



EFFECTS OF SOME DEMOGRAPHIC ATTRIBUTES OF SAWN WOOD MARKETERS ON THEIR INCOME IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the demographic attributes of sawn wood marketers in Benue State and the effects of some of these attributes on their income. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents. A total of 100 sawn wood marketers from five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the state were selected and sampled. One hundred copies of semi-structured questionnaire were used to elicit data for the study. Descriptive statistics and the t-test were used to analyse the data. The demographic attributes of sawn wood marketers showed that 97.0 % of the marketers were males. The age distribution of sawn wood marketers in State indicated that 98.0 % of the marketers were less than 50 years, out of which 83.0 % were young men of less than forty (40) years. Eighty-one percent (81.0 %) of the marketers were married. In terms of household size, the marketers had between 1 to 10 persons in their household. The result of educational attainments indicated that 84.0 % had at least secondary school education. Majority of the marketers (61.0 %) were indigenes of Benue State and 87.0 % of them had more than 5 years of experience in the trade. The income distribution of sawn wood marketers in Benue State indicated that about 67.0 % of them earned more than the minimum wage of ₦30, 000. The t-test indicated that age and level of education had significant effects on their income at 0.05 (0.005 and 0.011 $p \leq 0.05$), while the effects of household size and marketing experience were not significant (0.731 and 0.732 $p \leq 5\%$). Sawn wood marketing is a lucrative trade in Benue State; therefore, youths especially graduates should be encouraged to go into the business instead of waiting for white collar jobs that are very scarce.

Key words: Sawn wood, Marketing, Demographic attributes, Income

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INTRODUCTION

Sawn wood is a major timber product and a regular component/raw material for the socio-economic development of any country. According to the FAO (1999), sawn wood is the most produced and demanded among

other semi-processed and processed wood categories and is the most distributed for construction purposes in Nigeria. RMRDC (2001) reported that sawn wood production from the rich forests of southern Nigeria serves over 1200 furniture factories apart

from the numerous road side furniture makers across the country. Sawn wood is an important forest product in Nigeria. It serves as the raw material for the wood-based industry and is produced and marketed locally across the country in plank markets and sawmills. Saw milling, especially in the southwest, is one of the most dominant among wood-based industries in Nigeria, and the biggest contributor to the national economy.

Sawn wood processing and marketing contributes to a sustainable livelihood in both rural and urban parts of Nigeria through employment and cash income (Ohwo *et al.* 2014). The critical role and importance of sawn wood production, processing, pricing, marketing and utilization to the national economy cannot be over emphasized. Sawn wood marketing, like every other marketing

