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Learning Orientation and Artisans Performance in Furniture Making Industry in Gombe State, Nigeria

[1]Emmanuel Umoru Oki*, [1]Emeka Johnpaul Ogidi,[2]Mbasua, Yakubu Ali
[1]Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Jos
[2]Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Gombe State University, Gombe State

ABSTRACT

Furniture making artisans in Nigeria have not been keeping pace with the competitive posture of their foreign counterparts thus have performed below the expectations of their end-users. This study investigates the influence of learning orientation on the performance of artisans in furniture making industry in Gombe State, Nigeria. Questionnaires were used to collect data from artisans in the furniture making industry. Simple regression technique was used to analyze the data with the aid of SPSS version 25. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between the components of learning orientation (commitment to learning, open-mindedness and shared vision) and performance of artisans in furniture making industry in Gombe State. Our study recommends that artisans should develop and sustain principles of commitment to learning, open mindedness and shared vision to enhance their performance.

Key words: *Artisans, Furniture Making, Learning Orientation, Performance*

Submitted: 8th July 2020
Revised: 10th September 2020
Revised: 15th October 2020
Accepted: 23th December 2020

Introduction

Artisanship in recent times has received significant attention from scholars (McDowell, Oliver, Persson, Fairbrother, Wetzlar, Buchanan & Shipstone, 2011) and governments, although little attention has been paid to these stake holders in the furniture making sector (Arowosoge & Tee, 2010).According to **Tweneboah-Koduah and Adusei (2016),**artisans are talented and exceptional individuals so much that they can produce products from unassuming materials. Artisans are individuals with special and unique skills for manual production and/or manufacturing of products (Laurie, 1989; Farr & Farr, 2000; Grimes & Milgram, 2000). Across the globe, artisans can be found in the construction, manufacturing and building sectors (**Afolabi, Ojelabi, Omuh, Tunji-Olayeni, & Adeyemi,** 2018). Artisans have contributed to economic developmentin Europe and North America (Laurie, 1989; Farr & Farr, 2000). In India, artisanship employs over 2million individuals, and accounts for over 64% of exports in Sri Lanka (Pye, 1988). In Africa and specifically Nigeria, artisans constitute about 30-35% of the population, rescue street youth, ghetto youth and destitute from becoming gangsters, drug abuse, crime/violence and other vicious involvements (Eneh, 2010). Artisanship is important because it creates jobs, promotes knowledge sharing and value addition. The performance of artisans is central in the manufacturing sector, especially in the furniture making industry where skills and experiences are shown (Arowosoge, Ogunsanwo & Popoola, 2010),hence measuring artisans performance is vital, especially to the stakeholders in the industry.

According to McDowell et. al. (2011), artisanship directly contributes to the quality of skilled trade workforce, therefore gives the ability to compete successfully in a global market. Although, artisans are exposed to competition at both international and national level, Tasmin et. al. (2016) noted that the furniture industry has taken the lead. For example in Finland, the industry has more global trade with local features in furniture design. In other words, the increasing number of robots in Finnish manufacturing as well as cloud manufacturing will make it more promising to operate competitively in the global market. In other countries especially China, huge efforts are taken to export more furnitures with complete furnishing designs for homes and offices (**Tweneboah-Koduah & Adusei, 2016**), thus adopting strategies that are environmentally friendly (Sil & Coryanata, 2019). In Nigeria, artisans are driven into the furniture making industry because the industry has become a corner stone (**Afolabi et. al., 2018**). The industry is one of the highest in labour force employment because it has employed a substantial number of furniture artisans in Nigeria (**Tweneboah-Koduah & Adusei, 2016**). Artisans in the furniture making industry in Nigeria are predominantly found in the informal sector which makes industry-specific information about the sector scanty and difficult to obtain (Arowosoge & Tee, 2010).However, researchers agree that little attention has been given to empirical studies on artisans in the furniture making industry in Nigeria, especially in Gombe State (Arowosoge & Tee, 2010; **Afolabi et. al., 2018**).

