

Consumer Purchasing Behavior on Furniture: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

Research on consumer furniture purchasing, longstanding, has recently expanded globally, focusing on diverse factors influencing buying behavior. Although interest in this subject is expanding, there aren't enough thorough and rigorous reviews, which results in a fragmented understanding of how consumers behave when buying furniture. Hence, this study aims to identify which research topics of interest are more evident in consumer purchasing behavior on furniture and provide future researchers with directions to explore other research areas on purchasing furniture. Adopting the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) search methodology, the searched keywords included “consumer*” OR “purchasing*” OR “purchase*” AND “furniture”, extracted from the Wiley Online Library electronic database. The study applied specific inclusion criteria, including publication dates from 2015 to 2025, country, methodology, model/theory, and other dimensions. Through a comprehensive method-based systematic literature review, out of the 61 initial records, two articles published in the consumer behavior purchasing furniture literature were included. Key trends, top publication sources and contributors, and the present body of research regarding furniture-buying consumer behavior are all identified by this study. This review highlights the limited methodological and geographical diversity of existing studies on furniture purchasing behavior. Some relevant research may not have been included, as the analysis was confined to studies meeting the review's specific inclusion criteria. This paper contributes to uncovering the literature on consumer purchasing behavior on furniture to date. This review might act as a basic and instructive guideline for scholars to continue expanding knowledge in the topic with the suggested future research directions.

Keywords: Purchasing, Furniture; Systematic Literature Review; Future Research

Received:
August 1,
2025

Revised:
October 9,
2025
October 30,
2025

Accepted:
November 6,
2025

Online
Published:
November 26,
2025

INTRODUCTION

The consumer purchase decision process represents a purposeful, problem-solving journey shaped by cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to environmental stimuli (Moliner & Tortosa-Edo, 2024). When these factors are disrupted, obstacles may emerge that hinder consumer progression through the decision journey. Sharma et al. (2023) note that consumer decision-making has evolved from predominantly rational to increasingly emotional and experiential. Contemporary consumers seek experiences that engage multiple senses while fulfilling needs at aesthetic, functional, emotional, and cognitive levels.

Understanding consumer purchasing behavior is crucial for comprehending modern market dynamics, particularly in sustainability-oriented sectors like furniture. The global furniture market has undergone significant transformation due to technological advancement, online retail growth, and heightened environmental awareness. Research by Hitka et al. (2024) and Varpa et al. (2024) reveals that consumer choices now incorporate considerations beyond functionality and price to include sustainability values, lifestyle alignment, and product authenticity. This shift reflects the growing importance of sustainable materials and eco-friendly production processes, realigning consumer evaluation criteria with circular economy principles.

Over the past decade, research on furniture purchasing behavior (e.g., Hitka et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2023; Pirc Barčič et al., 2021; Kim & Jin, 2019; Hakala et al., 2015) has gained increasing scholarly attention. Consumers view furniture purchasing (Barbaritano & Savelli, 2021) through complex lenses that encompass usage patterns, cultural and symbolic connotations, and representations of aesthetic taste. In recent decades, ethical consumption has gained significant traction, particularly in Western societies, often intertwined with symbolic meaning, as evidenced by the growing body of research exploring this topic (Carrington et al., 2021).

When selecting furniture and designing living spaces, consumers typically consider multiple factors including economic value, functionality, visual appeal, environmental impact, and ethical considerations (Al-Saud et al., 2024; Varpa et al., 2024; Grabiec et al., 2022). These decisions extend beyond practical considerations to reveal personal taste and facilitate identity expression. In this context, home décor functions as a form of self-expression where the symbolic meaning of objects plays a pivotal role. Consumers often perceive furniture as reflecting their memories, experiences, and personal style.

According to Cuerdo-Vilches et al. (2021), household items influence and reflect social interactions. Consequently, furniture represents not only functional objects but also expressions of homemaking practices, consumption values, and lifestyle preferences. Additionally, furniture purchasing reflects culturally established aesthetic standards, conventions, and expectations beyond individual consumer decisions (Hakala et al., 2015). For instance, Finnish consumers value wood products, particularly prioritizing wood for furniture and interior design applications (Harju & Lähtinen, 2022; Viholainen et al., 2020).

