



Stakeholders' patronage and perception of imported building materials in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study sought to identify the brands of building materials commonly found in the Nigerian building materials markets with a view to comparing the level of patronage of foreign with locally produced materials and assessing the efforts of the Nigerian government in promoting local production. Sequel to this, reasons for such preferences by material dealers (suppliers, importers and marketers/distributors) regarding such building materials were explored. 3 building materials, namely; cement, steel and tiles and the major building materials markets in Lagos, Enugu, Rivers and Anambra states of Nigeria formed the study target and scope. Field and market surveys, questionnaires and interviews were used to elicit the perceptions of respondents. Insights received through the survey revealed that 'Dangote' cement brand which is locally manufactured as well as local steels products were found to be the most popular in the materials market due to proximity of their place of production, cheaper prices and good distribution networks. Vitrified tiles which are all imported were also discovered to be very common in the market because of its durability. Most materials dealers frequently patronize the imported 'BUA' cement brand due to its performance, while the imported 'Pacific' steel is readily available on demand. Vitrified floor tiles are largely patronized because of their availability and resistance to abrasion. Major reasons or feedback garnered from users for preferred choice of particular imported material brands are suitability for construction and availability, while the major factors responsible for purchasing building materials from abroad were; the high standard or quality of imported materials and advanced foreign technology. It was recommended that though the Nigerian Government has made great strides, especially in ensuring local production of cement and steel, more needs to be done. There is still the urgent need for the government to make necessary policies and take measures that will not only encourage and boost local production of these materials and that of tiles, but also improve the quality of existing local materials, so that national patronage is increased and confidence of material dealers and users is restored.

Keywords: Imported building materials; Nigeria, Patronage; Perception, Stakeholders

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1. Introduction

Oluwakiyesi (2011, p. 1) stated that “the construction sector is an important and indispensable sector of every economy; a precursor of national socio-economic development and a yardstick for measuring national progress”. It has also been established that construction products provide the necessary public infrastructure and private physical structures for many productive activities to thrive. Hence, the industry has a significant effect on the economy during its materials production, importation and usage (Ofori, 1990; Husseni, 1991; Obandan and Uge, 1996).

Mogbo (2001, p. 9) and Abiola (2000, p. 37) identified building materials as “one of the principal factors affecting the effective performance of the Nigerian construction industry”. The building materials sector is also regarded as a major contributor to the construction industry because materials constitute the single largest impact in construction often accounting for over fifty per cent (50%) of the total cost of construction (Ezeokwono, 2010; Mogbo, 1999; Okereke, 2003; Oyediran and Odeniyi, 2009).

Building materials have in fact been established to constitute as much as 40-80% of the total input of building construction, its input into low cost housing, which constitutes the bulk of Nigerian housing need is even considered higher. The production and use of building material is thus, not only relevant in housing and other structural development, but also to the economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability of Nigeria (Atolagbe, 2009).

According to Adogbo and Kolo (2009), there is an ever increasing demand and preference for import-based innovative building products in Nigeria which is attributable to the declining quality of its indigenous materials. This high dependence of Nigeria on importation, according to Atolagbe (2009) was due to the increase in oil wealth, the need to achieve economic growth, cost of quality, lack of infrastructures and the over-valuation of local currency which tends to make import cheaper than domestic production.

Unbridled importation and taste for foreign materials in Nigeria has since being a cause for concern and worry and little is being done to curb the ugly scenario or ameliorate the capacity of the indigenous or local materials industry. This scenario has also eroded the confidence Nigerian citizens and stakeholders have in indigenous or locally produced building materials. Marketers have in turn followed this trend and have flooded the building materials market with imported materials to meet the growing demand of consumers. This has also stagnated and led to the underdevelopment of the Nigerian building materials market.

Addressing this discouraging situation forms the basis for the study. Thus, some pertinent questions need to be asked by all construction industry stakeholders; what kinds of these imported materials are found in the market and why are they common? Why do importers and material suppliers prefer them to the locally produced materials? If these imports are damaging to the economy, as has been established by economists, why have they not been discontinued. Answers to these questions form the basis of the study.

It is expected that this research work will give more insight and strengthen existing literature on the present situation of the importation of building materials in the country. It will be of great importance to the Nigerian government with respect to the reasons why preference for imported materials still persists. This will also drive the need for government to increase local production and take a cue from the qualities of those

imported materials which material dealers patronize and incorporate them into local products and boost the confidence of Nigerians.

2. Aim and objectives of the study

The research focuses on studying the perceptions and preference of Nigerian construction stakeholders for imported building materials. The following objectives were the premise for achieving the aim.

- To ascertain the types of building materials (under study) commonly found in the Nigerian market.
- To identify the brands of imported building materials patronized by materials dealers (suppliers and marketers and importers)
- To obtain the views of materials dealers on the reasons for the preferred choice of imported materials.
- To investigate the factors responsible for sourcing of building materials from overseas.

