

A Comparative Analysis of The Factors Influencing the Choice and Purchase of Furniture Items: A Case of Ghana And China Furniture Customers

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Abstract: Furniture items are now a necessity as their demand is high of late. Globally, it can be seen in the homes, offices, palaces, schools, churches, temples and many other places and used by people. Customers do not just buy for buying sake, the decision to choose and buy is dependent on some factors. Limiting the study to customers from Ghana and China, the study was primarily focused on determining the factors influencing the choice and purchase of furniture items by customers from the two countries. The survey research design using the quantitative approach with interviews and other literary sources were adopted to collect data. The convenience and purposive sampling techniques were considered to select a sample size of 300 respondents each for the study. From the study, it can be concluded that buying furniture item(s) to replace worn out or old ones is what will influence Ghanaians primarily to buy any furniture piece while the Chinese are likely to buy to furnish an empty room. It is also concluded that, among all the various factors, Ghanaians largely prefer quality and durability while the Chinese customers look out for the design and decoration as the primary factor. It can be concluded that both customers within the ages 18-65 years are likely to buy any furniture piece that; is quality and last-longer, has nice designs and decorations, is comfortable to use without causing injury or much stress, has moderate price, and has good finishing. About 2% customers from Ghana between the ages 18-45 years and with college or equivalent certificate, bachelors' and masters' degree are likely to consider the furniture colour. The Chinese love colours, but they pay less attention to furniture colour. About 8% of the customers within the ages 18-55 years and with bachelors', masters' and doctoral degree place priority on wood colour as they value zitan (black wood) and rose wood (red wood) like gold.

Index Terms: customer, choice, purchase, purchasing decision, furniture, products, items

1. INTRODUCTION

Purchasing every item involves the decision to receive it (Kemerly, 2012; Ponder, 2008; Örucü and Tavsanci, 2001). In each case, the process of acquiring that particular item one wants, according to Kotler (2009) depends on the type of product to be purchased and this was also opined by Zwierzyński (2017), Cüceloğlu (2010) and Evans (2008).

Furniture products, which is of interest in this paper, includes a large range of products made from either one; wood, metal, plastic, clay,

bamboo, rattan and so on or the integration of two or more of these materials. Furniture items, utilized more than just their practical purposes have of late become needful in our daily expenses (Serin and Andaç, 2012; Al-Azzam, 2014). Furniture items are produced by artisans and mostly purchased by customers to enable them to furnish their homes or offices. These items easily help identify the status of the customers and help give them an identity in the community in which they live (Brinberg *et al.*, 2007; Dankwa, 2004).

According to Ponder (2013), Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2012) and Epperson (2005), the demand for furniture items is high because they are needful and now a necessity as used by many people around the globe. Customers do not just buy them for buying sake, the decision to choose

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and purchase is dependent on some factors; the design or decoration, colour, quality and durable, price, comfort/user-friendly, finishing, etc. According to Betemariam (2018), French (2012), York (2013) and Solomon (2003), these factors differ among customers when deciding to make a purchase. Customers today, especially Ghanaians and Chinese are more knowledgeable on the exact factor(s) and this save them from making a bad purchase.

Furniture customers from the two countries; Ghana and China make buying decisions every day and many have their own factors that motivate them to make this buying decision. The characteristics behind every decision to make a purchase can be personal; gender, age, from cultural; customer nationality or tribe, social; customer education background, and psychological factors like the colour of the furniture item (Betemariam, 2018; French, 2012; Burnsed, 2009; Eva & Judit, 2010). Customers from these two countries buy different furniture products in order to solve their immediate and extensive problems. For the immediate, there is not much searching and comparing of items. Furniture products are bought immediately when needed. But for the extensive, customers go to different markets to compare several colours, brands, quality, good finishing, user-friendly and so on of furniture items before a purchase can be done. In this case the purchase decision is due to the various factors mentioned above. Each of these factors has their own characteristics that marketers determine how to satisfy their customers by meeting their needs and preferences.