Previous studies show that artisans in the furniture making industry in Nigeria have performed poorly in comparison with their foreign counterparts in meeting the demand and satisfaction of their customers (Arowosoge & Tee, 2010; Aiyeloja, Oladele & Ozoemena, 2014). In Nigeria, the under-performance of artisans in the furniture making industry can be attributed to lack of materials and technologies, poor learning orientation, lack of intensified method of production using advanced equipments, lack of knowledge sharing due to competition, and so on (Arowosoge et. al., 2010; **Afolabi et. al.,** 2018). According to researchers, the performance of furniture makers rests on the effectiveness of their ability to share their vision, high level of commitment to learning, knowledge sharing, man-power and creativity of artisans in the industry (Alao & Kuje, 2010; Ozigbo, 2016).**Afolabi et. al.(**2018) noted that performance can elevate to its peak by exploring the potentials and/or opportunities in the industry, hence our focus on the learning orientation. In other words, learning orientation is a gateway to exploring potentials and opportunities in the industry, as well as a vital contributory factor to optimal performance. Learning Orientation (LO) refers to organization-wide activity of creating and using knowledge to enhance competitive advantage (Calantone, Cavusgil, & Zhao, 2002).LO is an important antecedent of firm innovativeness which in turn influences firm performance (Calantone et. al., 2002). Several scholars have long acknowledged and agreed to the importance of LO to overall firm performance (Calantoneet. al., 2002; Sil & Coryanata, 2019).Therefore, our paper builds on previous studies by investigating the influence of learning orientation on the performance of artisans in furniture making industry in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Foundation

Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984 cited in Baker, Robinson & Kolb, 2012). Using the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), researchers posit that the perspective of the learning process originated through the work of foundational theorists of experiential learning who placed intentional achievement based on subjective experience at the center of learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Baker et. al., 2012).ELT enshrined in six propositions provides the foundation for addressing learning orientation from the process and knowledge sharing perspective. The first proposition is that learning is conceived best as a process instead of a product. Therefore, for artisans in the furniture making industry to improve their learning, they need to focus on and engage in the process that facilitates best and maximum learning. Secondly, all learning is re-learning, hence an entrepreneur or apprentice beliefs on ideas that will improve their performance through creativity and innovation (Pulka, Imam, & Gamama, 2019). Thirdly, learning requires the resolution of conflicts thus open-mindedness. Fourthly, learning is an all-inclusive process of adaptation to the entire state that involves more than simple cognition. Next, learning results from synergistic transactions between the learner and his or her experiences. Lastly, learning is the process of creating knowledge. ELT follows constructivist views of learning in that it is the process of connecting new experiences and knowledge to

the learner's pre-existing personal knowledge. This constructivist approach may contrast with the view of artisans who believe in the channeling of ideas that they acquired previously.

Literature Review

Artisans Performance

Artisans are individuals with special and unique skills for manual production and/or manufacturing of products (Laurie, 1989; Farr & Farr, 2000), hence measuring their performance is vital, especially to the stakeholders in the industry. To understand the concept of performance and the dimensions of measuring performance, opinions and theories have differed among academicians and managers (Pitt, Caruana & Berthon, 1996; Pulka et. al., 2019). According to Taheri, Bititci, Gannon & Cordina (2019), performance "is the process of quantifying the efficiency and effectiveness of action within the organizational circle". Measuring performance is critical in confirming the decision of artisans (Smith & Bititci, 2017) particularly that of furniture makers. Today's business cycle is highly emphasized on artisans performance in the furniture making industry, especially in Nigeria, where furniture makers in terms of fashion and quality of their product are still lacking behind (Arowosoge & Tee, 2010; Smith & Bititci, 2017). Considering the nature of their activities and their role in the national economy, beautifying the spaces, and advancing modern creativity, they need to be highly oriented in terms of learning (Arowosoge & Tee, 2010).Some criteria used in previous studies show how to measure and determine their performance. Notable scholars (Putniņš & Sauka, 2019; Mahar& Ghumro, 2019;Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986) posit that performance is measured with financial and operational indicators. According to Putniņš and Sauka (2019), financial measures are proportioned to economic factors which include: profitability and sales growth (e.g. return on investment, return on sales, and return on equity), and operational measures are related to non-financial success factors such as quality, market share, satisfaction, new product development and market effectiveness (Pulka et. al., 2019). This study focuses on measuring both financial and non-financial measures of artisans in the furniture making industry in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Learning Orientation (LO)

