



***EXPECTATIONS OF FURNITURE BUYERS AT THE MALAYSIAN
INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR 2016***

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**EXPECTATIONS OF FURNITURE BUYERS AT THE MALAYSIAN
INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR 2016**

By

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**A Project Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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DEDICATION

I dedicate my final year project to my family and friends. A special feeling of
Gratitude to my loving parents, Zariffuddin Bin Othman and Ruslina Binti Ahmad and
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Degree and for the joy they gave to me.

Not to forget to all my best friends for their untiring efforts and support for me to
Complete this study successfully. May Allah bless all of us.

Thank You.

ABSTRACT

This research was done during the Malaysian International Furniture Fair 2016 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Center (KLCC). The objective of this research was to provide basic information on the various aspects of consumer behavior to identify such as the kinds of furniture buying characteristics, the type of materials other than wood and wood species preferred that are widely used in furniture at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair. In addition to that, the research also aimed to identify the factors that influence buyers to purchase wood-based furniture and initiative to improve marketability of Malaysian Furniture. The research involved 150 respondents, where the majority came from Malaysia, Singapore, United States, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates and a few European Countries. The highest average respondents spent a budget of RM10,000, and white being the most favored color for their furniture. The respondents also preferred classic furniture and modern designs. Leather was the main choice for the type of textile they preferred on their furniture. ISO-9001 was the most sought after quality certification amongst the respondents that determines the quality of the furniture. Transparent coating was also the most preferred coating that was desired amongst consumers. Respondents also desired solid wood as their choice of wooden furniture & chose rattan for non-wooden furniture. For the types of wood that most preferred, research shows that local species mostly rubber wood while imported species were mainly made of oak. Factors that persuaded consumers in buying wooden furniture was the quality and design. Aesthetic appeal, availability, high demand and environmental friendly are all factors that influence the species of wood being chosen. Among the initiatives taken to raise marketability Malaysian Furniture is to attend furniture fair. The conclusion of this study shows that Malaysia has a huge potential to become a recognized furniture-driven export country in the world.

ABSTRAK

Kajian soal selidik ini telah di jalankan di Pameran Perabot Antarabangsa Malaysia 2016 yang bertempat di Pusat Konvensyen Kuala Lumpur. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk menyediakan maklumat asas dengan mengenalpasti ciri-ciri terhadap perabot berdasarkan dari pembeli yang dipilih, mengenalpasti jenis sumber bukan kayu, dan mengenalpasti jenis spesis kayu yang menjadi keutamaan oleh pembeli di pameran perabot antarabangsa. Selain itu, kajian ini dijalankan dengan tujuan untuk mengenalpasti faktor yang mempengaruhi pembeli dalam memilih perabot berasaskan kayu dan inisiatif untuk meningkatkan kebolehpasaran perabot Malaysia. Kajian soal selidik dari sejumlah 150 responden telah dipilih berdasarkan teknik persampelan. Keputusannya, negara yang terlibat dalam kajian ini adalah Malaysia, Singapura, United Kingdom, Amerika Syarikat, Arab Saudi dan Eropah.. Purata yang tertinggi bagi anggaran bajet yang dibelanjakan oleh responden adalah sebanyak RM10,000 manakala untuk kategori warna, warna putih menjadi pilihan yang utama untuk perabot mereka. Selain itu, responden lebih memilih jenis perabot yang klasik dan moden. Kulit adalah peratus yang tertinggi untuk dijadikan bahan dan tekstil pada perabot. ISO-9001 adalah pilihan yang tertinggi untuk menjadikan penanda aras dalam penentuan sijil kualiti perabot. Salutan telus menjadi pilihan responden untuk dijadikan lapisan terakhir di permukaan perabot. Seterusnya, bagi jenis kayu, responden lebih suka menggunakan kayu pepejal, manakala bagi sumber bukan kayu, rotan adalah sumber yang menjadi pilihan responden. Bagi faktor yang mempengaruhi pembeli dalam memilih perabot berasaskan kayu adalah kualiti dan reka bentuk. Untuk spesis kayu, bagi spesis tempatan, kayu getah menjadi keutamaan yang dipilih manakala bagi spesis yang diimport, Oak adalah spesis yang dipilih oleh responden. Nilai estetik, ketersediaan, permintaan tinggi dan mesra alam adalah faktor yang mempengaruhi spesis kayu. Antara inisiatif untuk meingkatkan jualan perabot di Malaysia adalah dengan menghadiri pameran perabot. Konklusi dalam kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa Malaysia mempunyai potensi yang besar untuk menjadi pengeksport perabot terkemuka di dunia.

