GU J Sci, Part A, 6(4): 81-91 (2019)

Gazi University

Journal of Science

PART A: ENGINEERING AND INNOVATION

http://dergipark.gov.tr/gujsa

A Study on Determining the Criteria that Parents Consider When Buying Children's Room Furniture

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Article Info

Received: 05/11/2019
Accepted: 18/12/2019

Keywords

Children's room,
Furniture,
Design,
Flexibility,
Changeability,
Innovation

Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to determine the effects of flexibility and interchangeability characteristics on furniture preferences by the criteria that the participants take into consideration when buying children's room furniture. The general information of the participants and their evaluations on children's room furniture were determined with the help of a detailed questionnaire. A total of 103 parents who participated in the playground of a shopping center in Ankara with their children participated in the survey and the results were evaluated with SPSS program. As a result, it is seen that the participants emphasize ease of use, durability, price suitability and material quality when buying furniture in children's rooms respectively. In addition, it was determined that storeability, partitionability and collectability characteristics were effective in the furniture preferences of the participants.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Civilized society is one that is struggling to make a better world for our children" [1,2].

Children are active participants in learning about the world around them. They begin to understand size by whether they can hold something in their hands or wrap their hands around it. They learn that things can be soft or hard, smooth or bumpy by touching them. To accommodate this active learning process, it is beneficial for the environment to reflect the size of the children and facilitate the children's ability to see and reach objects and feel comfortable within their surroundings. A space that is reflective of the children's physical size and abilities heightens their sense of confidence in their ability to perform simple tasks more independently. Appropriates sizes and elements such as windows, tables, chair and playground will prolong the children's interest and participation in constructive activities [3]. "When children feel comfortable in their physical surroundings, they will venture to explore materials or events around them." [3,4].

The impact of the environment in children's personality should not be ignored. Housing should be a living space that will protect physical, social and mental health. A house should be large enough to provide enough space for family members and provide privacy, safety and comfort conditions [5]. Today, children spend a significant amount of time in their room to play and study. If the interior equipment and auxiliary elements in the children's rooms are not planned at an optimum level, many problems such as injuries, serious musculoskeletal disorders, posture disorders and respiratory disorders can be seen in children using this environment. Unless there is a preventive approach to child health, it can cause permanent problems in later life of children. For this reason, parents have to take a multifaceted approach to the choice of furniture for their children. In addition, equipping the space to meet the needs of the children by taking the idea of children will help them feel safe and prepare for a successful future.

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The house, where an important part of the day is spent, is in a constant relationship with the user. As the economic and social situation affects individuals, housing user communication changes according to the conditions [6].The social environment, economic situation and lifestyle of the people constitute certain standards and the provision of standards increases the level of satisfaction [7]. In today's world where consumption culture is widespread, people make various choices by emphasizing their likes. People are influenced by their social class as they choose their choices and endeavor to adapt themselves to meet the standards of their class.

Today, as a result of contemporary life, residential areas divided into different spaces for different activities like, service, life and sleep etc. Spaces, were created according to different activities, were classified; Private, semi-private and open to the outside in the structure of the house [8]. The functional and perceptual quality of each residential space created according to the requirements of the action can be ensured by questioning the abstract, concrete or functional relationships between the demands and requirements of the user and the architectural features of the space, fixed / movable reinforcement elements and auxiliary elements (accessories, etc.). Briefly, when the relations between people, space and equipment elements are kept at optimum level, positive contributions will be provided to user happiness and comfort [9].

When the literature is examined about the furniture and the other housing equipment, a limited number of studies have been found in this subject.

Kurtoğlu and Koç [10] emphasized the importance of user needs, economic status and appreciation in the selection of furniture, which is also defined as movable reinforcement elements, and emphasized the necessity to consider such issues as usability, durability and longevity. It has been suggested that furniture, which is more expensive than other household goods, can be used for many years when it is chosen by considering the user-furniture relations and by making a good choice, therefore, it should not be purchased without a good research on price, quality, durability and variety. Eriç et al. [11], in the design and production of residential furniture can adapt to different places, with the addition of new parts in time or change within the internal equipment systems should be emphasized, emphasizing the fact that residential interior fittings are an industrial product, adapt to such spaces over time It has been suggested that adding new parts or going to internal equipment systems that may change within its own structure may be rational behaviors that can increase the current quality standard. Bilgin [12], in his study, examined the relations of goods and man-goods used by families; families have changed their belongings depending on socio-economic level (SED) and there is a certain harmony between the lifestyle and belongings of the users. According to information, during the 1980’s it has changed the process of political and economic change people's consumption patterns experienced in Turkey revealed new consumer needs and expectations. With the increase in the purchasing power of Turkish consumers, the demand for different, high quality, aesthetic products that can be called “luxury products” has also increased.

