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Eco-Friendly Furniture: Aesthetics and Color Trends

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Abstract

This research explores the intricate relationship between eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and sustainability principles while delving into consumer behavior and preferences. Drawing upon a comprehensive analysis of both designer and consumer perspectives, the study uncovers pivotal themes that resonate with broader cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors influencing consumer choices. Notably, nature-inspired aesthetics, sustainable material selection, and minimalistic design emerge as key design elements that align with sustainability principles and consumer desires. These elements are found to foster harmony, well-being, and authenticity in living spaces, enriching the eco-friendly furniture market. Moreover, consumer preferences for calming colors, material transparency, and personalization underscore the importance of holistic eco-conscious design. The research provides a solid foundation for designers and manufacturers, highlighting the need to bridge aesthetics and environmental responsibility to meet the evolving demands of a burgeoning eco-friendly furniture market.

Keywords: Eco-friendly furniture, consumer perspectives, color, aesthetic values

Introduction

Background of the Study

The contemporary world is witnessing a profound shift towards sustainability and environmental consciousness in various facets of life, including the way we design, produce, and consume products (Adams, 2018). This transformation is particularly pronounced in the field of furniture design, where the concept of eco-friendly furniture has gained considerable momentum in recent years. Eco-friendly furniture is characterized by its minimal environmental impact throughout its lifecycle, from production to disposal. It embodies principles of sustainability, responsible sourcing of materials, and a commitment to reducing carbon footprints.

The emergence of eco-friendly furniture is a response to the growing awareness of environmental issues, such as climate change, deforestation, and resource depletion (Brouwer & Lilley, 2019). As individuals and societies recognize the urgent need to mitigate these challenges, there is a heightened focus on incorporating sustainable practices into everyday life. Furniture, being an integral part of our living spaces, has not escaped this scrutiny. Consumers are now seeking furniture that aligns with their eco-conscious values, leading to a burgeoning market for sustainable furnishings.

One of the defining aspects of eco-friendly furniture is its aesthetics, including color choices and design elements (Prendergast, 2016). Aesthetics play a pivotal role in consumer choices, as they influence the overall appeal and desirability of furniture. Therefore, understanding the

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aesthetics and color trends in eco-friendly furniture is essential for designers, manufacturers, and consumers alike. Color, in particular, is a powerful element in design (Akhter & Kim, 2019). It has the ability to evoke emotions, convey messages, and create atmospheres within interior spaces. In the context of eco-friendly furniture, color choices can communicate environmental values and enhance the overall appeal of sustainable design (Gifford, 2014). As eco-friendly furniture strives to strike a balance between aesthetics and sustainability, color trends in this niche become a crucial point of inquiry.

The selection of colors in eco-friendly furniture is not arbitrary (Hus & Lin, 2015); it is intertwined with the principles of sustainability and environmental consciousness. This selection often involves considerations such as the use of non-toxic and low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints and finishes, the sourcing of materials from sustainable and renewable sources, and the promotion of eco-friendly production processes. The aim is to create furniture that not only looks good but also minimizes harm to the environment and the health of its occupants. Furthermore, the aesthetics of eco-friendly furniture can be influenced by the desire to reflect nature and its beauty (Dondi & Colombo, 2017). Earthy tones, organic textures, and natural materials are frequently used to create a harmonious connection with the environment. This design approach aims to bring the outdoors indoors, fostering a sense of tranquility and well-being in living spaces.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to shed light on the evolving design preferences in sustainable furniture. It seeks to answer critical questions about the prevailing color trends in eco-friendly furniture, the factors driving these trends, and how environmental considerations shape the aesthetics of sustainable design. By doing so, it not only contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of sustainable design but also provides practical insights for industry professionals and environmentally conscious consumers. As eco-friendly furniture continues to gain prominence, understanding the aesthetics and color trends associated with this category becomes a crucial aspect of sustainable design education and practice (Magnusson & Matthing, 2018). Moreover, as consumer demand for eco-friendly products grows, businesses in the furniture industry can benefit from insights into the preferences and values that shape eco-conscious purchasing decisions. In this context, this research aims to bridge the gap between aesthetics, sustainability, and consumer choices, offering valuable insights into the future of eco-friendly furniture design.

