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DETERMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS ON THE FURNITURE PREFERENCE OF CONSUMERS

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to determine the effect of demographic features on the preferences of the consumers living in Kayseri province. In this context, the issues and problems that furniture manufacturers will focus on have been determined. For this purpose, a survey of 35 questions was prepared and applied with face-to-face interviews with 300 people living in Kayseri province. The findings were evaluated and interpreted with using of cross tables. As a result of the study, according to the results obtained from consumers who came to the dealers to buy furniture, it was determined that women took an active role when consumers bought furniture, and that the level of appreciation increased as the education level increased. It has been observed that all consumers have high expectations about durability of the furniture. As consumers age, the types of units purchased are decreasing and it has been found that durability and functionality are at the forefront rather than the aesthetics of the furniture. Based on these results, manufacturers can make special designs and develop different sales policies by narrowing their target audiences and focusing on these selected target audiences.

Keywords: *Demographic properties, Furniture preference, Furniture consumer.*

DEMOGRAFİK ÖZELLİKLERİN TÜKETİCİLERİN MOBİLYA TERCİHİNE ETKİSİNİN BELİRLENMESİ

Öz

Bu çalışmada, demografik özelliklerin Kayseri ilinde yaşayan tüketicilerin tercihleri üzerindeki etkisinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu kapsamda mobilya üreticilerinin odaklanacağı konular ve sorunlar belirlenmiştir. Bu amaçla Kayseri ilinde yaşayan 300 kişiyle 35 soruluk bir anket hazırlanmış ve yüz yüze görüşmeler ile uygulanmıştır. Bulgular çapraz tablolar kullanılarak değerlendirilerek yorumlanmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda mobilya almak için bayilere gelen tüketicilerden elde edilen sonuçlara göre, tüketicilerin mobilya satın alırken kadınların aktif rol aldığı, tüketicilerin eğitim düzeyi yükseldikçe beğeninin arttığı tespit edilmiştir. Tüm tüketicilerin mobilyanın dayanıklılığı konusunda yüksek beklentilerinin olduğu görülmüştür. Tüketiciler yaşlandıkça satın alınan ünite çeşitleri azalmakta ve mobilyanın estetiğinden çok dayanıklılığı ve işlevselliğinin ön planda olduğu görülmüştür. Bu sonuçlardan yola çıkarak üreticiler, hedef kitlelerini daraltarak ve bu seçilen hedef kitlelere odaklanarak özel tasarımlar yapıp farklı satış politikaları geliştirebilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Demografik özellikler, Mobilya tercihi, Mobilya tüketicisi.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Society and humanity are in constant change and development. This change and development is also reflected in the products used by society and man. Being aware of change and development is the first step to design the products of the future, to produce the technologies of the products to be designed, to define their processes. The formation of this awareness goes through the interpretation of demographic data that change from the past to the future.

The evaluation of past demographic data together with today's data will give us concrete clues about future data. With these predictions, innovative and value-adding products can be designed.

At the center of the demographic data, the individual's living space, furniture and furniture usage patterns of equipment elements in the space, the quality of the furniture and architecture and the culture of the city are in interaction with. The structure that houses the place, the city where the structure is located, the country where the city is located, and the world where the country exists are interacting with each other. The demographic data contained within all these layers are also in communication and interaction with each other. This communication and interaction can reveal new product forms. Furniture, which is one of the most important products that establish functional and emotional bridges between the individual and the space, has to take advantage of the interaction mentioned above. Therefore, demographics affect furniture design.

Consumers' purchasing decisions in economic factors (income level, general economic situation, financial structure), social factors (culture and subculture, social class, exemplary individuals, roles, and family), psychological factors (motivation, perception, attitudes, learning, and personality) and personal factors (demographic and situational) are effective. Individuals are looking for a number of differences in product characteristics based on their individual characteristics resulting from these variables. Accordingly, every product designed for people is differentiated in such a way as to respond to consumers' expectations. The product features that require differentiation in relation to furniture are functionality, reliability, durability and safety, especially aestheticism. Since other product features other than aesthetics are essential design factors, aesthetic elements such as shape, color, balance-ratio and texture are emphasized in order to adapt the characteristics of the product to the expectations of consumers in product differentiation. As a result of the research, a situation has emerged that contrasts with Burdurlu's thesis. Especially in the lower income group, there is still an expectation of durability from furniture. However, it has been observed that the function criterion in furniture is at least as important as aesthetics. However, it is useful to note that when buying furniture, the user evaluates all the criteria of furniture and demands a stronger product (Burdurlu et al., 2005).

