

CONSUMER SATISFACTION ON THE CURRENT USE OF FURNITURE IN COMPACT DWELLINGS

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Most people in India live in small flats mostly due to their cost and a shortage of available living space, so space management is an important aspect to be perceived. Space management, according to Archibus (1987), is the process of efficiently managing space in order to reduce the expense of unused space and maximize its utilization.

Space management in houses refers to the efficient utilization of available space in a way that maximizes functionality and comfort. In India, due to the growing population and urbanization, there is a shortage of housing in urban areas. Historical research provides insights into the minimum space requirements for humans in residential settings; in many cultures, habitable rooms smaller than 100 square feet per person are associated with psychological suffering (Hall, 1966). This has led to the development of smaller living spaces, thereby increasing the focus on space management. The apartments, also known as flats, are small parts of a housing unit, which is typically viewed as a collection of amenities used only by a household, a distinct social group. Sankha (2021) stated that human requirements are either the same or more than they were previously, despite the fact the places have become more confined. This has led to

the space being used for multiple purposes. Houses generally consist of four areas: communal areas; functional areas (kitchen, utilities, office); personal areas (bedrooms, bathrooms); and storage areas (cabinets, closets, and cabinets). In most cases, there are functional ties between the zones. For example, the kitchen and dining area are usually located near each other, and the bedrooms are usually clustered around a common bathroom. There may be overlaps in other zones. The “great room,” often known as the kitchen-dining area, is a common element of contemporary homes.

A well-designed space should allow activities to flow easily and efficiently from one zoned area to another. The space-planning process identifies which areas and functions are to be associated. To make the most of the available space, architects and interior designers use various techniques such as using multifunctional furniture, creating storage spaces in unused areas and utilizing natural light. With the increasing popularity of minimalism, Additionally, individuals are growing more aware of the possessions owned and the space needs of the respondents.

Creating the illusion of spaciousness may be desired because modern homes

frequently contain less space. “Stretching space” is a space-saving method that creates the illusion of larger areas while also serving as an economic tool. Overall, space management in houses is a significant component of modern living in India. It not only helps to create functional and comfortable living spaces, but also contributes to sustainable living by reducing the need for larger homes and minimizing waste. Switching to multipurpose furniture allows the consumers to make the most of the condensed areas without sacrificing comfort, utility, or organization. According to Xie(2016),furniture makes up almost 50% of the floor area of an apartment, making it an essential component. The most prevalent pieces of furniture in apartments are beds, couches, chairs, tables, wardrobes, and commodes. Apartments are too small to fit all thefurniture pieces at once, thus there is an increasing need for multipurpose, space-saving furniture.

The adaptable furniture pieces help harmonize areas while maintaining the aesthetic appeal. The purpose of the investigation is to map out any parallels and contrasts between the furniture arrangements configurations of various families.

Tamil Nadu, in India, has Chennai, commonly referred to as Madras, as its capital. Situated on the Bay of Bengal on the Coromandel Coast, It acts as an important base for commerce, culture, education, and the economy in South India. It is also known as the “Cultural South India’s capital” According to the 2011 Census’ provisional results, the city has 4.68 million inhabitants, ranking sixth in India; the urban agglomeration, which consists of the city and its suburbs, has roughly 8.9 million inhabitants, ranking fourth in the country’s metropolitan area and the 31st largest metropolitan area in terms of population.

The four main regions of Chennai are the North, Central, South, and West.

The majority of North Chennai is an industrial sector. Once primarily residential areas, South and West Chennai are quickly transitioning to business areas, a growing quantity of contact centers, financial institutions, and information technology corporations. The metro area is rapidly growing westward towards Ambattur, Koyambedu, and Sriperumbudur, and southward along the Grand Southern Trunk Road (GST Road) and the Old Mahabalipuram Road. The Chennai district has 11 lakh dwellings, of which 51% are renters, as per the Census (2011). Pallikaranai, South portion of the Chennai was the area of location the study was conducted.

To carry out the study, an exploratory research approach was used on satisfaction level of consumers on furniture selection in the households. The study was conducted by direct interview method in which a structured interview schedule was designed and validated. The study involved 100 household owners belonging to single apartment only. Each household (dwelling) was 800 sq.ft in size. The selection of sample was random sampling method, and the data was gathered by direct interview method. The location of the study was specifically conducted in apartments, and was purposively chosen by the researcher to analyse the mindset of people dwelling in apartments with similar space area. The research was conducted in 2024. The general details of households, family type, income status, number of members residing in the houses, the types of furniture in different rooms, the satisfaction level of respondents on the use of furniture in the households were studied.