Paparoidamis (2005) noted that modern organizations need continuous internal change and adaptation to changes met in modern operational environments, hence the ability to learn and learning itself are seen as prerequisites for the survival of today's artisans. Learning Orientation (LO) refers to organization-wide activity of creating and using knowledge to enhance competitive advantage (Calantone et. al, 2002). According to Calantone et. al. (2002),learning orientation includes obtaining and sharing information about customer needs, market changes, and competitor actions, as well as development of new technologies to create new products that are superior to those of competitors. LO is an imperative and largely unexamined aspect of nascent entrepreneurial emergence (Sil & Coryanata, 2019).According to Ittner & Larcker (1998), it is important to have favourable learning orientation and processes

that facilitate artisans learning attitude and performance. Learning orientations processes are important in understanding entrepreneurial emergence particularly in the furniture making industry.This industry is largely based on skills and practice, thus both individuals and firms perpetually attempt to learn from the system. In other words, learning orientation is an important antecedent of firm innovativeness, which in turn influences firm performance (Calantone et. al., 2002).

Relatively little has been elaborated of performance as an integral system of a learning orientation that exploits its knowledge resources to generate superior performance (Paparoidamis, 2005).Several scholars have long acknowledged and agreed to the importance of LO to overall firm performance (Calantoneet. al., 2002; Sil & Coryanata, 2019). These researchers confirm that a firm with a strong learning orientation is not simply a collector or storehouse of knowledge, but a processor of it, which could be the likes of artisans. Hence, learning orientation influences the extent to which artisans are likely to promote generative learning as a long-lasting core competency (Sil & Coryanata, 2019). Researchers observed that the most imperative characteristics of learning-oriented artisans is that they forecast and predict environmental changes and market changes, and also make necessary adjustments (Calantoneet. al., 2002; Baker et. al., 2008). Learning-oriented artisans are even willing to question their well-operated organizational systems (Farrell & Oczkowski, 2002), and update fundamental operating philosophies (Narver & Slater, 1999). Such individuals/firms drive the market rather than be driven by it. Such attitudes and strategies should lead to superior long-term performance of the individuals and/or organization.

Some notable scholars recently defined LO as a set of systematic values that influence the company's tendency to create and adopt knowledge sharing and utilization (Calantone et. al., 2002; Baker et. al., 2008). For artisans, LO therefore, is the degree of firm emphasis on the value of learning for long-term benefit followed by a commitment to learning of artisans, sharing of vision and their openness of thought. Keskin (2006) further stated that in a learning-oriented system, there will be an ongoing capacity building process to create a better future. The rising complexity and dynamism of the turbulent environment where businesses operate has pushed artisans to strengthen their strategic base with entrepreneurially-focused concepts to keep them competitively relevant, independent in their markets and ensure sustainable growth (Keskin, 2006).

In the furniture making industry in Gombe State, the observed mismanagement of skills and talent may be due to lack of learning orientation arising from poor educational system and background. Accordingly, the indicators of LO for dealing with sustainable competitive gain in the industry include commitment to learning, shared vision and open-mindedness (Calantone et. al., 2002; Baker et. al., 2008; Paparoidamis, 2005). In view of little empirical researchon artisans learning orientation and performance, we propose to address the issue focusing on the furniture making industry in Gombe State.