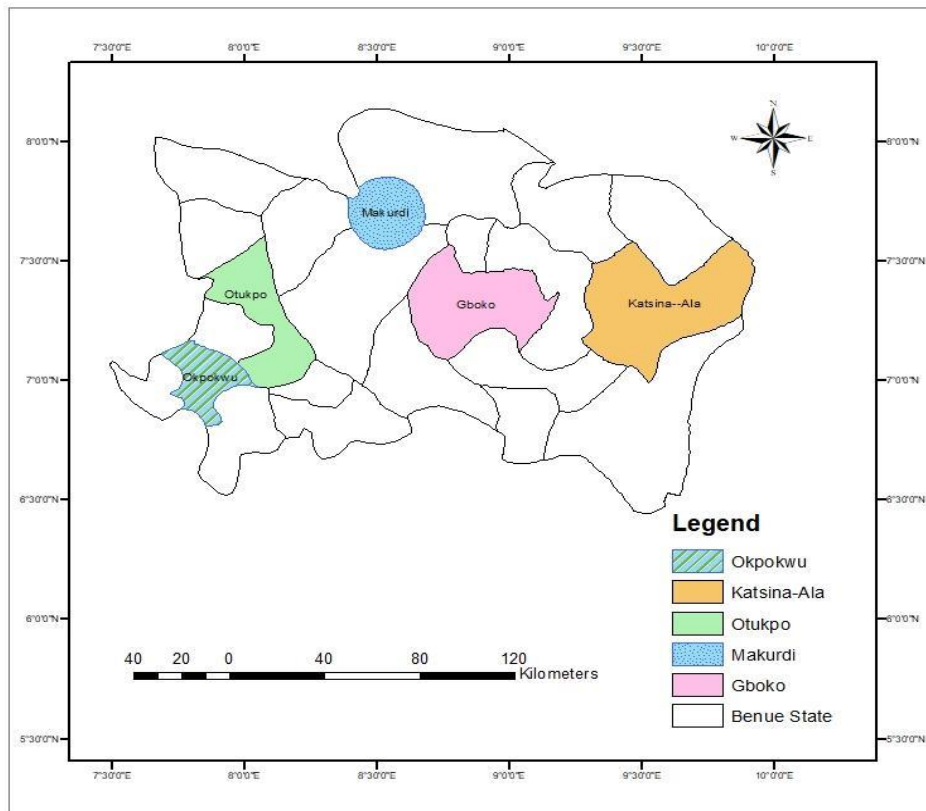
enterprise, involves the exchange between a sawn wood buyer and a sawn wood seller at a given price (FAO, 1995; Wollenberg, 2002; Fuwape, 2005). The efficiency of the sawn wood marketing process, as a link between the producer and the consumer, is a major determinant of economic incentives of the forestry sub-sector and this has effect on the consumption pattern of sawn wood. Several studies have indicated high level of profitability of the sawn wood trade in Nigeria (Aiyeloja *et al.*, 2012; Olugbire *et al.*, 2015; Sambe, 2016; Adegbenjo *et al.*, 2021). Sambe (2016) reported that the sawn wood trade was a profitable business in the three geo-political zones of Benue State. This paper takes a look at the demographic attributes of sawn wood marketers in Benue State and the effects of some of these attributes on the income generated from sawn wood trade in the State.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

The study was carried out in Benue State, located in the north central region of Nigeria. Benue State is bounded in the Southwest by Cross river State, Enugu State and Ebonyi State: in the Southeast by the Republic of Cameroon: in the West by Kogi State and in the Northeast and East by Taraba State. The State has three agro-ecological zones, namely; the Derived Savanna, the Guinea Savanna and the lowland rainforest (Keay, 1949). It lies between latitude 6°25' and 8°8'N and longitude 7°47'E and 10°E and has an area of 30,910 km² (FORMECU, 1998). According to the result of the 2006 National census, Benue State has a total population of 4,219,244 as against 2,780,398 in 1991 (NPC, 2006). The population of the State was

projected to 5,741,800 at 3% annual growth rate in 2016. The state has a total of 23 LGAs which are divided into three geo-political zones. The zones are: Zone 'A' comprising Ukum, Katsina-ala, Logo, Vandeikya, Ushongu, Konshisha and Kwande LGAs. Zone 'B' comprising Gboko, Tarka, Guma, Makurdi, Buruku, Gwer and Gwer-west LGAs. Zone 'C' comprising Ado, Agatu, Apa, Ohimini, Ogbadibo, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Oju and Obi LGAs. Benue State has a tropical sub-humid climate, with two distinct seasons, namely; a wet season and a dry season. Open woodland with tall grasses (1-3m high) and trees (up to 15m high) characterize the vegetation of Benue State. The trees are mostly savanna trees with short boles, thick barks and broad leaves.