The influential factor in consumer markets is the "consumer." In order for a person to be considered as a consumer in terms of marketing, he/she needs to have a need to be satisfied, he/she needs to have an income to spend and the willingness to spend this income (Akyuz, 2006).

When consumers choose from a large number of products and services, they prefer those that give them the highest benefit at the lowest cost. When making this choice, they give priority to products that are recognized and known by everyone (Demircioglu, 2012). Therefore, when producing goods and services, firms have to take into account the demands and needs of consumers and the characteristics of consumer behavior (Zengin, 2009).

The fact that consumer behaviour is influenced by external factors such as culture, Family, Advisory Group, marketing environment, recognises that it can both change and have a structure to adapt to. Consumer markets are constantly changing and one of the most important changes is in demographics. Since consumers' wishes and needs will vary, Market segmentation by demographic characteristics will benefit businesses (Akyuz, 2006).

The furniture sector is one of the rare sectors where products and services, production and marketing are intertwined. Although there is a basic need and durable consumer goods, it is a sector where fashion is as effective as ready-to-wear (Turker, 2010). Furniture, which is one of the main tools in the arrangement of a place, is an important factor in the design and comfort of a house. The function of furniture in our lives has not only been limited to being an object used in the house, but it has been an item and product that has established and

communicated its own structures of meaning in every period (Arpacı, 2014). Therefore, the process of buying furniture is very important for consumers. The socio-cultural, psychological, demographic and situational factors of each consumer differ from each other. This is reflected in the purchasing process and shapes the preferences of consumers. The most effective factors in the emergence of the need for furniture are the aging of existing furniture, the need for new furniture due to the growth of children in the family, other factors arising from the family, increases in income, the influence of groups of friends and the unfashionability of furniture (Akyuz, 1998).

The behavior and attitudes of consumers in Zonguldak province in the preference of furniture were examined. Accordingly, according to demographic factors such as education status, age, gender, income status, customer profile was revealed (Cabuk 2010, Cabuk vd 2012).

In the study on the determination of furniture preferences of consumers in the province of Duzce, 38% of the participants preferred furniture alone while choosing, 29% of the wife/ffiancé with the preference they determined. It was also determined that 83% of the participants preferred to take their furniture from the province where they were located (Sevim Korkut and Kaval 2015).

The right determination of the needs and possibilities of consumers will enable them to reach the right product in need by choosing the most appropriate conditions. It is determined that having knowledge about furniture types and furniture properties will help you to make your preferences in the most appropriate way (Arpacı and Obuz, 2013).

In this study, the behavior of consumers with different demographics in Kayseri province in the preference of seating group furniture; attitudes before, during and after purchase, education status, age, migration, income status, property, architectural features, gender, marital status in terms of factors such as customer profile were tried to be revealed.

2.MATERIAL AND METHOD

In the first phase of this study, the number of enterprises registered in the chambers of Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), Kayseri Chamber of Industry, Kayseri Chamber of Commerce and Furniture-Carpenters and the number of residences in Kayseri were determined.

The field of study was selected as Kayseri province Center. The sample group (n) 30 is considered sufficient for the normality of our sampling chapter in the literature on the number of surveys to be applied to consumers in Kayseri province, which is selected as a research area. Therefore, the sample group was increased above 30 by evaluating the available facilities ($n>30$). Thus, it was tried to make the results healthier (Cil, 2000). The questionnaire consists of 35 questions. Surveys were conducted face-to-face in question-and-answer form by meeting with consumers. The information obtained was evaluated and interpreted with the help of cross tables.

The number of questionnaires to be applied to consumers in Kayseri province is determined as follows. (Türedi, 2010). Total number of dwellings in Kayseri province represent the universe. In this context, the sample size is considered sufficient for 245 considering 341 910 houses according to P: 5% sampling error, $p = 0.8$, $q = 0.2$. In order to increase the reliability of the study, the number of surveys to be applied to consumers was increased to 300. Calculations for determining the number of samples according to the total number of dwellings were made according to Table 1.

Tablo 1. Sample sizes corresponding to different target groups for 5% and 10% sampling errors

Target group	Sample size for $\alpha=0,05$			
	%5 Sampling error (d)		%10 Sampling error (d)	
	p=0,05, q=0,05	p=0,8, q=0,2	p=0,05, q=0,05	p=0,8, q=0,2
1000	278	198	88	58
2000	322	219	92	60
3000	341	227	93	60
4000	351	232	94	61
5000	357	234	94	61
10000	370	240	95	61
20000	377	243	96	61
50000	381	245	96	61
100000	383	245	96	61
500000	384	246	96	61

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are approximately 63.691 private enterprises registered in the furniture industry (chamber of Commerce, Industry, Furniture Makers and carpenters) and approximately 2.000 of these enterprises are active in Kayseri (Demirci, 2004).

