

The Contribution of Higher National Diploma (HND) Furniture Graduates in the Furniture Industry in Ghana

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Abstract

The Furniture industry in Ghana identified greater importance in HND furniture graduate. However, the expectations of the furniture companies have fall shortened by inefficient delivery of skills and technology by the HND furniture graduates. The HND furniture graduates acquired highest knowledge and skills to facilitate design and production of furniture pieces. The furniture industries in Ghana have devious ways of production of items for indoor and outdoor without specific standards practice and procedures. The aim is to access and analyze the credibility of HND furniture graduate, and the expectation of furniture industry in Ghana. The HND furniture graduates in Ghana have lost focus, and interest to associate with the furniture companies. The furniture industry lack middle level manpower, insufficient ideals, skills and technology to wheel expectation of the industries to meet customer satisfaction.

Keywords: furniture industry, HND furniture graduate, performance, furniture companies

1. Introduction

Furniture in general are objects that can be moved around or free standing such as table, chair, bed, wardrobes and cupboards normally for use or for ornament in a house or an offices to make it suitable for living or working condition (Adupong R. 2011) Furniture is traditionally segmented into 3 sub-sectors based upon the purchaser's characteristics: Domestic: serving the public, mainly through retail outlets and for household use. Contract: furniture for public areas such as hotels, schools, cruise liners, hospitals, restaurants, residential accommodation, stadia and airports. Office: desks, work stations, seating, tables, cabinets and other items for the office environment. According to (Fira, 2010) In Ghana there is no clear cut definition or segmentation of the furniture industries as most companies deal in all of the types of items. According to (Akuaba bulletin 2014) proud to be a member of the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) is one of Ghana's oldest and most innovative furniture companies. And designs and manufactures quality furniture for homes, educational institutions and offices as well as outdoor play equipment and builder's joinery (doors, door frames and windows and window.) made furniture products. Tertiary processing -The manufacture of mouldings, flooring, parquetry, furniture manufacturing, window and door manufacture, veneer applications, turnery, wooden toys, handicrafts, etc (G.K.D. (Ametsistsi, *et al* 2008): Apart from timber, any other wood products required for the local market are produce by furniture company could be classified as follows:

- i. Building members such as: doors, door and window frames, flooring, parquets, and mouldings, including tang & groove members.
- ii. Veneer and plywood,
- iii. Furniture including cabinets, wardrobes, beds tables and chairs for schools, offices and homes and specialty products like poultry feed trays, crates, pallets, coffins and chop-boxes; and
- iv. Toys and utility products like kitchen stools and broomsticks.

Most of these commonly used wood products are produced by small scale carpenters who exhibit very little specialization. Their products serve the local market and overland export to neighboring countries such as Togo, Burkina Faso and Mali. There are many deficiencies in the educational sub-sector which have affected the quality, performance and relevance of the TVET system. This has led to the failure to equip students with the requisite employable skills needed by industry. These weaknesses and deficiencies have not only created a poor image of TVET but have also reduced TVET contribution to the national development. Further state, the recent introduction of Competency- Based Training (CBT) system is to enhance relevance of technical vocational education and ensure that training is guided by competencies endorsed by industry so that TVET graduates would acquire and demonstrate skills that meet the needs and specific standards of industry,(Nsiah, 2009). According to (HND 2001) students are mandated to select or create furniture items from specific areas like: Lounge, dining room, bedroom, office, library, school, leisure/garden, kitchen, shop, transport terminal and

public places. At the first stage, students are to develop folio containing feasibility study, specification and cost estimate. At the second stage students are required to demonstrate the ability to fabricate furniture as given in working drawings. According to the bulletins of (Ghana Wood Industry and Log Export Ban Study 2001) Constraints articulated by tertiary operators in the Ghana Wood Industry. These constraints largely have resulted from deficiencies in policies and institutional of Furniture and Wood Products Association of Ghana (FAWAG) failures are the following; Lack of design skills; inappropriate equipment; Lack of middle-level skills; inadequate capacity in industrial engineering; and Limited exposure to overseas equipment and product markets. The collective effect of these constraints has been the inadequate strength (including financial) of many enterprises to take advantage of market opportunities. Weaknesses of apart.

3. Methodology

3.1. The research method was based on performance of the furniture companies and the contributions of HND graduate there in

3.2. Sample Size:

From information obtained from the Furniture and Wood Products Association of Ghana (FAWAG), 420 furniture companies nationwide were identified. One hundred and eighty of the companies with employment capacity less than 10 workers were eliminated. The remaining 240 furniture companies which happened to be in the key regional capitals of Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi, Ho, Koforidua and Tamale were used for the study.