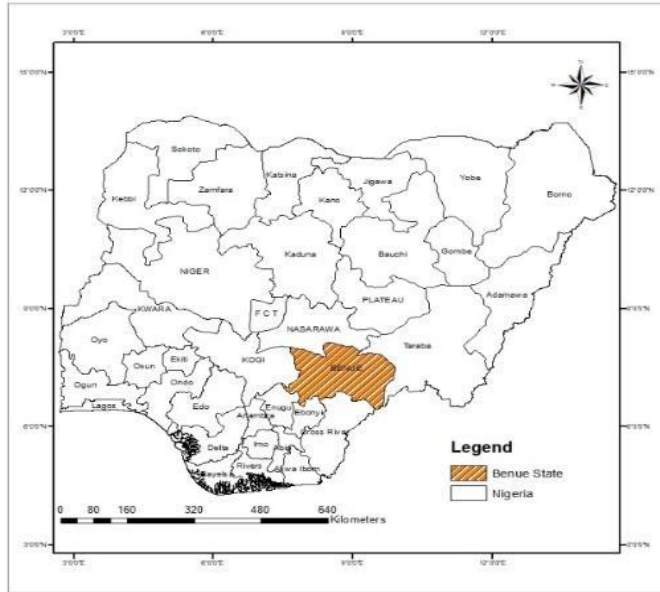


Figure 1: Map of Benue State Showing the LGAs Selected for this Study

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A multi stage sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the respondents. The first stage involved the purposive selection of five LGAs with the largest sawn wood markets and marketers in the state. The LGAs selected are Makurdi, Gboko, Otukpo, Okpokwu and Katsina-ala. The LGAs were selected because of their spatial distribution, market sizes, relative abundance of sawn wood marketers and availability of sawn wood species in them. A total of 100 timber marketers were randomly selected from the various timber markets in the selected LGAs as respondents and sampled. Copies of semi-structured questionnaire were used as the main instrument of data collection for this study. Data collected were those on the demographic attributes of sawn wood marketers and the income generated from sawn wood marketing in the State.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (making use of means, frequencies and percentages) was used to compute the attributes of the marketers, while multiple linear regression model, making use of the t-test, was used to test for the effects of age, education, gender and household size on the income generated from sawn wood sales in the State. As used by Ola (1999) and Aiyelaja *et al.* (2013), the multiple regression model that was used to investigate the effect of demographic attributes of the marketers on their income is specified thus;

$$Y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_nx_n + e$$

Where: Y = dependent variable (level of income),

x_1-x_n =Independent variables (age, education, gender, household size, etc),

a = Intercept,

$b_1...b_n$ = Regression coefficient or estimators,

e = error coefficient or error term

RESULT

Demographic Attributes of Sawn Wood Marketers in Benue State

The demographic attributes of sawn wood marketers considered are gender, age,

marital status, household size, level of education, state of origin, experience in the trade and type of marketer. The result is presented in Tables 3

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Sawn Wood Marketers in Benue State

	Variables	F (N=100)	%
Gender	Male	97	97.0
	Female	3	3.0
	Total	100	100
Age (Years)	15-20	13	13.0
	20-29	40	40.0
	30-39	30	30.0
	40-49	15	15.0
	50-59	2	2.0
	60 and above	0	0.0
	Total	100	100
Marital status	Single	18	18.0
	Married	81	81.0
	Separated	-	-
	Divorce	-	-

	Widowed	1	1.0
	Total	100	100
Household Size	1-3	26	26.0
	4-6	45	45.0
	7-9	26	26.0
	10 and above	3	3.0
	Total	100	100
Education	No formal education	1	1.0
	Primary School	15	15.0
	Secondary School	43	43.0
	Tertiary School	41	41.0
	Total	100	100
State of Origin	Benue	61	61.0
	Non-Benue	39	39.0
	Total	100	100
Years in the Trade(experience) (yrs)	< 5	13	13.0
	5-9	19	19.0
	10-14	24	24.0
	15-19	20	20.0
	20-29	15	15.0
	25-29	3	3.0
	30 and above	6	6.0
	Total	100	100
Type of Marketer	Wholesaler	2	2.0
	Retailer	38	38.0
	Both	60	60.0
	Total	100	100

Source: field survey, 2021

The result of the income distribution of sawn wood marketers in Benue State is presented in Table(4).

Table 4: Income Distribution of Sawn Wood Marketers in Benue State

Monthly income(₦)	K-Ala	Frequency				Total	%
		Gboko	Okpokwu	Makurdi	Otukpo		
<30,000	5	7	1	8	7	28	32.9
30,000<50,000	4	3	3	3	1	14	16.5
50,000<70,000	1	5	2	-	7	15	17.6
70,000<90,000	-	-	-	2	4	6	7.1

90,000>100,000	1	3	4	10	4	22	25.9
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Source: field survey, 2021

Effects of Demographic Attributes on the Income of Sawn Wood Marketers in Benue State