Comparatively, there is no research study focusing on the factors influencing the choice and purchase of furniture items by Ghanaians and Chinese taking into consideration the gender, age and education background factors. The study therefore, was primarily focused on determining the factors influencing the choice and purchase of furniture items by customers from the two countries.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted the survey research design where the quantitative approach was used. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to select a sample size of 300 respondents each from Ghana and China for the study. Data were obtained from respondents through the use of open and close-ended questionnaire and the data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 software.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographics of Respondents from Ghana=300

Table 1: Socio-demographics of respondents from Ghana

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)	
Gender	Male	168	56.00
	Female	132	44.00
Age According to the Gender (MALE=168)	18-25	34	20.00
	26-35	114	68.00
	36-45	14	9.00
	46-55	4	2.00
	56-65	2	1.00
Age According to the Gender (FEMALE=132)	18-25	42	32.00
	26-35	74	56.00
	36-45	8	6.00
	46-55	4	3.00
	56-65	4	3.00
Education Background (MALE+FEMALE)	Below than Secondary School	0	0.00
	Secondary School or equivalent	6	2.00
	College or equivalent	54	18.00
	Bachelor's Degree	130	43.00
	Master's Degree	94	32.00
	Doctoral Degree	16	5.00

Ghanaians' decision and Purchasing Pattern for Furniture Items

Table 2: Ghanaians' decision and purchasing pattern for furniture items

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Old one worn out	146	48.00
Recently renovate	22	7.00
Furnishing empty room	106	35.00
Impulse buy	2	1.00
Existence of new model	20	7.00
New additions due to increase in family size	4	2.00

Factor influencing Ghanaian respondents' decision to purchase furniture items according to Gender

Table 3: Factors influencing Ghanaians decision to purchase furniture items according to gender

Variables	Male	%	Female	%	Total	Total %
Design and Decoration	42	25.0	46	35.0	88	29.0
Furniture Colour	0	0.0	6	5.0	6	2.0
Comfort or user-friendly	34	20.0	18	13.0	52	17.0
Finishing	6	4.0	0	0	6	2.0
Quality and Durability	74	44.0	56	42.0	130	44.0
Price	12	7.0	6	5.0	18	6.0
Total	168	100%	132	100%	300	100

Factor influencing Ghanaian respondents' decision to purchase furniture items according to Age

Table 4: Factors influencing Ghanaians decision to purchase furniture items according to age

Variables	Age	Total	%
Design and Decoration	18-25	18	21.0
	26-35	58	66.0
	36-45	8	9.0
	46-55	2	2.0
	56-65	2	2.0
Furniture Colour	18-25	3	50.0
	26-35	2	33.0
	36-45	1	17.0
Comfort or user-friendly	18-25	12	23.0
	26-35	36	69.0
	36-45	4	8.0
Finishing	26-35	6	100.0
Quality and Durability	18-25	44	34.0
	26-35	76	58.0
	36-45	6	5.0
	56-65	4	3.0
Price	26-35	14	78.0
	36-45	4	22.0

Factor influencing Ghanaian respondents' decision to purchase furniture items according to Education Background

Table 5: Factors influencing Ghanaians decision to purchase furniture items according to education background

Variables	Education Background	Total	%
Design and Decoration	Secondary School or equivalent	4	5.0
	College or equivalent	18	20.0
	Bachelor's Degree	38	43.0
		24	27.0
		4	5.0
Furniture Colour	College or equivalent	3	50.0
	Bachelor's Degree	2	33.0
	Master's Degree	1	17.0
Comfort or user-friendly	College or equivalent	10	20.0
	Bachelor's Degree	20	38.0
	Master's Degree	20	38.0
		2	4.0
Finishing	Bachelor's Degree	4	67.0
	Master's Degree	2	33.0
Quality and Durability	Secondary School or equivalent	2	2.0
	College or equivalent	20	15.0
	Bachelor's Degree	64	49.0
		40	31.0
		4	3.0
Price	College or equivalent	2	11.0
	Bachelor's Degree	6	34.0
		8	44.0
		2	11.0