Numerous studies have explored consumer behavior in furniture purchasing, highlighting evolving preferences toward sustainability, digital retail experiences, and ethical consumption. Hakala et al. (2015) and Viholainen et al. (2020) found that European consumers value furniture made from durable, eco-friendly materials such as wood and bamboo, reflecting environmental and aesthetic priorities. Kim and Jin (2019) examined motivations behind

collaborative consumption, emphasizing sustainability and social interaction as key drivers in furniture acquisition. More recent studies, such as Hitka et al. (2024) and Varpa et al. (2024), further established that sustainable design and perceived environmental impact strongly influence purchasing decisions among younger consumers.

Technological transformation has also reshaped furniture purchasing processes. Yu et al. (2024) demonstrated how online platforms and digital advertising influence consumer perceptions and purchase intentions, highlighting the growing importance of virtual experience, entertainment, and interactivity. Similarly, Budianto and Subawa (2022) applied the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to explain how website quality and trust affect online furniture purchases in Bali. Emotional and symbolic dimensions have also gained attention; Barbaritano and Savelli (2021) and Cuerdo-Vilches et al. (2021) noted that furniture increasingly functions as self-expression and identity representation, linking consumption patterns with personal and cultural values.

Despite the growing body of research on consumer decision-making and sustainable purchasing, no comprehensive systematic review has synthesized studies specifically focused on consumer purchasing behavior in the furniture sector. Existing literature reviews tend to address general consumer goods or sustainable consumption but overlook the unique attributes of furniture purchasing, which combines functional utility, emotional attachment, and long-term investment. This study addresses that gap by systematically reviewing and evaluating recent scholarly contributions to identify dominant themes, theoretical foundations, and methodological patterns.

Although several studies from different geographical regions have explored aspects of consumer behavior using various research methods and theoretical frameworks, the existing literature remains fragmented and lacks comprehensive synthesis. While research on consumer purchasing behavior toward furniture exists, no prior systematic review has integrated and critically analyzed these findings within a unified framework. The novelty of this study lies in applying a systematic literature review approach to consolidate dispersed insights, identify dominant research themes, and outline a structured future research agenda. Accordingly, this article aims to fill this gap by presenting a holistic synthesis and providing scholarly direction for future studies.

METHODOLOGY

Database Resources

This review utilized the Wiley Online Library database as its primary source. Wiley Online Library serves as an academic search engine designed to facilitate broad access to scholarly literature across diverse disciplines. The database was selected due to its extensive collection of consumer behavior publications in English and its standing as a major repository of peer-reviewed publications. The literature search employed the search string detailed in Table 1.

This study specifically focused on the International Journal of Consumer Studies (IJCS), recognized globally as a peer-reviewed journal that advances theoretical and empirical understanding of consumer behavior. The IJCS publishes high-quality studies covering diverse aspects of consumer decision-making, sustainable consumption, and market trends, making it an ideal source for extracting reliable and comparable findings. Concentrating on this journal

ensures methodological consistency and enables the synthesis of research meeting international academic standards.

Table 1
The Search String Applied for Review Process

Databases	Keywords used
Wiley Online Library (International Journal of Consumer Studies)	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("consumer"*) AND ("purchasing*" OR "purchase"*) AND ("furniture"*))

Criteria of Eligibility and Exclusion

To maintain a rigorous and systematic selection process, only peer-reviewed journal articles published in the International Journal of Consumer Studies (IJCS) between 2015 and 2025 were included. The inclusion criteria required that each article (i) explicitly examined consumer behavior or decision-making in furniture purchasing contexts, (ii) provided empirical or conceptual insights relevant to consumer motivation, perception, or sustainability, and (iii) was published in English. Studies focusing on general consumer behavior unrelated to furniture products, along with book chapters, conference papers, and review articles, were excluded to ensure consistency and focus on original, high-quality academic research (Table 2).