3. Literature

3.1. Overview of the Nigerian construction industry

Numerous authors in Nigeria have affirmed the milestones and significant contributions of the construction industry to the economy. For instance, El Rufai (1993) referred to the construction sector as a 'capital goods' industry because its products and services do constitute the basis where other economic activities are built upon. Ajanlekoko (1990) opined that the building/construction industry is the prime motivator of the Nigerian economy. Construction is a small player that accounts for less than 1% of the total labour force, yet it also accounts for 69% of fixed capital formation, meaning that an estimated 70% of the total net capital investment in the country goes to the sector (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). This value is bound to rise when the contribution of building materials industries is included in the computation of the construction industry's contribution to GDP.

Although the construction industry is a relatively small player in terms of Nigeria's GDP, it is still regarded a very active sector that is sure to also benefit from growth and tourism, retail and manufacturing. According to Frontier Market Intelligence (2012), four factors are contributing to the growth of the construction sector: massive demand for buildings across all sectors of the economy, the focus on infrastructural development by the state and federal governments, adoption of privatization and commercialization as instruments of federal government policy and tightening of regulations relating to how business is done in Nigeria.

Sadly, the Nigeria's construction sector is, yet to realize its full potentials. This is because the sector is still bedeviled with security challenges arising from the activities of Islamic insurgents, unfavourable business environment; regulation, policies, politics, misappropriation and corruption, over dependence on foreign products (expatriates and importation), lack of adequate and poor implementation of Industrial Standards (Oladapo and Oni, 2012). In addition to this, poor implementation of policies and strategies has rendered its

market stagnant, underdeveloped, making it a haven for poor quality building materials. Other constraints to the construction sector include a shortage of skilled manual labour, the relatively high cost of hiring staff at managerial level and inadequate building materials (Dantata, 2008, p. 25).

Despite these inhibiting factors, “the sector experienced growth rate of more than 20% between 2006 and 2007, even though the global credit crunch forced some developers to hold a few big projects”. “The sector’s numbers were still impressive at 13.1% in 2008”. “Some projections anticipate average expansion at 15 – 17% by 2012”. “This would make the construction industry worth more than 60billion dollars; it would barely register in terms of its overall contribution to GDP at 1.83% in 2008”. “The government’s goal is to double the sector’s value” (Frontier Market Intelligence, 2012, p. 2). Strong steps to stamp out corruption previously rife in the construction industry are also being undertaken and more are promised. Stricter building and land-use development rules have helped to boost investor confidence.

3.2. Historical review of materials importation in Nigeria: How it all went wrong

Atolagbe (2009, p.87) informed that Nigeria was colonized by the British for about a century and under this colonial rule, “the native technological culture including those in building materials were lost to the domineering influences and processes of their colonial masters”. By 1960, when Nigeria assumed a level of political and economic independence, virtually all the indigenous methods of production and manufacture had either been abandoned or obsolete in preference to foreign or imported techniques and “till date, a re-orientation towards indigenous values has not been achieved with any remarkable success among citizens whose native values have been self-debased, considered inferior and unacceptable” (Atolagbe, 2009, p.84). The state of Nigeria technological and industrial casualty is the resultant effect of the colonial experience.

Using his exact words:

“Nigerians, in building material production failed to build on the techniques their forefathers clearly and procedurally handed over to them, and worse still could not grapple with the new foreign based technology that was introduced to them mid-way by the colonialists and finally the colonialists left at independence, when citizens were at a crossroad. They had abandoned what they had and knew; and had not come to terms with what they liked; “the new technology”. This is the technological dilemma of Nigeria and her government since independence”.

Furthermore, Nigeria’s economy, and to a large extent, its life style is “Import” based expect for crude oil and few plant produce like rubber, cocoa, groundnut. Even this has fallen constantly since the late 80’s. The vast majority of her needs are imported from education to religion, industrial to agricultural machineries etc. It’s obvious that Nigeria may remain a perpetual buyer.

According to Atolagbe (2009, p.85), “the history of housing in Nigeria and various interventions of governments and the private sector to achieve sufficiency is also replete with, among other measures, massive importation of building materials like cements, timber products, refractory materials, tiles, glass,

aluminum, steel, cables, plastics, ceramics product etc". The question now, is: how did Nigeria become so dependent? As earlier discussed, much of this could be traced back to the wave of colonization.

To understand Nigeria's transition from the era of dominant use of indigenous building materials to the era of wide use of conventional materials, Oluyode (1998), posited three stages, namely: the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post colonial Era. The pre-colonial era witnessed a steady growth in the indigenous housing which is predominantly indigenous building materials, technology and styles. These materials include, mud, stones, woods, grass, hides and skins, bamboo etc. This materials, technology and styles suited the climatic conditions and to a good extent, were eco-friendly. The colonial era marked the British incursion into Nigeria, and by 1920's, European influence had began to be felt in the social, political and cultural life style of Nigerians. The building materials transition had begun. Traditional materials gave way to imported materials, the living pattern and life styles including building forms, materials, methods and techniques of the west became the envy of Nigerians. The post colonial era transition was faster as Nigerians abandoned their indigenous values for imported ones. This was not only in the building industry, but also in government, politics, administration and even cultures.