According to TUIK data, the total number of houses in Kayseri province was found to be 341910. In the scope of the research, the general results of the surveys conducted for 300 people were given in Table 2. When the table was examined, it was found that the number of men surveyed was higher, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 21-40, education levels were higher, and income levels were between 2000-4000. It was also determined that the majority of the participants were homeowners, the houses were between about 150-200m², and the majority of the participants were from the center of Kayseri.

Table 2. Overall results of the survey

Demographic	Factors	Participants	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	167	55,7
	Female	133	44,3
Age	20-30	65	21,7
	31-40	141	47,0
	41- 50	69	23,0
	51 and +	25	8,3
Education status	Primary school	16	5,3
	Secondary school	5	1,7
	High school	53	17,7
	Under graduate	191	63,7
	Graduate	35	11,7
Income status	2000-4000 TL	173	57,7
	4000-6000 TL	64	21,3
	6000-8000 TL	28	9,3
	8000-10000 TL	12	4,0
	Other	23	7,7
Ownership status	Householder	232	77,3
	Tenant	68	22,7

H. Kılıç

Square of house	0-100 m ²	20	6,7
	100-150 m ²	115	38,3
	150-200 m ²	131	43,7
	200 m ² and +	34	11,3
Immigration status	Kayseri	221	73,7
	Districts of Kayseri	15	5,0
	Other cities	64	21,3

3.1.Evaluation of The Effects of Demographic Data on Furniture Preference

Within the scope of the study, the effect of demographic data (gender, age, education, income level, property status, residential use area and migration status) on consumers' preferences for furniture was tried to determine, and the results related to some of these demographic data are summarized in the tables below.

3.1.1.Evaluation of The Effect of Gender On Furniture Preference

Of the 300 surveyed, 167 were male and 133 were female. It has been determined that the person who is effective in men's choice of furniture is largely their partner. It was determined that the person who was effective in women's choice of furniture was largely themselves, and that women received ideas from more relatives than men when buying furniture. This situation shows that women are the determinants of furniture choice and women make the decision to buy. Therefore, when designing furniture, it was understood that it would be right to evaluate the products with a lady's eye. Distribution of the effect of gender on furniture preference when buying furniture is given in Figure 1.

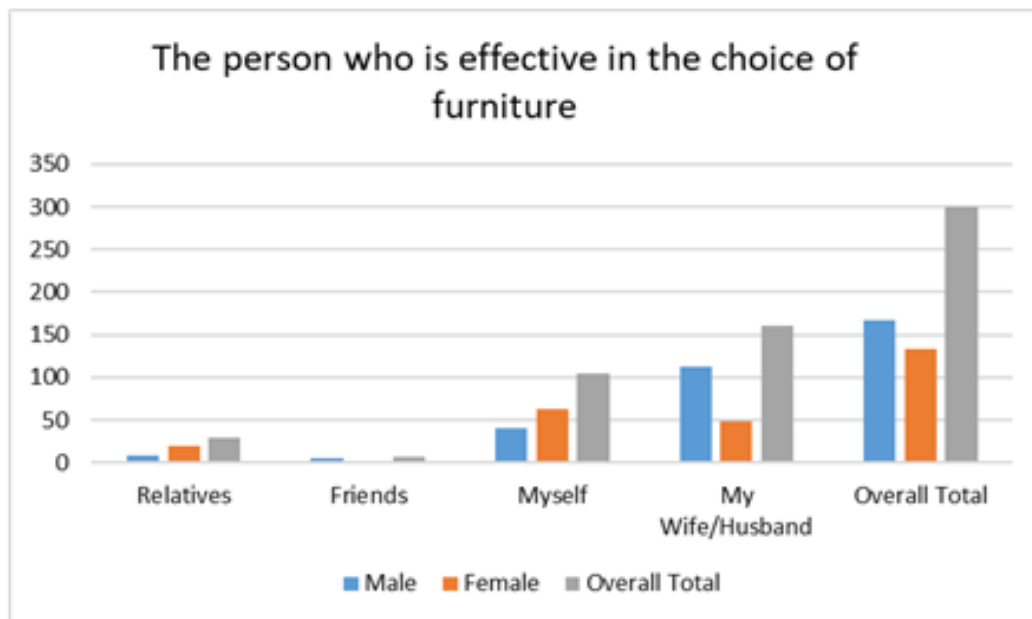


Figure 1. Distribution of the impact of gender on furniture choice when buying furniture

3.2.2. Examination of Consumers' Expectations in Furniture Preference as They Age

When consumers were between the ages of 31-40, it was determined that the importance of durability was more important when buying furniture, and the expectation of durability in furniture decreased as their ages progressed. As consumers age, their expectations of furniture preference are given in Figure 2.

