

## **A consumer market research on Cypriot furniture and woodworking manufacture**

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### **RESEARCH PAPER**

#### **Purpose**

The aim of the present work is the benefit of condensed information to furniture enterprises with regard the furniture production of the Cypriot market in a particularly competitive market, through the analysis of attitudes of Cypriote consumers. Furthermore, we seek to provide a mapping out of new policies by the political leadership as well as the institutions that promote research and competitiveness and support the Cypriot timber and furniture sector in confronting the various problems of a traditional and important manufacturing sector of Cyprus with essential contribution in the National Economy and employment and with a rather dynamic developmental course during the last 30 years. An important objective of our research is to help all businessmen and furniture enterprise executives and Cypriot timber product constructors be informed on the developments of the market in order to make the proper decisions on their future. Besides, architects, civil engineers and developers will be able to realize the preferences of Cypriote consumers and be informed on the application of new materials in furniture and woodworking manufacturing. The goal is the bigger possible satisfaction of needs and wishes of Cypriote consumers regarding furniture and woodworking manufacturing.

#### **Methodology/ approach**

For the aims and purposes of the present research a specifically structured questionnaire was prepared and completed, with personal interview of consumers. The research was realised between June and July 2007 in Nicosia, within the frames of the Cypriot Furniture Exhibition. The sample definition has been decided through accidental sampling of 576 consumers, for a level of precision 95 % (Zaharopoulou 1993, Tsaklagkanos 2000).

Each questionnaire included three (3) groups of questions mainly of closed type (an overall of 92 variables) dealing generally with a) the reasons that Cypriote consumers visit and buy Cypriot furniture, b) the opinion of Cypriote consumers on the Cypriot market, g) the advantages of both Cypriot and imported furniture, d) the sections that the Cypriot furniture sector should invest in, in order to become more competitive, e) the role of advertisement for the Cypriot furniture and f) the contribution of Cypriote consumers in the growth of the Cypriot furniture sector.

In total, five hundred fourteen (514) questionnaires were completed by permanent residents of all Cyprus, i.e. a 89.2% percentage of the initially selected sample. The data were then analyzed, applying the scientific rules of statistics. The technics we used were Frequencies, Descriptive Statistics, Crosstabs and Correlations. (Anderson et al. 1996, Norusis 1997, Pashaloudis and Zafeiropoulos 2002, Howitt and Gramer 2003, Papadopoulos et al. 2005).

### **Findings - Practical Implications**

Cypriote consumers entrusted the Cypriot furniture and woodworking manufacture a lot in the past. The most important reason for buying Cypriot furniture or woodworking manufacture in the past is the information derived from satisfied relatives, friends or their acquaintances. Today, the big majority of consumers has a positive to very positive opinion for furniture made in Cyprus.

Design, quality and the finishing appear to be the powerful advantages of the imported furniture and woodworking manufacture, while the quality of Cypriot furniture, the relatively accessible prices and the prompt service are selected as the strong positives of domestic production.

The medium sum that a Cypriote consumer would spend when deciding to buy furniture or other woodworking manufacture amounts in 6.500 €

The four main causes that made Cypriote consumers interrupt their relationship with certain Cypriot furniture and woodworking manufacture enterprises in the past are found to be the bad service, high prices, late delivery (big lead time) and the errors at the order.

In any case, the big majority of Cypriote consumers considers that the woodworking manufacturing sector is a healthy one that generally contributes positively in the growth of Cypriot economy. Furthermore, they also show a particular, personal interest for the survival and growth of the Cypriot woodworking manufacturing sector in the intensely competitive market of today, which is submerged with imported furniture products and they will continue to support the Cypriot products.

### **Research limitations /implications**

There are no particular limitations. The present research could be repeated after 3-4 years, in order to locate any possible changes in the market research of Cypriot furniture and woodworking manufactures. The extension of this research to other Mediterranean countries (Greece, Egypt, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal) would be particularly interesting, in order to benchmark the consumer tendencies and attitudes regarding furniture, produced in the Euro –Mediterranean region.

### **Originality**

This study is the first one concerning consumer behaviour in the branch of furniture in Cyprus.

### **Keywords**

Market Research, Consumer Behavior, Marketing, Furniture Firms, Cyprus