3.3. The present scenario

The Nigerian economy has often been regarded as 'relatively open'. Whilst economists generally agree that openness to international trade accelerates development (Obandan and Okojie, 1998). The Heckscher-Olin's theory postulates that the immediate cause of international trade is the difference in relative prices caused by the difference in relative demand and supply of factors as a result of differences in factor endowment between countries (Jinghan, 2002). The large Nigerian construction market can support growth, but in conformity with the Heckscher-Olin's theory, it cannot deliver sustained growth at the rates needed to make visible impact in the construction industry hence the need for importation (World Bank, 2002).

Nigeria's aggregate imports have grown substantially since the country's political independence in 1960. Various surveys corroborates this. From a value of 23.6% in 1960 to 46.1% in 1970, it surged to about 53.8% and 56.8% in 1981 and 1982 respectively, then to about 52.7% in 1992 and 60.0% in 2010 (Sa'ada and Hassan, 2008; CBN, 2012). However, Qalitheia (2010) places the degree of Nigerian import dependence at over 70%.

3.4. The Nigerian building materials market

Before delving into the building materials market in Nigeria, it is pertinent to have an overview of what a building material is and the common types available in Nigeria. A building material is an item needed for performing building construction purposes or simply put, creating a building. It can be classified as either natural or man-made. Natural building materials are those materials which occur naturally. Examples include sand, clay, wood, rocks etc., while Man-made materials undergo synthesis and have been refined by man for construction purposes examples includes tiles, paints etc. (Ogbuagu, 2008). The construction industry, can be seen to represent the service arm of building materials sector, as the output of the latter forms the input of

the former; therefore the growth of the building materials sector has a direct implication on the outlook of the construction industry. Plessis (2007) pointed out that building material production and distribution in Nigeria has a tremendous impact on society and the environment.

Surprisingly, numerous aspects of the Nigerian construction industry, its management, education and technology have been discussed, written and researched on, but quite little has been done with respect to the Nigerian building materials market despite its relevance to the economy. The greatest strength of the Nigerian building materials market is its size.

The Nigerian Building materials market has the sole function of ensuring that building materials manufactured or imported are effectively distributed in the market for construction purposes to be achieved, the market also helps regulate the type of product, cost of products and possibly standard and quality. Therefore, for the building industry to attain greater heights, attention and focus must be given to the building materials market (Oladapo and Oni, 2012).

4. Methodology

4.1. Data collection sources and methods

The relevant data used for this study, was generated via questionnaires, oral interviews and market survey. Details of results were also presented; using tables and charts for proper elucidation. The essence of combining the questionnaire distribution with oral interviews was to have personal interaction and obtain information from the respondents/construction materials dealers (suppliers, marketers and importers) and also elicit information which is not contained in existing literature. In addition to this, the oral interviews conducted, was with a view to getting on- the- spot responses to the information required and to supplement data obtained from the questionnaires. The main advantage of face-to-face interviews was that the researchers could adapt the questions as necessary, clarifies doubts, and ensure that responses were properly understood by repeating or rephrasing the questions. It also ensured the respondents exhausted their ideas and opinions on the subject matter.

The market survey carried out was employed to obtain various brands of building materials, precisely: cement, reinforcement bars and tiles, while the interviews and questionnaires were aimed at eliciting reasons for their preferences. The questionnaires were administered randomly to building materials dealers located in major building materials markets in Lagos, Rivers, Enugu and Anambra States of Nigeria in order to obtain an even spread across the country. These states in turn, served as the locations for the market survey. The questionnaires were distributed by hand to the respondents to enable the researchers explain the essence of the study, since most of them have no formal education.

From existing literatures and oral interviews it was possible to identify the importation factors or variables (as indicated in the analysis) to which building materials dealers were required to provide their views. Based on this, the questionnaire was then drawn up and administered to the building material dealers. A total of 150 questionnaires were administered and 126 replies were received, representing a response rate

of 84%. Table 1 shows the target respondents and population as well as the questionnaire distribution and response rate.

Table 1. Questionnaire distribution and response

Description of Respondents	Number distributed	Number of respondents	Response rate (%)
Materials suppliers	96	81	
Materials importers and marketers	54	45	
Total	150	126	84

The questionnaire contained well structured preformatted set of questions to which respondents recorded their answers; the questions were well articulated to capture price variation, inventory and sources of building materials. Two distinct questionnaire surveys were developed: one for inventory appraisal and the other to ascertain their views on issues bordering on imported building materials (in accordance with the study objectives). For each statement, respondents were required to express the level of their agreement in a five point Likert-type scale, where 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree.

To ensure validity and reliability, the questions and statements were geared towards achieving the research objectives. The questions were also structured to ensure consistency and avoid ambiguity.

4.2. Data analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire survey and interviews were subjected to comparative and descriptive analysis using simple bar charts, pie charts tables, and percentages. The importance index was used to obtain the ranking of the factors responsible for sourcing building materials from overseas on a five (5) point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

The importance index is mathematically represented as:

$$I_i = \frac{\sum f x_i}{N} \quad (1)$$

where:

I_i = Importance score index of each variable;

f = Frequency of responses to each rating;

x_i = Score or rating given to each variable by the respondents, where $i = 1,2,3,4,5$

N = Total number of responses concerning the variable.

