

Development of certain areas in the Slovenian furniture industry

Leon OBLAK

Anton ZUPANČIČ, Jože KROPIVŠEK

Department of Wood Science and Technology
Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

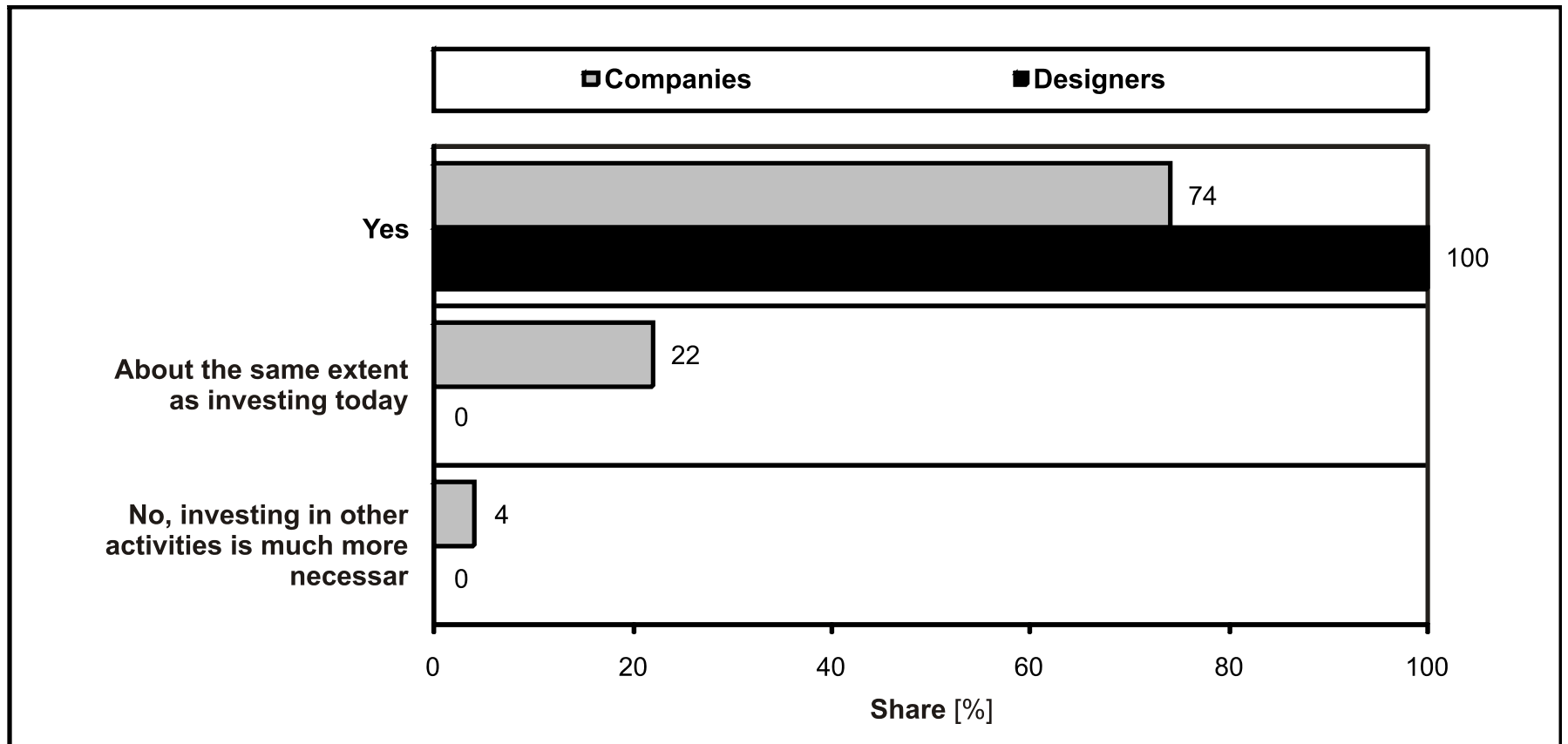
Questions instead of the introduction

- Is the competition in furniture industry becoming increasingly intense?
- What is the problem of (non)competitiveness of Slovenian furniture industry?
- What can be the solution?

Research

- Our research includes 147 furniture companies classified under the following fields:
 - manufacture of office and shop furniture,
 - manufacture of kitchen furniture and
 - manufacture of other furniture.
- A separate questionnaire was also developed to obtain the opinions of designers involved in product development in the Slovenian furniture companies. We obtained 111 completed questionnaires of active furniture designers.

Must the Slovenian furniture companies invest more resources in the development of their own products (in comparison to investing in other activities)?