On the other hand, in the studies focusing on children's rooms, Aleksić [2] defined the principles of a healthy environment in kindergartens and stopped the most appropriate design standards for children. Salvador [13] conducted research on product design, focusing on children's furniture (high chairs), and conducted research on issues that led to effective sustainability, waste reduction and product optimization. Adawiyah bte Jalaludin [3] offers a solution to repetitive stress and injuries due to the reduction of health problems between children and adults, musculoskeletal disturbance and incorrect ergonomics and improper posture at work stations. Wan et al. [14], China's rapid economic development emphasized that by improving people's living standards and raising people's health and environmental awareness, therefore, parents are choosing products made of non-toxic materials for their children and meeting the functional requirements. In Ruth’s [15] study, emphasized that the design and production of furniture to be preferred for children, considering materials that do not harm for human health and safety principles, will protect children especially from indoor injuries and toxic effects. Ruth also stated that this is an important criterion for a healthy, safe and calm young generation. Another study in Finland, Toivonen [16] suggested that sales price plays an important role in the perception of product quality.

In the study of Yıldırım et al. [17], middle and upper income users' satisfaction and complaints were examined for the built-in furniture. At the end of the study, the users reported that the workmanship and material quality, size and storage capacity of these permanent furniture which made by the contractors, were not enough for satisfaction. It is seen that most of these complaints are concentrated in labor and material quality. In Akyüz's [18] study stated that the importance of the sales price decreased but the brand increased, with increasing education and income level.

When the literature on the subject is examined, it is clear that the innovative change that affects all areas of life is also reflected in the characteristics of children's furniture. Therefore; it is very important to use the findings with an innovative approach in the design of the interior elements by examining the lives and housing uses of families with different socio-economic levels [19]. When approached from this point, it is very important to meet the needs of the action and equipment in the rooms of our children, which will direct the future of humanity in many areas, in order to achieve a healthy structure and success. Within the framework of this approach, the above studies have not adequately examined the extent to which the children are able to meet their needs in matters such as the size and shape of the rooms where they spend a significant part of their lives, the qualities and materials of the equipment and auxiliary elements, and the density within the space. In this context, it is of great benefit to research children's rooms and find solutions to design new spaces or to improve existing spaces with the findings to be obtained. This study focuses on interior fittings and auxiliary elements, especially in children's rooms, and shows some possible practical answers to a wide range of design parameters. In this study, it is aimed to determine the characteristics that the parents will prefer for the design of children's room furniture depending on their demographic characteristics. Accordingly, the effect of the demographic differences of parents on the preference of children's room furniture will be tried to be determined. In the light of these findings in the literature, the research hypotheses developed in accordance with the purpose of this research are given below.

H1: Participants will consider the quality of workmanship, material quality, flexibility / changeability, functionality, durability and ease of use when purchasing children's room furniture.

H2: Participants will require extensibility, storability, partitionability and summability in children's room furniture.

The research method and findings developed for the purpose of the research to test the hypotheses given above are explained below.

2. METHOD

In this study, it is aimed to determine the issues that the participants take into consideration when buying children's room furniture. The characteristics of the parents, questionnaire design and statistical analysis are discussed below.

2.1. Selection of Participants

This study has randomly selected 103 parents, who were with their children in The Ankara Metrocity Shopping Mall playground, participated in this study. 18.4% of the participants were male, 81.6% were female, 60.2% were in the 26-35 age range, 39.8% were in the 36-45 age range, 44.7% were high school and 55.3% were high school graduates. In addition, 33% of the participants have income of 1500-4500 ₺, 42.7% of them have 4501-6000 ₺ and 24.3% of them have 6001 ₺ or more.