A classification system based on number of employees and operational capacity of wood volume was used to group the 240 companies as follows: 30 in Group A, 90 in Group B and 120 in Group C.

- Group A – Large furniture companies that employed over 80 workers, with operational capacity of wood volume over and above 20,000 m³ per annum.
- Group B - Medium sized, employing between 60 - 80 workers, with operational capacity of wood volume between 5,000 – 20,000 m³ per annum.
- Group C - Small scale furniture companies employing between 10 - 40 workers with operational capacity of wood volume of 5,000 m³ per annum or less.

3.3. Technique:

3.3.1. SWOT analysis was carried out on HND furniture graduate that are available and employed by the furniture industry, to determine the employment rate, the ability of companies to afford their services, and the access the awareness of the graduate.

3.3.2. The second SWOT analysis was also carried out on the furniture companies to evaluate the type of contracts or jobs offered and contributions of HND furniture graduate; to determine the quality standards of products and job, and the prospect of the industry, and critical trade areas

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. The available of HND furniture graduate in the furniture companies and capability of the industry.

Figure 1: the contribution of HND furniture graduates who are employees by the furniture companies. (Number of companies (*N*) = 240, HND graduates (*N*) = 50)

Figure 1

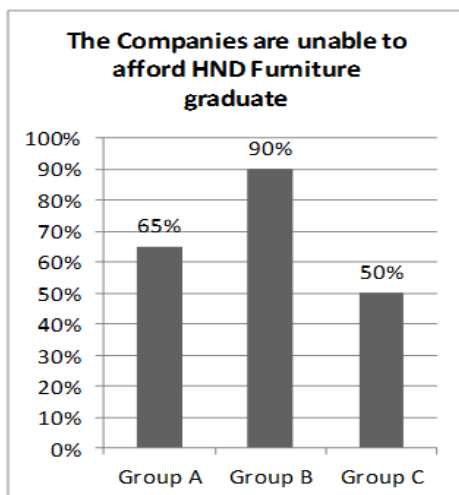
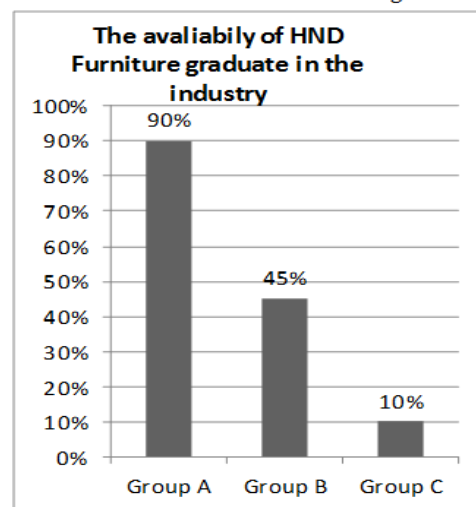


Figure 2



Most of the smaller companies are not aware of the HND furniture graduate in the systems they only depends on apprentice training (the informal training that dominated the country) and those that aware find it difficult to afford their services and most cases are not compatible. The bigger and medium companies are aware of the existence of HND furniture graduate, however the expectation are not enough.

Figure 3

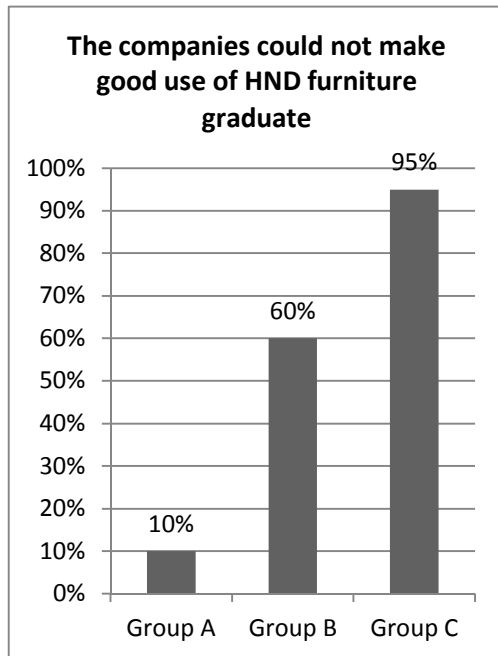
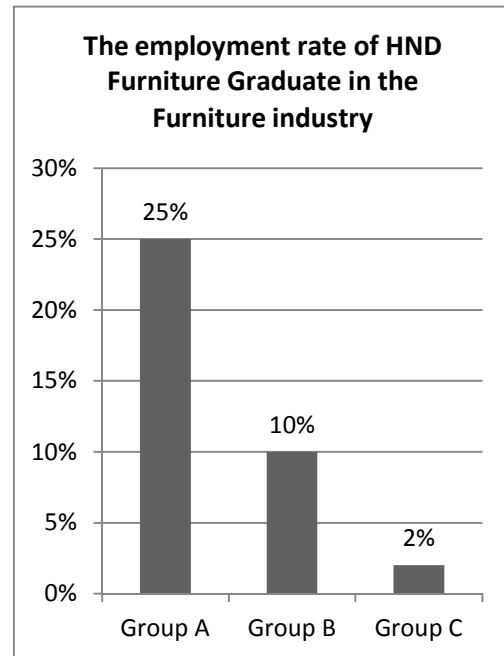