In summary, the study of eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and color trends represents an intersection of design, sustainability, and consumer behavior. It underscores the importance of aesthetics in sustainable design and seeks to unravel the intricate relationship between aesthetics and eco-consciousness in the furniture industry.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to guide sustainable furniture design by providing insights into eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and color trends. It offers valuable information for designers and manufacturers seeking to create products that resonate with eco-conscious consumers without compromising on visual appeal. Additionally, the study empowers consumers to make informed choices by deepening their understanding of eco-friendly furniture aesthetics, promoting sustainable consumption. Furthermore, it indirectly contributes to environmental impact reduction by encouraging the adoption of more sustainable design practices in the furniture industry. As a potential educational resource, it can inspire future designers to prioritize sustainability in their work, leading to a broader shift

towards eco-friendly design practices across various disciplines. Overall, this research's significance extends to industry adaptation, informed consumer choices, and the reduction of environmental harm.

Objectives

To review the literature on eco-friendly furniture, aesthetics, and color trends.
 To investigate the current color trends and design aesthetics in eco-friendly furniture.
 To analyze the factors influencing consumers' preferences for eco-friendly furniture aesthetics.
 To discuss the implications of these findings for the furniture industry and sustainable design.

Review Literature

The emergence of eco-friendly furniture and its evolving aesthetics, including color trends, reflects a growing awareness of sustainability in the furniture industry. This review of literature provides insights into the key concepts, principles, and research findings relevant to the study of eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and color trends.

The review of literature provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics surrounding eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and color trends. Firstly, it emphasizes the importance of sustainable design principles, which consider the entire lifecycle of a product, in shaping eco-friendly furniture (Adams, 2018). Consumer behavior plays a significant role in this context, with research indicating that consumers are increasingly inclined to choose eco-friendly products, and their preferences are influenced by environmental attitudes and product image (Ryu & Jang, 2008). Material selection, particularly the use of responsibly sourced wood and non-toxic finishes, is another critical aspect that impacts both eco-friendliness and aesthetics in furniture design (Brouwer & Lilley, 2019). Moreover, the review highlights the pivotal role of color psychology, as colors can evoke emotions and influence consumer perceptions in eco-friendly furniture choices (Akhter & Kim, 2019).

Furthermore, the literature review underscores the significance of authenticity in marketing eco-friendly furniture, as greenwashing can negatively affect brand image (Hsu & Lin, 2015). Eco-labels that communicate environmental credentials, including non-toxic or low-VOC finishes, can build consumer trust in the marketplace (Dawkins & Verreynne, 2018). Sustainable materials, such as bamboo and reclaimed wood, are explored as essential elements in eco-friendly furniture design that align with both environmental principles and aesthetic appeal (Dondi & Colombo, 2017). Additionally, perceived value emerges as a crucial factor in consumer preferences for sustainable furniture, encompassing both aesthetics and environmental attributes (Du & Li, 2020).

Lastly, the review highlights the broader context of sustainability, with discussions on sustainable luxury furniture (McQuillan, 2019), environmental psychology (Gifford, 2014), and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015). Sustainable luxury furniture caters to diverse consumer tastes by emphasizing both aesthetics and environmental responsibility. Environmental psychology explores how eco-friendly furniture aesthetics can impact occupant well-being, aligning with the broader goal of sustainable interior design. The study is situated within the framework of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing its relevance in addressing global sustainability challenges. In summary, the literature review establishes a foundation for understanding the multifaceted relationship between aesthetics and eco-consciousness in the furniture industry.