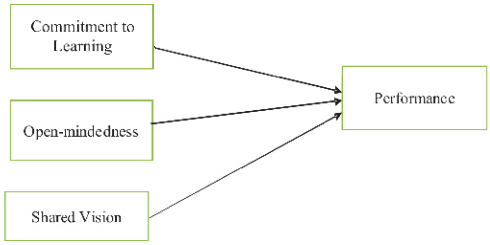

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses Development

The conceptualization of LO has been the focus of systematic inquiry in the literature (Senge, 1990; Huber, 1991; Paparoidamis, 2005; Adegbuyi et. al., 2018**), and several key dimensions of the construct have emerged. Some scholars emphasize concrete information generation and dissemination systems as the mechanism through which learning takes place (Huber, 1991; Adegbuyi et. al., 2018), while others consider firms as cognitive enterprises, and call for the need for a shared mental model and commitment to learning, a shared organizational visions, and an open-minded approach to problem solving (Senge, 1990;** Paparoidamis, 2005**).**

***Commitment to Learning*– th**is concerns the value placed on learning activities within an organization (Paparoidamis, 2005). Thus, it is the degree to which this value is viewed as axiomatic for the artisans. The level of commitment of an artisan in acquiring knowledge, transferring the learned skills, creating and modifying the available craft is what defines the extent of commitment. The key to learning orientation is the fundamental commitment it holds toward the learning process. In other words, this commitment influences whether an artisan is likely to promote a learning culture or not, and invariably the performance. Hence, if an artisan places slight commitment in the learning system, slight learning is likely to occur (Keskin, 2006).Learning-efficient artisans are reflective hence understand the reasons and effects of their commitment. However, Kumar et. al. (2020) stated that a culture amenable to learning is a prerequisite of its ability to perform, as well as the understanding of its environment and coverage, which to some extent influences the general performance of artisans. Considering the fact that artisans may lack in the level of commitment in enhancing their performance (Kohli et. al., 1998), researchers suggest further empirical studies investigating its influence on performance (Kohli et. al., 1998, Paparoidamis, 2005). Consistent with learning orientation literatures, Sinkula and Baker (1999) suggested that learning orientation has significant influence on the performance of the organization. Similarly, Vega-Martinez, Serna and Montoya (2020) examined the dimensions of learning orientation and its impact on organizational performance and competitiveness in SMES, and their findings reveal that it has a positive relationship. However, Liu, Luo and Shi (2002) reported that there is no significant relationship between commitment to learning and the performance of organization. This shows inconsistency in the literature, thus we hypothesize that:

> ***H_1: Commitment to learning significantly influence artisans' performance in the furniture making industry***

***Open-mindedness* –this entail**s an eagerness and ability to critically appraise the organizations' operational activities and create

new ideas to enhance its performance (Calantone et. al., 2002). Sinkula et. al. (1997) observed that it is related to the continuous proactive responses of the individual long-held routines, assumptions and beliefs because it is at the center of organizational improvement. Open-mindedness is central to all and sundry in the organization, especially to the artisans in the furniture making industry (Hamzah et. al., 2020). Artisans have to understand and cope with changes in technology and turbulent environment, because they have to learn and unlearn skills (Kohli et. al., 1998; Hamzah et. al., 2020). Therefore, the ability of artisans to redefine their ways of doing things, makes certainty the level of work performed. When artisans are open-minded, it means they are ready to learn and transform their creative ways and enhance performance. This was confirmed in the recent work of Hamzah et. al. (2020). They affirmed that open-mindedness is linked with the notion of unlearning, that is, to face the current competitive nature of the system and general performance of artisans, artisans have to be proactive in approaching their activities. Based on the above literature, the way of thinking and acting of artisans especially in the furniture making sector will be affected and limited if they fail to practice the system of open-mindedness. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H_2: *Open-mindedness significantly influence artisans' performance in the furniture making industry*