Socio-demographics of Respondents from China=300

Table 6: Socio-demographics of respondents from China

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Male	138	46.00
	Female	162	54.00
Age According to the Gender (MALE=138)	18-25	41	30.00
	26-35	65	47.00
	36-45	29	21.00
	46-55	3	2.00
Age According to the Gender (FEMALE=162)	18-25	49	30.00
	26-35	67	41.00
	36-45	37	23.00
	46-55	9	6.00
Education Background (MALE+FEMALE)	College or equivalent	18	6.00
	Bachelor's Degree	42	14.00
	Master's Degree	156	52.00
	Doctoral Degree	84	28.00

Chinese' decision and Purchasing Pattern for Furniture Items

Table 7: Chinese' decision and purchasing pattern for furniture items

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Old one worn out	48	16.00
Recently renovate	90	30.00
Furnishing empty room	120	40.00
Impulse buy	18	6.00
Existence of new model	6	2.00
New additions due to increase in family size	18	6.00

Factor influencing Chinese respondents' decision to purchase furniture items according to Gender

Table 8: Factors influencing Chinese' decision to purchase furniture items according to gender

Variables	Male	%	Female	%	Total	Total %
Design and Decoration	58	42.0	80	49.0	138	46.0
Wood Colour	14	10.0	10	6.0	24	8.0
Comfort or user-friendly	20	14.0	34	21.0	54	18.0
Finishing	7	5.0	5	3.0	12	4.0
Quality and Durability	30	22.0	24	15.0	54	18.0
Price	9	7.0	9	6.0	18	6.0
Total	138	100%	162	100%	300	100

Factor influencing Chinese respondents' decision to purchase furniture items according to Age

Table 9: Factors influencing Chinese' decision to purchase furniture items according to age

Variables	Age	Total	%
Design and Decoration	18-25	30	22.0
	26-35	80	58.0
	36-45	19	14.0
	46-55	9	6.0
Wood Colour	18-25	6	25.0
	26-35	11	46.0
	36-45	4	16.0
	46-55	3	13.0
Comfort or user-friendly	18-25	13	24.0
	26-35	26	48.0
	36-45	9	17.0
	46-55	6	11.0
Finishing	18-25	3	25.0
	26-35	5	41.0
	36-45	2	17.0
	46-55	2	17.0
Quality and Durability	18-25	14	26.0
	26-35	25	46.0
	36-45	9	17.0
	46-55	6	11.0
Price	18-25	4	22.0
	26-35	7	39.0
	36-45	5	28.0
	46-55	2	11.0

Factor influencing Chinese respondents' decision to purchase furniture items according to Education Background

Table 10: Factors influencing Chinese' decision to purchase furniture items according to education background

Variables	Education Background	Total	%
Design and Decoration	below than Secondary		
	School	6	4.0
	Bachelor's	19	14.0
	Master's	71	51.0
Wood Colour	Doctoral	42	31.0
	Bachelor's	4	17.0
	Master's	14	58.0
Comfort or user-friendly	Doctoral	6	25.0
	below than Secondary		
	School	5	9.0
	Bachelor's	6	11.0
Finishing	Master's	29	54.0
	Doctoral	14	26.0
	below than Secondary		
	School	1	8.0
Price	Bachelor's	2	17.0
	Master's	6	50.0
	Doctoral	3	25.0
	below than Secondary		
Quality and Durability	School	2	11.0
	Bachelor's	2	11.0
	Master's	9	50.0
	Degree	5	28.0

From table 2, in descending order, it is obvious Ghanaians are likely to purchase furniture items when; the old one is worn out, furnishing empty room, renovating a room, there is existence of new model and lastly, there is increase in family size. Because Ghana is a lower middle-income country, among the purchasing pattern, the primary decision by furniture customers to make

purchase is as a result of the existing piece getting damaged, thus a motivation to purchase new one. The pattern is different among the Chinese. According to table 7 and in descending order, Chinese customers are likely to purchase furniture items when; they are furnishing empty room, they are renovating a room, the old one is worn out, there is increase in family size, impulse buying and there is existence of new model. Whereas the Ghanaians primary decision to buy is when the old one is worn out, the Chinese primarily focus on buying furniture item is to furnish empty room. The reason is that, the furniture customers after considering the design buy quality products that will last longer so hardly will that product get damaged. This is why they are likely to buy when furnishing an empty room.