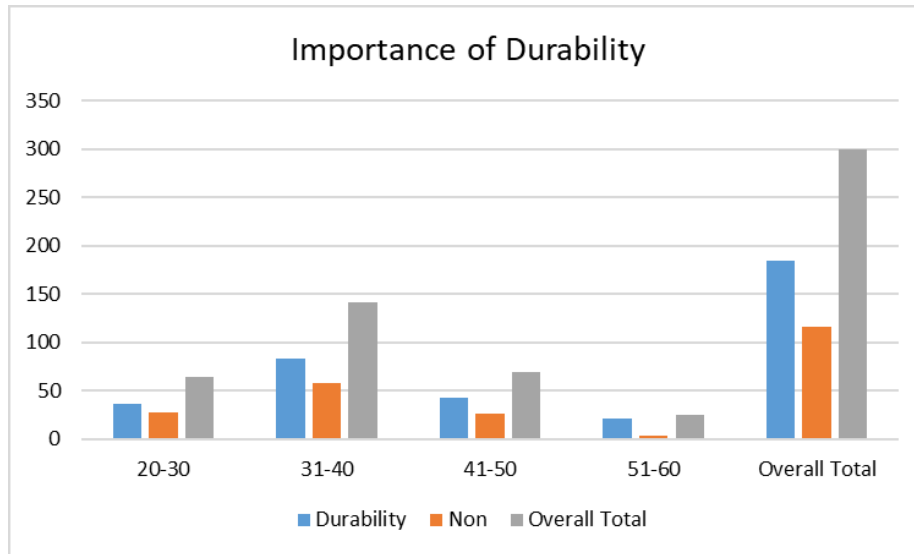


Figure 2. Distribution of expectations in furniture preference as consumers age

3.2.3. Determination The People Who Are Effective in Buying Furniture According to The Age of Consumers

According to the age group of consumers who are effective in their preferences when buying furniture; consumers prefer furniture at a young age while acting in common with their wife/husband, the choice of furniture is left to the wife as the ages increased. Distribution Figure 3. is also given regarding the people who are effective in buying furniture according to the age of consumers.

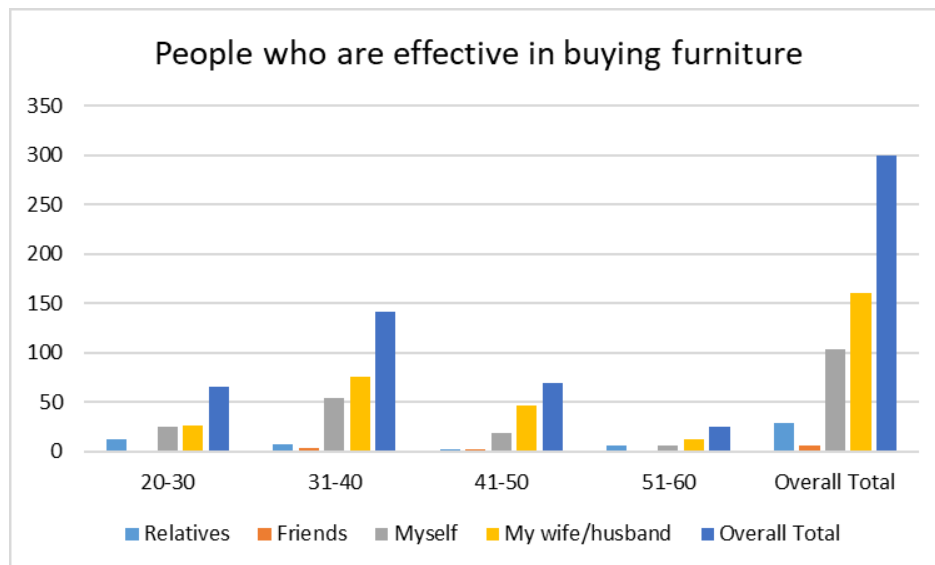


Figure 3. Distribution related to people who are effective when buying furniture according to the age of consumers

3.2.4. Products in The Living Room Furniture Preference According to The Age of Consumers

According to the age of the consumers in the living room furniture preference of the products examined; 31-40 years of age of the consumers when buying furniture for the living room as a set (seat set, TV unit, table and chair) was determined to prefer. As consumers age, the number of products they buy has decreased, and they prefer to buy enough products to meet more basic needs. The distribution of the products in the living room furniture preference according to the age of the consumers is given in Figure 4.