***Shared Vision*–this notion refers to an organization-wide focus on learning (**Calantone et. al., 2002**).** Shared vision is the component of leaning orientation process that is different from the other two, that is, commitment to learning and open-mindedness. It is so because it influences the direction of learning process.Scholars view shared vision as a vital foundation for proactive learning because it proffers direction and a focus for learning that fosters energy, commitment and purpose among artisans (Day, 1994; Sinkula et. al., 1997; Liu et. al., 2002; Hamzah et. al., 2020).Here, commitment to learning and open-mindedness influence the extent of learning, hence the need for artisans to imbibe both commitment to learning and open-mindedness. Shared vision is therefore vital, as that it helps artisans to know how and what to measure, company expectations, as well as the system of learning (Kohli et. al., 1998). According to Liu et. al. (2002), whichever direction an artisan has taken, without commitment and agreement, the goals may suffer in the process of achieving them, if it must be achieved. Researchers report that artisans without shared vision tend to have multiple thought words, and this makes it difficult to learn (Norman, 1985; Dougherty, 1989). On the other hand, Calantone et. al. (2002) opined that shared vision has positive influence over firm performance in USA. Similarly, Wang (2008) agreed that there is significant relationship between shared vision and firm performance in the United Kingdom. This study attempts to examine the extent to which shared vision influences the performance of artisans in the furniture making industry. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H_3:*Shared vision significantly influence artisans' performance in the furniture making industry*

Method

This study adopted a survey design. This approach is more suitable to gather quantitative data, make statistical assumptions and correlation of factors associated with specific objectives (Awang, 2012).The target population for this study is limited to artisans in the furniture making industry in Gombe State. However, for equal representation and to avoid data variance that may culminate from and/or view of artisans in the furniture making industry, this study considered only artisans that have experience of three years and above in the same industry.**To determine the sample size, the study adopted the Cochran formula (Cochran, 1977), $n_o = z^2pq/e^2$. Here, n_o represent the sample size, z represent the selected critical value of desired confidence level, q = 1-p and lastly e is the desired level of precision. Thereafter, the study arrived at the estimated sample size of 285.** Data was obtained via questionnaires administered to artisans in the furniture making industry in Gombe State.The participants were selected using purposive sampling technique. Simple regression was used to analyze the data generated and subsequently to evaluate the hypothesized relationships. The data generated from the sample was transcribed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

To measure learning orientation, 9-item questionnaire was created to measure 3 dimensions (5 questions for commitment to learning, 5questions for open-mindedness, 5 questions for shared vision) by adapting from literature (Huber, 1991; Calantone et. al, 2002; Sil & Coryanata, 2019). To measure performance, 5-item questionnaire was created to measure overall performance adapting from literature that focus on financial performance indicators such as profitability and growth (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986; Arowosoge & Tee, 2010; Smith & Bititci, 2017; Putniņš & Sauka, 2019).

Table 1: Respondents Characteristics

Indicator	Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	285	100%
Female	00	0.0%
Total	**285**	**100%**
Age Firm		
Below 5 years	40	14.0%
5-10 years	89	31.2%
11-15 years	77	27.0%
16-20 years	70	24.6%
21years and above	09	3.16
Total	**285**	**100%**
Education		
No formal education	18	6.3%
Primary School	16	5.6%
Secondary School	98	34.38%
Diploma	56	19.65%
IND/BSC	82	28.77%
Postgraduate	15	5.26%
Total	**285**	**100%**
Number Employees		
5-25	246	86.3%
26-50	31	10.9%
51-75	8	2.8%
Total	**285**	**100%**
Marital Status		
Single	119	41.8%
Married	113	39.6%
Widow	37	13.0%
Others	16	5.6
Total	**285**	**100%**
Experience		
Below 5 years	68	23.9%
5-10 years	62	21.8%
11-15 years	50	17.5%
16-20 years	55	19.3%
21-25 years	31	10.9%
26-30 years	16	5.6%
31-35 years	2	0.7%
Above 35 years	1	0.4%
Total	**285**	**100%**

