

# Pottery production, an entrepreneurship perspective for job creation and poverty alleviation. A case study of Dada pottery, Okelele, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

Indigenous pottery art as a small scale business was studied in the perspective of entrepreneurship. The study area is Dada pottery located at Okelele quarter, Ilorin East local government of Kwara state. A structured and validated questionnaire was used. This was in the format of five point scale that ranges from Strongly Agreed to Strongly Disagree. Information was obtained from primary and secondary sources. The research results reveals that indigenous pottery has prospects wider and increased acceptability among the rural and the urban dwellers for domestic and interior decorations especially in the hotel industry. The Dada potters are good, deft in creativity and innovative but are facing many occupational challenges which include lack of working capital as loans from banks, continual usage of old equipment etc. Dada potter centre need entrepreneurship approach in the area of production, new marketing and products production strategies to be able to compete with foreign wares and increase the scope of consumers.

**Key words:** Pottery production, entrepreneur perspective

## 1 Introduction

Making pottery is a timeless occupation, and the best of pots through the ages have quality of timelessness about them that transcends chronological and cultural boundaries. Their appeal is universal. Hopper (2000). Pottery developed as a result of a response to the needs of mankind for containers and dispensers. The forms they took developed for a variety of reasons; for religious association, geographical and climatic consideration and for cultural customs. Once the basic needs became evident, forms were developed and made to serve them. Thus pots were made for fertility wedding rites, funeral rites, cooking and household chores etc. In some cultures, notably India, pottery was the disposable material, like today's paper, Styrofoam or polystyrene. Everyday pottery was thrown away after use either as a measure of hygiene or religious doctrine or both. Traditional Sub-Saharan African pottery is hand-built. There is no evidence of the use of potter's wheel. Nonetheless the confidence and dexterity with which the potters go about their works are manifest in the precision of forms, which is characteristic of their products. The pots are generally not fire in high temperature as open fire, but a high firing device is often used for the heating. Adebowale, (2014). Pottery is one of the craft of the ancient Nigeria that is still being practiced in most parts of the country today. It is Nigeria's most cultural material that has caught the attention and interest of early British archeologists in Nigeria like Professor Thurstan-Shaw, whose work of excavation of the baked clay objects has been outstanding, but homogenous and elephantine. Pottery has been described as one of the cheapest arts being practiced in Nigeria and heavily dominated by Women. Thus, pottery making is ubiquitously practiced in virtually all the ethnic groups of Nigeria including Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa (Vanguard Newspaper, 2011)

Entrepreneurship is the process of starting a business or an organization. The entrepreneur develops a business model, acquires the human and other required resources and is fully responsible for its success or failure. In recent years, entrepreneurship has been claimed as a major driver of economic growth in both the United States and Western Europe. Entrepreneurship activities differ substantially depending on the type of organization and creativity involved. Entrepreneurship ranges from solo, part time projects to large scale under takings that create many jobs (Entrepreneurship, no date). Schumter (1959) considered the entrepreneur as an innovator. He writes that entrepreneurship is the carrying out of new combinations we call enterprise. "The new combination focuses on five aspects; The introduction of new goals, new methods of production, opening up of new markets, new sources of supply of raw material and new industrial organizations". Baumol (1993) sees entrepreneur as "people who get ideas for creating a new business, bring that business into existence and then carry on the work of the enterprise". Entrepreneurship is a human activity which plays a major role in economic development. Its history is as old as human history. It indicates to the spirit of enterprise such a spirit transform the man from a nomad to a cattle rearer, to a settled agriculturist, to a trader and an industrialist Murthy (1989).

### 1.1 Small Scale Business

The role of small scale business has been emphasized from time to time, keeping in view the overall plan objectives of the economic growth coupled with social justice. The small sector has distinct advantage of low investment with high potential for employment generation. It also bring out dispersal of industries in rural and

semi-urban areas with definite advantage of equitable distribution of national income. This sector has been identified in all the national development plans of Nigeria. It is widely acknowledged that the creation, sustenance and growth of small and medium Enterprise (SME) Is a key ingredient for the sustainable development of any nation. Nigeria like other similar nations of the world is gradually initiating reforms on (SME) aimed at transforming the national economy from its present prostatic statue to a highly industrialized one, as achieved by some Asians countries in the second half of the last century. World Bank Survey (2002). According to ILpo et al (2004), these reforms aimed at creating employment, reducing poverty and improving the welfare of people which is in agreement with the goals of industrialized countries worldwide.