From table 3, it could be seen that, in descending order, factors like furniture quality and durability; where the men consider more than the women, design and decoration; where the women consider more than the men, comfort or user-friendly; where the men consider more than the women, the price; where the men consider more than the women, finishing; where the men consider more than the women and the furniture colour; where the women consider more than the men, will only influence the decision of Ghanaian customers to make purchase of furniture items. Ghanaians necessarily do not consider the colour of the wood used for the furniture item, but due to the standard of living, furniture customers pay much attention to the furniture quality and durability before they are convinced to make a purchase. It is very obvious the story is different

among Chinese furniture customers as can be seen in table 8. In descending order, the factors that influence them to decide and purchase furniture items include the furniture; design and decoration; where women consider more than the men, quality and durability; where men consider more than the women, comfort or user-friendly; where women consider more than the men, wood colour; where the men consider more than the women, price; where both genders consider equally. Comparatively, as Ghanaian furniture customers look out for the quality and durability because they want long-lasting item, the Chinese furniture customers, on the other hand look out for the design and decoration first, and this is because, they believe in attractive furniture designs and decorations while the product quality is also assured.

The various factors influencing the respondents' decision to make a purchase between the two countries in terms of age distribution are showed.

Design and decoration: From table 4 and 9 respectively, in descending order, it is realized that both the Ghanaian and Chinese furniture customers of age; 26-35, 18-25, 36-45 and 46-55 years are likely to buy furniture items with nice designs and decorations than considering any other factor. They believe owning a furniture piece with nice designs and decoration beautifies the space and they also believe how decorative a furniture item is can easily tell your status in the society.

Furniture colour: According to table 4, furniture customers from Ghana of age in descending order; 18-25, 26-35 and 36-45 years are likely to purchase furniture item as a result of this factor.

Ghanaians within these age bracket love colours, so anything that is nicely coloured or painted attract their attentions. The story is different among the Chinese. As far as this study is concerned, Chinese furniture customers pay less attention to furniture colour when deciding to purchase furniture items. Though they also colours, they rather pay keen attention to wood colour because the type of wood used for production means a lot to them.

Wood colour: According to table 4 and 9 respectively, furniture customers from China of age in descending order; 26-35, 18-25, 36-45 and 46-55 years are likely to purchase furniture item considering the wood colour. Chinese believe in wood colours. For example, they believe the zitan (black wood) and rosewood (red wood) are equally valuable like gold, so when these materials are used for production, one is assured of valuable product. Thus, a major factor is to settle for wood colour when consider to buy furniture items. The story is different among furniture customers from Ghana. As far as this study is concerned, they pay less attention to the wood colour when deciding to purchase furniture items. All they look out for is any wood that will produce quality and lasting furniture products.

Comfort or user-friendly: According to table 4 and 9 respectively, in descending order, it is seen that both furniture customers from Ghana and China of age; 26-35, 18-25, 36-45 and only Chinese furniture customers of 46-55 years are likely to buy furniture items that are more user-friendly or comfortable to use. Both customers within that ages do not want to struggle or easily get injured using any furniture piece but rather want comfort,

so they place priority on this factor any day when deciding to make a purchase.

From table 4, it is seen that Ghanaian furniture customers of age 26-35 years are likely to purchase furniture item of a good finish. This is different among the Chinese furniture customers. According to table 9, in descending order, it is realized that the Chinese furniture customers of age; 26-35, 18-25, 36-45 and 46-55 years are more interested in buying furniture items of good finishing. Both customers believe a good finishing means a lot, and on any day, they will consider this over any other factor. Owning furniture item(s) with good finish gives the user some level of class, thus a reason to settle on this factor.