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Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my parents and siblings. Their love, care, understanding and moral support have been a source of inspiration to me.

APPROVAL SHEET

I certify that this research report entitled 'Expectation of Furniture Buyers at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair 2016' by Ahmad Nashriq b Zariffuddin has been examined and approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Wood Science Technology in the Faculty of Forestry, Universiti Putra Malaysia.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Malaysian Furniture Industry

According to the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA, 2009), there are about 2,400 furniture firms in Malaysia which has developed from a host of small manufacturers into a major industry. From generic products of simple manufacture, the export-driven industry has today become one of the most important in Asia. The market research on the furniture industry in Malaysia offers a comprehensive picture of the furniture sector in Malaysia, providing data on furniture production and furniture consumption, furniture imports and exports. Malaysian furniture imports and exports are broken down by country and product (office furniture, kitchen furniture, upholstered furniture, non-upholstered seats, bedroom furniture, seats parts and parts of furniture). Further, the wood and forestry sector is also considered with production, imports, exports and consumption data are provided for the main semi-finished wood products (sawn-wood, wood-based panels).

Sustainable forest management, ample supply of renewal timber from its forest plantations, trained labor and up-to-date technologies have enabled Malaysia's furniture makers to carve out substantial export business in wood-based products such as rubber wood, solid wood, and many others. Currently, Malaysia's furniture is widely accepted in major markets such as the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom and Singapore (Salleh et.al., 2008).

In the World Bank report on doing Business 2013, Malaysian furniture export was ranked 12, which has improved its position by two ranks in comparison to 2012 (Ahasanul et.al., 2013). Thus, Malaysia's export performance of furniture has been going through impressive growth as furniture export rate has been escalating at a regular pace of 10% in a span of 10 years every year (Salleh et.al., 2008). In the year 2008, Malaysia's export of furniture product heightened to USD 3.5 billion due to which in a short span of time Malaysia has successfully ranked the tenth exporters of furniture product (Ng and Thiruchelvam, 2011).

Malaysia's furniture industry has been particularly affected by the global economy. The emergence of China as a factory of the world has affected the price sensitive market segments of the industry. Malaysia's furniture industry could not compete on the price factor and has been forced to refocus on mid and high end market segments through enhancement of design and market presence. A lot of emphasis has been placed on marketing of the products as a strategic move. However, there has been limited emphasis on human development in the Malaysian furniture industry.

While human resources can be developed as a source of core competencies of the industry, a well-managed human development program may help to increase performance and diminish job stress.

1.1.1 Structure of the Malaysian Furniture Industry

In 1995, there were about 2,965 furniture plants in Malaysia, with 2,630 in Peninsular Malaysia, 120 in Sabah and 215 in Sarawak. It is estimated that 70% of the mills were small scale plants, such as workshops and backyard factories using low level production technology and catering to domestic markets (Tee, 2010). The remaining 30% were large and medium sized furniture plants which have penetrated the export markets. In terms of ownership, it is estimated that more than 75% of the furniture companies are either wholly or majority Malaysia owned (Tee, 2010). In Malaysia, generally the Malaysian furniture manufactures can be categorized into four categories such as:

Generally the Malaysian furniture manufacturers can be categorized into four categories:

- Small and medium scale industries established and operating in the furniture village
- Small scale industries established and operating outside the furniture village
- Medium and Large manufacturing companies-local owned
- Large manufacturing companies-joint venture and foreign owned

Large furniture manufacturing plants are categorized as the plants that have paid-up capital above RM9 million, medium plants are between RM2.5 million to RM9 million while the small plants have paid-up capital below RM2.5 million (MTIB, 2000).

In 2015, the wooden furniture is the highest for export of major timber products in Malaysia. Malaysian furniture companies numbering about 2,300 are mainly located in Peninsular Malaysia (MITI, 2015).

