

Consumers' Preference on Imported and Locally Made Furniture in Dar es Salaam and Arusha, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study was designed to assess the consumer's preference between imported and locally made furniture in Dar es Salaam and Arusha in Tanzania. Primary and secondary data for the study were collected from furniture consumers in the study area. A total of 134 consumers were surveyed. Questionnaires and documentary reviews were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression were used in the analysis of data. The result of the study revealed significant differences on the levels of consumers' preference for furniture products. Imported furniture seems to be far preferred by consumers. It was observed that the major differences in consumers' preference for furniture were due to quality and design. This study provides valuable implications for local small-scale manufacturers if they want to compete in the globalized market. It is, therefore, recommended that local furniture manufacturers should acquire adequate skills, technology and innovation in order to produce competitive products.

Keywords

Consumers' preference, imported furniture, locally made furniture

Introduction

The world production of furniture in 2017 was estimated to be worth US\$420 billion, while annual trade in furniture surpassed US\$130 billion (CSIL, 2017). Tanzania has experienced an influx of consumer goods, including furniture, from outside the country due to trade liberalization despite the fact that imported furniture is similar to those produced locally by small-scale industries (TICR, 2012). The import of furniture from abroad is an indication of globalization that allows participation of Tanzania

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in the world market; however this global competition is intensifying, foreign firms are expanding into new international markets and home markets no longer appeal as an opportunity (Adam, 2011). Local companies that never thought about foreign competitors suddenly found this competition in their own backyard (Kotler & Armstrong, 2005).

Inability to compete is a hindering factor to the development and sustainability of small-scale furniture enterprises (TICR, 2012). Studies by Aubert and Wanga (2007) have revealed that the furniture subsector is underperforming, and there is a lack of significant changes in the quality of products, production processes, work organization and marketing of products. As a result, there is low productivity in the sector, and it fails to respond positively to intense competition in the market. Kotler and Armstrong (2005) noted that firms that are slow to adjust to market changes are likely to lose their chances to enter into other markets and lose their market share in the local markets. Changing consumer preferences and liberalization of the economy are exposing furniture consumers to new products, especially from China and Malaysia (Kizito, 2009). The only way of survival for the majority of small-scale furniture manufacturers is to produce products that meet consumer needs.

Many studies conducted in Tanzania on furniture industries focused on challenges of upgrading furniture clusters (Murphy, 2007), knowledge, technology and cluster-based growth (Musonda, Adeya, & Abiola, 2008) and growth of small furniture firms (Isaga, 2012; Mhede, 2012). Specific factors affecting consumers' preference have not been well studied. Thus, there is knowledge gap on this matter. This study analysed the factors affecting consumers' preference for imported and locally made furniture in Dar es Salaam and Arusha, Tanzania.

In addressing the factors affecting consumers' preference on imported and locally made furniture, this article is organized into seven sections; the first section presents the background information and the status of the research topic; the review of literature which provides the theoretical and empirical underpinning is presented in the second section. The third section presents objectives which show the aim as well as the importance of the study. The fourth section describes the methodology used in the study whereas, the fifth section presents the analysis and discussion. Conclusions, managerial implications and recommendations are presented in the sixth section, and finally the seventh section contains the acknowledgement.

Review of Literature

Furniture is one of the household durable goods which has a long repeat purchase (Stone & Rowe, 1960), perhaps once in every 4 years or so, for some families (Roy, 2002). As most of household durable goods are purchased for family use, family members may make a joint decision (Wilkie et al., 1992). However, it is not always the case for the family involved in joint decision to have similar purchase motive, choice criteria, information, or product preference. Psychologist Carl Jung (1967) noted that self-archetype can be displayed through self-expression in built form. Furniture provides a better chance to project self-image with more options and better affordability (Yoon & Cho, 2009).

Several factors may influence consumers' preference on products. Consumers may have preferences on items depending on the weight they give to it. Some scholars noted that consumers assign different values to products based on the tangible differentiating attributes that influence their utility for the products (Anderson & Narus, 2003; Smith & Nagle, 2002). For example, for certain products the presence of certain additional features provides a large price-to-cost differential. Research also indicated that consumers value imported products especially for their assumed high quality and prestigious image

(refer to Nguyen & Walker, 2005; Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003). If a product is perceived as internationally accessible, consumers are likely to attribute a superior quality to such a product, since such quality is thought of as a precondition for international acceptance.