Quality and durability: According to table 4 and 9 respectively, in descending order, it is obvious that both the Ghanaian and Chinese furniture customers of age; 26-35, 18-25, 36-45 and only Chinese furniture customers of 46-55 years and Ghanaian furniture customers of age 56-65 years are likely to buy furniture items that are quality and will last longer. Both customers within those ages are mindful on their expenditure so they prefer quality and something that will last longer so they place priority on this factor on any day when deciding to make a purchase.

Price: According table 4, it is realized that Ghanaian furniture customers of age 26-35 and 36-45 years are likely to consider the price before they buy any furniture piece. This is because; customers within this age are the working class, married and are very cautious on their expenditures. The Chinese are also cautious on their expenditure. According to table 9, in descending order, it is seen that the Chinese

furniture customers of age; 26-35, 36-45, 18-25, and 46-55 years are likely to consider the price before they buy the furniture piece because they are also within the working class, married and need to be mindful on too much spending. Both customers will only buy if the price of any furniture item(s) is within their means and will not go hungry after purchase.

The various factors influencing the respondents' decision to make a purchase between the two countries in terms of education background are showed.

Design and decoration: In hierarchical order, customers from Ghana with a bachelor's degree, master's degree, college or equivalent certificate, doctoral degree and secondary school or equivalent certificate are the likely ones to purchase furniture item(s) considering the nice design and decorations according to table 5. Ghanaians with these education background love nice designs and decorations, and as a matter of fact, any item with attractive designs and decoration persuade them to buy. On the other hand, customers from China with masters, doctoral, bachelor's degree and those below secondary school certificates are the likely ones to purchase furniture item(s) considering the nice design and decorations according to table 10. Chinese with education background also love nice designs and decorations, and anything very pleasant to the eyes is what will persuade them to make purchase of any furniture item.

Furniture Colour: Table 5 clearly shows customers from Ghana with college or equivalent certificate, bachelors and master's degree love colours and they are the likely ones to purchase

furniture item considering the colour of the furniture first. Chinese love colours too, however, as far as this study is concerned, they pay less attention to furniture colour when deciding to buy any furniture piece. They rather consider the colour of the wood used for the production since to they believe wood colours could easily tell the status of the user.

Wood Colour: Chinese furniture customers with masters, doctoral and bachelor's degree believe in wood colours according to table 10. They value the zitan (black wood) and rosewood (red wood) as gold, and having any furniture item(s) made from any of these is prestigious, thus a major factor for them to settle for wood colour when deciding to purchase furniture item(s). The story is different among Ghanaians. As far as the study is concerned, Ghanaian furniture customers pay less attention to wood colour when deciding to purchase any furniture item(s). All they look out for is any wood that will produce quality and lasting furniture products.

Comfort or User-friendly: Furniture customers from Ghana with bachelors, masters, college or equivalent certificate and doctoral degree as far as this study is concerned, are the ones very likely to buy any furniture item(s) that are more user-friendly or comfortable to use according to table 5. Because of their education level, they see it necessary to consider first the comfortability in using any furniture item(s). On the other hand, Chinese furniture customers with masters, doctoral degree, bachelor's degree, and customers with below secondary school certificate are likely to buy furniture item(s) that are more user-friendly or comfortable to use according to table

10. Both customers due to their level of education want comfort and would not love to use any furniture items that will stress or easily injure them.

Finishing: From table 5, it is obvious that Ghanaian furniture customers with bachelor's and master's degree are likely to purchase furniture item(s) of good finish. On the other hand, from table 10, Chinese furniture customers with masters, doctoral degree, bachelor's degree and those with below secondary school certificate are very likely to buy furniture items of good finishing. Both customers believe a good finishing means a lot as it comes with quality, and any furniture piece with good finish show class, so on any day, they will consider this over any other factor when deciding to buy a furniture piece.