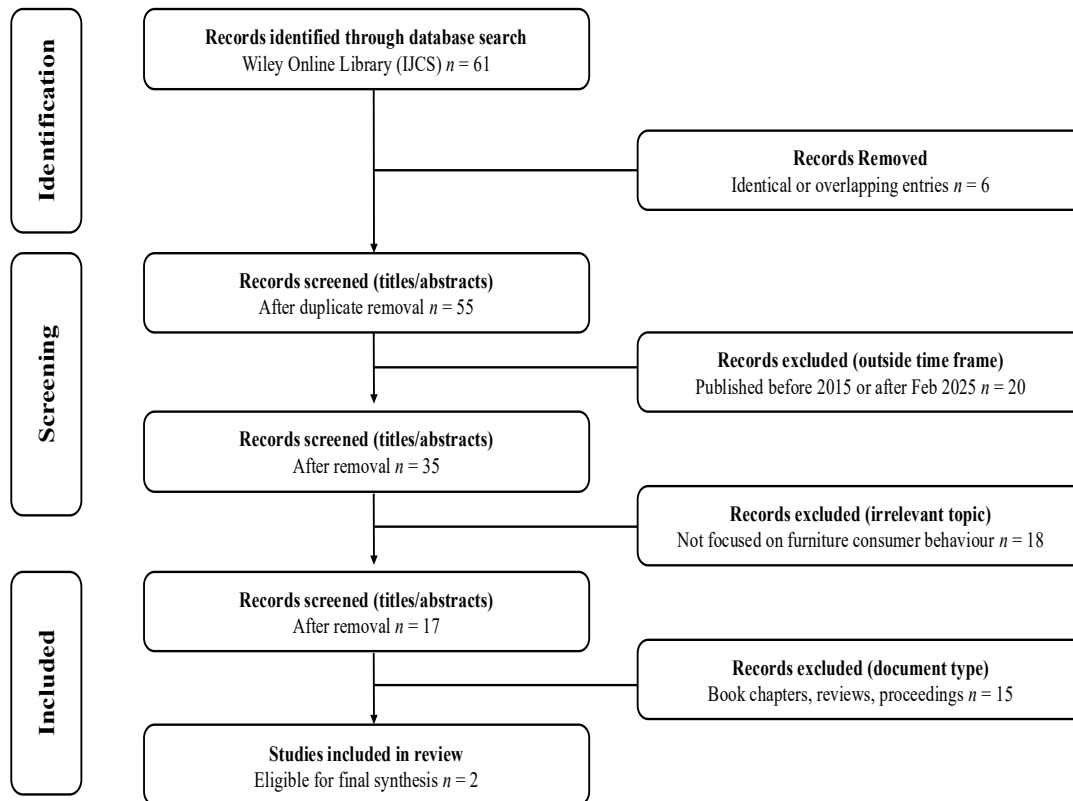
Table 2
Criteria of Eligibility and Exclusion Publication

Criterion	Eligibility	Exclusion
Literature type	Research journal	Book, review paper, thesis, dissertation, abstract only publication
Language	English	Others
Year publication	2015 - 2025	Before 2015 AND after 28 th February 2025

Process of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)

The PRISMA framework guided the systematic review process, providing a structured protocol for data observation, identification, screening, and study inclusion. Each review stage followed the PRISMA flow protocol to ensure methodological rigor and bias reduction (Paul & Criado, 2020; Paul et al., 2021). This study adopted the PRISMA-based search strategy proposed by Abu Seman et al. (2024) as a methodological reference for formulating search terms and database screening. The systematic search of Wiley Online Library using keywords "Consumer" OR "Purchasing" OR "Purchase" OR "Furniture" applied to titles, abstracts, and keywords yielded 61 records. After applying eligibility criteria, 59 records were excluded, leaving two studies for comprehensive analysis (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Flow Diagram of the Search Strategy



Data Analysis: Systematic Literature Review

This study employs a systematic literature review presented in a clear, table-based format to examine the selected research. The table highlights key details for each study, including authors, country of origin, research aims, methodology, study design, target population, and theoretical or conceptual frameworks applied. The final column provides concise analysis of central themes related to each article's focus.