The table above shows the demographic distribution of the respondents. All respondents were males (285). 32% (89 firms)have existed between 5-10years, artisans with secondary education (98%), 42% of the artisans are single, 246 are young (between 5-25years), and, only 24% of artisans have experience 5years.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
PF	285	5	5.4035	0.04643	0.7839	-0.144	0.144	1.101	0.288
CL	285	4	5.5902	0.03886	0.65599	-0.254	0.144	0.142	0.288
OPM	285	3.2	5.8091	0.035	0.59082	-0.022	0.144	-0.18	0.288
SV	285	2.6	5.8204	0.0349	0.58911	-0.02	0.144	-0.288	0.288
	285								

The table above shows the descriptive statistics of the variables. The Skewness and Kurtosis are within the range of acceptance. The mean and standard deviation are also within the acceptable range as seen above.

Table 3: Factor Analysis Results

	Commitment to learning	Open-mindedness	Shared vision	Performance
commitment to learning1	.703			
commitment to learning2	.712			
commitment to learning3	.758			
commitment to learning4	.748			
commitment to learning5	.803			
openmindedness1		.717		
openmindedness2		.667		
openmindedness3		.720		
openmindedness4		.796		
openmindedness5		.833		
shared vision1			.798	
shared vision2			.741	
shared vision3			.734	
shared vision4			.824	
shared vision5			.738	
performance1				.757
performance2				.815
performance3				.727
performance4				.749
performance5				.779

To ensure a good factor analysis, variables should be correlated to some extent, but not be perfectly correlated (Field, 2005). Factor Analysis was performed on all the items of constructs in the study variables. The reason is to understand the structure sets of variables in the instrument (questionnaire) and to ensure the questionnaire measures the underlying dimensions. The test of sphericity was applied to determine whether the partial correlations among variables are small (Field, 2005). A measure over 0.5 is barely acceptable, values between .5 and .7 are mediocre, values between .7 and .8 are good, values between .8 and .9 are great and values above .9 are superb (Kaiser, 1974).

Table 4:Reliability Statistics

S/N	Questionnaire Constructs	Cronbach Alpha Reliability Result	Number of Items	Remark
1	Commitment to learning	0.78	5	Reliable
2	Open-mindedness	0.82	5	Reliable
3	Shared Vision	0.87	5	Reliable
4	Performance	0.84	5	Reliable
5.	Overall	0.82	20	Reliable

Reliability is the extent of how reliable is the said measurement model in measuring the intended construct. This reliability is achieved when the value of Cronbach's Alpha is above 0.7. In this study, the reliability result of Cronbach Alpha is 0.82, which is high thusreveals internal consistency of measured constructs.

Table 5: Correlation coefficient

		1	2	3	4
1	Performance	1			
2	Commitment to Learn	.229**	1		
3	Open Mindedness	.355**	.276**	1	
4	Shared Vision	.253**	.334**	.383**	1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The correlation result for the dependent and independent variables in Table 5 shows that all the variables have a positive relationship to performance of artisans in the furniture making industry. The result reveals that commitment to learning, open mindedness and shared vision correlate to performance of artisans in furniture making industry by 22.9%, 35.5% and 25.3% respectively.

Table 6: Path Coefficient

Hypo	Relationship	STD Beta	Std. Error	T Stat	P Value	VIF	Decision
	(Constant)		0.426	3.000	0.003		
H1	CL---->Pf	0.344	0.09	4.560	0.000	2.181	Supported
H2	OPM->Pf	0.045	0.135	0.440	0.661	3.003	Not Supported
H3	SV---> Pf	0.192	0.112	2.280	0.023	2.703	Supported