5. Survey findings and discussions

5.1. Brands of materials commonly found in the Nigerian market

i) Cement

From respondents' views, 32.5% are of the opinion that 'Dangote' is the most commonly found cement in the market while 25.4% consider it as 'Unicem', 16.7% and 14.3% , 'BUA' and 'Ibeto' respectively as the most common. Only 4.8% and 6.3% went for 'Burham' and 'Elephant' cement respectively. No respondent considered 'five star' cement since it is relatively new. It can be thus deduced that 'Dangote' cement is the most popular cement followed by 'Unicem' (see table 2). This can be attributed to place of production since they are locally produced and also have good distribution network.

On the price of cement per bag, 'Unicem' and 'elephant' were the cheapest at ₦1, 600/bag. 'Burham' is the most expensive at ₦1850/bag. Dangote sells at ₦1, 700/bag with BUA at ₦1800 and Ibeto at ₦1, 750/bag. The price differences are attributed to the fact that some of the cement brands are produced locally while others are imported. Also poor distribution network affects the price increase of cement e.g. 'Burham' cement has no depot in the city of Port Harcourt, thereby compelling suppliers to source for the product from Lagos state.

(Note that the prices are not constant. Prices indicated below for the materials under study are market prices as at September, 2012).

Table 2. Types and prices of products commonly found in the market

Material	Brand/Amount(₦)	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Cement	BUA, 1,800	21	16.7
	Burham, 1,850	6	4.8
	Ibeto, 1,750	18	14.3
	Five star	-	-
	Dangote, 1,700	41	32.5
	Unicem, 1,600	32	25.4
	Elephant, 1,600	8	6.3
Total		126	100
Reinforcement bar (16mm)	Pacific steel, 170,000	19	15.1
	Ukraine steel, 165,000	8	6.3
	Brazilian steel, 155,000	-	-
	Universal steel, 135,000	34	27.0
	African steel, 135,000	33	26.2
	Double star steel, 140,000	33	26.2
Total		126	100
Tiles	Ceramic, 3,200	21	16.7
	Vitrified, 4,600	42	33.3
	P.V.C	34	27.0
	Granite, 12,000	16	12.7
	Marble, 11,000	13	10.3
Total		126	100

Source: Researchers' field and market survey (2012).