Figure 4



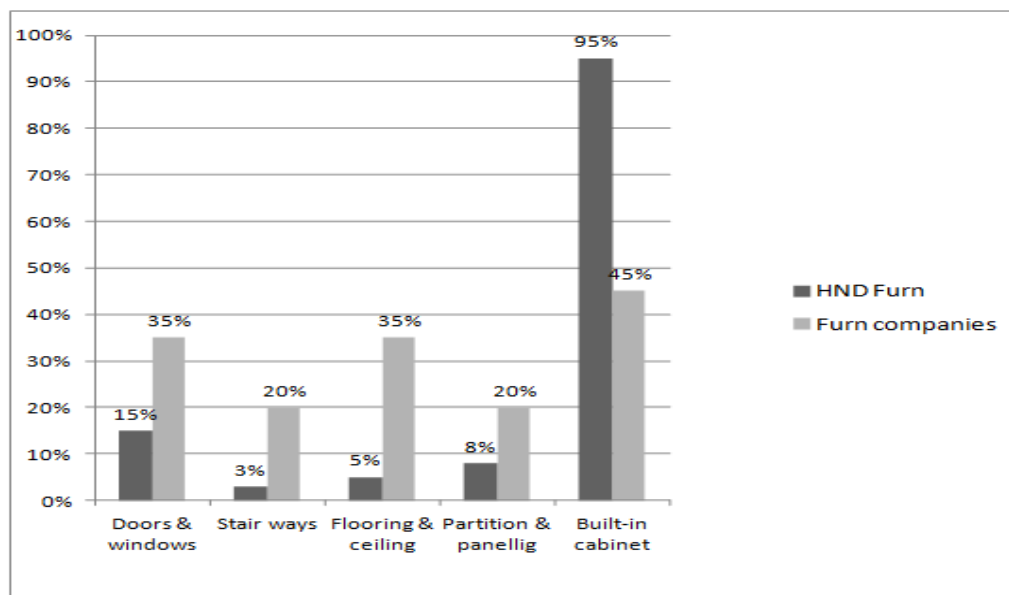
The little of the smaller companies that are aware of the HND furniture graduate were convinced with trust of great potentials their exhibit in furniture design and construction. The bigger and medium companies have different view, due to incompetency and not incomprehensive enough to task offered (fig4); they find it difficult to be employed,

4.2. The contract that furniture companies follows and the jobs the furniture industry executes.

The performance of HND furniture graduates in the furniture companies on joinery product.

(Number of companies (N) = 240, HND furniture graduates (N) = 50)