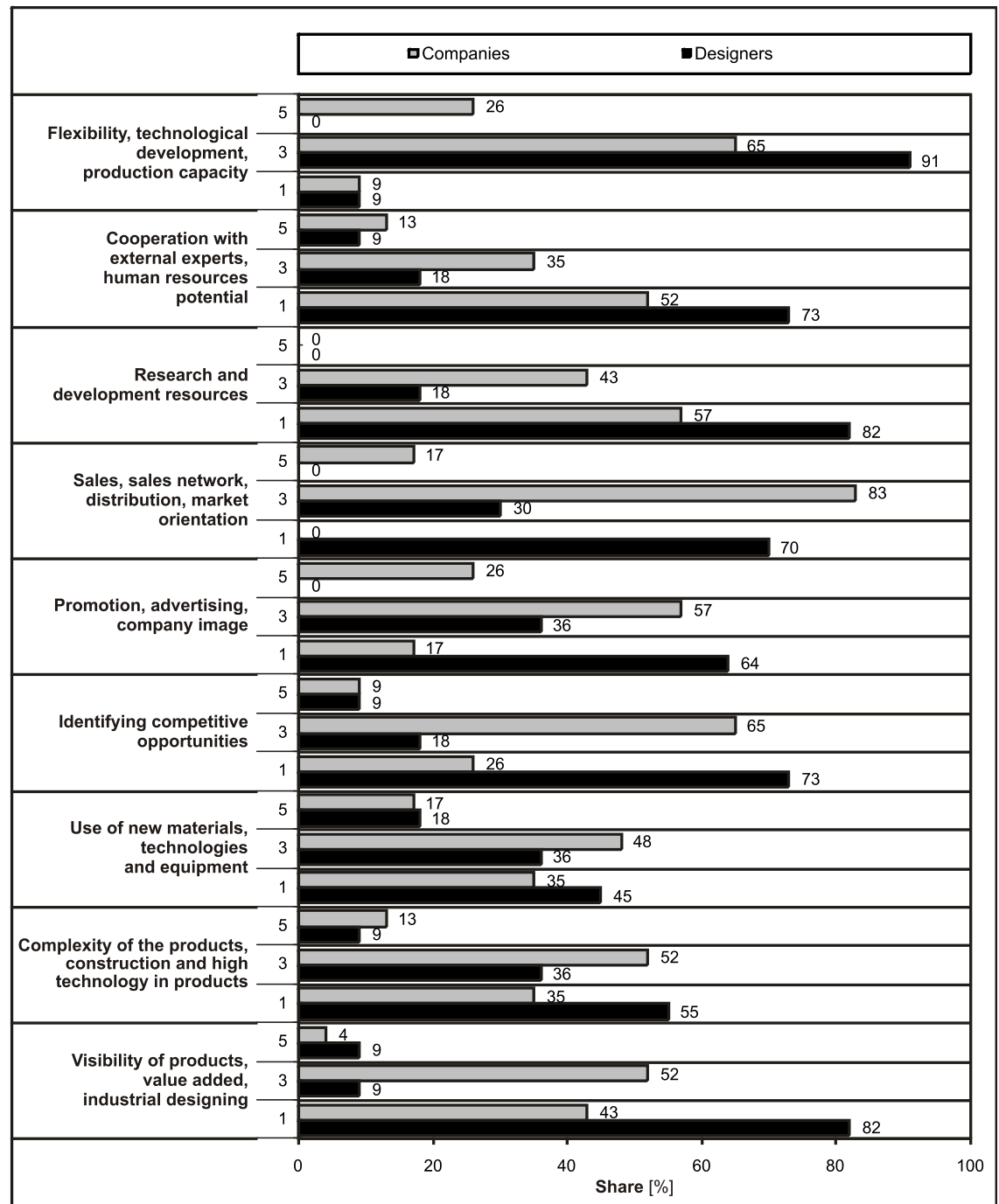


Development areas, which have directly or indirectly negative influence on product development