## 2. Statement of Problem

Pottery art have suffered a setback due to modernization that brought in aluminum, iron and ore products used for various household chores. These products gain more prominence due to their durability and ease of transportation. Pottery art in Italy, China, Japan and many other countries have advanced beyond only pots and other domestic containers. Unfortunately, pottery in many parts of Africa especially Nigeria is yet to move with the modern needs of people in the area using pottery to meet the wider needs for interior decoration, as cookery and serving wares etc. It is however note worthy to comment that traditional pottery art has survive and still relevant to some people's need in spite of modernization that brought in substitutes such as metals, aluminum, plastics, ceramics products etc. Indigenous pottery are facing many challenges which has culminated a monumental limitations to entrepreneurship prospects of the seemingly incitative art. Some of these include lack of capital to invest, no modern tools to enhance production and finishing touch, transportation etc. previous study indicated that in spite of this problems, pottery production is on the increase. Thus, this study is viewing the challenges in pottery making through the eye of an entrepreneur by developing a business model, acquires the necessary human and material resources, adequate research and then strategies on surmounting the problems of capital resource, source of materials, production and processes to make products relevant in the face of foreign competition. Then the marketing, advertisement and other logistics like transportation, consumers good will should be approached with relevant skill and seriousness to achieve the set goal. An entrepreneurship approach no doubt, will turn things round to create jobs and alleviate poverty among youths in the studied area

## 3. Objectives of the Study

He general objective of this study is to assess an improve pottery making as a lucrative business for job creation and to alleviate poverty in the study area. Specifically, the study investigated;

1. The socio-economic characteristics of the selected respondents in the study area
2. Assess the entrepreneurship prospects in pottery art in the study area
3. Identify the challenges militating against pottery making by respondents in the study area
4. Assess the level of utilization of entrepreneurship product marketing mix and promotion

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 *History of Study Area*

The study was carried out at Okelele Quarter in Ilorin East Local Government, Kwara State. The pottery business in this particular community belongs to a family called Dada pottery. A respondent explained that the named derived its origin from the closeness of the pottery ground to the household of dreadlocks of hairs Children. In Yoruba culture, it is believed that a baby born with dreadlock isa special child whose hair must not be barbed throughout is his/her life time. The art of their pottery belong solely with the female in the family. This has been a secret pact that the method be shared only among the daughters of Dade family. This was because they believed the business appeal more to women than men. Thus, to ensure continuity, the sons in the family and their wives are not taught the art, only the real daughters of the family are allowed to learn and practice the art.

### 4.2 *Research Design and Instrument for Data Collection*

The first stage of this research involves exploratory studies which was the survey of study area as pilot exercise. To conduct the pilot study, a questionnaire was developed with more open ended questions. This was structured and validated with very few open ended questions. The second stage of this research was descriptive under conclusive study. The insights gained from exploratory study were verified. Respondents were randomly and purposively selected at the pottery site. This constitutes the potters and family at the site, giving a total of one hundred and five (105) respondents. A three points validated and structured questionnaires was used in Table 1.0 to determine the socio-economic characteristics of respondents, In Table 2.0-4.0, five points scale questionnaire was employed, which ranges from Strongly Agree (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D) and Undecided (U).

#### 4.3 Sources of Data

The study was based on primary and secondary data. The study main target population was the potters at Dada pottery site Okelele quarters, Ilorin East Local Government Area in Kwara State, Nigeria. Primary data was collected from the women potters at the production site of Dada community. The methods for collecting information were personal interview, conversation, survey and observation. Secondary data were collected through newspaper, website reports on pottery activities and related research works and relevant books