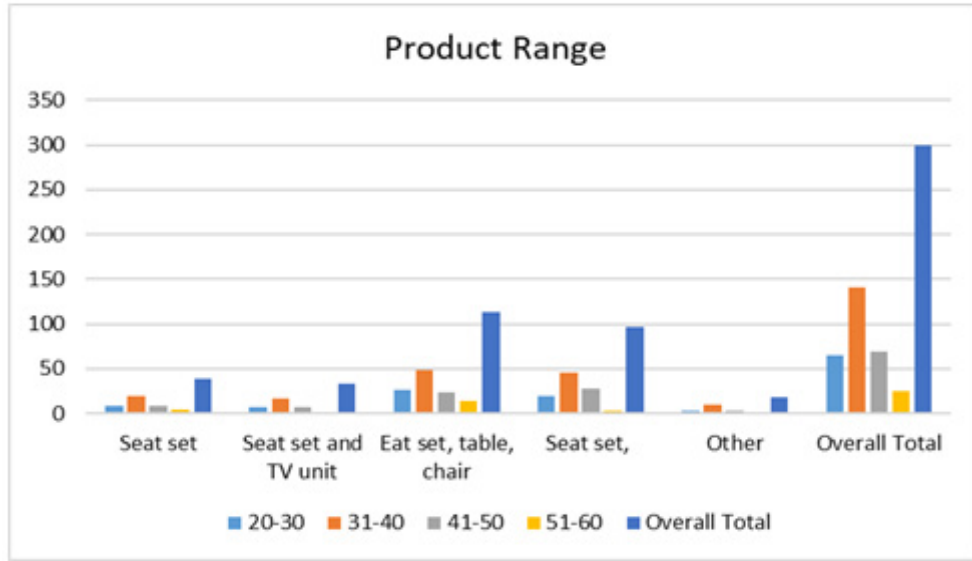


Figure 4. Distribution of products in the living room furniture preference according to the age of consumers

3.2.5. Determination the Effect of Consumers' Educational Status on Aesthetic Preference in Furniture

As consumers' education levels increased, it was observed that they paid more attention to aesthetic aspects in the furniture they purchased. This situation shows that consumers care more about aesthetics in product designs as their education increases. The distribution of the effect of the educational status of consumers on aesthetic preference in the selection of furniture is given in Figure 5.

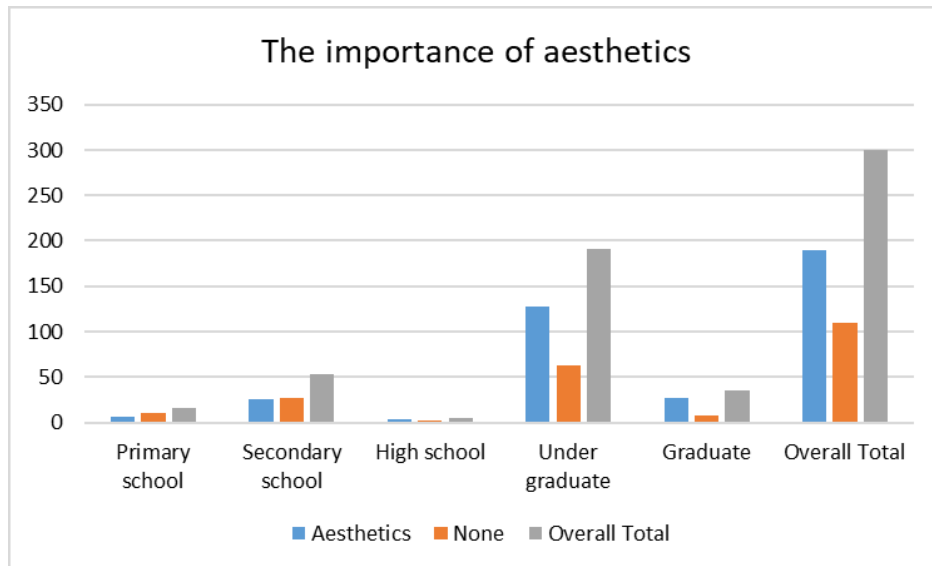


Figure 5. Distribution of consumers' educational status on the effect of aesthetic preference in furniture

3.2.6. Determining The Effect of Education Status On the Preference of Durability of Furniture

As the educational status of consumers increases, it has been determined that the issue of durability in the furniture they buy is as important as it is in aesthetics. Furniture is not the nature of goods that can be exchanged in a short time, but it is expected to be of quality because it is a commodity that is purchased in numbered times and targeted for long-term use. The distribution of the educational status of consumers regarding durability in the selection of furniture is given in Figure 6.