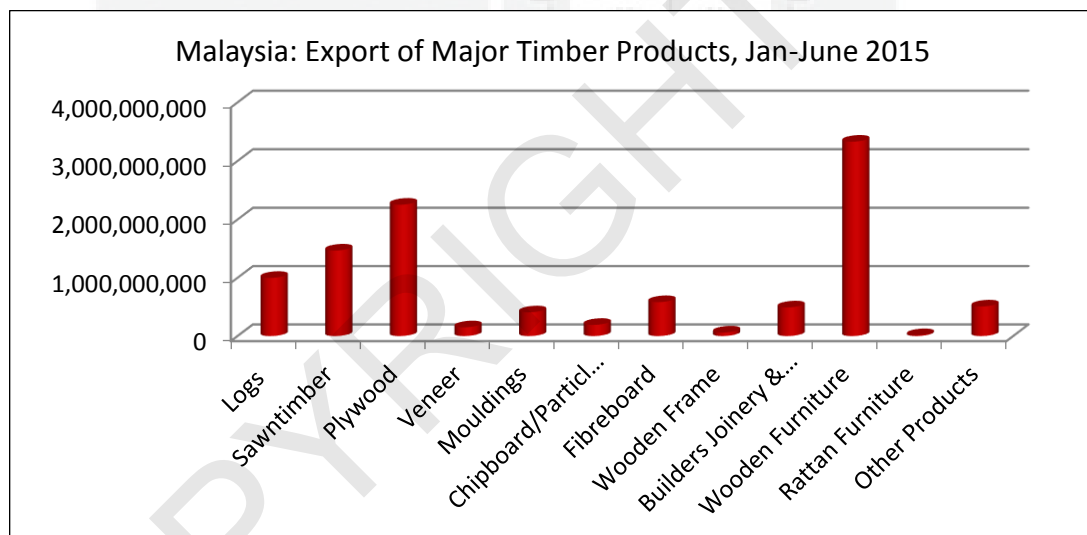


Figure 1.1: The export of major timber products, Jan-June 2015 in Malaysia.

Source: DOS, MTIB.

The furniture industry has been identified by the Malaysian government as one of the industries which can meet this objectives through exports. The Malaysian furniture industry was the star performer of the wood-based sector in Malaysia. The table 1 showed Malaysian furniture industry has made impressive progress on exporter increases ranking from 2006 to 2011 on the top 8th in the world, as the timber sector has moved towards downstream processing activities.

	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
No.	World	89.7	World	106.5	World	116.2	World	96.5	World	109.9	World	120.9
1.	China	17.1	China	22.0	China	26.8	China	25.5	China	32.8	China	37.8
2.	Italy	11.1	Italy	12.9	Italy	13.4	Italy	9.8	Italy	10.0	Germany	11.3
3.	Germany	8.0	Germany	10.4	Germany	11.6	Germany	9.2	Germany	9.8	Italy	10.9
4.	Poland	6.0	Poland	7.1	Poland	7.9	Poland	6.3	Poland	7.0	Poland	8.2
5.	Canada	4.5	Canada	4.1	USA	4.1	USA	3.2	USA	3.7	USA	4.1
6.	USA	3.2	USA	3.6	Canada	3.6	Vietnam	3.1	Vietnam	3.7	Vietnam	3.8
7.	France	3.0	France	3.0	Vietnam	3.4	France	2.5	Canada	2.7	Canada	2.8
8.	Denmark	2.5	Vietnam	2.9	France	3.3	Canada	2.3	Malaysia	2.4	Malaysia	2.5
9.	Vietnam	2.4	Denmark	2.8	Malaysia	2.6	Malaysia	2.1	France	2.2	Sweden	2.3
10.	Malaysia	2.2	Malaysia	2.5	Denmark	2.5	Sweden	1.9	Sweden	2.0	France	2.3

Table 1: Malaysian furniture exporter ranking in global market, 2006-2011.

Source: DOS, Malaysia Timber Industrial Board (MTIB)

1.1.2 Factors Affecting Export of Furniture

Factors affecting the export of furniture from a country can be divided into domestic and international trade factors (MIDA, 2009). The domestic factors include the supply of raw materials from both domestic log productions and import sources, and the export levy and quota rules, while the international trade factors include the currency exchange rates and import price indexes. Figure 1.2 shows the export of wooden furniture by destination on Jan – June 2015. The selection of the above factors were based mostly on the discussion about the furniture development and market.