### 5. Discussion

The obtained data in Table 1 indicated that majority respondents were those between the ages of 31-40 years with (57.14%). Followed by those in ages 47-62 years (19.04%) and the least were those at the bracket age of 63 years and above. This indicates that the majority of the potters are in their productive age. The data on sex revealed that it is all female dominated profession. It is an unwritten policy that the art should only be passed from mothers to daughters in the family, males and their wives are excluded. Those who focused fully on pottery as their main occupation were 60, 57.14%. Others are engaged on other trades like cooking, food vending, and petty trading etc. As for the respondents educational background, the majority are those having secondary education 60 respondents and percentage 57.40% followed by those with primary school certificate 45, respondents 42.86%, None at tertiary level. This shows that youth with higher education do not have so much interest in the trade. The table also shows that majority of the respondents are Muslims, 70 respondents with 66.67% from immemorial, Ilorin town has been predominantly Muslims followed by Christianity 42.86% and the least are traditional religion. In the are of income been generated annually, those with #51,000 - #100,000 are in the majority having 42.86%, followed by those whose total earning annually falls at the range of #20,000 - #50,000. The least are those whose annual incomes are at the range of #200,000 and above being 8 with 7.61%. This data showed that business is not all that buoyant with the potters. This may not be connected with foreign products which are alternative wares used for cooking and other household chores

Table 2 contains the responses given by respondents on entrepreneurship perspective of pottery business at the study centre. The statements were based on 5 point like are scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Majority 75 (69.44%) strongly agree that pottery wares are designed to meet various needs locally, 30 (28.57%) agreed, while none were undecided nor disagree with the concept. This confirms Hopper (2000) that pottery developed as a result of a response to the needs of mankind for containers, dispensers and variety of reasons. Other entrepreneurship points articulated on the saleable virtues of pottery received majority Strongly Agreed and Agreed from the respondents. Such as natural cooling effect of pots on drinking water, Strongly Agrees 70 (66.67%), peculiar aroma and taste of soups and dishes cooked with pot Strongly Agree 60 (57.14%) and the usefulness for festivals and rituals Strongly Agree 50(47.62%), Agree 40 (38.10%) and the least Strongly Disagree 4 (3.80%). The responses confirm the entrepreneurship perspective of the unique roles of pottery for people's socio-economic and religious needs. As for the source of material being obtained locally, 60(57.14%) Strongly Agreed, none disagree 0 (0.0%). This implies that they all obtain materials locally and are facing a common challenge relevant to procuring the clay for use. On the sales and profitability aspect being adequate to feed the family and care for children 33 (31.43%) disagree being the highest score while 25 (23.80%) strongly Disagreed. Those that Strongly Agreed ranges from 20 (19.05%) to 10 (9.52%). This indicates some problems somewhere, while some are making good sales, majority are not making ends meet.

Table 3 shows the occupational challenges as pointed out by the potters in the course of producing handmade pottery wares and sales. These include uncertainty in getting the raw materials and could be difficult during the dry seasons. Other problems borders on inability to afford modern drilling, moulding and firing machines with data scores for strongly agree (SA) being 70 (66.67%) respectively, 60 (57.00%) respectively. This confirmed the data report where majority respondents strongly disagreed 60 (57.14%) on availability of running capital loans from the banks, relations, friends or cooperative societies. This obviously may account for the slow production and limitations on innovative approach towards products that can compete with foreign wares. Majority's response also strongly agreed 70 (66.67%) that materials for finishing touch are sourced locally, even the tools are sourced locally. This funding confirmed Murthy, (1989) entrepreneur assertion that "The small sector has distinct advantage of low investment with high potential for employment generation". Due to the fact that most of their materials are sourced locally and are often obtained cheaply. Therefore contribute considerably to lowering total cost of production.

Table 4 reveals the potters response to entrepreneur products strategies, pricing, distribution and promotion techniques. Majority which constitutes 45 (42.10%) agreed that they identify the needs and requirements of customers before production. An overview study of the key entrepreneurship techniques for effective production shows that in launching new quality and nice looking design products, they had low rating of 3 (2.86%), carrying out research also scored low rating of 5 (4.76%). Spreading information about products through the radio,

newspaper, internet, handbills etc had low rating of 3.0 (2.86%), promoting products internationally had rating of 5.0 (4.76%). Study showed that Dada Okelele potters seem to have ignored or ignorant of how to implement essential entrepreneurs production and marketing strategies that would have raise their product demands and sales beyond their locality to international level. Kotler and Keller, (2005) confirmed the essential role of marketing as “an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customers relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders. The launching of new quality and nice looking products also suffered a setback as the rating showed 3 (2.86%). This may account for inability of Okelele’s wares to have competitive advantage with foreign products. The consumer view of the product’s position is low. Kotler and Armstron, (1997) theorized that “a product is the complex set of perceptions, impressions and feelings that consumers hold for the product compared with competing products”. Manufacturers, thus must plan positions that will give their products the greatest advantage in selected target markets.