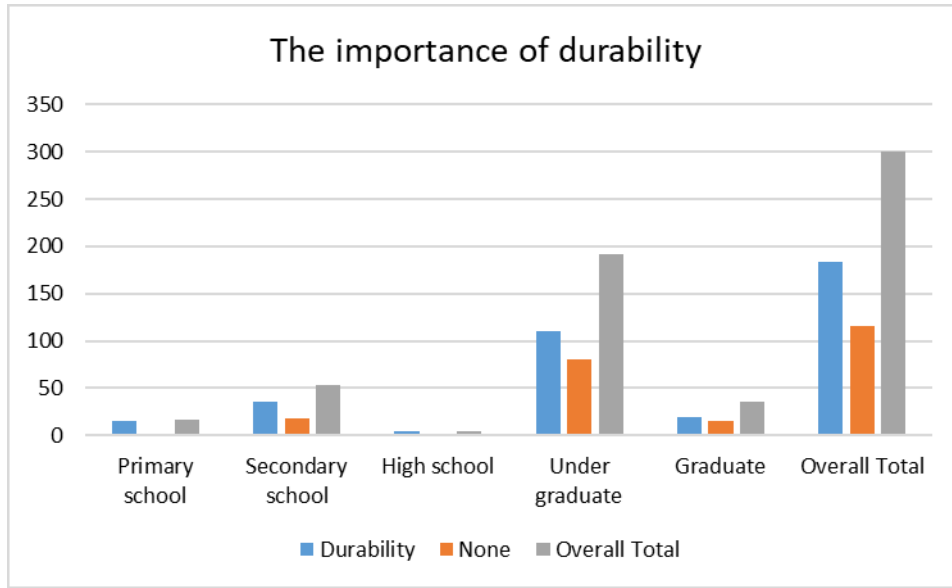


Figure 6. Distribution of consumers' educational status on the effect of durability preference in furniture

3.2.7. Determining The Color Preferences of Consumers When Buying Furniture According to Income Level

When examining the color preferences of consumers according to their income levels when purchasing furniture, it was observed that more coffee tones (milk coffee) were preferred. This is supposed to be due to the fact that the coffee tones do not show much dust and dirt. Light-colored furniture is thought to be risky to consumers because it has more dirt and stain-holding properties. Color preferences are given in Figure 7. when consumers buy furniture based on their income level.

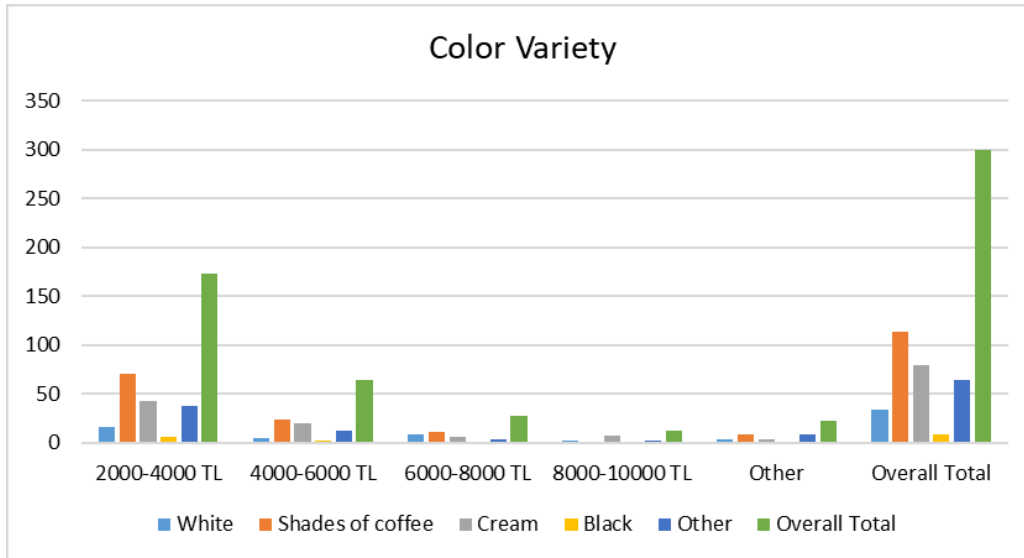


Figure 7. Distribution of color preferences when buying furniture according to the income level of consumers

3.2.8. Determination of The Preferred Housing Area of Consumers According to The State of Migration

The consumers who live in Kayseri and Kayseri have preferred the most 150 - 200m² residences. Those who came to Kayseri from the districts preferred 150-200m² housing units. Consumers from different cities in Kayseri prefer 100-150m² housing units. The house size that consumers prefer based on their immigration status is also given in Figure 8.