Quality and durability: According to table 5, it is seen that Ghanaian furniture customers with bachelor's, master's degree, college or equivalent certificate, doctoral degree and secondary school or equivalent certificate are likely to buy furniture items that are quality and will last longer. On the other hand, Chinese furniture customers with masters, doctoral, bachelor's degree and the ones with below secondary school certificate prefer quality and something that will last longer according to table 10 and they will place priority on this factor on any day when deciding to make a purchase. Clearly, both customers regardless of the education background, love quality and long-lasting furniture items.

Price: According table 5, it is seen that Ghanaian furniture customers with master's degree, bachelor's degree, doctoral degree and the ones with college or equivalent certificate are likely to

consider the price before they buy the furniture piece. This is because; Ghanaians customers with these education backgrounds are mostly the working class, married and are very cautious on their expenditure. And they love to know how favourable the price of any furniture item is before they consider buying. On the other hand, Chinese furniture customers with master's, doctoral, bachelor's degree and those with below secondary school certificate are also cautious on their expenditure, and are likely to consider how favourable the price of furniture item is before they buy according to table 10. Majority of the customers with these education backgrounds are also within the working class and are married like the Ghanaians and need to be mindful on too much spending, thus a primary reason to consider this factor when deciding to buy furniture item.

4. CONCLUSION

From the study, it can be concluded that buying furniture item(s) to replace worn out or old ones is what will influence Ghanaians primarily to buy any furniture piece and the Chinese are also likely to buy furniture item(s) when they want to furnish an empty room.

It is also concluded that, among all the various factors influencing the choice and purchase of furniture item(s), Ghanaians largely prefer quality and durability factor when deciding to purchase any furniture piece. Because Ghana is a lower-middle income country, furniture customers even with the little amount of money, want long-lasting item(s) to enjoy product satisfaction. On the other hand, Chinese furniture customers look out for the design and decoration as the primary factor to influence their decision when buying any

furniture item(s). This is because, they believe there is prestige in owning any attractive designs and decorative furniture piece.

In comparing the various factors influencing both the respondents' decision to purchase furniture item(s) in terms of age, it can be concluded that customers within the ages 18-65 years are likely to buy any furniture piece that; is quality and last-longer, has nice designs and decorations, is comfortable to use without much stress, has moderate price, and has good finishing. Only a few, that is Ghanaian furniture customers between the ages 18-45 years are likely to basically consider the colour of any furniture item(s) when deciding to purchase an item. This is approximately about 2% of the Ghanaian furniture customers. The Chinese love colours, but as far as this study is concerned, it can be concluded that they pay less attention to the colour of any furniture item(s) when deciding to purchase one. Chinese furniture customers within the ages 18-55 years are very likely to purchase furniture piece considering the wood colour, as they value black and red wood like gold. About 8% of the Chinese furniture customers place priority on wood colour as the primary decision factor when purchasing any furniture item(s).

In comparing the various factors influencing both the respondents' decision to purchase furniture item(s) in terms of education background, it can be concluded that customers with; below secondary school certificate, secondary school or equivalent certificate, bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctoral degree are likely to buy any furniture piece that; is quality and last-longer, has nice designs and decorations, is comfortable to

use without much stress, has moderate price, and has good finishing. Only a few, that is, Ghanaian furniture customers with college or equivalent certificate, bachelors' and masters' degree are likely to basically consider the colour of any furniture item(s) when deciding to purchase an item. This is approximately about 2% of the Ghanaian furniture customers. The Chinese love colours, but as far as this study is concerned, it can be concluded that they pay less attention to the colour of any furniture item(s) when deciding to purchase one. Chinese furniture customers with bachelors', masters' and doctoral degree are very likely to purchase furniture piece considering the wood colour, as they value black and red wood like gold. About 8% of the Chinese furniture customers place priority on wood colour as the primary decision factor when purchasing any furniture item(s).

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