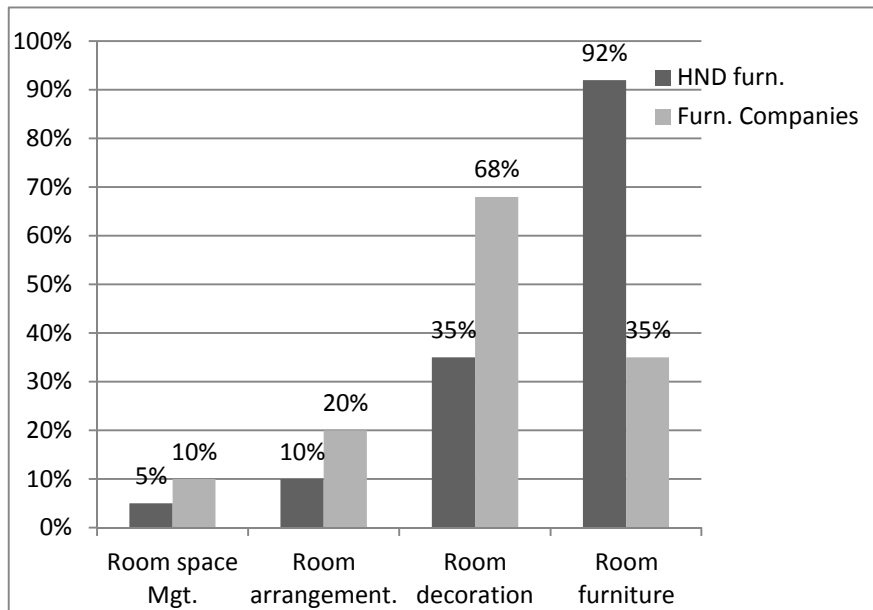
Figure 5



The results indicate the credibility of furniture companies' tremendous performance and more knowledge in production of joinery items, which is measurable to the HND furniture graduates. The industry is more equip than the HND furniture graduates. This have affected the general performance of the industry .According to (Nsiah 2009) there are many deficiencies in the educational sub-sector which have affected the quality, performance and relevance of the TVET system. This has led to the failure to equip students with the requisite employable skills needed by industry.

The performance of HND graduates who are employed by the furniture company on interior decoration product. (Number of companies (N) = 240, HND graduates (N) = 50)

Figure 6

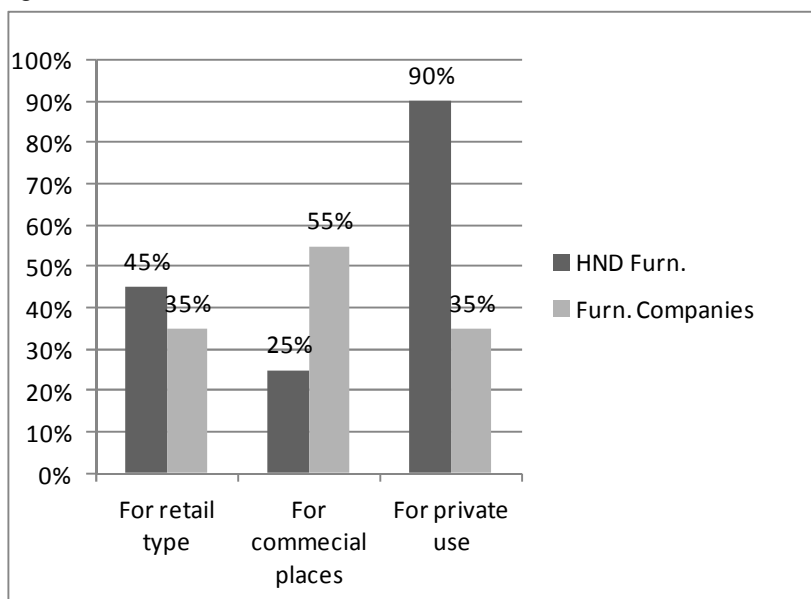


The results indicate the credibility HND furniture graduates and outstanding knowledge and tremendous performance in arrangement of furniture products. The general performance of the furniture companies is not good, but yet is not measurable to the HND furniture graduates.

Figure 7: The performance of HND furniture graduates on furniture product activities.

(Number of companies (N) = 240, HND graduates (N) = 50)

Figure 7



There is a gross mismatch between HND furniture graduates and the needs of furniture companies; this is serious implications for the employability of graduates especially the polytechnics and this is affecting the enrolment of students in to the furniture programm. According to (B-S 2005).The polytechnics instead of tertiary TVET institutions producing high level skilled technical and professional manpower seem to have lost focus and are attempting to operate in the shadows of the Universities. (Nsiah 2009) also stated that, there are many deficiencies in the educational sub-sector which have affected the quality, performance and relevance of the TVET system. This has led to the failure to equip students with the requisite employable skills needed by industry. As a result Nearly 75% of furniture on the Ghanaian market are imported and are receiving high patronage because they are perceived to be superior in quality and design to the locally. (Budu-Smith, 2005).

5. Conclusion

The furniture industry in Ghana is denuding, the taste for quality furniture pieces in the country are of great demand. There are no key indicators to improve the quality, functional aesthetic value for furniture and joinery products in the country. There are several missing gap between the furniture industry and the HND furniture graduates, in that furniture companies operates in all disciplines of products; there are no clear cut trade limitations or specializations. The HND graduates should have been the breakthrough for the industry achievement, have lost focus and interest with the furniture industry. The graduates are not credible to maximize industrial need; lack potential to meet industries demands. The training institutions in Ghana have focus on higher education in furniture programm and ignored other indoor disciplines; such as interior architecture, and interior decoration. These challenges could be solved by segmenting the indoor discipline at the middle and higher levels of education in the country.

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