Customers' preference between local and imported products could also be determined by price and pricing methodology. Consumers' preferences on products may be attached to their perception on price (Mazumdar, Raj, & Sinha, 2005) and price satisfaction and fairness (Xia & Monroe, 2004). If consumers perceive that prices of certain products are unfair they may opt for other products. Researchers found out that once consumers perceive a price difference between local and imported products, these price dissimilarities begin to affect their preference for local products (Ismail, Masood, & Tawab, 2012).

Customers' demographic characteristics such as age, sex, race, income, marital status, education and geographical location influence preference for various product categories (Mayala, Katundu, & Msuya, 2017; Xia & Monroe, 2004). Cross and Dixit (2005) found that as different segments of customers have different needs and benefit perceptions, they also differ in how sensitive they are to products' brand, quality and design. Consumers with a high need for differentiation tend to adopt new products or brands more quickly than those with a low need for differentiation (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005; Kashi, 2013; Zimmer, Little, & Griffiths, 1999). Researchers have stressed that consumers may prefer imported products because of associations with higher prestige (Schuiling & Kapferer, 2004) which may be determined by other factors such as the level of education, age, income level and culture.

Objectives

Furniture industry is among the important sectors in the economy of Tanzania; however, the sector has not been fully exploited to the extent that it gives full potential to the economy. In this view, this study aims to analyse the factors affecting consumers' preference for imported and locally made furniture in Tanzania. In doing so, this study will help to inform policymakers and furniture manufacturers on how to promote and accelerate quality and performance of small-scale furniture industries in Tanzania who will thus be able to compete effectively in the globalized market.

Theoretical Framework

This study situates itself in the domain of the consumer utility theory which tries to provide for alternative choices made by individuals. Aleskerov and Monjardet (2002) define utility as the satisfaction that each choice provides to the decision-maker, who in this respect is the furniture consumer. The theory states that the consumers maximize their utility as a function of consuming different goods, given relative prices, income and preference. Towo (2012) noted that the utility theory assumes that any decision is made on the basis of the utility maximization principle, in which the best choice is the one that provides the highest utility.

Regardless of the type of utility function, the utility theory assumes that preferences are complete, reflexive and transitive (Belton & Stewart, 2002). The preferences are complete if for any pair of choices x and y , one and only one of the following conditions is fulfilled: x is preferred to y , y is preferred to x or x and y are equally preferred. Board (2009) noted that preferences are said to be reflexive if for any pair of choices x and y that are identical, then y is also equally preferred to x . The preferences are said to be transitive if for any three choices x , y and z x is preferred over y and y is preferred over z , then it is concluded that x is preferred over z . The hypotheses on reflexivity and transitivity imply that the furniture consumer is a rational decision-maker.

Furniture consumers are assumed to act rationally, because they will choose between imported and locally made furniture so as to maximize total utility. Hence, consumers have to make choices based on preferences. Consumers are therefore faced with trade-offs in their purchasing and investment decisions, since their choices are numerous. The implication is that the consumer will maximize utility, through preferring either imported or locally made furniture subject to the factors that constrain them. These factors include price, quality, income, occupation, age, education, style and design.

Methodology

The study was carried out in two cities of Tanzania, namely, Dar es Salaam and Arusha. The two case-study cities were purposively chosen because they are among the largest cities in Tanzania and are the major recipient of imported furniture. This study applied a cross-sectional design for the purpose of obtaining detailed data on furniture preference directly from furniture consumers.

The multistage sampling method was used to sample consumers. At the first stage, study wards were selected. Ten (out of 90) wards of Dar es salaam and three (out of 17) wards in Arusha were purposively selected to participate in the study. In each ward, hamlets were randomly selected from the list of wards provided by the ward executive office. Target households within hamlets were systematically selected. Individual respondents within each household were selected purposively, targeting members who had the responsibility of purchasing furniture and had at least purchased locally or imported furniture in the last 5 years. The formula by Fisher, Laing, Stoeckel, and Townsend (1991) was used to determine the sample size. The sample size of respondents was 134. Out of the 134 consumers, 87 were from Dar es Salaam and 43 from Arusha. For the purpose of this study both primary and secondary data were collected through questionnaires and documentary reviews. It was necessary to use a combination of data in order to complement each other and to obtain sufficient and insightful information for the study.

Analysis

In this study, the logit model was used to estimate determinants of preference. In the model, a decision can take two values, furniture preference = binary: $Y = (p = 1)$ if a consumer prefers to buy locally made furniture and $Y = (p = 0)$ if a consumer prefers not to buy local furniture.