2.2. Questionnaire Design

The research hypothesis was measured with the help of a questionnaire. In the design of this questionnaire, residential furniture evaluation questionnaires were used which were found to be valid and reliable in previous studies [17,20,21]. The questionnaire consists of three parts. These are:

- General information of the participants (gender, age, education level, total monthly family income, number of children).
- Considerations when purchasing children's room furniture (workmanship quality, material quality, price suitability, fashionability, flexibility / changeability, functionality, durability and ease of use).
- Features required in children's room furniture in terms of flexibility and changeability (extensibility, summability, changeability, functionality, storability, partitionability).

The survey was conducted in May 2019 by interviewing the participants face to face during the working hours of the day on weekdays and weekends.

2.3. Statistical Analysis

In this research, a total of 103 participants 'parents' considerations when buying children's room furniture were measured with a questionnaire. Percentage values, averages and standard deviation values of the data obtained from the questionnaire were calculated, Cronbach Alpha reliability tests of the data were performed and whether the relationships between the independent variables were statistically significant was tested by single variance analysis (ANOVA). The means of the variables found important in the analysis of variance are expressed graphically.

3. RESULTS

The Cronbach alpha reliability analysis of the data obtained from this study was conducted, and as a result, the reliability value of the research scale, which included the evaluations of the participants regarding the issues taken into consideration when buying children's room furniture was found to be 0.83, and the reliability value of the flexibility / changeability scale was 0.76. In previous studies, Cronbach [22], Kaplan and Saccuzzo [23] and Panayides [24] reported that alpha reliability coefficients for all components can be considered as “reliable” when the coefficients exceed 0.60. The Cronbach alpha value obtained in this study is above the indicated value. Accordingly, the data obtained were considered as “reliable”.

In the first evaluation, %99 (102) of the participants had bed, 32% (33) of them had commode, 86.4% of them had clothes closet, 50.5% had them had dresser and 17.5% had diaper changer unit in their children's rooms.

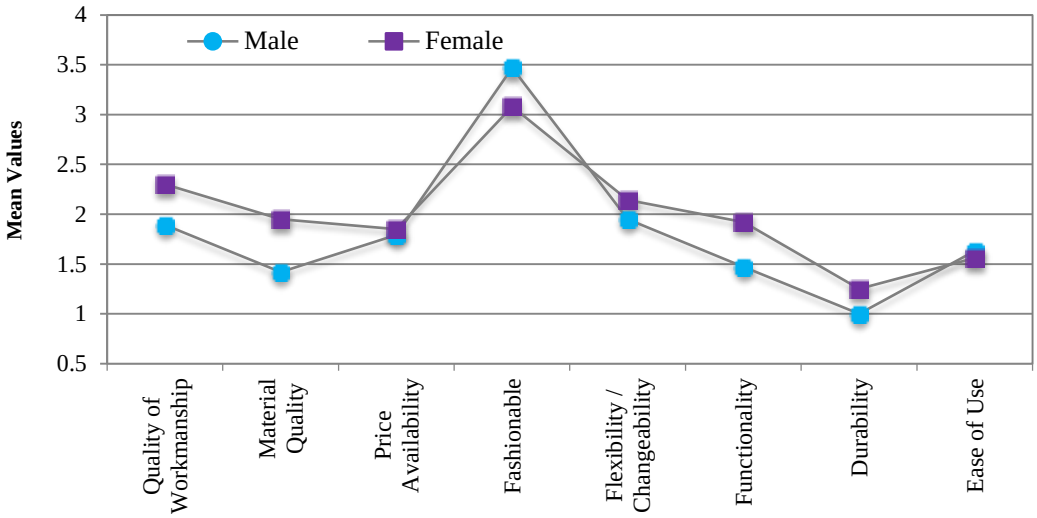
Table 1 shows the categorical averages, standard deviation values and ANOVA test results of the data that the participants take into consideration when purchasing children's room furniture by gender.