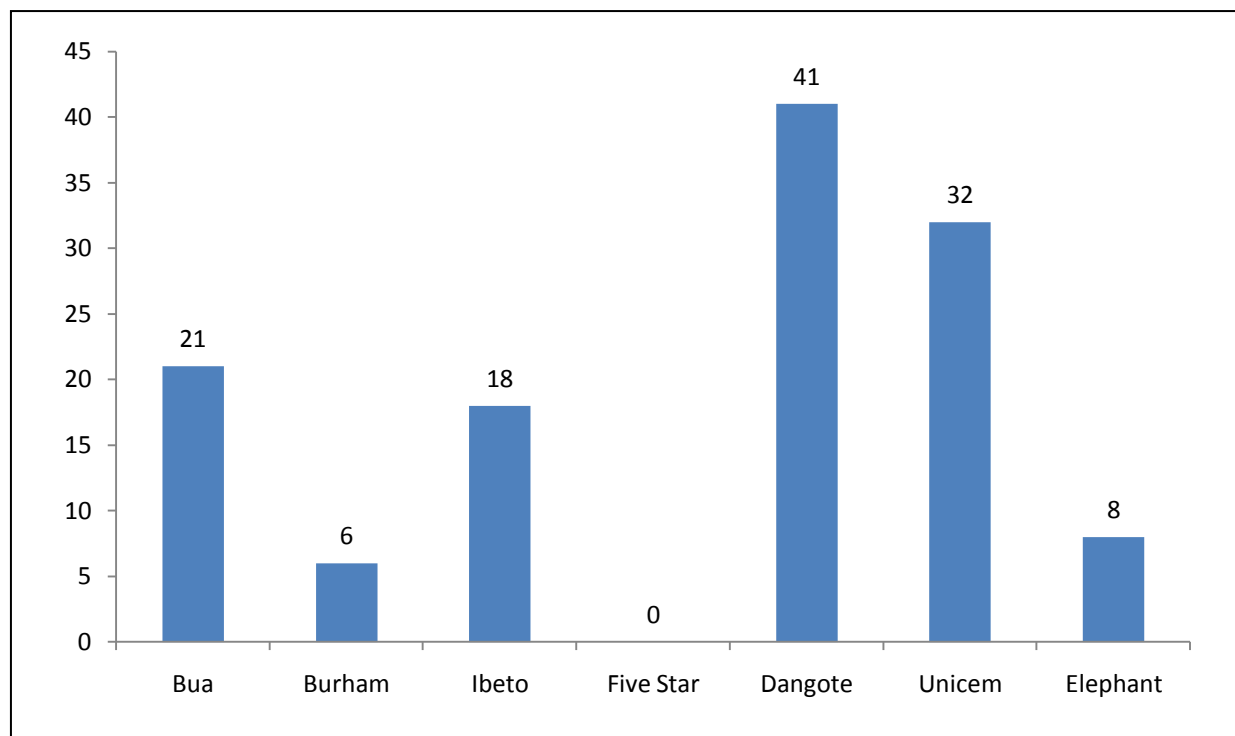


Figure 1. Bar chart representation of cement commonly found in the market

ii) Steel

From the views of respondents, it can be deduced that locally produced steels are most commonly found in the market since they account for 73.8% collectively; 27.0%, 26.2% and 20.6% for universal steel, Double star, and African steel. Imported steel has only 26.2% popularity in the market with pacific having 15.1% (*see table 2*). This could be attributed to an increase in local production, price variation and distribution network. On the price of steel, African and universal steel were found to be the cheapest at N135, 000 and Germany's pacific Steel N170, 000 for 52 pieces of 16mm which is mostly used for construction works in Nigeria. The price difference could be traced to import problems, duties and logistics, quality of steel and transportation for distribution.

iii) Tiles

33.3% of respondents are of the opinion that vitrified tiles are most commonly found in the market with P.V.C tiles given 27.0% and 16.7% to ceramic while Granite and Marble enjoy only 12.7% and 10.3% respectively as the most common (*see table 3*). This is because of the abrasion resistance of vitrified tiles, while granite and marble are considered expensive, it is equally important to note that all tiles are imported except P.V.C.