Table 1 represents the general details such as family type, size, housing type and monthly income of the respondents. It was observed from the table that households

selected for the study were all nuclear family category in which 63 percent of the families were having four members in each household and 37 percent of the families were three member families. All the houses selected for the study were own houses of the respondents. The family monthly income represented that 10 percent of the families had a monthly income of Rs.45,000-65,000; 25 percent had a monthly income of Rs.65,001- 85,000. Nearly half of the families (45%) had a monthly income of Rs.85,001-1,00,000. Twenty percent had a monthly income of more than Rs.1,00,000. The study showed that all the families representing the study belong to both middle income and high-income groups.

Figure 1 depicts the major influencers in selection of interiors. Ninety percent of the house owners had represented that the family members were the major influencers in choice of furniture. 20 percent of the participants had been influenced by internet. Influence by relatives/friends and architects were 10 percent each. 8 percent had been influenced by the selection of furniture by interior designers and 5 percent through advertisements. Since the selecting process was impacted by more than

one category, the graph represents a multi choice response by the house owners.

Figure 2 infers attributes that influence selection of furniture in which 90 percent of the respondents have reported that the size of the furniture is an important factor in selection. 70 percent have mentioned the utility of the furniture plays the major role in selection. 60 percent of the respondents have given importance to flexibility in the use of the furniture as reported in the study. 38 percent mentioned the cost matters in selection of furniture. 30 percent of them mentioned that the life durability of the furniture was an important factor. As mentioned by OztopHulya *et al.*,(2008) the selection of furniture for households reflects the use of space and the lifestyle of the inmates in the house and the attributes like comfort, durability and utility provide peace and tranquility for the people using the furniture at households. 22 and 20 percent have reported that style and beauty as an influencing attribute in furniture selection respectively. 10 percent had mentioned the least modern and trend being the influencing factors in selection of furniture. The attributes in selection of furniture were a multi choice response from the house owners, and thus the

Table 1. General details of the household

N=100			
S.no	Variables	Categories	Percentage (%)
1	Family type	Joint family	0
		Nuclear family	100
2	Family Size	Three members	37
		Four members	63
3	Types of Housing	Rent	0
		Own	100
4	Monthly Income (Rs)	45,000-65,000	10
		65,001-85,000	25
		85,001-1,00,000	45
		1,00,001 and above	20

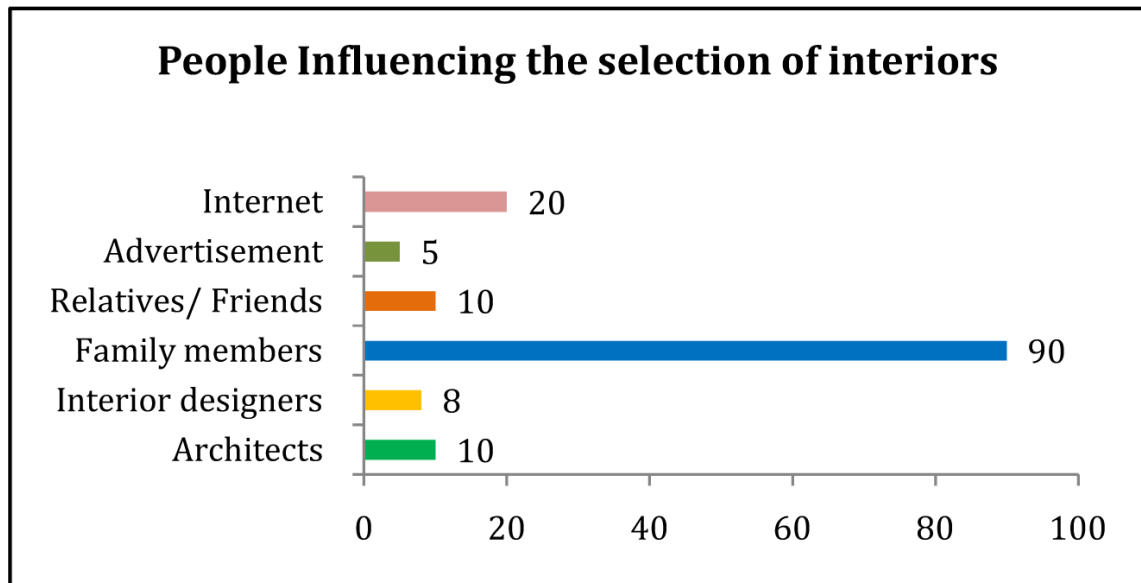


Fig. 1: People influencing the selection of interiors

major influencing factors identified from the study in selection of furniture were size, utility and flexibility.