Table 3*Feature of Articles with the Highest Number of Scientific Publications*

Author and year	Origin	Purpose	Type	Design	Target population	Theoretical/conceptual framework	Key themes
Hakala et al. (2015)	Finland and German	To study on the procurement of furniture amongst young Finnish and German consumers who are in the life phase of building up their homes.	Research	Qualitative - Interview	22	NA	The most crucial factors for consumers in both nations when purchasing furniture are aesthetics, cost, and quality, which are followed by practicality and environmental considerations. They consider timber furniture to be pricey, long-lasting, environmentally friendly, and beautiful. Young consumers choose used, inherited, and recycled furniture over eco-labelled furniture as a way to show their support for ethical and environmental principles and for financial reasons. Customers also place a premium on productivity while developing new products. Recycled or inherited furniture seems to be a safe haven for young adults who are trying to balance their conflicting environmental and financial values.
Kim and Jin (2019)	United States of America (USA)	To develop a scale that examines consumer motivations for collaborative consumption of consumer goods.	Research	Qualitative	NA	NA	Five fundamental aspects of cooperative consumer goods consumption were found by the study: sustainability-conscious, gregarious, open-minded, enjoyable, and economical.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This review identifies three overarching themes from the selected studies: sustainability and ethical consumption, collaborative and experiential consumption, and socio-economic and cultural influences in furniture purchasing.

The study by Hakala et al. (2015) highlights that young European consumers prioritize aesthetics, durability, and eco-consciousness when acquiring furniture. However, financial constraints often lead them to prefer used or inherited items over new eco-labeled products, illustrating the persistent intention-behavior gap in sustainable consumption. This aligns with Xu et al. (2020) and Viholainen et al. (2020), who also found that although consumers value sustainability, cost and accessibility remain major barriers to green purchasing.

In contrast, Kim and Jin (2019) introduce the theme of collaborative and experiential consumption, identifying motivations such as sustainability, social engagement, and enjoyment as drivers for sharing or co-owning furniture. This perspective aligns with broader discussions in consumer literature (e.g., Carrington et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2023), suggesting that emotional and experiential dimensions now play central roles in consumer decision-making. The findings also echo Yu et al. (2024), who demonstrate that interactive digital experiences can strengthen purchase intentions by enhancing enjoyment and engagement.

Collectively, both studies underscore how cultural, economic, and technological factors shape furniture-purchasing behavior. European and American consumers demonstrate similar sustainability-oriented attitudes but differ in behavioral expression. These findings contribute to the broader knowledge base by illustrating that sustainable furniture purchasing is influenced not only by environmental awareness but also by social values and lifestyle identities. The limited number of studies reviewed reveals a significant research gap, reinforcing the urgency for future research integrating diverse contexts and comparative analyses across regions.

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

Building on Paul and Criado (2020), this section outlines key areas for further research using the Theory, Context, and Methodology (TCM) framework.

Theory

Consumer purchasing behavior in the furniture industry has been studied through various theoretical frameworks, yet existing research remains limited in scope and depth. Studies employing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) have found that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly influence consumers' intentions to purchase green furniture (Xu et al., 2020). Similarly, adaptations of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) reveal that website quality, service perception, and product perception affect online furniture purchase intentions (Budianto & Subawa, 2022). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model has been applied to assess the influence of short video advertisements on purchase intentions (Yu et al., 2024).

Despite these insights, no single theory sufficiently captures the complex nature of consumer decision-making in the furniture market. Furthermore, rapidly evolving market conditions have introduced behavioral shifts that existing models may not fully address. For example, Pirc

Barčić et al. (2021) documented a marked increase in online furniture purchases among Croatian consumers during the pandemic.

To address these gaps, future research should integrate multiple frameworks such as TPB, Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT), motivation theory, and cognitive theory to better account for both pre-purchase intentions and post-purchase satisfaction (Ajzen, 2012; AlSokkar et al., 2024). Additionally, developing new theoretical models that capture behavioral shifts during unprecedented events will be vital for furniture retailers aiming to adapt strategies.

