

CHALLENGES FACING BY SMALL-SCALE FURNITURE INDUSTRIES IN HYDERABAD SINDH PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The study evaluated the challenges in Hyderabad city of Sindh province small-scale furniture industry faced. The resource-based view and resource dependency theory were used as the study's guiding concepts. 75 furniture carpenters were chosen at random from different locations of Hyderabad city. The information was gathered via the questionnaire. The collected data was examined using a descriptive analysis. According to the findings, carpenters faced several difficulties, including a shortage of modern machine tools, inadequate working capital, low labour skills, a lack of formal workspaces, and fierce competition from imported furniture. The lack of modern machine tools prevented small and medium enterprises from producing goods of the kind needed to enter growing markets. To boost productivity, furniture production must make use of current machinery. Insufficient availability of suitable financial services had led to insufficient operating capital for investments in furniture manufacturing. The study concludes that the furniture business has a significant role in generating income and jobs. The study recommends that Governments should promote a business-friendly environment in addition to creating financial and non-financial services as well as supportive institutional infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

The furniture industry encompasses a wide range of companies and activities involved in designing, manufacturing, distributing, and selling furniture for residential, commercial, and industrial spaces. The industry includes various types of furniture, such as home furniture, office furniture, and outdoor furniture, with key players ranging from small local artisans to global manufacturers and retailers.[3] The furniture industry is crucial to the economy, society, and daily life for several reasons. The furniture industry provides millions of jobs globally in areas

such as design, manufacturing, sales, logistics, and marketing. From skilled craftsmen to industrial workers, the sector sustains a large workforce. Furniture manufacturing significantly contributes to the GDP of many countries. In developed economies, it can form a large part of the manufacturing sector, driving economic growth. Furniture is a major export product for many countries. The global trade in furniture promotes international commerce, generating revenue and fostering cross-border economic relationships[4]. The furniture industry of

Pakistan is a significant sector that contributes to the country's economy by providing employment and catering to both domestic and international markets. The industry has a rich tradition of craftsmanship, combining modern designs with traditional styles, and is recognized for its diverse range of products, including wooden, metal, and upholstered furniture[2]The furniture industry in Pakistan faces several challenges that impact its growth and competitiveness, both locally and internationally. Many Pakistani furniture manufacturers still focus on traditional designs and fail to adopt modern, contemporary, or globally trending styles. This limits their appeal in international markets, which increasingly demand innovative and stylish products. The industry struggles with insufficient investment in R&D, which hinders the development of new products and materials that can enhance quality and design[1]

Pakistan's furniture industry is heavily dependent on locally sourced wood. However, the availability of high-quality wood is declining due to deforestation, outdated logging practices, and inconsistent supply. This results in higher raw material costs and limited production capabilities. Many furniture manufacturers rely on imported materials like MDF, particleboard, and hardware. Import restrictions or fluctuations in currency value affect costs and the availability of these materials. Many small and medium-sized furniture manufacturers in Pakistan still use outdated tools and labor-intensive methods. This hampers their ability to increase productivity, reduce costs, and maintain consistent quality. The lack of digital tools for designing, manufacturing, and selling (e.g., CAD/CAM software, e-commerce platforms) limits the industry's potential to modernize and cater to changing consumer demands[6]

The furniture industry in Pakistan has significant potential for growth, driven by both domestic demand and export opportunities. As Pakistan's population continues to grow, especially in urban areas, the demand for residential and office furniture rises. The trend towards modern living spaces and the rise in real estate development, including new residential and commercial buildings, creates a robust market for furniture. The growing middle class in Pakistan has increased demand for quality,

affordable furniture. This group is increasingly seeking contemporary and stylish furniture, especially in the urban centers of Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad. There is a rising awareness about sustainability and eco-friendly products among consumers, creating a niche market for environmentally conscious furniture made from sustainable materials.[6]