## 6. Summary and Conclusion

An entrepreneurship perspective study of Dada pottery at Okele quarters remains;

- One of the cheapest art being practiced in Nigeria and heavily dominated by women. Having a distinct advantage of low investment with high potential for employment generation
- There are prospects for wider and increased needs and acceptance of these traditional pots among the rural and urban dwellers for domestic shores and interior decorations. They are also in steady rise of demands in hotels and indigenous food restaurant for cooking and service of indigenous dishes for example, Edika ikong, Isiewu soup etc. Many hotels also use native pottery cups to serve local beverages like pito, burukutu, gin and beer etc. All these area of demands culminates into creating jobs for enterprising individuals.
- This Nigeria indigenous clay pot craft potters though are deft in creativity, have innovations and have over the years preserve their cultural heritage, but have limitations in the area of essential entrepreneur’s production and marketing strategies. Especially launching new products through localized research method marketing mix and advertisement giving them competitive advantage with foreign products. Beautiful products are made daily, but awareness to prospective consumers nationally and internationally is low.
- The pottery craft business is facing many occupational challenges, the major ones which is constituting a setback for the business include inability to secure capital loans from the banks, or through government assisted loan scheme for the purchase of modern equipment. Hence, their progress is low.

Government is enjoined to provide microcredit small-low interest loans that allow women to start their small businesses. Study has confirmed that women are good “credit risks” and repayment rates are high, other women empowerment government assisted programs include Better life for Rural Women, National Commission for Women and Women in Agriculture and Rural Development. To compete fairly well in the domestic and international market, indigenous potters need to set appropriate production and marketing strategies through knowing the needs and requirements of consumers. Gone are the days when local pots were the only means for domestic cooking and shores. Then they were not too demanding about shape, design and other finishing touch. But with the advent of modern day alternative aluminum and metal wares, consumers demand is changing considerably. So, to retain the consumer’s patronage, local potters should address the pottery art through entrepreneur approach in production, new quality and beautiful designs that identify and meet customer’s demands, constant research and development, dynamic pricing in line with market demands and adequate promotion of products nationally and internationally via local media and international media.

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## RESULTS

Table 1: The demographic characteristics of the respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	00	0.00
Female	105	100.00
Total	105	100%
Main occupation		
Pottery	60	57.14
Cooking & Food vending	30	28.57
General Trades	15	14.29
Total	105	100%
Marital Status		
Single	10	9.53
Married	70	66.67
Divorced	10	9.52
Widow	15	14.29
Total	105	100%
Level of Education		
No formal Education	00	00.00
Primary Education	45	42.60
Secondary Education	60	57.40
Tertiary Education	00	00.00
Total	105	100%
Religion		

Christianity	25	23.81
Islam	70	66.67
Traditional Religion	10	9.52
Total	105	100%
Income (annually)		
20,000-50,000	42	40.00
51,000-100,000	45	42.86
110,000-200,000	10	9.52
200,000- and above	8	7.61

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to entrepreneurship perspective of pottery making in Okelele pottery centre