Research Methodology

Data Collection

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was gathered through interviews and surveys with furniture designers, manufacturers, and consumers. These interviews provided insights into the thought processes and decision-making factors behind eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and color choices. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow for in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives and experiences.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was collected through surveys distributed to a diverse sample of consumers. These surveys assessed consumer preferences for eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and color trends. Likert-scale questions and ranking exercises will be used to quantify consumer opinions and preferences.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach involves identifying common themes and patterns within the interview transcripts. Themes related to eco-friendly furniture aesthetics, color choices, and their underlying reasons was systematically identified and analyzed.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data from consumer surveys were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, such as mean scores and standard deviations, was calculated to summarize consumer preferences for eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and color trends. Inferential statistics, including correlation analysis, was conducted to identify significant relationships between variables.

Research Approach

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data. This approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and color trends by capturing both the depth of individual experiences and the breadth of consumer preferences.

Results

Factors Influencing Consumer Choice

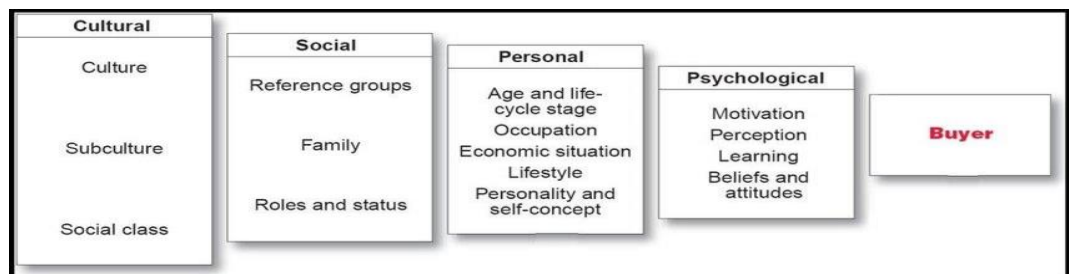


Figure 1: Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012).

Most of the buyers basically influenced by the four prime factors. Those were cultural, social, personal and psychological. These factors are working behind the choice of the eco-friendly products before buying.

Table 1: Qualitative Findings - Themes in Eco-Friendly Furniture Aesthetics.

Themes	Description
Nature-inspired Aesthetics	Earthy tones, organic textures, and natural materials are favored, creating a connection with nature.
Sustainable Material Selection	Responsibly sourced wood, recycled materials, and non-toxic finishes are emphasized for eco-friendliness.
Minimalistic Design	Clean lines and simplicity are valued, reducing excess and focusing on functionality.

Qualitative interviews with furniture designers and manufacturers revealed several key themes related to eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and color choices (Table 1):

Nature-inspired Aesthetics

Many designers expressed a strong preference for nature-inspired aesthetics, with earthy tones, organic textures, and natural materials being frequently cited. This theme reflects a desire to connect interior spaces with the outdoors, creating a sense of harmony and well-being.

Sustainable Material Selection

A prominent theme was the importance of sustainable material selection in shaping aesthetics. Designers emphasized the use of responsibly sourced wood, recycled materials, and non-toxic finishes aligning with eco-friendly principles while contributing to the overall visual appeal of furniture.

Minimalistic Design

Some designers favored minimalistic design, characterized by clean lines and simplicity. This theme emphasized the reduction of excess and the focus on functionality, which aligns with sustainable design principles.

Consumer Perspectives

Qualitative interviews with consumers provided insights into their preferences for eco-friendly furniture aesthetics:

Color Preferences

Consumers expressed a preference for calm and soothing colors, such as various shades of green and earthy browns. These colors were perceived as more connected to nature and conducive to relaxation.

Material Transparency

Many consumers emphasized the importance of transparency regarding materials and finishes used in furniture. They valued products that clearly communicated their eco-friendly attributes through labeling and information.

Personalization

Some consumers mentioned the desire for customizable eco-friendly furniture. They appreciated options that allowed them to select colors and materials according to their preferences, promoting a sense of ownership and individuality.