With the global demand for affordable, high-quality furniture growing, Pakistan's furniture industry has significant export potential, especially to the Middle East, Europe, and North America. The country's competitive labor costs allow manufacturers to produce high-quality furniture at lower prices, giving them an edge in international markets[9] Traditional Pakistani craftsmanship, including intricate woodwork and unique designs, has a distinctive appeal in international markets, particularly in regions such as the U.S., Europe, and parts of the Middle East. Furniture makers can capitalize on the growing appreciation for handmade, artisanal products. The adoption of new technologies, such as 3D printing and CNC machines, can enable faster production times, reduce costs, and allow for more creative and intricate designs. By investing in advanced manufacturing processes, Pakistani furniture makers can gain a competitive edge both domestically and internationally [10]

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is broad agreement around the world on the important role that small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) play. Globally, small firms offer a multitude of advantages, such as employment generation, increased firm competitiveness and innovation, and assistance in the development of financial inclusion plans and industrialization programs [5]. They are thought to have played a significant role in helping developing nations eradicate poverty. Due to this awareness, policy discussions both internationally and in Africa particularly have focused heavily on the central question of how to foster economic growth through the expansion of SMEs [11]

2.1 Small scale furniture Industry of Pakistan

Small-scale furniture industries in Pakistan have been a significant part of the country's economy, especially in regions like Lahore, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Karachi,

and Rawalpindi. These industries provide employment, foster local craftsmanship, and contribute to both domestic and international markets. Small-scale furniture industries in Pakistan often rely on traditional carpentry and craftsmanship. These industries are home to skilled artisans who use a combination of hand tools and modern machinery to create a wide range of furniture pieces. The craftsmanship is deeply rooted in local traditions, with intricate wood carvings, inlay work, and finishing techniques being common[1]

The range of products produced by small-scale furniture manufacturers includes. Home Furniture: Including sofas, tables, chairs, wardrobes, cabinets, and beds. Office Furniture such as Desks, chairs, filing cabinets, and conference tables. Outdoor Furniture Mostly Garden chairs, benches, and tables. Custom Furniture such as Made-to-order pieces based on customer requirements. The primary materials used in these industries are wood (both solid and engineered), plywood, MDF (Medium Density Fiberboard), and particle board. For higher-end furniture, teak, rosewood, and other fine hardwoods are often used, while for affordable furniture, pine, MDF, and other cost-effective woods are popular choices[15]

Lahore the city is known for its vibrant furniture market, particularly in areas like the Furniture Market in Samanabad. It is one of the largest hubs for wooden furniture in the country. Sialkot is renowned for producing high-quality wooden and metal furniture. The small-scale manufacturers in Sialkot are known for their export-oriented production. Faisalabad is known for producing affordable yet durable wooden furniture, often catering to the domestic market. Karachi as the commercial hub of the country, Karachi hosts a variety of small-scale furniture manufacturers that serve both local and international markets[9]

2.2 Small scale furniture industry in Sindh province

The small-scale furniture industry in Sindh, Pakistan, is an important part of the local economy, particularly in cities like Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, and Larkana. This industry is typically characterized by local artisans, family-owned workshops, and small businesses producing custom, affordable, and often

traditional furniture. The sector serves both domestic and commercial needs, with a variety of styles, ranging from simple wooden furniture to more elaborate designs. Sindh region is known for its traditional woodcraft skills, with artisans specializing in detailed hand-carved furniture. Wood like teak, rosewood, and mango wood are commonly used. Furniture made includes beds, chairs, tables, cabinets, and sofas, often with intricate inlay work or traditional Sindhi patterns[6]

Karachi is the largest city in Sindh and a major hub for the furniture industry. It has a wide range of small-scale manufacturers that supply both the local market and export goods. **Hyderabad** known for producing furniture that blends traditional craftsmanship with modern designs, Hyderabad has several small factories and workshops. **Sukkur and Larkana** These cities, though smaller, also have a thriving furniture-making community, particularly focusing on affordable, locally produced items. **Different type of furniture is used one is Traditional Furniture** Includes ornate wooden pieces such as daybeds, chairs with carved designs, and side tables, often featuring regional influences like floral and geometric patterns [16]