S/N	Entrepreneur perception on pottery marketing	Strongly Agreed Frequency %	Agreed frequency %	Undecided Frequency %	Disagree Frequency %	Strongly Disagree Frequency %
1.	Pottery wares are designed to meet various needs among the rural communities	75 (69.44)	30 (28.57)	0.00	0.00	0.00
2.	Pottery wares for cooking has peculiar aroma and taste on food cooked	60 (57.14)	30(28.58)	10 (9.52)	3 (2.86)	2 (1.78)
3.	Pottery water container cools naturally	70 (66.67)	30 (28.57)	5 (4.76)	0.00	0.00
4.	Religious pots designs convey special messages	50 (47.62)	25 (23.81)	10 (9.52)	8 (7.61)	4 (3.56)
5.	Many pots are purchased for festivals and rituals	50 (47.62)	40 (38.10)	5 (4.76)	5 (4.76)	7 (6.67)
6.	Pots designed are dictated by the needs and desires of consumers	50 (47.62)	40 (38.10)	2 (1.90)	5 (4.76)	7 (6.67)
7.	Traditionalists and decorators are major purchasers of pottery wares	75 (69.44)	30 (28.57)	15 (14.29)	20 (19.05)	10 (9.52)
8.	Expertise are acquired through training and constant practice	60 (57.14)	40 (38.10)	0.00	2.86	2 (1.78)
9.	Materials are sourced locally	60 (57.14)	45 (42.85)	0.00	0.00	0.00
10.	Sales are adequate to feed the family and children education	20 (19.05)	10 (9.52)	15 (14.29)	33 (31.43)	25 (23.80)

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to challenges encountered in production and sales

S/N	Challenges in production and sales	Strongly Agreed Frequency %	Agreed Frequency %	Undecided Frequency %	Disagreed Frequency %	Strongly Disagreed Frequency %
1.	Depend on drilled wells and bore holes	80 (76.19)	20 (19.04)	0.00	0.00	0.00
2.	Scarce clay during dry season	75 (71.43)	30 (28.57)	0.00	0.00	0.00
3.	Inability to afford drilling machines	70 (66.67)	30 (28.57)	0.00	3 (2.86)	0.00
4.	Cannot afford modern molding and firing machines	60 (57.00)	40 (38.10)	0.00	3 (2.86)	2 (1.90)
5.	Manual labour slow down production turn out	30 (28.57)	45 (42.10)	50 (47.62)	15 (14.26)	15 (14.26)
6.	Pots highly susceptible to breakages	40 (38.10)	45 (42.10)	5 (4.76)	50 (47.61)	15 (14.26)
7.	Demand is low except at festivals	20 (19.04)	15 (4.26)	5 (4.76)	50 (47.61)	15 (14.26)
8.	Exposure to harsh weather	25 (23.8)	35 (33.33)	50 (47.62)	25 (23.81)	15 (14.26)
9.	Poor source of water	62 (59.04)	38 (36.19)	0.00	3 (2.86)	2 (1.90)
10.	Materials for finishing touch are sourced locally	70 (66.67)	30 (28.57)	0.00	3 (2.86)	2 (1.90)
11.	Finishing touch are put in place with local tools	40 (38.10)	45 (42.10)	5 (4.76)	10 (9.52)	5 (4.76)
12.	Availability of loans through the banks relations/friends or cooperatives	7 (6.67)	8 (7.62)	10 (9.52)	35 (33.33)	60 (57.14)

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to Entrepreneur's production, pricing, distribution and promotion strategies

S/N	Production, pricing, distribution and promotion strategies of pottery products	Strongly Agreed frequency %	Agreed Frequency %	Undecided frequency %	Disagreed frequency %	Strongly Disagreed frequency %
1	Identify needs and requirements of customers before start production	40.0 (38.10)	45.0 (42.10)	5.0 (4.76)	8.0 (7.61)	7.0 (6.67)
2	Launching new quality and nice looking design pottery	3.0 (2.86)	2.0 (1.90)	0.00	30.0 (28.57)	70.0 (66.67)
3	Setting of standard	45.0 (42.10)	40.0 (38.10)	5.0 (4.76)	10.0 (9.52)	5.0 (4.76)
4	Carry out research and development of new products	5.0 (4.76)	4.0 (3.81)	2.0 (1.90)	70.0 (66.67)	25.0 (23.81)
5	Pricing in line with nature of market, demand and products cost spread	40.0 (38.10)	45.0 (42.10)	15.0 (14.28)	3.0 (2.86)	2.0 (1.90)
6	Information about the products through: radio, newspaper, internet, handbills etc	3 (2.86)	4 (3.81)	0.00	53 (50.48)	45 (42.86)
7	Follow selective distribution strategy	10 (9.52)	5.00 (4.76)	12.0 (11.43)	38.0 (36.19)	40.0 (38.10)
8	Promoting products internationally	5.00 (4.76)	3.00 (2.86)	1.00 (0.95)	40 (38.10)	56 (53.33)

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