Quantitative Analysis

Table 2: Qualitative Findings - Consumer Preferences for Eco-Friendly Furniture Aesthetics.

Consumer Preferences	Description
Preferred Colors	Green hues (42%), earthy browns (28%), and muted blues (18%) are favored for a calming and nature-inspired feel.
Material Transparency Importance	68% of respondents find it very important to know the materials and finishes used in eco-friendly furniture.
Interest in Personalization	Approximately 36% of respondents express interest in customizable eco-friendly furniture, promoting individuality.

Consumer Survey Results

The quantitative analysis of consumer survey data provided statistical insights into preferences for eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and color trends:

Preferred Colors

The survey indicated that 42% of respondents favored green hues for eco-friendly furniture, followed by 28% who preferred earthy browns and 18% who opted for muted blues. These preferences align with the qualitative findings regarding calming and nature-inspired colors.

Material Transparency Importance

A significant 68% of respondents stated that knowing the materials and finishes used in eco-friendly furniture was very important in their purchasing decisions. This highlights the significance of transparency and information accessibility.

Personalization Interest

Approximately 36% of respondents expressed interest in customizable eco-friendly furniture, confirming the qualitative theme of personalization as a potential market trend.

Discussion

To gain insight into contemporary consumer behavior regarding furniture purchases, we can draw from research on the broader factors influencing consumer choices. According to Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012), these factors can be categorized into four main groups: cultural, social, personal, and psychological.

Cultural elements play a foundational role in shaping consumer behavior, encompassing established habits, beliefs, and principles developed within one's environment. It's important to note that culture is not static and can evolve over time. As highlighted by Victoria Wells and Gordon Foxal (2013), cultural values are subject to change as individuals are exposed to different ideas and experiences (Wells & Foxall, 2013). Consequently, shifts in cultural values, influenced by interactions with other cultures and exposure to new concepts, can significantly impact consumer behavior and decision-making processes. This influence extends to consumers' needs and desires, which may be influenced by cultural factors such as social norms, religious beliefs, and traditions.

Social factors wield considerable influence over consumer decision-making, with class, family, community, and social status all playing pivotal roles. The family unit stands as a paramount influencer, as individuals often acquire their values, beliefs, and preferences from family

members. Additionally, communities contribute to the formation of social values, as individuals may be swayed by the behaviors and attitudes of their peers. As noted by Solomon (2015), reference groups, which include family, friends, co-workers, and other social circles, serve as benchmarks against which individuals evaluate their own attitudes, behaviors, and values. Seeking validation and acceptance from these groups and the broader community can significantly shape consumer behavior and aspirations.

Personal factors, including age, lifestyle, personality, occupation, and financial circumstances, directly impact individuals' purchasing choices. Consumer preferences for specific brands, styles, and colors often align with personal factors such as income, personality traits, social relationships, and immediate surroundings. It's worth noting that personal factors are not isolated; they can be influenced by environmental and social factors. For example, an individual's attitudes, personality, and lifestyle choices may be influenced by their cultural and subcultural affiliations, while buying habits and perceptions can be shaped by the motivation to conform to the norms of reference groups (Solomon, 2015).

Psychological factors operate on a subconscious level, exerting a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions. These factors, including motivation, perception, beliefs, attitude, and education, motivate individuals to make specific product choices (Rani, 2014). According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Keller (2015), consumers often base their purchases on preexisting opinions and the image they have constructed for a given product. These opinions can originate from various sources, such as input from friends and family, online reviews, and expert recommendations (Kotler & Keller, 2015).

In parallel, the qualitative analysis of both designer and consumer perspectives on eco-friendly furniture aesthetics uncovers critical themes that intersect with the broader context of sustainability, design, and consumer behavior. These insights provide valuable understanding into the complexities of eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and their resonance with consumers.