The demographic attributes of sawn wood marketers tested included Age, Household size, Educational level and Experience in the trade. The result is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Demographic Attributes and their effects on the Income of Timber Marketers in Benue State

Variable	B	t. test	P. Value
Age (Yrs)	10724.8	2.9	0.005*
Household size	1362.4	0.3	0.731 Ns
Your level of Education	10697.0	2.6	0.011*
Marketing experience in timber business (Yrs)	139.1	0.3	0.732 Ns
Model of Fitness Parameters			
R Square	0.3		
Adjusted R Square	0.1		
Std. Error of the Estimate	29307.1		
F Stat.	3.5		

Significant level = 0.05; Constant = 496.8

Note: Ns = Not Significant at 5% Probability level.
* = Significant at 5% Probability level.

DISCUSSION

Demographic Attributes of Sawn Wood Marketers in Benue State

Gender distribution of marketers

The result showed that 97.0 % of the marketers were males while 3.0 % were females. This therefore indicated that sawn wood marketing in Benue State was a male-dominated occupation. The dominance of males over females in timber marketing in Benue State could be attributed to the tedious nature of the business. Lifting of woods, sorting and arranging of planks in the outlets, arranging them for sale, carrying them for sawing, travelling through difficult terrains to buy/sale wood, are some duties that make sawn wood marketing tedious and discouraging to women. This finding corroborates with that of Sambe (2016), who

reported that 99.4 % of timber traders in Benue state were males. It is also in agreement with the report of Kalu *and* Ani (2009), and Sekumade and Oluwatayo (2011), who reported that timber trade is dominated by the male gender in Benin City, Edo State, and Gboyin LGAs of Ekiti State respectively. The result also agreed with the findings of Olayode and Aluko (2020), who reported that 59.0 % of sawn wood traders in Ibadan metropolis were males, while 41% were females. This result is in agreement with Olawumi and Okunlola (2015), who reported that majority of the respondent in Ondo sawmill were males but the result disagreed with Alfred and Akitade (2002), who reported that sawn wood marketing was dominated by females. Similarly, the result agreed with the findings of Aiyeloja *et al.*

(2012), who reported that males constituted 100% of sawn wood marketers in Port Harcourt. They also opined that the major reason for this is the tedious nature of the trade. The reasons are in agreement with the assertion of Sekumade and Oluwatayo (2011), who also reported that most capital intensive and arduous jobs tend to be male-dominated in Nigeria. Ndaghu *et al.* (2012), as quoted by Olayode and Aluko (2020), also reported that labour-demanding livelihoods are usually male dominated.

- ***Age distribution of marketers***

The age distribution of sawn wood marketers in Benue State indicated that 13.0 % were less than 20 years, 40.0 % were between 20-29 years, 30.0 % were between 30-39 years, 15.0 % were between 40-49 years, 2.0 % were between 50-59 years and there was no marketer that was 60 years and above. Generally, 98.0 % of the marketers were less than 50 years, out of which 83 % were young men of less than forty (40) years. This indicated that sawn wood trade in Benue State is dominated by youths within the ages of 20-29 years. Young and energetic people, therefore, dominated the trade in the state. The elderly marketers were no longer actively involved in sawn wood marketing in Benue State, as most of them have become weak and have handed over their businesses to their children. This result compared favourably with that of Oladele *et al.* (2014), who reported that 51.6 % of sawn wood traders in Port Harcourt, Rivers State were between the ages of 21 and 30 Years. The result also agreed with the report of Sambe (2016), who reported that 43.7 % of sawn wood marketers in Benue State were less than 30 Years, while those between the ages of 31 and 40 Years formed 41.9 %. A pool of these data indicated that 85.6 % of sawn wood marketers were below the youthful age of 40 years. The youths were gainfully employed in sawn wood business in Benue State and have enormous strength and energy required for

this kind of trade. This result, however, contradicted the findings of Olayode and Aluko (2020), who reported that sawn wood trade in Ibadan metropolis were dominated by middle aged people. According to their report, most (40.0 %) of the sawn wood traders in Ibadan, Oyo State were between the ages of 41-50, while those between the ages of 51-60 formed 35.0 %. This implies that 75.0 % of sawn wood traders in Ibadan were above 40 Years of age. On the contrary, while no sawn wood marketer in Benue State was above 60 years, Olayode and Aluko (2020) reported that 11.0 % of sawn wood marketers in Ibadan metropolis of Oyo State were above 60 Years..