The purchase place of furniture by the consumers in the study is given in table 2. Forty per cent of the respondents, opted to purchase furniture from local furniture shops, which can be ascribed to the preference for supporting local businesses or the desire to see and test the furniture in person before

making a purchase. A majority, standing at 50 per cent, prefer to purchase the furniture traditionally from one shop, indicating a strong inclination towards shopping at a single shop perhaps trusted, retailer for the furniture needs. This could occur because of loyalty, convenience, or the availability of a wide selection of products in one place. A smaller percentage, 20 per cent, chooses furniture designed by a carpenter, suggesting a

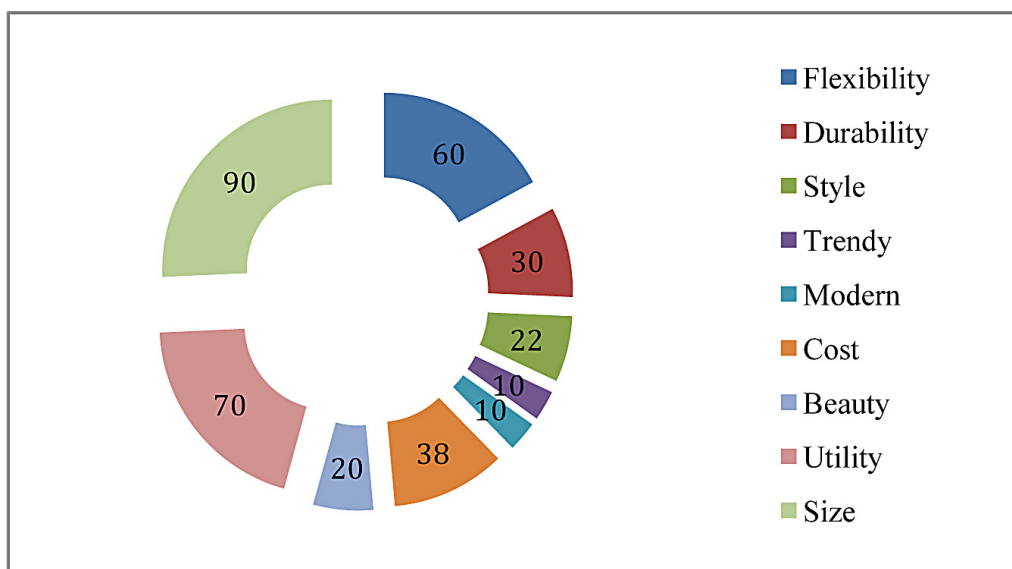


Fig. 2 : Attributes that influence selection of furniture

Table 2. Purchase of furniture

N=100	
Categories	Percentage (%)
Purchased from local furniture shop	40
Purchased traditionally from one shop	50
Furniture designed by carpenter	20
Purchased from online	30

preference for custom-made or personalized pieces that cater to specific tastes or requirements. The results coincide with the study done by Niswarushen and Ponnumani, (2021) which was found that 54.8 percent of the respondents buy furniture from showrooms followed by 23.7 percent from small workshops and 14.1 percent from roadside shops. Lastly, 30 per cent of the individuals purchase furniture online, reflecting a growing trend towards e-commerce and the convenience of shopping from home. Online shopping trends were influenced by the wider selection and competitive pricing often found on the internet.