Context

Past research has predominantly focused on cognitive and functional factors, but important affective and emotional dimensions remain underexplored. Emotional responses have been shown to influence green furniture purchase intentions (Yu et al., 2024). Social influences also play significant roles in shaping consumer preferences (Hitka et al., 2024). However, a noticeable gap exists in research addressing the "opaque period" that is the phases before and after purchase which are crucial for understanding consumer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

Meanwhile, technological advancements are reshaping the furniture purchasing experience. Virtual reality and metaverse technologies enable immersive product visualization (Kang et al., 2020). High-immersion VR environments encourage exploration of wider product ranges (Meißner et al., 2020). Additionally, consumer participation as co-creators is gaining momentum (Schüttengruber & Freund, 2023). The pandemic-driven acceleration of online furniture shopping has emphasized determinants such as website quality as pivotal to purchase intentions (Budianto & Subawa, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered consumer behavior in this sector. Online furniture purchases in Croatia rose sharply during the pandemic (Pirc et al., 2021). This surge has increased product returns, raising environmental concerns (George, 2024). Furthermore, heightened environmental awareness has boosted consumers' willingness to pay premiums for eco-friendly products (Dangelico et al., 2022). Future research should build on these behavioral changes to guide strategy design.

Methodology

Research has predominantly relied on quantitative, survey-based methodologies. For example, Yu et al. (2023) employed the Analytic Hierarchy Process to evaluate factors affecting online furniture purchases. Although these approaches effectively quantify what factors matter, they often lack depth in explaining underlying motivations. This reliance on quantitative methods reveals a clear gap in qualitative and mixed-methods research. Qualitative techniques have the potential to uncover detailed consumer motivations. For instance, Tapinc and Cavdar (2022) demonstrated through qualitative inquiry how consumers assess furniture quality attributes. Integrating qualitative approaches would enhance theoretical development.

Additionally, meta-analytic methods offer a valuable complement by synthesizing findings across multiple studies. Ghosh (2024) conducted a meta-analytic review on online purchase intentions. Applying similar frameworks within the furniture industry could help identify evolving trends. Future research should adopt a mixed-methods agenda to develop comprehensive models (see Table 4).

Table 4
Future Directions for Research (TCM)

TCM	Future directions	Scope
Theory	<p>To what degree, and in what ways, can the integration of multiple theoretical frameworks deepen our understanding and enrich the existing body of knowledge on consumer purchasing behavior within the furniture industry?</p> <p>What specific channel-based, product-based, and consumer-based factors and the theoretical frameworks that support them can help explain the underlying reasons for consumer engagement in the context of purchasing furniture?</p> <p>How can combining different theoretical approaches such as motivational and cognitive theories enhance our understanding of consumer behavior in the context of furniture purchasing?</p> <p>How can qualitative research approaches be utilized to develop new theoretical insights into consumer purchasing behaviour within the furniture industry?</p>	<p>Exploring this question may open new pathways for researchers to uncover complex motivations, decision-making processes, and contextual influences that single-theory approaches might overlook. By combining insights from behavioral, psychological, and technological perspectives, future studies can offer a more holistic view of how consumers engage with furniture products across various purchasing environments.</p> <p>Investigating this question can provide valuable insights into how different aspects of the shopping experience, such as the convenience of digital platforms, the design and quality of furniture, and individual consumer traits, influence decision-making. This approach also encourages the application of relevant theories to better understand the connections between these factors and purchasing behavior in today's increasingly multi-channel retail environment.</p> <p>This integrated perspective can offer deeper insights into the psychological drivers and thought processes that influence how individuals make buying decisions, especially when navigating both online and offline channels. By drawing on multiple theories, researchers can capture the complexity of consumer preferences and behaviors more effectively, leading to a more comprehensive view of how and why people choose specific furniture products.</p> <p>By exploring in-depth perspectives, emotions, and decision-making processes through methods such as interviews, focus groups, and observations, researchers can uncover rich, contextual data that may not emerge through quantitative analysis alone. These insights can serve as the foundation for building novel theories that more accurately reflect the complexities of how consumers engage with furniture products across various retail channels.</p>
Context	<p>What unique insights can be uncovered through further research that explores various digital environments or social media platforms in</p>	<p>Examining how different online spaces shape consumer preferences, engagement, and buying decisions could reveal important trends and</p>