The logit model is as follows:

$$\ln \left[\frac{p_i}{1 - p_i} \right] = L_i = \beta_0 + \beta_i' \chi_i$$

From the above general model, the following specific model was used for the study:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots$$

Table 1. Explanatory Variables and the Hypotheses Included in Regression Analysis

| Variables | Definition of Variable | Unit | Hypotheses |
|----------------|---|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Age | Age of the consumer | Number of years | Positive (+) |
| Sex | Sex of the consumer | Male 1 and female 0 | Positive (+) |
| Education | Years of schooling of the consumer | Number of years of Schooling | Positive (+) |
| Household size | Total number of members in the household | Number of people in household | Positive (+) |
| Occupation | Employment status of the respondent | 1 if yes and 0 otherwise | Positive (+) |
| Income | Amount of money earned in a year | TZS | Negative (-) |
| Quality | 1 if the quality is good and 0 otherwise | Index | Negative (-) |
| Design | 1 if the design is superior and 0 otherwise | Index | Negative (-) |
| Location | Distance in kilometres to the buying point | Number of kilometres | Positive (+) |
| Price | Amount of money charged in TZS | Amount of money in TZS | Positive (+) |

Source: Authors' own construction.

where

X is a vector of independent variables

β is a vector of their respective coefficients.

Y is a dependent variable (dummy: 1 if a consumer prefers locally made furniture and 0 otherwise)

The paired t -test was employed in order to examine if there is a significant difference in preference for local and imported furniture among consumers in Dar es Salaam and Arusha.

Findings and Discussion

Local and Imported Furniture Preference

Statistics show that 58.2 per cent preferred to buy imported furniture, whereas, 41.8 per cent preferred locally made furniture (Table 2). This implies that imported furniture was more preferred to locally made furniture. Further, when tested using chi-square, results showed that there was a difference in furniture preference between locally made and imported furniture ($\chi^2 = 3.61$). The reasons might be that foreign products were much more in the minds of customers compared to locally made products. This may be associated with the design appearance, quality as well as wider choice. This is in line with findings of a study conducted by Domie (2013) who observed that the majority of consumers prefer foreign brands.

Table 2. Local and Imported Furniture Preference

| Type of Furniture | Frequency | Percentage | Chi-square |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Imported furniture | 78 | 58.2 | 3.61 |
| Locally made furniture | 56 | 41.8 | — |
| Total | 134 | 100 | — |

Source: Authors' own findings and calculations.

Note: $p < 0.05$.

Table 3. Consumers' Preference Across the Cities

| Preference | Dar es Salaam | | Arusha | |
|------------------------|---------------|----|-----------|----|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| Imported furniture | 53 | 61 | 25 | 53 |
| Locally made furniture | 34 | 39 | 22 | 47 |
| Total | 87 | | 47 | |

Source: Authors' own findings and calculations.

With regard to the location, a comparative analysis was done between the two cities of the study area. Results as shown in Table 3 indicate that 61 per cent and 53 per cent preferred to buy imported furniture in Dar es Salaam and Arusha, respectively. Correspondingly, 39 per cent and 47 per cent preferred to buy locally made furniture. Results suggest that the preference of imported furniture across cities is high, Dar es Salaam being the leading city. This implies that the frequency of buying furniture products from abroad is higher in Dar es Salaam as compared to Arusha, which may be associated with style consciousness, appearance and prestige.

This is in line with the findings of a study done by Khattak and Shah (2011) who found that consumers in big cities consider imported products as those of high value, and they feel pride when consuming those products.

Factors Affecting Consumers' Preference

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients produced a Chi-square of 126.633; a p -value of 0.000 for locally made and 50.478; Sig. = 0.000 for imported furniture. Furthermore, the Hosmer and Lemeshow test with chi-square equals to 5.402, significant at 0.714, for locally made furniture, and 3.587, significant at 0.802, for imported furniture, was established. Two measures together indicated that the models of the consumers' preference were more suitable to data. Results also indicated that a $-2\log$ likelihood of 55.502, a Cox & Snell R^2 of 0.611 and a Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.823 indicated a strong relationship between prediction and grouping for locally made furniture (Table 4). Again, data indicated that a $-2\log$ likelihood of 257.888, a Cox and Snell R^2 of 0.556 and a Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.831 showed a strong relationship between prediction and grouping for imported furniture (Table 4).