Table 1. *Preference of children's room furniture according to gender of the participants*

Preference of Children's Room Furniture	**Gender**						**ANOVA Results**		
	Male		**Female**		**Total**				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	df	Sig.
Quality of Workmanship	1.89[a]	0.66	2.30	0.72	2.22	0.73	4.947	1	0.028*
Material Quality	1.42	0.51	1.95	0.56	1.85	0.58	14.514	1	0.000*
Price Availability	1.79	0.92	1.85	0.94	1.84	0.93	0.055	1	0.815[ns]
Fashionable	3.47	0.96	3.08	1.28	3.16	1.23	1.557	1	0.215[ns]
Flexibility / Changeability	1.95	0.40	2.14	0.60	2.11	0.58	1.800	1	0.183[ns]
Functionality	1.47	0.51	1.92	0.56	1.84	0.58	9.858	1	0.002*
Durability	1	0	1.25	0.44	1.20	0.40	6.210	1	0.014*
Ease of Use	1.63	0.76	1.56	0.50	1.57	0.55	0.261	1	0.611[ns]

Notes*: M: Mean, S: Std. Deviation, df: Degree of freedom, *: P < .05 level is significant, ns: Not significant.*
a: Variable averages ranked from 1 to 5 (1: Very important, 5: Not important). Higher values are negative answers.

When the average values given in Table 1 are considered, it is found that there is a statistically significant difference between the evaluations of the participants regarding the "quality of workmanship", "material quality", "functionality" and "durability" which are taken into consideration when buying furniture according to their gender. The graphical expression of these differences is given in Figure 1.



***Note**: Higher variable means show more negative responses.*

***Figure 1.** Considerations of the participants when buying furniture according to their gender*

In general, Figure 1 shows that when purchasing children's room furniture, participants give an importance to quality of workmanship, material quality, flexibility / changeability, functionality, durability and ease of use. This result shows that participants consider the hypothesis (*H1*) when buying child furniture. In addition, it is seen that male give more importance to "workmanship quality", "material quality", "flexibility / changeability", "functionality" and "durability" of the furniture when buying children's room furniture compared to female. On the other hand, it is seen that female give more importance to the fashionability of furniture than male. However, there was no statistically significant difference between "price availability", "fashionable", "flexibility / changeability" and "ease of use" with gender at $p < 0.05$.

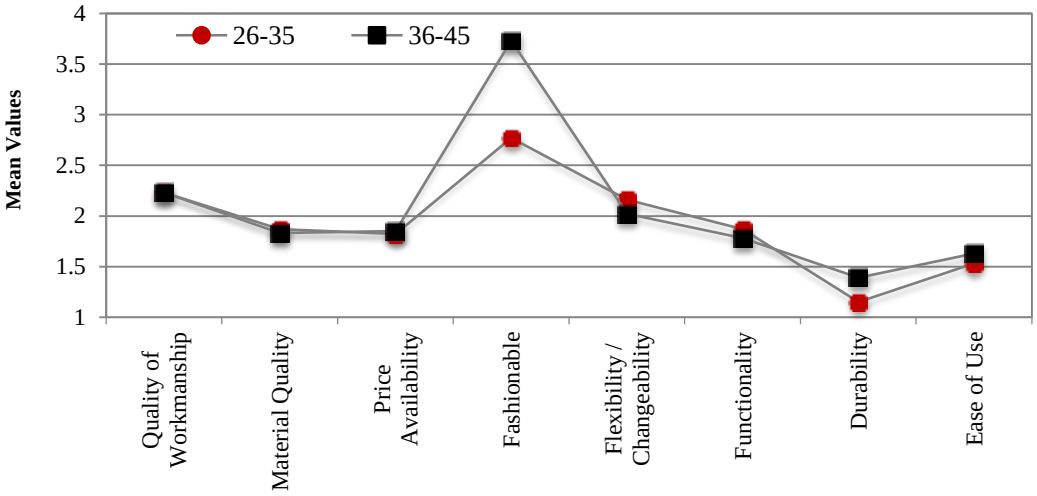
Table 2 shows the categorical averages and standard deviation values and ANOVA test results of the data that the participants take into consideration when buying children's room furniture according to their age.

***Table 2.** Preference of children's room furniture according to age of the participants*

Preference of Children's Room Furniture	**Age**						**ANOVA Results**		
	26-35 Age		**36-45 Age**		**Total**				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	df	Sig.
Quality of Workmanship	2.23[a]	0.76	2.23	0.69	2.22	0.73	0.002	1	0.966[ns]
Material Quality	1.87	0.56	1.83	0.63	1.85	0.58	0.125	1	0.725[ns]
Price Availability	1.82	0.98	1.85	0.85	1.84	0.93	0.027	1	0.869[ns]
Fashionable	2.77	1.25	3.73	0.98	3.16	1.23	17.198	1	0.000*
Flexibility / Changeability	2.16	0.61	2.02	0.52	2.12	0.58	1.400	1	0.239[ns]
Functionality	1.87	0.59	1.78	0.57	1.84	0.58	0.600	1	0.440[ns]
Durability	1.15	0.36	1.29	0.46	1.20	0.40	3.352	1	0.070**
Ease of Use	1.53	0.50	1.63	0.62	1.57	0.55	0.836	1	0.363[ns]

***Notes**: M: Mean, S: Std. Deviation, df: Degree of freedom, *: P < .05 level is significant, ns: Not significant.*
a: Variable averages ranked from 1 to 5 (1: Very important, 5: Not important). Higher values are negative answers.