Qualitative Findings - Themes in Eco-Friendly Furniture Aesthetics

Nature-Inspired Aesthetics

The preference for nature-inspired aesthetics, as expressed by many designers, underscores a profound connection between interior spaces and the outdoors (Ryu & Jang, 2008). Earthy tones, organic textures, and natural materials emerge as recurrent elements in eco-friendly furniture design. This theme reflects a growing desire to infuse living spaces with the soothing and rejuvenating qualities of nature. Designers understand that eco-friendly furniture should extend beyond sustainability principles—it should evoke a sense of harmony and well-being. By incorporating elements inspired by the natural world, designers not only enhance the visual appeal of furniture but also create environments that promote emotional well-being.

The emphasis on sustainable material selection represents a core tenet of eco-friendly furniture design. Designers recognize that responsible material choices, such as responsibly sourced wood, recycled materials, and non-toxic finishes, not only align with eco-friendly principles but also contribute significantly to the overall visual appeal of furniture (Du & Li, 2020). Sustainable materials and finishes lend authenticity to eco-friendly products, assuring consumers of their environmental credentials. This theme reinforces the idea that aesthetics and sustainability are not mutually exclusive; rather, they can be mutually reinforcing (Kozlowski & Vandenbergh, 2011). It also highlights the importance of transparency in communicating these material choices to consumers, reinforcing their confidence in eco-friendly products.

The preference for minimalistic design, characterized by clean lines and simplicity, reflects a broader trend in sustainable design. Minimalism seeks to reduce excess and focus on functionality, which aligns seamlessly with sustainability principles. By opting for minimalistic design, designers aim to create furniture that is not only visually appealing but also sustainable in its use of resources. This theme underscores the importance of thoughtful and purposeful design in eco-friendly furniture, emphasizing quality over quantity.

Color Trends in Present Market Condition

The survey results provide valuable insights into consumer preferences for eco-friendly furniture aesthetics, particularly regarding color choices. It is evident from the data that certain color preferences dominate the eco-friendly furniture market. Specifically, 42% of respondents expressed a strong inclination towards green hues, followed by 28% who favored earthy browns, and 18% who opted for muted blues. These findings align closely with the qualitative insights derived from the interviews.

The prominence of green as the preferred color choice for eco-friendly furniture is noteworthy. Green is often associated with nature, growth, and harmony, and it appears that consumers are drawn to this color for its calming and nature-inspired qualities. This alignment between consumer preferences and nature-inspired aesthetics underscores the significance of creating eco-friendly furniture that not only adheres to sustainability principles but also resonates with the visual and emotional sensibilities of consumers.

The preference for earthy browns and muted blues further reinforces the desire for a connection with nature in eco-friendly furniture (Hsu & Lin, 2015). Earthy browns evoke images of natural wood and organic materials, aligning with the sustainability principle of responsible material selection. Muted blues, on the other hand, may symbolize the tranquility of water or sky, offering a sense of serenity and peace within interior spaces. These color choices reflect an awareness of the emotional and psychological impact of color in design and its ability to create spaces that promote well-being.

The finding that 68% of respondents considered material transparency to be of utmost importance in their purchasing decisions is consistent with the qualitative theme of sustainability. This highlights consumers' increasing demand for transparency and information regarding the materials and finishes used in eco-friendly furniture (Dawkins & Verreynne, 2018). As consumers become more environmentally conscious, they seek assurance that the furniture they purchase aligns with their values, not only in terms of aesthetics but also in its environmental impact.

Moreover, the interest expressed by approximately 36% of respondents in customizable eco-friendly furniture indicates a potential market trend. Personalization options can allow consumers to align their furniture choices with their unique preferences and interior design schemes (McQuillan, 2019). This finding underscores the importance of flexibility and adaptability in eco-friendly furniture design to cater to the diverse tastes and needs of consumers.