Generally, the results indicated that seven variables (education, price, design, quality, age, income and household size) have significant influence on consumers' preference for locally made and imported furniture. The models were predicted at 82% for locally made and 83% for imported furniture in response to furniture preference. The details of the findings are discussed in the following subsections.

Influence of Education on Furniture Preference

The Wald criterion demonstrated that education which was tested at $p < 0.05$ is a significant contributor in determining furniture preferences. Results were statistically significant at Wald = 2.001, Exp (B) = 0.196 and $B = -8.832$ ($p < 0.047$) for locally made and Wald = 16.781, Exp (B) = 1.279 and $B = 0.246$ ($p < 0.001$) for imported furniture. The negative sign ($B = -8.832$) indicates that locally made furniture preference was best predicted with consumers whose education levels were lower than those with higher levels of

Table 4. Determinants of Consumers' Preferences

| Variable | For Locally Made Furniture | | | | | For Imported Furniture | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--------|--------|----|-------|------------------------|--------|-------|--------|----|-------|---------|
| | B | SE | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp (B) | B | SE | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp (B) |
| Education | -8.832 | 6.243 | 2.001 | 1 | 0.057 | 0.196 | 0.246 | 0.157 | 16.781 | 1 | 0.001 | 1.279 |
| Residential location | 1.365 | 1.176 | 1.349 | 1 | 0.245 | 3.918 | 0.558 | 0.343 | 9.562 | 1 | 0.012 | 1.823 |
| Price | -5.125 | 1.196 | 18.356 | 1 | 0.000 | 0.006 | 0.601 | 0.319 | 5.321 | 1 | 0.013 | 1.824 |
| Design | -4.725 | 1.118 | 17.875 | 1 | 0.000 | 0.069 | 0.247 | 0.190 | 4.776 | 1 | 0.016 | 1.280 |
| Quality | -1.630 | 0.418 | 15.213 | 1 | 0.000 | 0.196 | 0.211 | 0.002 | 6.582 | 1 | 0.012 | 1.235 |
| Age | -1.761 | 0.356 | 4.579 | 1 | 0.032 | 0.032 | 0.458 | 0.259 | 11.234 | 1 | 0.002 | 1.580 |
| Occupation | 0.091 | 0.085 | 1.169 | 1 | 0.280 | 1.096 | 0.389 | 0.283 | 6.287 | 1 | 0.011 | 1.475 |
| Annual income | 0.345 | 0.085 | 16.652 | 1 | 0.000 | 1.412 | 3.310 | 1.027 | 10.394 | 1 | 0.001 | 27.394 |
| Household size | 0.986 | 0.278 | 12.541 | 1 | 0.000 | 0.373 | -1.761 | 0.356 | 4.579 | 1 | 0.032 | 0.467 |
| Constant | 66.151 | 14.252 | 21.543 | 1 | 0.000 | 5375 + 28 | -16.42 | 1.193 | 22.085 | 1 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

• Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients (chi-square = 126.633 and Sig. = 0.000)

• Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients (chi-square = 50.478 and Sig. = 0.000)

• Log likelihood = 55.502; Cox & Snell R² = .611 and Nagelkerke R² = 0.823

• Hosmer and Lemeshow test (chi-square = 5.402 and Sig. = 0.714);

• Dependent variable : furniture preference = binary: Y = 1 if a consumer prefers to buy locally made furniture and Y = 0 if a consumer prefers not to buy local furniture

• Log likelihood = 257.888; Cox & Snell R² = 0.831

• 0.556 and Nagelkerke R² = 0.831

• Hosmer and Lemeshow test (chi-square = 3.587 and Sig. = 0.802)

• Dependent variable : furniture preference = binary: Y = 1 if a consumer prefers to buy imported furniture and Y = 0 if a consumer prefers not to buy imported furniture

Source: Authors' own findings and calculations.

education. On the other hand, an increase in the level of education increases the chances of consumers preferring imported furniture. This is because of them having higher chances to for job opportunities and thus opting for fashionable imported furniture. Similarly, Domie (2013) found that highly educated consumers showed high preference for modern design and paid much attention to finished details. On the contrary, Birch, Barrett, and Wiedmann (2004) indicated that socio-demographic factors were weakly linked to explaining consumer preferences while product characteristics were much more important in preference considerations.