According to figure 3 on information about the expenditure sent on furniture as bulk purchase in selected households, half of the individuals surveyed indicate that they had spent between one lakh to two lakhs of rupees on furniture for the irrespective homes. 30 per cent reported spending an amount ranging from two lakhs to three lakhs on their furniture purchases. 10 per cent of the respondents had invested more than three lakhs, while the remaining 10 per cent had spent less than one lakh rupee on furniture. The data clearly shows that a substantial 90 per cent of the total respondents had allocated a significant budget of over one lakh rupees for their home furniture. The consumers also prefer brands, comfort and style of furniture nowadays making the furniture market more demanding on costs and therefore the spending on

furniture mostly depends on the user comfort and quality leading to higher cost on furniture purchase Niswarushen and Ponnumani, (2021) has also indicated in their study that consumer prefer brands and comfort as major attribute in purchase of furniture for home. It indicated that furniture purchase constitutes a major expense for households and is often considered a lifetime investment. Consequently, the choice of furniture has a significant influence on the overall aesthetics, functionality, durability, and comfort of the living space.

Figure 4 above illustrates the satisfaction levels of respondents regarding their furniture selection at home. A small percentage, i.e 12 per cent, reported satisfaction, with only 4 per cent indicating a high level of satisfaction. A quarter of the respondents, 24 per cent, were neutral, expressing a moderate level of contentment with the furniture choices. However, the majority, 60 per cent, were not satisfied with their current furniture. Within this group, 48 per cent were dissatisfied, and 12 per cent were highly dissatisfied with their furniture selection. It indicated that a significant number of respondents were unhappy with their current furniture; with the lack of space being a commonly cited issue that affects the usage and satisfaction of furniture in their homes. As mentioned by Nagasudha *et al.*, (2022), small apartments often become crowded and cluttered, contributing to feelings of stress, entrapment, and claustrophobia among

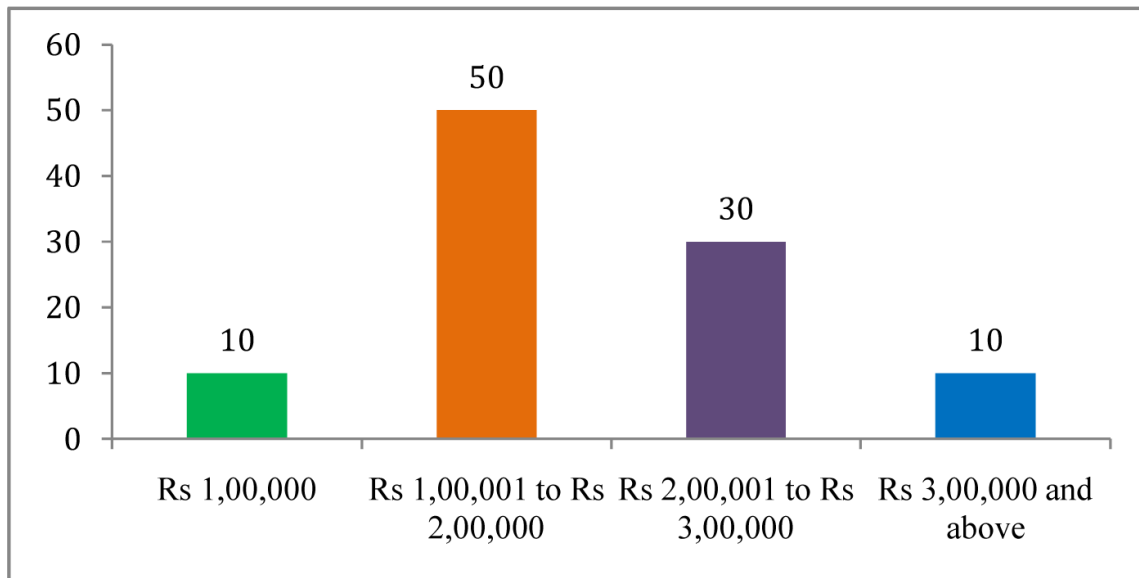


Fig. 3: Amount spent on furniture in the selected households

residents. This is due not only to the limited floor space but also to the presence of physical items such as furniture and personal belongings. Consequently, space-saving furniture can significantly enhance the satisfaction of apartment dwellers.

Table 3 gives the association between levels of satisfaction on furniture at household with independent variables. Gender of the person determines many decision changes in day-to-day life. Deciding on the selection of furniture for households has become a

common factor that influences both men and women in current trending lifestyles. Thus, there is no significant association ($P > 0.05$) between the gender and the level of satisfaction on household furniture.