H. Kılıç

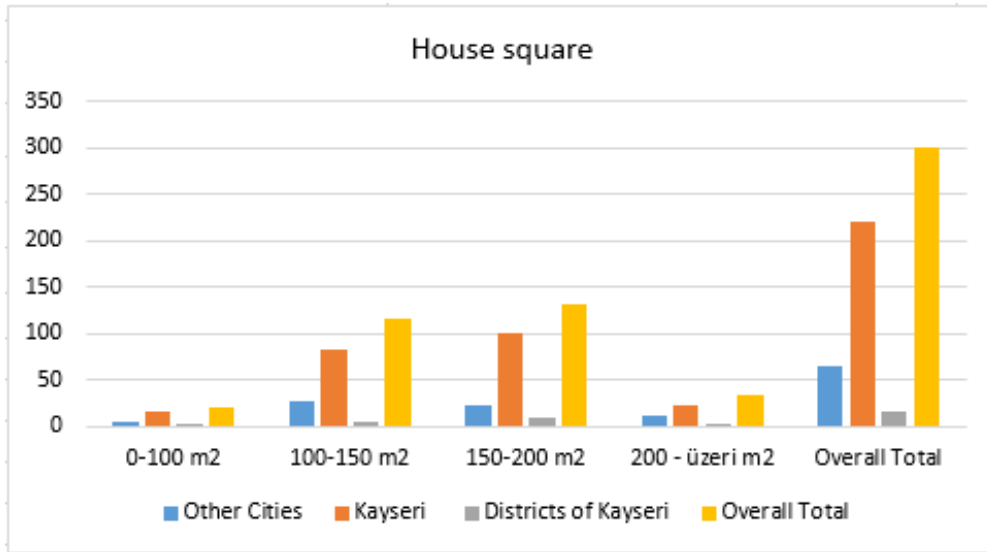


Figure 8. Distribution on the house size that consumers prefer based on their immigration status

3.2.9. Analyzing of Consumers' Economic Preference in Furniture According to The State of Migration

According to the state of migration, consumers' economic preference in furniture is examined; it is understood that according to the economy of furniture is more important for the people from other cities, than those living in Kayseri. The distribution of the furniture purchased by consumers according to the migration situation is given in Figure 9 regarding the importance of economy.

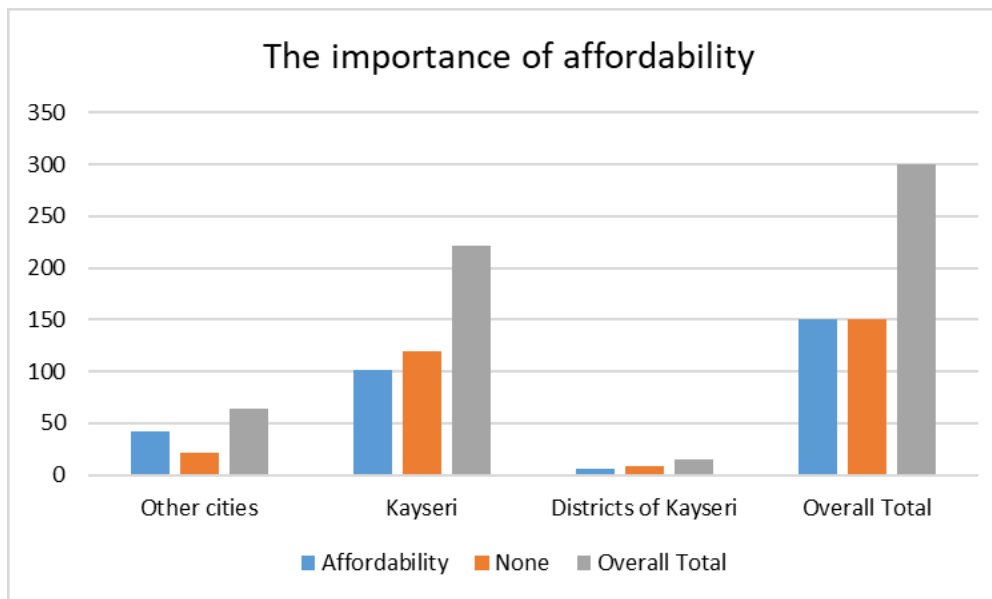


Figure 9. Distribution of importance of affordability in furniture according to migration situation