Influence of Price on Furniture Preference

It was found that the price of furniture impacted the preference. Results were statistically significant at Wald criterion of 18.356 and 5.321, $\text{Exp}(B) = 0.006$ and 1.824 and $B = -5.125$ ($p < 0.000$) and 0.601 ($p < 0.013$) for locally made and imported furniture, respectively. Results showed that with decrease in price, consumers' preference to locally made furniture was 0.006 times more, which means that consumers' preference with imported furniture increased with increase in price. This might be due to the fact that the individual's satisfaction is related to the amount of income earned. This is supported by findings of a study conducted by Kizito (2009) who observed that consumer satisfaction decreased with increase in price, especially among less educated people who earned lower income. Thus, it can be said that furniture consumers' decisions on which type to buy are subjected to the available income and prices of the furniture.

Influence of Design on Furniture Preference

Furniture design was another factor with a significant contribution in determining consumer preference, which was tested at $p < 0.05$. The results were statistically significant at Wald of 17.875, $\text{Exp}(B)$ of 0.069 and $B = -4.725$ ($p < 0.000$) for locally made furniture and Wald of 4.776, $\text{Exp}(B)$ of 1.280 and $B = 0.247$ ($p < 0.016$) for imported furniture. The negative value ($B = -4.725$) indicates that locally made furniture were best preferred with traditional and casual design. This is to say that consumers who are sensitive to modern style prefer more imported furniture. The possible explanation for this is that simple/traditional/casual design may be associated with low price which favours most low-income earners. Similarly, Kizito (2009) and Zziwa and Bukenya, Sseremba, and Kyeyune (2006) revealed that 60 per cent of the consumers preferred low-priced furniture design.

Influence of Quality on Furniture Preference

The Wald criterion demonstrated that furniture quality made a significant contribution in predicting consumer preference. The findings were tested at $p < 0.05$ and produced statistical significant results of Wald = 15.213 and 6.582, $\text{Exp}(B) = 0.196$ and 1.235 and $B = -1.630$ ($p < 0.000$) and 0.211 ($p < 0.012$) for locally made and imported furniture, respectively. The negative sign ($B = -1.630$) reveals that consumer satisfaction with quality for locally made furniture was not convinced. This is to say that consumers show high satisfaction with imported furniture in terms of quality. This implies that customers' expectations on furniture items are associated with the finishing of such items. These results confirm the relationship between the perception of consumers on the quality of the product and their willingness to

pay low or high prices for such a product. Therefore, a rational decision-making consumer will choose furniture that maximizes the utility.

Influence of Income on Furniture Preference

It was also important to establish how income predicts furniture preference at $p < 0.05$. Results indicated that income was a strong predictor of furniture preference. Results were statistically significant with Wald criterion of 16.652, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.412$ and $B = 0.345$ ($p < 0.000$) for locally made and Wald criterion of 10.394, $\text{Exp}(B) = 27.394$ and $B = 3.310$ ($p < 0.001$) for imported furniture. The findings reveal that, as income increased, consumers' preference increased by 1.412 and 27.394 times for locally made and imported furniture, respectively. This implies that those who had high income were more likely to prefer imported furniture compared to those who had low income. This might be due to the fact that higher income earners have more style preference and would rather buy items with high price. This supports findings of a study done by Kassali, Kareem, Oluwasola, and Ohaegbulam (2012) who noted that income of the household head significantly influences consumers' preference. Similarly, these findings corroborate findings established by Arowosoge, Ogunsanwo, and Popoola (2008) that modern furniture is comparatively preferred by individuals with high purchasing power as an indication of their worth, taste and lifestyle.

Influence of Household Size on Furniture Preference

Household size significantly contributes in predicting furniture preference. This finding was tested at $p < 0.05$ and produced results at Wald = 12.541, 4.467, $\text{Exp}(B) = 0.373$, 0.467 and $B = 0.986$ ($p < 0.000$), -1.761 ($p < 0.032$) for locally made and imported furniture, respectively. The negative $\text{Exp}(B)$ value indicates that large family size reduces the likelihood of purchasing imported furniture by 37 per cent. The possible explanation here may be that as the size of the family increases, the costs of maintaining the family also increase; thus, consumers preferred locally made furniture which are relatively cheap compared to the imported furniture. Consumers would like to save some money so that they can provide for their big families. These results support the findings by Abbeam, Armed, and Baidoo (2014) who found that the household size had a positive relationship with consumers' preference.