When the average values given in Table 2 are considered, it is found that there are statistically significant differences in the levels of "fashionability" and "durability" that the participants take into consideration when buying furniture according to their age. The graphical expression of these differences is given in Figure 2.



***Note**: Higher variable means show more negative responses.*

Figure 2. Considerations of participants when buying furniture according to their age

According to Figure 2, it is seen that the participants between the ages of 26-35 give more importance to "fashionability" and "durability" features when buying baby / child room furniture compared to the age range of 36-45.

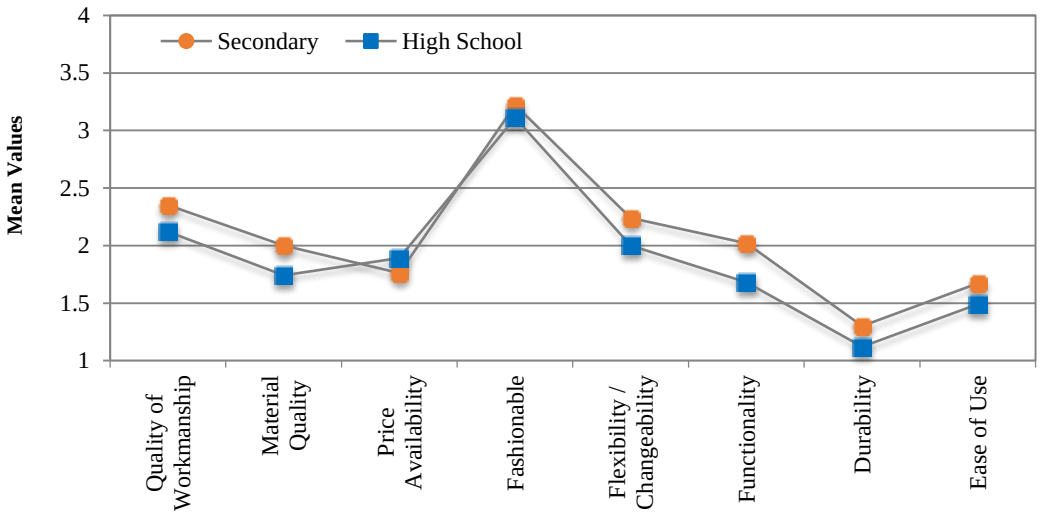
Table 3 shows the categorical averages, standard deviation values and ANOVA test results of the data that the participants take into consideration when buying baby / child room furniture according to their educational level.

***Table 3.** Preference of children's room furniture according to educational level of the participants*

Preference of Children's Room Furniture	**Educational Level**						**ANOVA Results**		
	Secondary		**High School**		**Total**				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	df	Sig.
Quality of Workmanship	2.35[a]	0.77	2.12	0.68	2.22	0.73	2.476	1	0.119[ns]
Material Quality	2	0.60	1.74	0.55	1.85	0.58	5.387	1	0.022*
Price Availability	1.76	0.79	1.89	1.03	1.84	0.93	0.525	1	0.470[ns]
Fashionable	3.22	1.32	3.11	1.18	3.16	1.23	0.208	1	0.649[ns]
Flexibility / Changeability	2.24	0.67	2	0.46	2.11	0.58	4.542	1	0.035*
Functionality	2.02	0.54	1.68	0.57	1.84	0.58	9.360	1	0.003*
Durability	1.30	0.47	1.12	0.33	1.20	0.40	5.336	1	0.023*
Ease of Use	1.67	0.60	1.49	0.50	1.57	0.55	2.827	1	0.096**

***Notes**: M: Mean, S: Std. Deviation, df: Degree of freedom, *: P < .05 level is significant, ns: Not significant.*
a: Variable averages ranked from 1 to 5 (1: Very important, 5: Not important). Higher values are negative answers.