2.3 Challenges facing the Small Scale Furniture Industry

Cheaply imported furniture, particularly from China, has created stiff competition for local manufacturers, especially in terms of pricing. Many small-scale industries still rely on traditional methods of production, which can limit efficiency and innovation. Small-scale furniture manufacturers often face difficulties accessing financing for upgrading their operations or expanding their businesses. The lack of standardized quality control procedures can sometimes lead to inconsistencies in the final products. Some small-scale furniture manufacturers in Pakistan have tapped into international markets, particularly in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. Pakistani furniture is well-regarded for its quality craftsmanship and custom designs, though exporters face challenges related to logistics, quality consistency, and global competition. The government has recognized the importance of small-scale industries in the economy and has provided limited support through export

incentives, training programs, and workshops aimed at improving skills and technology. However, there is room for further support, particularly in facilitating better access to modern tools, quality standards, and marketing.

3.METHODS

3.1 Study Design and Sampling Procedures

This research was conducted in Hyderabad city of province sindh Pakistan.A cross-sectional survey methodology was employed in the study to help collect data once at a given time. Owners and managers of small carpentry businesses made up the study population. Furthermore, only small enterprises that have been in operation for ten years straight after their formation were included in the study. Remarkably, 75 carpenters in all were chosen at random for this investigation. Data was gathered through questionnaire.

3.2 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, and this required utilizing the computer program Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 to calculate frequencies and percentages.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, 75 entrepreneurs served as the sample. There were 75 responses, of which 100% (n = 75 all were men. In terms of age, 44% of the owner-managers were under 30, while 56% were between the ages of 31 and 45. This result is in line with earlier research findings that indicate Hyderabad Sindh entrepreneurs are typically between the ages of 25 and 45

In terms of educational background,90.6% of the respondents had finished elementary school, and 9.4% had earned a degree or secondary education. According to the research, most persons with higher levels of education have more options when it comes to formal employment. individuals with limited education in Hyderabad encounter challenges in obtaining well-paying employment, leading them to choose self-employment as their sole source of income. Table 1 shows that, of the respondents, only 6.6% had completed carpentry training, and 93.3% had not participated in any of the various Hyderabad colleges vocational programs.

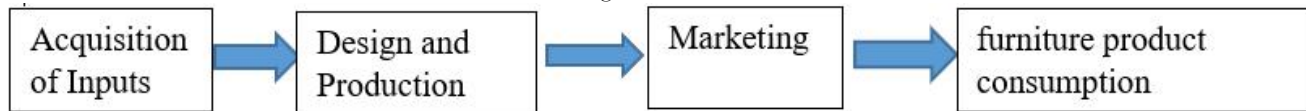
Table 1: Education Levels and Age of the Respondents

Indicator			Indicator		
Sex	N	Percentage%	Age (years)	N	Percentage%
Male	75	100	Between 20-30 years	33	44
			Above 30 years	42	56
			Total	75	100
Education Level			Vocational training		
Primary school	68	90.6	Attended	05	6.6
Secondary and above	07	9.4	Not attended	70	93.3
Total	75	100	Total	75	100

4.1 Initial mapping of Small scale furniture Industries

The first step in analyzing the difficulties facing the furniture industry is to map the organizational structure of small-scale furniture manufacturers using

the roles that they play. Acquisition of input, design and manufacture, marketing, and furniture product consumption are among the tasks carried out. The sections that follow provide more information on these features.