3.2.10. Analyzing of Consumers' Aesthetic Preference in Furniture According to The State of Migration

According to the state of migration, when consumers want to change their furniture, the effect of aesthetics on preference is examined; all consumers who emigrated to Kayseri or locals of Kayseri have been determined that aesthetics is important in the case of buying furniture again. The distribution Figure 10 is also given regarding the importance of aesthetic consideration in cases of re-buying furniture according to the migration status of consumers.

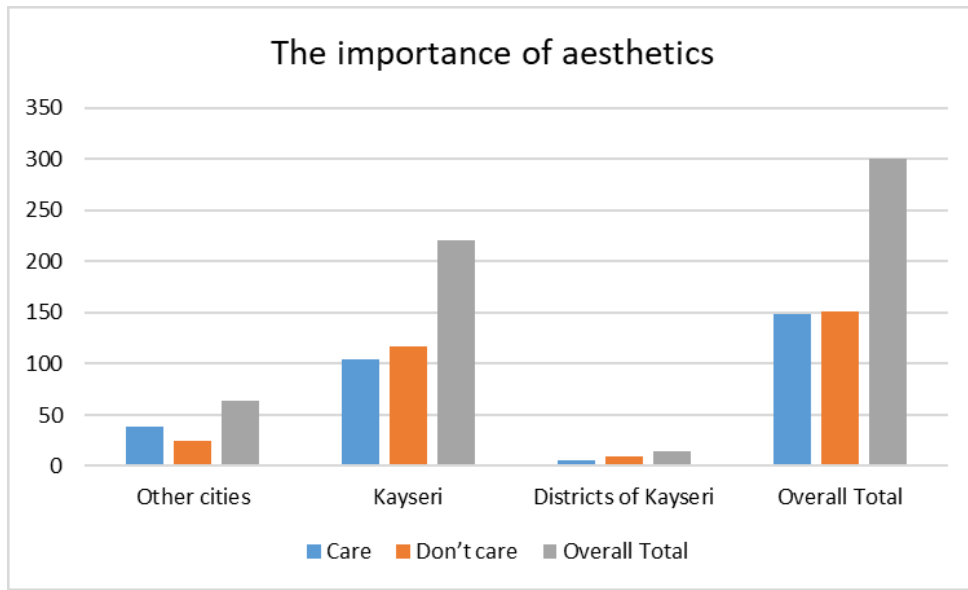


Figure 10. Distribution of aesthetics in cases of migration and re-purchasing of furniture

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study was carried out in the borders of Kayseri province with the aim of giving innovative ideas in design to brands and manufacturers who want to sell living room equipment and dining room furniture based on the demographic characteristics of the target audience. In addition, furniture brands serving the same geography are targeted to enable designers to take multidisciplinary approaches and to help them make designs suitable for the target audience using demographic data. In addition, the data obtained from this study will be used by the manufacturer.

As a result of the study, it is observed that women take an active role in the selection of furniture and take ideas especially from their closest relatives when making these choices. As the level of education increases, the expectation from furniture increases with the level of appreciation. Whatever the demographic situation, the expectation of all people from furniture is durability. In the lower- and upper-income groups, coffee tones were found to be prominent in the color choices of the audience. As the age progresses, the types of units purchased are decreasing and the expectation is increasing about durability and functionality rather than the aesthetics of the furniture.

With these results, manufacturers can make special designs and develop different sales policies by narrowing the target audiences and focusing on these selected target audiences. However, it can also develop production patterns according to the life forms of the target audience and the places in which it is lived. Both audiences can be satisfied by making similar logic choices when choosing colors and materials for the target audiences whose income level is lowest and highest. While satisfying the upper income group with really different materials and colors, selecting the same materials and colors in the lower income group will increase the urge to buy.

This work will not only be stuck on the borders of Kayseri province. Tips have been obtained for both national and international furniture manufacturers and vendors on how demographic data will contribute to furniture design. The furniture industry will not only remain within its circle but will be able to capture different and innovative ideas on both design and sales, taking into account consumer demographics. Thus, both domestic and foreign market competitiveness of furniture manufacturing companies will increase.

In the light of these studies, the depth of these studies can be increased by investigating the effect of demographic data on furniture production technologies and material quality.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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