When the average values given in Table 3 are considered, it is seen that the participants considered the "material quality", "flexibility / changeability", "functionality", "durability" and "ease of use" that they considered when buying furniture according to their educational level p <0.05 / p <0,10 levels were found to be statistically significant differences. The graphical representation of these differences is given in Figure 3.



***Note**: Higher variable means show more negative responses.*

***Figure 3**. Considerations of participants when buying furniture according to their educational level*

According to Figure 3, participants who graduated from university gave more importance to ”workmanship quality”, “material quality”, “fashionable”, “flexibility / changeability”, “functionality”, “durability” and “ease of use” than the participants who graduated from high school. However, an opposite result has emerged for price availability.

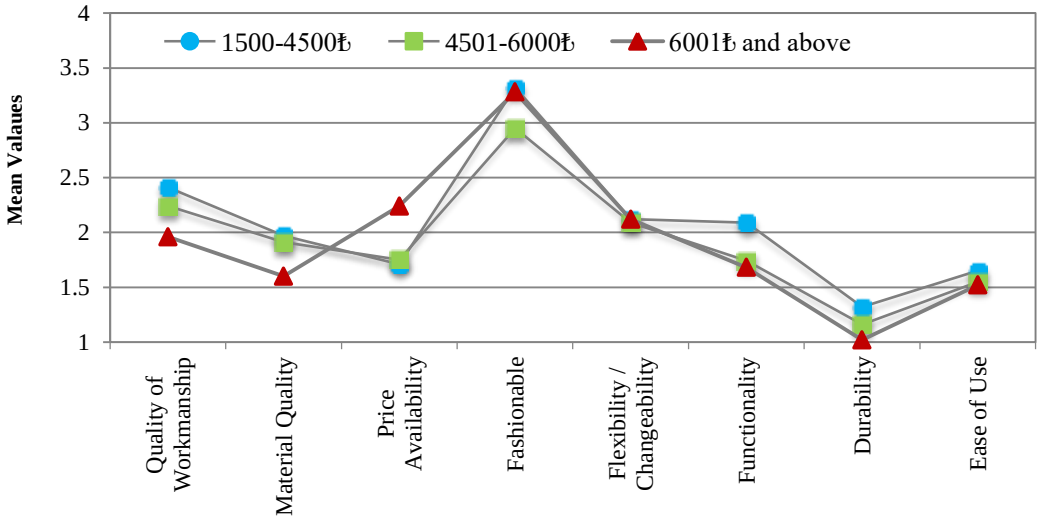
Table 4 shows the categorical averages, standard deviation values and ANOVA test results of the data that the participants take into consideration when buying children's room furniture according to their income level.

***Table 4.** Preference of children's room furniture according to income level of the participants*

Preference of Children's Room Furniture	**Income Level**						**ANOVA Results**		
	1500-4500 ₺		**4501-6000 ₺**		**6001 ₺ and above**				
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	df	Sig.
Quality of Workmanship	2,41[a]	0,66	2,24	0,71	1,96	0,79	2,888	2	0,060**
Material Quality	1,97	0,46	1,91	0,56	1,6	0,71	3,387	2	0,038*
Price Availability	1,71	0,76	1,75	0,79	2,24	1,23	3,272	2	0,042*
Fashionable	3,32	1,15	2,95	1,24	3,28	1,34	1,025	2	0,363[ns]
Flexibility / Changeability	2,12	0,59	2,09	0,60	2,12	0,53	0,029	2	0,972[ns]
Functionality	2,09	0,57	1,74	0,49	1,68	0,63	5,326	2	0,006*
Durability	1,32	0,47	1,16	0,370	1,12	0,33	2,351	2	0,100**
Ease of Use	1,65	0,49	1,55	0,503	1,52	0,71	0,469	2	0,627[ns]

***Notes**: M: Mean, S: Std. Deviation, df: Degree of freedom, *: P < .05 level is significant, ns: Not significant.*
a: Variable averages ranked from 1 to 5 (1: Very important, 5: Not important). Higher values are negative answers.