In conclusion, the survey results demonstrate a strong alignment between consumer preferences and the qualitative findings related to eco-friendly furniture aesthetics. Consumers show a clear inclination towards colors that evoke a connection with nature and promote a sense of calmness. Material transparency is of paramount importance to consumers in their eco-friendly furniture purchase decisions (Gifford, 2014). Additionally, the interest in

customization options suggests a growing demand for personalized, eco-conscious furniture solutions. These insights offer valuable guidance to designers and manufacturers in creating eco-friendly furniture that resonates with both sustainability principles and consumer desires.

“Eco-friendly furniture,” that is, furniture designed and produced with a focus on environment, has been a growing trend in recent years. An increased awareness of environmental issues has influenced the furniture market, both at the level of production and consumption, while sustainable materials and eco-friendly designs are trending.

Environmental sustainability in furniture comprises the use of materials, manufacturing processes, and design strategies that minimize the environmental impact of furniture production by reducing the use of non-renewable resources, minimizing waste, and reducing the emission of harmful pollutants (Doni & Colombo, 2017). Using sustainable materials is crucial in sustainable furniture design. It involves selecting materials that have a minimal environmental impact throughout their lifecycle, from harvesting to production to disposal. Furthermore, producing furniture locally and utilizing locally sourced materials and suppliers can reduce the carbon footprint of the product while also supporting the local economy.

The industry needs to understand the consumer and the significance of emotions in the design process in order to inspire shifts in behaviour. Green products should be designed to meet people’s needs using the emotional connections as a strategy for real competitive advantage and growth (Prendergast, 2016). This requires understanding the emotional and practical considerations that consumers have when choosing furniture including factors such as the desire for comfort, functionality, and aesthetics, as well as the emotional connection that people have with their homes and living spaces. Another consideration is the emotional connection that many people have with nature and the desire to incorporate elements of nature into their homes. By using sustainable materials such as reclaimed wood or bamboo, or by incorporating natural colours and textures, companies can create an emotional connection with their customers that goes beyond just the eco-friendliness of the product (Ryu & Jang, 2008). In addition, sharing the story behind the creation of the green furniture and highlighting the efforts made and the impact the product has on the environment should evoke positive emotions in the consumer, help them feel a connection with the product, and leave them feeling inspired to act.

Non-toxic alternatives are available and are a great alternative to conventional finishes that may contain harmful chemicals. Coating furniture with natural vegetable oils and waxes is a sustainable and eco-friendly option (Kozłowski & Vandenberg, 2018). These natural coatings are derived from renewable resources, such as plants, and are non-toxic, biodegradable, and can provide excellent protection and durability for furniture. Vegetable oils, such as linseed oil, walnut oil, or tung oil, are commonly used to finish wood furniture. These oils penetrate the wood and provide protective barrier against moisture and wear, while also enhancing the natural beauty of the wood. They are also non-toxic and can be easily reapplied if needed. Waxes, such as beeswax, carnauba wax, or soy wax, can also be used to finish furniture (Magnusson & Matthing, 2018). These waxes provide a smooth, protective layer over the wood surface and can help to enhance the natural colour and texture of the wood. They are also renewable and biodegradable, making them an environmentally friendly choice.

Conclusion

This article delves into the intricate interplay between eco-friendly furniture aesthetics and sustainability principles, elucidating the preferences of both designers and consumers. The

research underscores the growing significance of nature-inspired aesthetics, sustainable material selection, and minimalistic design in shaping eco-friendly furniture. These design elements are not only aligned with sustainability principles but also resonate with consumers who seek harmony, well-being, and authenticity in their living spaces. Additionally, consumer preferences for calming colors, material transparency, and personalization reaffirm the importance of holistic eco-conscious design. As the demand for eco-friendly furniture continues to rise, these insights provide a robust foundation for designers and manufacturers to navigate the evolving landscape of sustainable design, bridging the gap between aesthetics and environmental responsibility to create furniture that enhances both the beauty of interior spaces and the health of our planet.

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