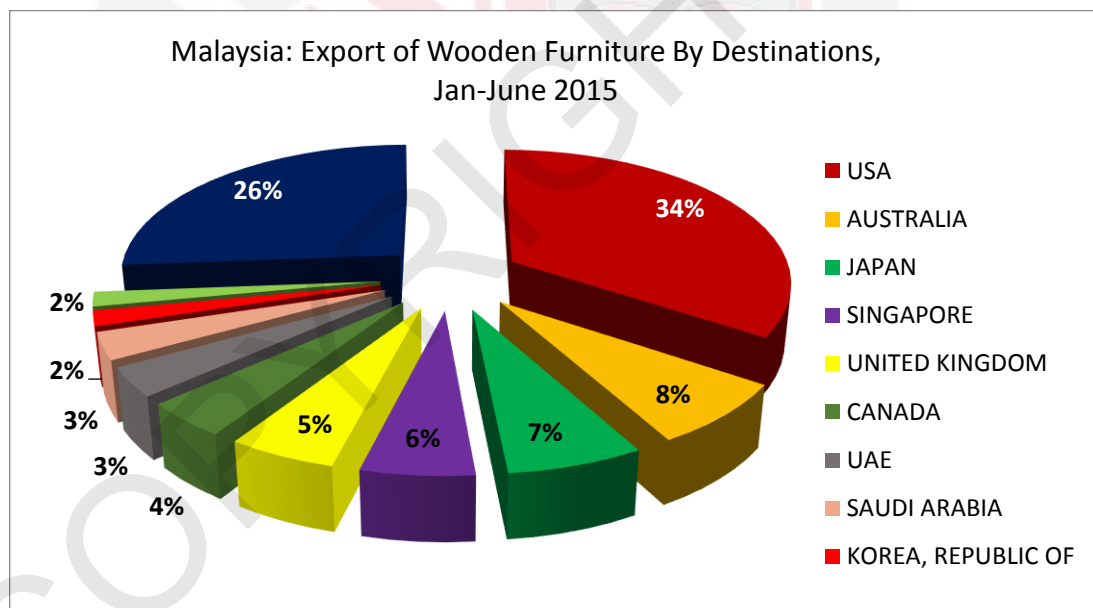


Figure 1.2: The export of wooden furniture by destination, Jan-June 2015.

Source: DOS, Malaysia Timber Industrial Board (MTIB)

1.2 The Malaysian International Furniture Fair

Malaysian International Furniture Fair is the 10th largest exporter of furniture fair in the world with Malaysia exports around 80% of its furniture production. With large markets in the US, Japan and Australia, Malaysia has a strong position in the global furniture industry. Malaysia has always been known for its wood based furniture, owing to its natural resources. The government has set an annual growth target of 6.5% for wood based furniture, estimated to reach up to RM53 billion by year 2020 (MIFF, 2017).

In recent years, the growth has shifted from producing general products towards designing its own, and this has been key in propelling Malaysia onto the international arena. Popular with overseas buyers of the middle to high category, foreign buyers look to Malaysia for manufacturers who can meet their high production demand. While lower priced Chinese and Vietnamese furniture pose strong competition, Malaysian furniture continues to set itself apart with original design that places importance on aesthetics as well as its good work ethics (MIFF, 2016). With a business-friendly environment, good quality products and a high potential market, the Malaysian furniture industry is poised to exceed expectations and to continue its exponential growth.

1.3 Problem Statement

Currently, furniture manufacturers in Malaysia lack of information to fulfil the request of furniture buyers from around the countries and one of the factors that caused the problem was the lack of furniture exhibition held. Malaysian International Furniture Fair and other furniture show have a big potential to overcome the lack of information about furniture.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

- I. Identify furniture buying characteristics among customers.
- II. Identify type of materials than wood and wood species preferred by buyers at Malaysian International Furniture Fair.
- III. Identify factors that influence buyers to purchase wood-based furniture and initiative to improve marketability of Malaysian Furniture.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The data on the objective for this study was based on a questionnaire given to buyers at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair. Due to time constraint, only a total of 150 buyers were interviewed.

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