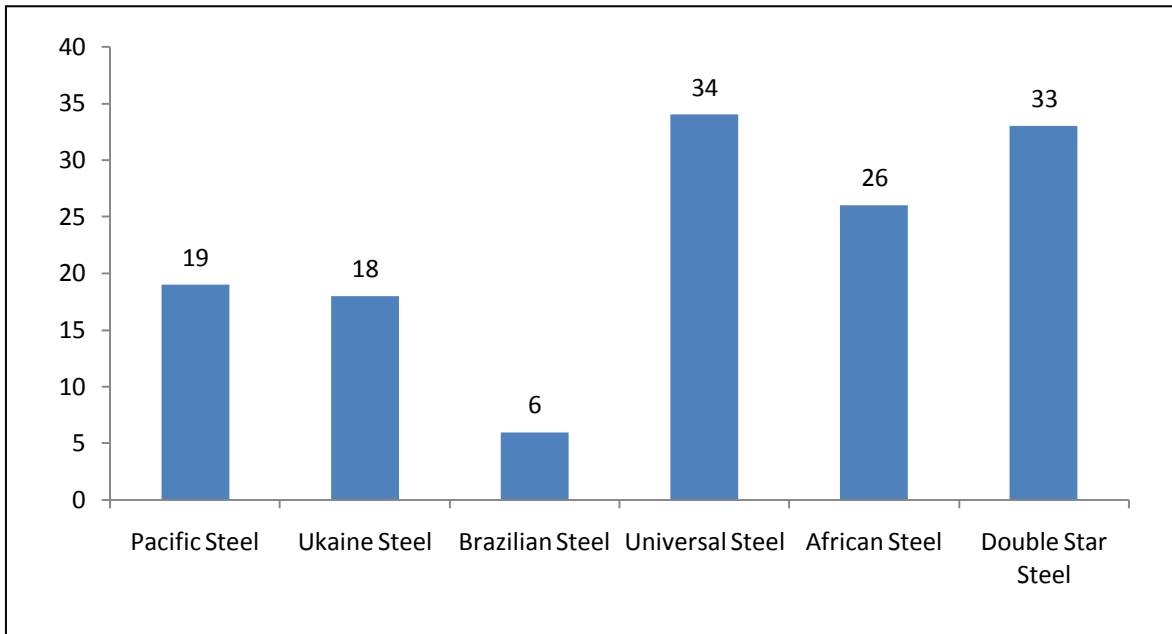


Figure 2. Bar chart representation of steel commonly found in the market

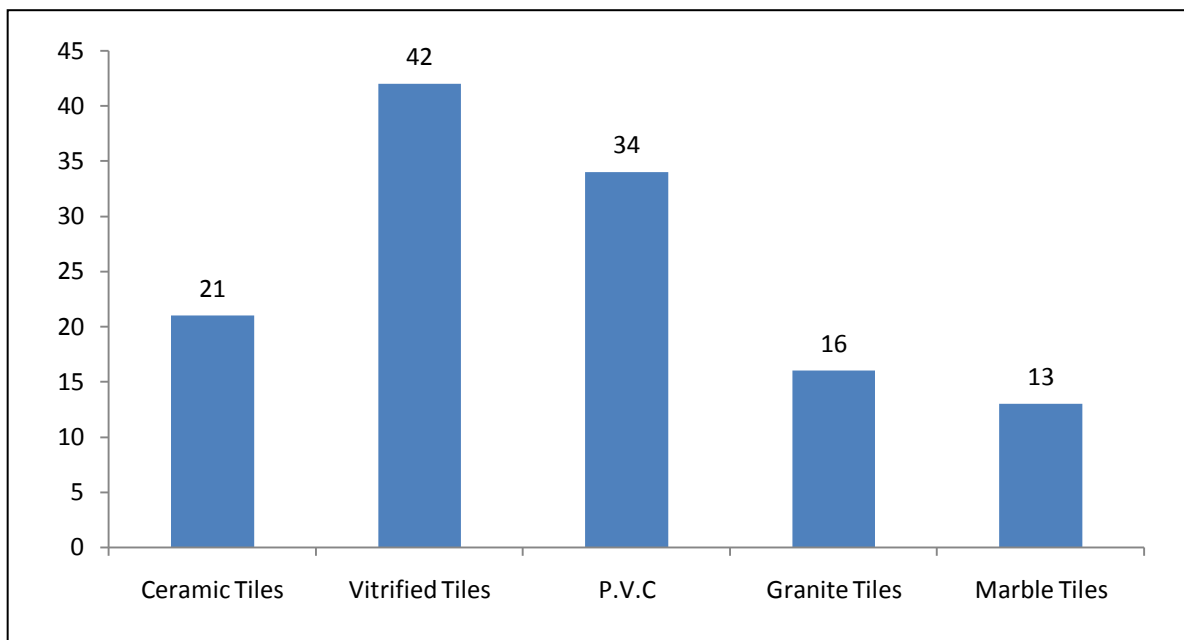


Figure 3. Bar chart representation of tiles commonly found in the market

5.2. Types of imported building materials patronized

With respect to brands of imported materials mostly used, table 3 indicates the following:

- *i) Cement:* 37.3% of the population sample makes use of BUA cement brand, 29.41 and 33.3% make use of Burham and Ibeto respectively and none use five star. This indicates that the respondents prefer BUA cement. The none usage of five star cement is because it is relatively new in the market.
- *ii) Steel:* Respondents prefer pacific steel, which is due to the fact that it comes when demanded, and is the only available imported brand in keyyatta market of Enugu state as at the time the research was carried out.
- *iii) Floor Tiles:* Vitrified floor tiles are preferred by the respondents more than any other tiles because of their prices, availability and also it resistance to abrasion. P.V.C followed closely, because it is less expensive, affordable and supply comes when demanded. Despite the abrasion resistance of granite and marble, it was not on preference list by the respondents due to its high cost.

Table 3. Types of imported building materials frequently used or dealt on

Materials	Brand/Type	Numbers of respondents	Percentage (%)
Brand of cement	Bua	47	37.3
	Burham	37	29.4
	Ibeto	42	33.3
	Five star	-	-
Total		126	100
Reinforcement bar	Pacific	76	60.3
	Ukraine	28	22.2
	Brazilian rod	22	17.5
Total		126	100
Tiles	Ceramic	21	16.7
	Vitrified	39	31.0
	P.V.C	34	27.0
	Granite	18	14.3
	Marble	14	11.0
Total		126	100

Source: Researchers' field Survey (2012)