The monthly income of a family influences the purchase of the furniture in the households. As the income increased there is a significant increase ($P < 0.05$) in the level of satisfaction of furniture design. This showed that affordability of furniture enhances the satisfaction level of the customers. The more

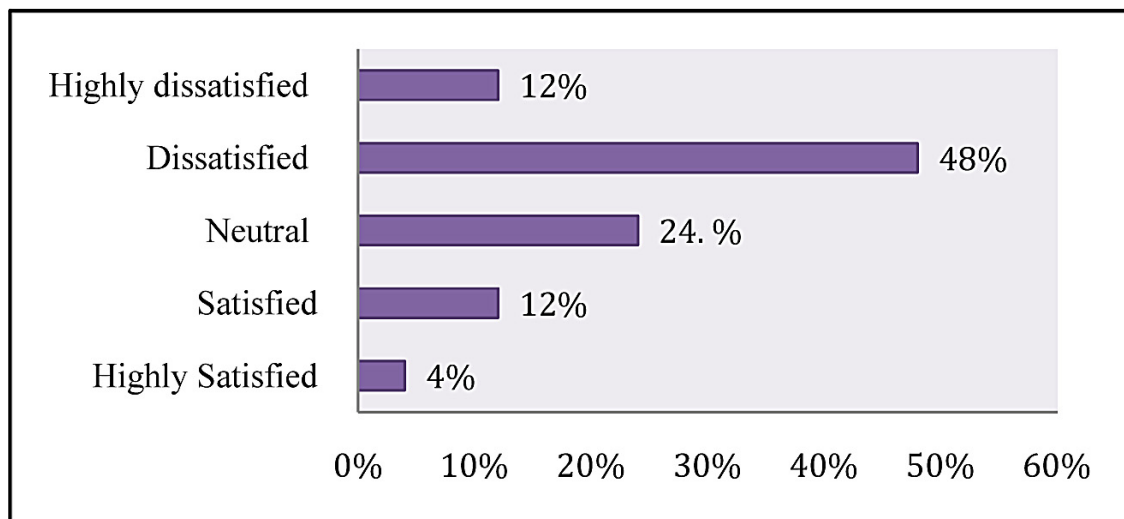


Fig. 4: Satisfaction level in selection and current usage of furniture in households

the income of the family the higher is the satisfaction level on household furniture.

There is highly significant association ($P < 0.01$) found between the plan to redesign space management interiors in households and the satisfaction level on current usage of furniture. The study defines that as the satisfaction level decreases there is an increase in the plan for redesigning interiors in the households.

The study examined consumer satisfaction regarding furniture selection in apartment households in Pallikaranai, Chennai. The findings indicate that all surveyed households belonged to nuclear families, with the majority (63%) consisting of four members. All participants were home owners, with income levels ranging from middle to high income. The primary influencers in furniture selection were family members (90%), followed by online sources (20%), relatives and architects (10% each), interior designers (8%), and advertisements (5%).

The attributes influencing furniture selection were predominantly size (90%), utility (70%), and flexibility (60%), with cost (38%) and durability (30%) also playing a role. Purchasing patterns revealed that 50% of the respondents preferred buying from a single trusted shop, while 40% opted for local furniture stores, 30% bought furniture online, and 20% preferred custom-made designs from carpenters.

Regarding expenditure, 90% of the households allocated over ₹ 1,00,000 for furniture, reflecting a significant financial commitment towards interior furnishing. However, satisfaction levels were notably low, with only 12% expressing contentment and 60% reporting dissatisfaction, citing lack of space as a major concern.

Statistical analysis showed no significant association between gender and satisfaction levels ($P > 0.05$). However, a significant positive correlation ($P < 0.05$) was observed between income and satisfaction, indicating that higher-income groups reported greater satisfaction with their furniture choices. Additionally, a highly significant negative correlation ($P < 0.01$) was found between satisfaction levels and the intention to redesign interiors, suggesting that dissatisfaction often leads to considerations for interior modifications.

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These findings highlight the challenges of furniture selection in compact dwellings, highlighting the necessity of flexible and space-efficient designs in order to better meet the needs and expectations of customers.

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Table 3. Association between levels of satisfaction on furniture at household with independent variables

Independent variables	Chi square value	Correlation
Gender	2.511 ^{NS}	0.108
Income	22.666*	0.060
Planning to redesign	41.94**	-0.474

* $P \leq 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$ and NS- non significant

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