- ***Marital status***

The result indicated that 18.0 % of the marketers were single, 81.0 % were married and 1.0 % of the marketers were widowers. This shows that majority of the sawn wood marketers in Benue State were married and, therefore, presumed to be responsible people. This result is in tandem with that of Sambe (2016), who reported that majority (62.5 %) of sawn wood marketers in Benue State were married. It is also in agreement with the findings of Olayode and Aluko (2020), who reported that 78.0 % of sawn wood traders in Ibadan metropolis of Oyo State were married. The larger proportion of married sawn wood marketers implies that timber trade is perhaps a secured livelihood activity for the marketers in Benue State and could sustain their responsibilities to their wives, children, and other family members under their care.

- ***Household size***

The result on household size indicated that 26.0 % of the marketers had between 1 to 3 persons in their household, 45.0 % had 4 to 6 persons, 26.0 % had 7 to 9 persons, while 3.0 % had 10 persons and above in their household. This implies that over 70.0 % of sawn wood marketers in the state had at least 4 persons in their households. This could be indicative of the profitability of the trade,

which enabled the traders to sustain these numbers of persons in their various households. It also indicated that these marketers bear much responsibility. People in their various households have to be fed, clothed, accommodated, schooled etc.

- **Educational background**

In terms of educational attainments, 1.0 % of the marketers had no formal education, 15.0 % had primary school education, 43.0 % had secondary school education and 41.0 % had tertiary education. For the pooled data, the analysis revealed that 99.0 % of the sawn wood marketers in Benue State had at least primary school education; while 84.0 % had at least secondary school education. Only 1.0 % of the marketers had no formal education. They are therefore expected to be able to make rational marketing decisions, interpret market information, communicate easily, keep financial records and adopt marketing innovation that will enhance market performance. This result is comparable with the report of Olayode and Aluko (2020), who reported that that majority (81.0 %) of sawn wood sellers in Ibadan metropolis of Oyo State had at least primary school education; it also agreed with Oladele *et al.* (2014), who reported that 100.0 % of sawn wood marketers in Port Harcourt have at least primary school education and that of Sambe (2016), who reported that 87.5 % of timber traders in Benue State had at least primary school education. All of them also variously agreed that marketers with secondary education dominated the sawn wood markets. According to Aiyeloja *et al.* (2012), timber business requires some degree of literacy due to measurements and simple calculation involved in plank processing from round wood into different dimensions. They also opined that profit obtainable in the enterprise may have attracted individuals with higher educational status from white collar jobs, which in most cases, do not guarantee above average quality of life in Nigeria.

- **State of origin**

The result on the state of origin of sawn wood marketers showed that 61.0 % of sawn wood marketers in Benue State were indigenes of the State, while 39.0 % were not indigenes of the state. This indicated that most of the sawn wood marketers in Benue State were indigenes of the State. This report is in disagreement with that of Sambe (2016), who reported that the Igbos from the south east dominated the timber business in Benue State. The relatively dominant proportions of the Tivs, the Idomas and the Igedes in the timber trade in the state could be attributed perhaps to their familiarity with the terrain as indigenous people. Most buyers also prefer to patronise marketers that are of the same ethnic group with them. However, it must be stated that ethnicity is not a barrier to entry into the timber business in Benue State. Another reason for the dominance of Benue indigenes could be as a result of the withdrawal and relocation of most of the non-indigenes that dominated the business in the past. Those that are still in the trade complained of low patronage and profit margins as a result of influx of indigenes of the State into the business.

