appearance, quality and processability were the most influential factors for the specification and selection of the species for furniture and joinery production. Affordability, area of usage and informed decision were the least influential factors. Seven common sawn lumber sizes and the actual sizes on display at the markets showed that thickness sizes were less by 5mm for four sizes. The width sizes for all the observed pieces were less by 5-20mm for all the seven sizes. It was concluded that the trend of availability of the species on the markets for furniture and joinery production is attributed to the knowledge on the utilization of the species and the easiness to obtain by the dealers whiles most wood users buy lumber without checking if the sizes are actual as indicated. There is therefore the need to increase utilization of a wide number of species, especially lesser-used species (LUS) to help prevent creaming for the few traditional high value species.

Keywords: Furniture, joinery, lumber sizes, lesser-used species, timber species.