4.1.1 Acquisition of inputs

Concerning the procurement of inputs, 88.8% of the participants stated that they obtained inputs from retailers, whereas 6.66% and 5.3% bought inputs from wholesalers and own businesses, respectively. According to the data, all of these inputs are obtained locally, which reduces the transaction costs associated with acquiring inputs. Table 2 showed that 80% of carpenters paid cash for their inputs. This may be due to the fact that carpenters have a high need for working capital. This suggests that the raw material suppliers were the direct players in this stage. Retailers and wholesalers were the indirect actors, and they were crucial in supplying various inputs for the furniture manufacturing industry. A number of wholesalers and retailers offer a variety of

solid wood products, including imported and domestic lumber. Pine trees, mkongo, pine, and other native trees make up the majority of the woodlands in the area.

This indicates that the strength, size, and cost of the locally produced timbers were competitive. Conversely, the imported woods were more competitive in terms of appearance and smoothness of substance. For external and finishing applications, strong woods and elegantly designed imported timbers were highly preferred. The primary issues preventing carpenters' firms from expanding were reportedly a lack of supply, growing input costs, deteriorating wood quality, and rising workshop rental rates.

Table 2: Source of Inputs and Mode of Acquisition Among Carpenters

Source of Inputs	N	Percentage %	Mode of input acquisition	N	Percentage %
Retailers	66	88	Cash	60	80
Wholesalers	5	6.6	Credit	09	12
Own shops	4	5.4	Both cash and credit	06	08
Total	75	100	Total	75	100

4.1.2 Production

Production is the term used to describe the entire process of making wood furniture. Among the respondents, 81.2% used indigenous machinery while 18.8% used contemporary machinery to produce furniture. This suggests that a lot of labor goes into making furniture. Antiquated equipment and implements are frequently found in the messy and disorderly workshops of small businesses, potentially contributing to low output. One probable explanation is that they rely on labor-intensive, low-

cost work instead of investing in sophisticated technology since they cannot afford to hire it. They are unable to achieve economies of scale through large-scale production due to the low degree of technology employed in the furniture industry. According to the resource-based view, a company's ability to add value to its products through the adoption of new technologies gives it a competitive advantage.

Table 3: Type of Machine Used in Furniture Production

Type of machine used	N	Percent
Labour Intensive (Manual)	72	96
Machine Intensive	03	4
Total	75	100

Labor is needed to produce furniture, and Table 4 reveals that 10.6% of respondents used hired labor, 29.30% used both paid and family labor, and 60% used family labor in this process. Piece rates were used to compensate hired labor; 69.33% of

respondents said they were paid per piece rate, which varied based on the task they were hired to complete. The precise amount paid, nevertheless, was kept a secret, carpenters frequently use hired labor, when there is a heavy workload.

Table 4: Type of Labour and Payment in Furniture Production

Types of labour	N	Percent	Labour Payment	N	Percent
Hired Labour	08	10.66	Daily rate	14	18.66
Family Labour	45	60	Piece rate	52	69.33
Both family and Hired Labour	22	29.33	Wage negotiated each time	09	12
Total	75	100	Total	75	100

The study considered quantity produced monthly, the average cost of production, and the amount of furniture manufactured each month. Depending on the size, three standard bed kinds were produced each month. These measurements were 4 by 6, 5 by 6, and 6 by 6. Twenty Five beds were made per month on average per respondents. Cost in Pkr rupees 25000 pkr for a 4 by 6 foot bed, 31000 pkr

for a 5 by 6 foot bed, and 38000 PKR for a 6 by 6 foot bed were the average costs per bed size. The quantity of manufactured beds and doors depends on the demand and customer’s preferences but also working capital. On the other hand, the study revealed that carpenters produced an average of 20 doors per month.