TCM	Future directions	Scope
	relation to consumer purchasing behaviour for furniture?	patterns that are currently underexplored, offering valuable contributions to both academic understanding and practical retail strategies.
	What potential outcomes can be uncovered by broadening the research sample in experimental studies focused on consumer purchasing behaviour in the furniture sector?	Expanding the sample size may lead to more reliable, diverse, and generalizable findings, offering a clearer picture of how different consumer groups respond to various factors influencing their furniture buying decisions.
	Can conducting cross-cultural comparisons and replicating studies across different countries uncover new perspectives and deeper insights into consumer purchasing behaviour in the furniture industry?	Exploring how cultural contexts shape buying decisions may reveal meaningful differences and shared patterns, helping researchers and retailers better understand global and local consumer needs.
	How can the knowledge gaps arising from the increasing integration of digital technologies in the furniture retail sector be effectively addressed?	Investigating this question can help identify areas where current understanding of consumer purchasing behaviour is limited, and guide future research toward uncovering how digital tools influence decision-making, engagement, and shopping experiences in both online and hybrid retail environments.
	How can consumer behaviour during the less visible stages, both before and after the actual purchase be explored within the context of furniture buying?	Studying this “opaque period” could offer valuable insights into factors such as pre-purchase research, anticipation, post-purchase satisfaction, and product usage, all of which contribute to a deeper understanding of the overall customer journey in the furniture market.
Methodology	What valuable insights can be uncovered through the use of qualitative research methods in studying consumer purchasing behaviour for furniture?	By applying approaches such as interviews, focus groups, and observational techniques, researchers can explore the deeper motivations, emotions, and experiences that influence how consumers choose and interact with furniture products, offering a richer and more nuanced understanding beyond what quantitative data alone can provide.
	Can the use of qualitative research methods offer deeper insights into understanding consumer purchasing behaviour in the furniture industry?	The potential to reveal detailed user experiences, perceptions, and decision-making processes across various retail channels, helping to build a more comprehensive picture of how consumers engage with furniture products in both online and offline settings.
	How effective is it to carry out longitudinal studies on consumer purchasing behaviour in the furniture industry by observing a sample over a specific time frame, particularly in terms	Tracking consumer actions and attitudes across different stages of their buying journey can offer more robust and reliable insights into patterns and shifts in behaviour,

TCM	Future directions	Scope
	of enhancing the generalizability of the findings?	leading to a deeper and more accurate understanding of long-term trends in furniture purchasing.
	In what ways can longitudinal studies contribute to understanding the evolving purchasing patterns of furniture consumers?	By tracking consumer behaviour over an extended period, such studies can reveal how preferences, decision-making processes, and channel usage shift over time, offering valuable insights into long-term trends and helping retailers adapt to changing customer needs in the furniture market.

CONCLUSION

This study systematically reviewed literature on consumer purchasing behavior in the furniture sector, focusing exclusively on the International Journal of Consumer Studies from 2015 to 2025. The findings reveal a significant research gap, with only two relevant studies identified. The reviewed studies emphasize that while consumers value ecological and aesthetic qualities, purchasing decisions are often constrained by affordability. Furthermore, growing interest in collaborative consumption highlights evolving consumer motivations.

The main contribution lies in consolidating fragmented insights and identifying key themes. By applying a systematic review approach, the paper provides a structured overview and offers a conceptual foundation for future development. Despite its methodological rigor, this review is limited by its narrow scope. These criteria were intentionally applied to ensure data consistency, but they reduced the number of eligible studies. The limited sample underscores the scarcity of focused research.

Future studies should expand across multiple journals, regions, and timeframes. Researchers are encouraged to integrate diverse theoretical frameworks and employ mixed-method approaches. This review provides a foundational reference for advancing research in this emerging field.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research was funded by the Universiti Putra Malaysia under the Geran Inisiatif Putra Muda (GP-IPM) code of project (GP-IPM/2025/9815700).

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