From the table above, it shows that all the independent variables (commitment to learning, open mindedness and shared vision) are significant. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for the predictors is used to test if there is a strong linear association among them. The result of the multi-collinearity shows that there is no multi-collinearity among the independent variables, since the values of the VIF are all less 5 . The t value (4.5, and 2.2) shows significant level at 5%. Thus, the study support H_1 and H_3, but not H_2 because the probability of making type 1 error is 0.66 which is greater than 0.05 threshold.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1 is not supported. In other words, commitment to learning has a significant influence on artisans performance in the furniture making industry. Our findings reveal a strongcorrelation between commitment to learning and artisan performance. Our finding is in line with empirical evidence that shows a significant effect of commitment to learning on organizational performance (Sinkula and Baker, 1999; Vega-Martinez et. al., 2020). Our finding aligns with an assumptionof ELTthat states that the higher the level of commitment of entrepreneurs, the more they succeed (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Baker et. al., 2012).Therefore, artisans that implement commitment to learning which has a positive relationship with performance will be successful especially in the furniture making industry.

Hypothesis 2 is not supported. In other words, open-mindedness has no significant influenceon artisansperformance in the furniture making industry. Our findings deviate from earlier studiesthat reveal a strong relationship between open-mindedness and performance of organizations (Sinkula and Baker, 1999; Keskin, 2006; Calantone et. al., 2002).Therefore, there is no evidence to show that open-mindedness influence artisans performanceespecially in the furniture making industry.

Hypothesis 3 is not supported. In other words, shared vision has a significant influence on artisans performance in the furniture making industry. The result is in line with earlier studiesthat affirm the positive relationship between shared vision and performance of artisans (Liu et. al., 2002; Calantone et. al., 2002; Wang, 2008; Hamzah et. al., 2020). Our finding is in line with ELT assumption, thus the theory provides the foundation for addressing learning orientation from the process and knowledge sharing perspective (Kolb& Kolb, 2009).

Conclusion

This study has contributed to existing studies by empirically demonstrating the link that exists between learning orientation and artisans performance, especially in the furniture making industry in Gombe State. Therefore, successive studies can gain insights about how these dimensions (commitment to learning, open-mindedness and shared vision) of learning orientation shape performance of artisans in the furniture making industry. In Gombe State where this research work was conducted, weposit that the learning orientation system of artisans inthe furniture making industry is weak thus making higher organizational performance unattainable to its expectations. In the furniture making industry, artisans are known to showcase their products and skills acquired via

committed learning and shared vision. Therefore, our study concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between learning orientation (commitment to learning and shared vision) and performance of artisans in the furniture making industry.

Implications of theStudy– this study implies that the reality of LO in a business setting is the outcome of organizational practices, decision making techniques and styles employed by the firm in the quest to act entrepreneurially. This study shows that artisans could learn through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984) and as a result, learning is seen as a process instead of product. However, the significant relationship found between learning orientation and performance of artisans in the furniture making sector was consistent, considering that the activities of artisans is seen as a process of learning and relearning (Smart & Conant, 1994).

The study recommends that artisans, particularly in the furniture making industry must develop capability that will foster learning orientation particularly the commitment to learning and shared vision dimensions (which was found to be the most influential dimension in the context of this study) through learning and relearning, firm-level training and development, networking, and formation of professional association. This will provide a basis for building a formidable learning organization that will foster understanding and development of absorptive capacity to cope with the growing complexity of business environment in Nigeria.

Limitation and Future Research Direction–this study has some limitations owing to the limited nature of its geographical area (Gombe State), relatively small sample size (artisans in the furniture making industry) and conceptual scope (LO and Performance). This study focused on only artisan, thus, other individuals/businesses in other sectors of the economy are outside the scope of this study. Academics need to conduct research on the actual situation in other key sectors/industry of the economy and in other states of the federation. Thus, it would be meaningful if the sample size and study context are broaden to enlarge the generalization and conclusions drawn from the findings of this study. Furthermore, future research may adopt mixed methods. A longitudinal methodology towards broader understanding of LO and artisans performance would also contribute to literature. Finally, future studies may focus on investigating specifically the open-mindedness dimension to seek more answers to its relationship with organizational performance.

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