Table 5: Average Unit Production Cost for Different Bed Size

Type of materials used	Type of bed size		
	4 by 6 ft	5 by 6 ft	6 by 6ft
Material Cost	15000	18000	23000
Labour Cost	6000	8000	9000
Manufacturing Cost	4000	5000	6000
Total Cost	25000	31000	38000

Table 6: Average Unit Production Cost of Different Doors

Type of materials used	Type of Standard Doors Made of Different Wood Types		
	Single door (Pinewood)	Single door (mkongo)	Single door (mninga)
Material Cost	7000	8500	10000
Labour Cost	3000	4000	5000
Manufacturing Cost	2500	3000	4000
Total	12500	15500	19000

4.1.3 Marketing of Furniture Products

Carpenters promote their products in a variety of methods. Of them, 84% sell furniture directly to customers, 9.33% sell to retailers, and 6.66% sell to wholesalers. This suggests that the primary consumers of furniture products are households, schools, colleges, and hospitals. Carpenters typically sold 20 beds and 15 doors per month, regardless of the size of the bed. For beds and doors, carpenters made an average monthly profit of Pkr 124000 and pkr 50000, respectively. The variation in profits might be attributed to variations in selling prices among carpenters, which could be primarily caused by variations in the manufacturing costs that each carpenter incurred, reflecting variations in the spatial distribution of supply and demand centers.

Table 7 demonstrates how carpenters used sport market arrangements to sell their products; 80% of carpenters adopted this strategy. It is evident that carpenters choose to sell to clients on-site in order to reduce the expense of transportation, loading, and unloading. Other markets were not easily accessible to carpenters. This is most likely a result of the expensive transportation expenses associated with moving completed goods from one location to another. Small amounts of completed goods were stocked by retailers and wholesalers for sale to the general public. Retailers and wholesalers keep a careful eye on the needs and tastes of their customers. As a result, they are extremely important to the furniture industry because they have numerous

intimate relationships with both customers and carpenters.

Table 7: Main Buyers and Means of Getting Customers of Furniture Products

Types of Buyers	N	Percent	Means of getting customers	N	Percent
Wholesalers	05	6.66	From colleagues (other carpenters)	09	12
Retailers	07	9.33	Wholesalers	06	08
Customers	63	84	Customers come at workplace	60	80
Total	75	100	Total	75	100

4.1.4 Business Relationship Among Carpenters

In the small-scale furniture industry, 92% of carpenters had business contacts, while 08% had none at all mentioned in Table 8. The findings showed that in the small-scale furniture industries, business relationships were defined by both vertical and horizontal coordination. This suggested that

small-scale furniture producers depended on outside resources, such as data, technology, relationships with suppliers, access to markets, and affiliations. One of the prerequisites to achieving better performance of SMEs is information sharing through networks .

Table 8: Business Relations Among Carpenters

Response	N	Percent
Yes	69	92
No	06	08
Total	75	100

4.1.5 Main Challenges Facing Small Scale Furniture Industries

It was discovered that small-scale furniture manufacturers producing locally created furniture faced a number of difficulties. The results in Table 9 demonstrated that the primary obstacle facing the furniture industry, according to 42.66% of

respondents, was the absence of contemporary machinery for making high-quality furniture. Other challenges were a shortage of competent labor 26.66. %, an absence of formal workspaces 9.3%, intense competition from imported furniture items 10.66% and inadequate capital 10.66%.

Table 9: Main challenges Facing Small Scale Furniture Industries

Major Challenges	N	Percent
Insufficient Capital	08	10.66
Lack of formal working place	07	9.33
Limited labour skills	20	26.66
Lack of Modern machine tools	32	42.66
High Competition	08	10.66
Total	75	100

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper finds out the difficulties affecting the country's small-scale furniture industry. Given the significance of SMEs in Hyderabad Sindh, the government should now establish supportive institutional infrastructure, expand financial and non-financial services, and foster an atmosphere that is favorable to business. The SME policy should improve the institutions that will meet the unique opportunities and restrictions faced by furniture

carpenters and maximize the utilization of those potential. The study concentrated on issues that Hyderabad Sindh small furniture companies had to deal with. This can prevent the results from being broadly applied. Conducting a comparative analysis of the difficulties faced by SMEs in rural and urban regions should be the main goal of future research.

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