- **Years in the trade (experience)**

The result on trade experience of sawn wood marketers indicated that 13.0 % of the sawn wood marketers in Benue State had less than 5 years of experience in the trade, 19.0 % had between 5-9 years of experience, 24.0 % had between 10-14 years of experience, 20.0 % had between 15-19 years of experience, 3.0 % had between 25-29 years of experience and 6.0 % had more than 30 years of experience. This indicated that most of the sawn wood marketers in Benue State had trade experiences of more than five years. Those with 10-19 years' experience dominated the trade in the State. The report agreed with the findings of Olayode and Aluko (2020), who reported that the highest numbers (40 %) of sawn wood traders in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo

State have been in the trade for between 11 to 20 years. A pooled value of this result also showed that 87.0 % of the marketers in Benue State had been in the trade for at least 5 years. These marketers are therefore expected to be able to make rational decisions that would enhance market efficiency and performance. This result is in agreement with the report of Sambe (2016), who reported that 76.2 % of sawn wood marketers in Benue State had at least 5 years of experience in the trade. The result is also comparable with that of Olayode and Aluko (2020), who reported that 63.0 % of sawn wood sellers in Ibadan metropolis had at least 10 years' experience in the business. Some marketers had up to 30 years of experience in the timber trade in Benue State, which could be an indication that timber business is a sustainable means of livelihood that has been in existence in Benue State for a long time.

- **Types of marketers**

The result on the type of marketers showed that 2.0 % of sawn wood marketers in Benue State were absolutely into wholesale marketing, 38.0 % were retailers, while 60% of the marketers are into both wholesaling and retailing. Only 38 .0 % were purely retailers. The result indicated that majority of the sawn wood marketers in Benue state were into both wholesale and retail trade. Most of them purchased standing trees directly from the tree producers (mostly government), fell such trees; convert them into logs and deckings before transporting them to the timber market. The deckings are converted into different dimensions of sawn wood at the market and sold to retailers or directly to consumers.

Income Distribution of Sawn Wood Marketers

The result of the income distribution of sawn wood marketers in Benue State indicated that 32.9 % of them earned less than ₦360, 000 annually, 16.5 % earned between ₦ 360, 000 and less than ₦ 600, 000 annually, 17.6 %

earned between ₦ 600,000 and less than ₦ 840, 000 annually, 7.1 % earned between ₦ 840, 000 and less than ₦ 1,080, 000 annually, while 25.9 % earned above ₦ 1,080, 000 annually. This showed that most of the sawn wood marketers earned more than the minimum wage (₦360, 000 annually) from sawn wood trade. This result also showed that timber business in Benue State is sustainable and the high number of sawn wood marketers that earned above ₦1,080, 000 annually is an indication that it is a lucrative business. The result agreed with Babatunde *et al.* (2020), who reported that the mean annual income from timber industry in Ife East Local Government of Osun State, Nigeria was ₦ 2,700,000.5. The result also agreed with Babatunde *et al.* (2018), who reported that the annual income earned by timber industry in Ijebu North Local Government of Ogun State was well above the Federal Government approved minimum wage.

Effects of Demographic Attributes on the Income of Sawn Wood Marketers in Benue State

The result of the t test indicated that Age and Education level of sawn wood marketers in Benue State had significant effects on their income at 5 % probability level (0.005 and 0.011 $p \leq 0.05$). This result contradicts the report of Aiyeloja *et al* (2012), who reported that age does not influence the profit margin of sawn wood marketers in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. It, however, agreed with their report that educational status had significant effects on the profit margin of sawn wood sales. They opined that educational status affected skill acquisition and book keeping positively in small scale businesses and that marketers' education will help in calculations of standard measurements during plank processing and conversion. On the contrary, Household size and marketing experience had no significant effects on their income at 5 % probability level (0.731 and 0.732 $p \leq 5$

%). This result agreed with the findings of Aiyelaja *et al.* (2012), who reported that experience and household size do not

CONCLUSION

Timber marketing in Benue State is dominated by males, who are mostly youths and indigenes of the State. It has provided a lot of employment opportunities for so many youths in the State. Graduates should, therefore, be encouraged to go into the trade

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influence the profit margin of sawn wood marketers in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

instead of waiting for white collar jobs that are very scarce. There is also the need to encourage more women to venture into the trade. This the government can do by providing start-up capital such as soft loans and other forms of financial assistance to those interested in going into the trade.

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