Influence of Age on Furniture Preference

Another strong predictor of furniture preference was age. This variable was tested at $p < 0.05$ and showed a statistically significant influence at Wald of 4.579, an $\text{Exp}(B)$ value of 0.467 and $B = -1.761$ ($p < 0.032$) for locally made furniture and Wald of 11.234, $\text{Exp}(B)$ of 1.580 and $B = 0.458$ ($p < 0.002$) for imported furniture. The negative coefficient ($B = -1.761$) indicates that furniture preference is to a large extent predicted with younger age. On the other hand, preference on imported furniture increases with increase in age. The reasons may be that respondents with lower age might have insufficient income to purchase high-priced furniture because of few opportunities that enable them to earn adequate income. Additionally, lower aged respondents might have opted for cheap items in order to save their income for future obligations. Similarly, Yoon and Cho (2014) noted that younger consumers are more sensitive to price and rarely pay attention to brand at the point of purchase.

Influence of Residential Location on Furniture Preference

The results indicated that residential location significantly influenced furniture preference on imported furniture but not on locally made furniture. Findings were tested at $p < 0.05$ and produced a statistically significant influence, with a Wald statistic = 9.562, an Exp (B) value = 1.823 and a B value = 0.558 ($p < 0.012$). This shows that locally made furniture being sold close to residential houses does not determine customers' choices; customers would rather prefer imported furniture which is sold somehow far from residential houses. These results support the findings of Rajagopal (2011) who observed that distance covered by the customers to visit the malls significantly influences their preferences.

Influence of Occupation on Furniture Preference

The Wald statistic demonstrated that occupation significantly influenced consumers' preference on imported furniture (Wald = 6.287, Exp [B] = 1.475, B = 0.389 and [$p < 0.011$]) but not on locally made furniture. The possible explanation here may be that occupation shows social class status and thus is likely to influence customers' preference on imported furniture. This is in line with findings of a study conducted by Troian (2011) who indicated that occupation was linked to explaining consumer preferences on furniture.

Influence of Geographical Location on Furniture Preference

Overall preference to the locally made against imported furniture given by both Dar es Salaam and Arusha consumers has been summarized in Table 5. The data show that the locally made furniture in comparison to the imported furniture has a more positive image in the minds of Arusha consumers than Dar es Salaam consumers. The differences between Arusha and Dar es Salaam consumers, with regard to the preference of locally made furniture against imported furniture, were found significant in all the factors studied, except for consumers' occupation. Arusha consumers had given the highest rating to price, whereas Dar es Salaam consumers gave the highest rating to design. Sensitivity to price is probably

Table 5. Furniture Preference by Geographical Location

| Factors | Arusha | | Dar es Salaam | | Difference in Mean Value | T-Value |
|----------------|--------|-------|---------------|-------|--------------------------|---------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Education | 4.12 | 0.718 | 3.40 | 0.639 | 0.72 | 5.33* |
| Household size | 4.32 | 0.471 | 3.60 | 0.699 | 0.72 | 6.10* |
| Price | 4.48 | 0.646 | 4.08 | 0.488 | 0.40 | 3.51* |
| Occupation | 4.44 | 0.577 | 4.20 | 0.699 | 0.24 | 1.84 |
| Design | 4.00 | 0.495 | 4.56 | 0.501 | 0.56 | 5.60* |
| Age | 3.92 | 0.565 | 3.28 | 0.453 | 0.64 | 6.40* |
| Quality | 4.32 | 0.532 | 3.96 | 0.471 | 3.36 | 3.60* |
| Income | 3.84 | 0.618 | 3.56 | 0.577 | 0.28 | 2.30* |

Source: Authors' own findings and calculations.

Note: *significant at 0.05 significance level.

because of the little amount of money they earn. This may be true because locally made furniture has relatively a less price compared to imported furniture. Dar es Salaam consumers, being style conscious, probably are relatively less concerned about durability and price. This is so because style keeps on changing with time.

Conclusions, Managerial Implications and Recommendations

This study identified factors influencing consumers' preference of imported versus locally made furniture. From the findings of this study, significant differences were reported on the level of consumers' preference for furniture products. Imported furniture was more preferred compared to locally made furniture because of design and quality. Findings further indicate that locally made furniture were preferred more by low-income earners because of their cheap price. In this case, it can be concluded that quality and design explain fully why most consumers prefer imported compared to locally made furniture. It is also concluded that most of the low-income earners prefer locally made furniture because of low price. This study provides valuable implications for local small-scale manufactures if they want to compete in the globalized market. It is, therefore, recommended that local furniture manufactures should acquire adequate skills, technology and innovation in order to produce competitive products.

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