When the average values given in Table 4 are taken into consideration, it is seen that there is a strong relationship between “workmanship quality”, “material quality”, “price suitability”, “functionality” and “durability” with income level. There was a statistically significant difference between $p < 0.05$ / $p < 0.10$ levels. However, no statistically significant difference was found between “fashionable” and “flexibility / changeability” with income level at $p < 0.05$ level. The graphical representation of these differences is given in Figure 4.



***Note**: Higher variable means show more negative responses.*

***Figure 4.** Considerations of participants when buying furniture according to their income level*

According to Figure 4, when purchasing children's furniture, participants with income 6000₺ and more pay more attention to "workmanship quality", "material quality", "functionality" and "durability" characteristics when purchasing baby / child room furniture compared to participants with income of 1500-4500₺. On the other hand, it is seen that participants with income between 1500-4500₺ and 4501-6000₺ pay less attention to the "price suitability" feature compared to participants with income of 6000₺ and above.

Finally, Table 5 shows the categorical mean and standard deviation values and ANOVA test results of the data that the participants want to have in the children's room furniture in terms of flexibility and changeability.

***Table 5.** Features of children's room furniture in terms of flexibility and changeability*

Flexibility and Changeability Features	**Bed**		**Commode**		**Dresser**		**Wardrobe**		**Diaper Changer Unit**	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Extensibility	86	83.5	8	24.2	77	86.5	40	76.9	6	33.3
Summability	63	61.2	18	54.5	41	46.1	30	57.7	14	77.8
Changeability	22	21.4	17	51.5	10	11.2	27	51.9	8	44.4
Functionality	54	52.4	16	48.5	49	55.1	35	67.3	5	27.8
Storability	96	93.2	29	87.9	84	94.4	49	94.2	13	72.2
Partitionability	45	43.7	23	69.7	81	91.0	37	71.2	11	61.1

n: Number of frequencies, %: Percentage values

Table 5 shows the characteristics that the participants want in the children's room furniture in terms of flexibility and changeability. Accordingly, extensibility in the bed, storage in the commode, storage in the dresser and partitionability, storage in the wardrobe and summability in the changing unit are prominent. These results show that the "Participants will require extensibility, storability, partitionability and summability in children's room furniture." (*H2*) hypothesis is generally supported.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the points that participants take into consideration when purchasing children's room furniture such as workmanship quality, material quality, flexibility/changeability, functionality, durability and ease of use have been determined and the results obtained are given in a systematic order below.

It was found that the participants gave importance to the quality of workmanship, material quality, flexibility / changeability, functionality, durability and ease of use while purchasing children's room furniture. This result was previously reported by Yıldırım et al. [17] as indicated in the study by the interior equipment elements of workmanship and material quality, size and storage capacity that supports the conclusion that shows the importance.

Another result shows that men give more importance to “workmanship quality”, “material quality”, “flexibility / changeability”, “functionality” and “durability when buying children's room furniture compared to women. Women, on the other hand, give more importance to the “fashionability” of furniture than men. In addition, it is noteworthy that the participants in the 26-35 age range declare that they attach more importance to the “fashionability” feature when purchasing children's room furniture compared to the 36-45 age range.

Another result is that the university graduate participants give more importance to ”workmanship quality”, “material quality”, “flexibility / changeability”, “functionality”, “durability” and “ease of use” when purchasing children's room furniture compared to high school graduates. This result shows that the quality expectation in furniture also increases due to the increase in education level.

Another result is that participants with income of 6000₺ and above pay more attention to “workmanship quality“, “material quality”, “functionality” and “durability ken characteristics when purchasing children's room furniture compared to participants with 1500-4500₺ income. On the other hand, it is seen that participants with income between 1500-4500₺ and 4501-6000₺ pay less attention to the “price suitability” feature compared to participants with income of 6000₺ and above. This result supports the conclusion that the increase in the income level leads to a decrease in the importance of the price as stated in the study conducted by Akyüz [18].

Finally, it is seen that the participants want to have extensibility in the bed, storage in the commode, storage in the dresser and partitionability, storage in the wardrobe and summability in the changing unit in terms of flexibility and changeability. If these results are taken into consideration in the design of children's room furniture, the satisfaction levels of the users will increase.

These results show that parents take into consideration when buying and replacing children's room furniture according to their demographic characteristics. Based on these results, designers and furniture firms can determine design characteristics that are appropriate to users' preferences, develop marketing strategies and prepare new presentation concepts.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest was declared by the authors

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