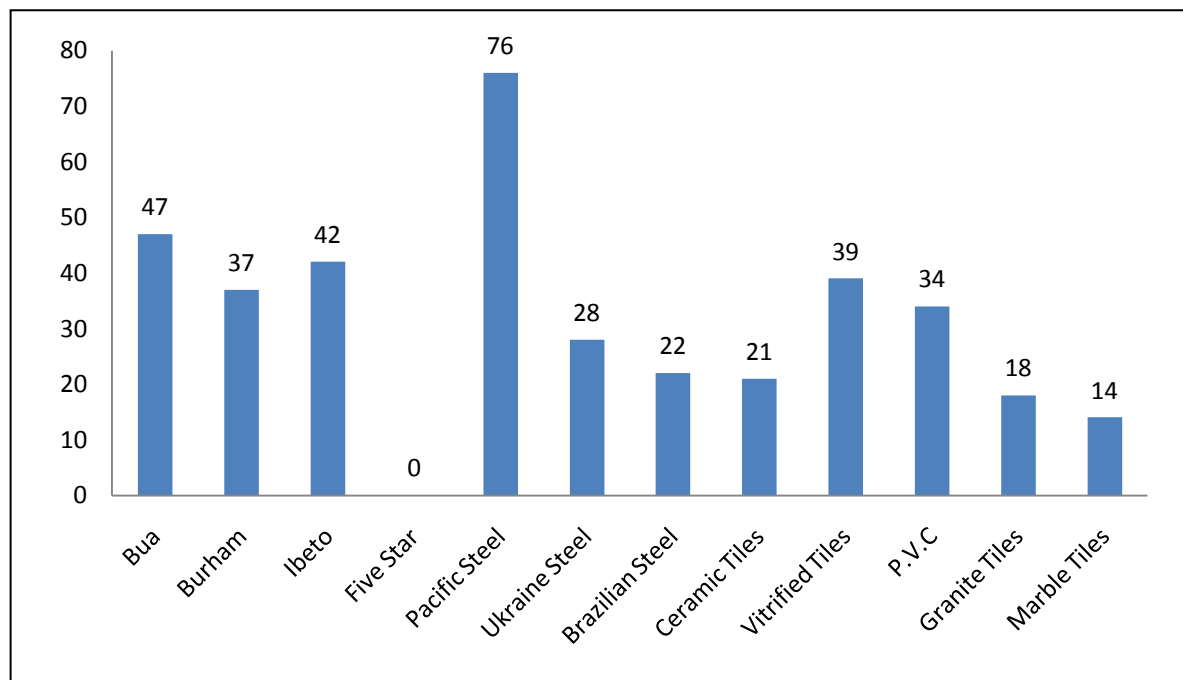


Figure 4. Simple Bar chart representation of the types of imported materials patronized

5.3. Reasons for preferred choice of imported materials

Table 4 provides respondents' views on preference for the building materials under study.

Table 4. Reasons for preferred choice of materials

S/N	Reasons	Cement		Reinforcement		Tiles	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	Easily sold off	39	31	13	11.9	34	27.0
2	Good for construction (Lasts longer and are better than others)	48	38.1	28	22.2	49	38.9
3	Supply comes when demanded i.e. readily available	19	15.0	32	25.4	18	14.3
4	Cheaper than others	7	5.6	5	4.0	9	7
5	More confidence because it is imported	13	10.3	13	10.3	16	12.7
6	The only available brand	-	-	33	26.2	-	-
	Total	126	100	126	100	126	100

Source: Researchers' field survey (2012)

- *i) Cement:* 31% responses gathered from cement indicates that their reason for using or selling a particular brand of cement is because they are easily sold off (i.e. high market demand), while 38.1% prefer a particular brand because it is good for construction works. The remaining 30.9% however, share other reasons like supply comes on demand, cheap price and confidence in imported products.
- *ii) Steel:* From the analysis of the responses, it was gathered that 26.2% use or sell a particular brand because it is the only available brand in the market, this is quite true in ‘Keyatta’ market of Enugu state, where only a particular brand of steel is obtainable. 22.2% say they use it because it has a higher tensile strength, while 25.4% say they deal with it because it comes when demanded. 14.3% say they use it since it is either imported or less expensive
- *iii) Floor tiles:* 38.9% of the respondents affirm that they deal with the tiles because of it is best for construction, while 27.0% indicate their reason as being easily sold off. The rest, constituting 34.1% went for its cheap price, confident since it is imported and its ready availability.

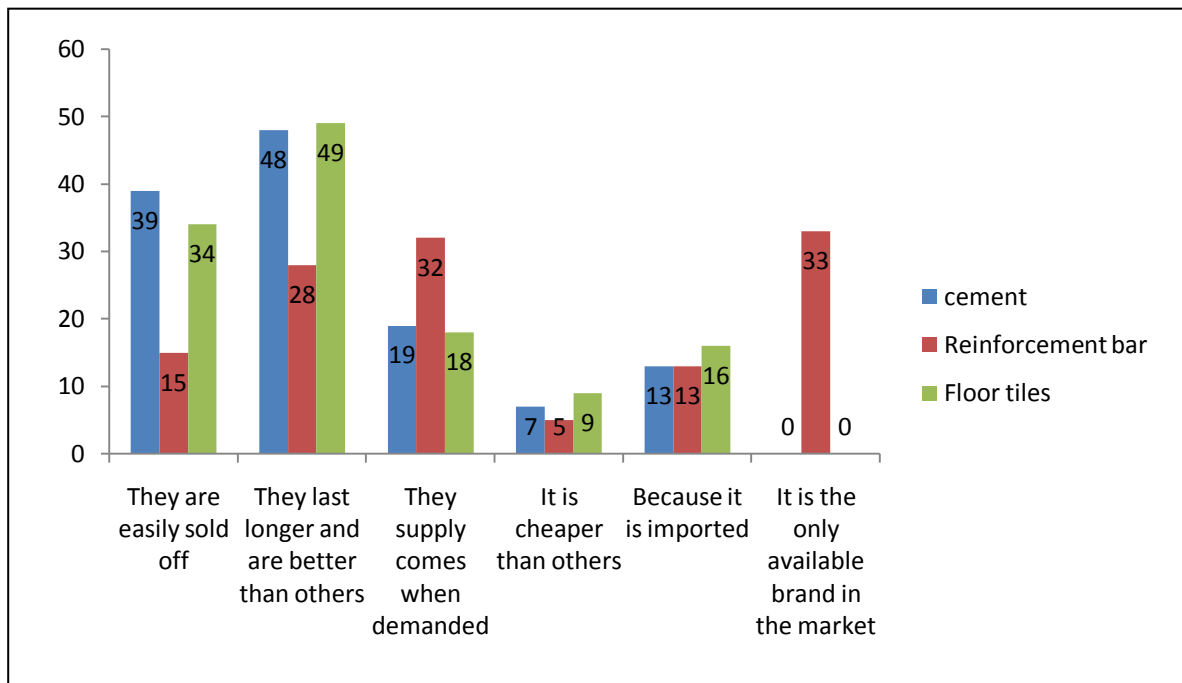


Figure 7. Multiple Bar chart representation of the views on preferred choice of materials

5.4. Factors responsible for sourcing building materials from overseas

To obtain the rankings of factors that promote the importation of building materials, respondents were asked to indicate their extent of agreement or disagreement on a five (5) point Likert scale. The mean scores of all their responses were calculated and average means score values obtained. This yielded the results indicated in table 5.