5 - the area is highly developed and there is no problem

3 - the field is neither developed nor problematic

1 - the area is undeveloped and highly problematic

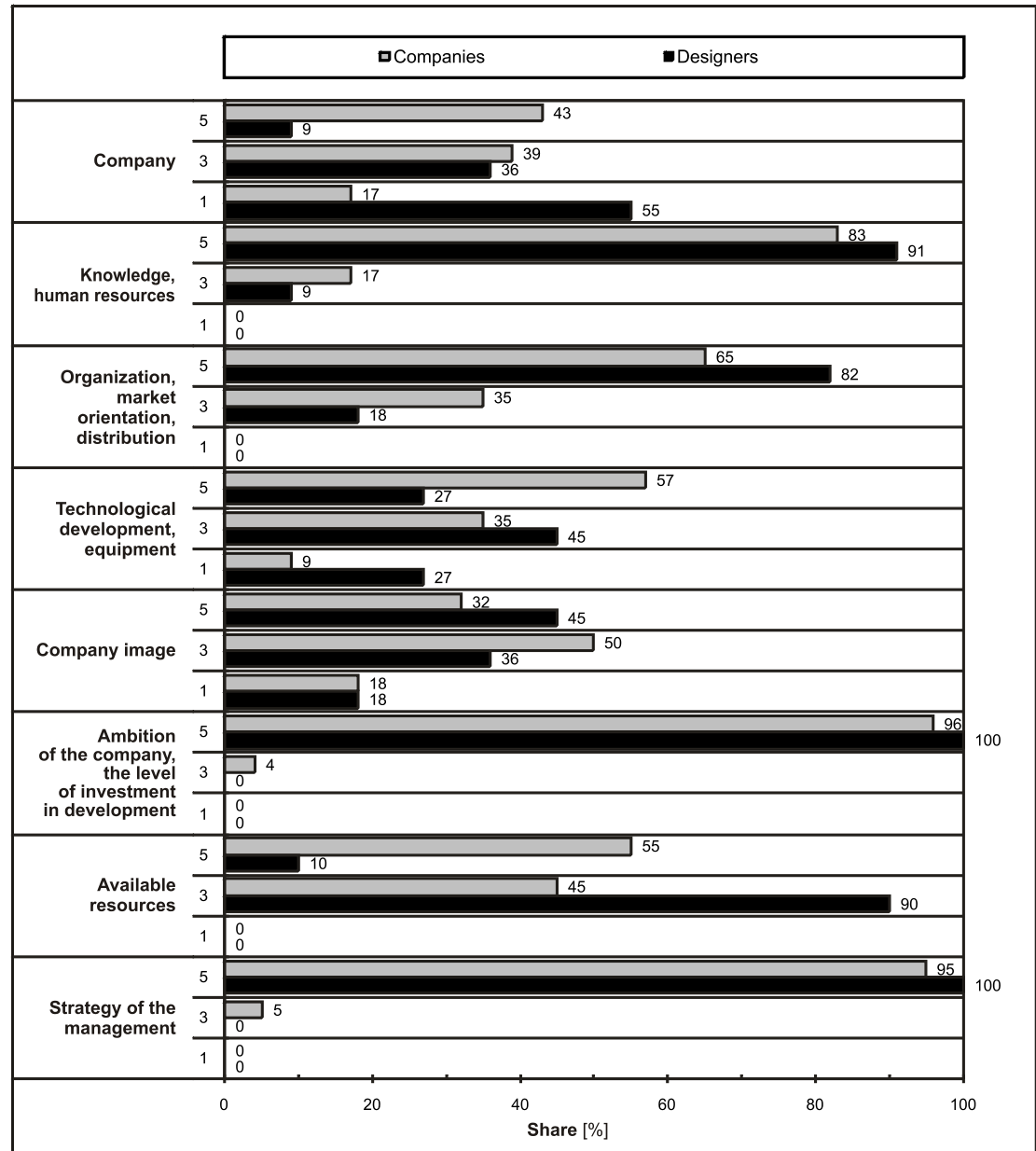


The influence of factors on developing own products in the company

5 - the factor has a great influence

3 - the factor has a minor influence

1 - the factor has no influence on it at all



Key information about the company in product development

Very important information	Companies (%)	Designers (%)
Strengths and opportunities of a company	95	91
Characteristics of products, which will in the future be the most desired ones among potential buyers	91	91
Company markets (niches, competition, ...), buyer, price ranger, ...	90	82
Trademarks of the company, classification, objectives, vision	77	91
Characteristics of the existing products (materials, technology, ...)	64	64
The existing situation (technology, marketing, advertising, competition, ...)	59	64
Expected investments (technology, human resources, development, ...)	50	64
Company deficiencies	50	45
Organization of a company, knowledge, human resources	41	55
Basic, additional and future activities, cooperation	36	55
Economic indicators of the company (sales, profit, resources for development)	32	55
Less important information		

Conclusions

- The added value of the products of Slovenian furniture industry is at a very low level. Along the fact that Slovenian furniture industry is a net exporter and is thus facing high competition on markets, on which it exports its products, makes the raise the added value urgent and necessary.
- The survey showed the unity of designers and companies who believe that in the past there were more innovative products in the furniture industry and that it will be called in the industry to improve the ratio of investment in development, compared to investing in other activities.
- Most of companies and designers believe that the presence of developing own products in the company is most influenced by ambition of the company and strategies of the company management and that most important information are those about strengths and opportunities of a company.