Table 5. Ranking of factors responsible for sourcing building materials from overseas

S/N	Factors	SA	A	U	DA	SD	Importance index	Rank
1	Exchange Rate between foreign currencies and the Naira	2	10	26	34	42	1.89	15
2	High Quality of imported finished product	35	30	24	19	07	3.27	4
3	Imported materials produced according to standards and specifications	39	35	23	15	14	3.56	1
4	Favorable export duties from abroad	20	19	28	30	29	2.77	14
5	Political instability in Nigeria	17	21	32	29	27	2.78	13
6	Economic instability in Nigeria	21	20	28	32	24	2.83	12
7	Favorable government policies abroad	31	27	26	19	23	3.19	7
8	High corruption and unethical practices in Nigeria	29	28	27	19	24	3.15	9
9	Market visibility and viability of imported Products	31	28	28	29	19	3.25	6
10	Advance technology abroad	37	35	25	17	12	3.54	2
11	High cost of local production	28	34	25	21	18	3.26	5
12	Clients' desire and taste for imported Materials	26	28	27	23	22	3.10	10
13	Non availability of raw materials in Nigeria	32	29	25	21	19	3.27	4
14	Perception of imported products	39	32	20	16	19	3.44	3
15	High market demand and supply for imported products	27	22	28	33	26	3.17	8
16	Adequate man -power and cheap labour force abroad	23	19	34	31	19	2.97	11

The factors indicated in the table, all obviously influence preferences of material dealers for imported materials to varying extents, but from the analysis of respondents' view, it can be deduced that the high standard or quality of imported materials and advanced foreign technology were the most important reason for patronizing materials from overseas, while exchange rate ranked least. This calls for more attention on the part of the Nigerian government to boost local production and improve or enhance standards of existing local materials.

6. Summary and Conclusions

The field survey of the study gave an insight on the preferences and views of material dealers regarding imported cement, reinforcement and tiles. Findings suggest that 'Dangote' cement was found to be the most

popular cement in the materials market. This was traceable to place of production (local) and good distribution network. Locally produced steels were also discovered to be very common in the market, accounting for 73.8% collectively. This was as a result of local production, price variation and distribution network. Vitrified tiles which are largely imported are the most common in the market. Respondents patronize it due to its abrasion resistance.

On the perceptions of imported materials; dealers frequently use the 'BUA' cement brand due to its impressive performance (informed by users), the 'Pacific' steel because it comes when demanded. Vitrified floor tiles are most frequently dealt on, in comparison to other types of tiles because of their availability and resistance to abrasion. P.V.C follows closely since it is less expensive, affordable and supplied when demanded. Granite and marble, though imported enjoy little patronage because they are expensive. With respect to the reasons for preferred choice of using or selling particular brands of imported materials, majority of responses garnered suggest that imported cement and tiles are good for construction or lasts longer and is easily sold off (i.e. high market demand). For reinforcement, the main reasons were that particular brands were only available in limited particular parts of the country and are readily available. The major factors responsible for patronizing building materials from overseas were the high standard or quality of imported materials and advanced foreign technology.

In line with the forgoing summary, the study is inclined to conclude that Nigerians is making appreciable progress in terms of local production of cement and reinforcement, especially with the transformation agenda of the present government. Tiles however do not fall into this category, the government must thus make greater efforts in that regard.

Furthermore, a solution to the negative perceptions of local materials by material dealers and unhealthy demand for foreign materials lies in returning to indigenous practices. The argument for a return to pre-colonial housing practices should not be constructed as a return to primitive practices but as a symbol of our social cultural heritage and national pride. Such a change implies a change in living values from the acquired practices or acculturation to the native social cultural values of Nigeria.

7. Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are advanced:

- With respect to the most preferred and commonly used imported materials, the government should consider the reasons given by materials dealers for their patronage and thru its quality control agencies take a cue from the properties of such materials after due quality studies and make efforts to incorporate such qualities in locally manufactured products.
- Concerted and focused efforts should be made by the government in supporting, encouraging and funding researches, devising policies for the manufacture, improvement and development of domestic or local building materials.
- The federal government should on their own or in partnership with the private sector, provide social amenities like electricity, infrastructure, good road network, alternative means of transporting goods and

services (e.g. railways) to avoid shortage in distribution network caused by bad roads. These will in turn encourage local production, reduce cost of construction and house ownership, enhance employment generation and boost GDP.

- Rigorous marketing should be embarked on, to further drive the need to patronize Nigerian- made-products and give citizens more confidence in local products.

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