

Attracting Manufacturers to Radical Design Innovation: A Conceptual Study

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Keyword

Radical design innovation
Furniture industry
Design
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Market pull

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this conceptual paper is to explore the potential of radical design innovation among manufacturers in Malaysia. It defines and presents the maturity level that has yet to be pursued among furniture manufacturers in terms of design capability in a manner that shed light on the constructs and sets the stage for future research. This will further determine whether companies have been equipped with the right innovation. This study will emphasize the use of qualitative methodologies to develop a more detailed understanding of radical design innovation from a Malaysian perspective. More specifically, it will examine the meaning, causes of design innovation and how comparatively they apply design innovation with Western companies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

For the first four months of 2014, the export value of furniture had increased by 18 percent from RM2.223 billion to RM2.625 billion (Chee Seong, 2014). In 2014, Malaysian Furniture Industry Council was formed from two merging associations which are the Malaysian Furniture Entrepreneur Association and the Malaysian Furniture Industry Council. This integration resembles unity under one body and one voice in order to heighten the competitiveness of this industry (Chee Seong, 2014).

The growing trend of “China Effect” and scarcity of resources have forced furniture companies to implement critical strategies to enhance their competitiveness. Moreover, Plantation industries and Commodities Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas urged the furniture manufacturers to intensify their innovation in terms of their global business environment and market needs to increase their competitiveness (Bernama, 2014). He also urged local manufacturers to develop their own designs rather than mass-market production as well as adopting marketing strategies to create niche markets or market segments (Bernama, 2014)

Despite its long clinical success, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the financial crisis particularly in the United States (US), European Union (EU) and Middle East which greatly affect the furniture industry since year 2009 (Berhad, 2009). This rapid change of economy is having a serious impact to the industry as it still needs to endure the fierce competition with low cost producers of China and Vietnam (Brandt & Wei, 2012). These views are aligned with Williamson (2005)’s view who claims some challenges Asian countries have to partake as a winning recipe for competitiveness. The Malaysian Furniture Promotion Council (MFPC) is a good platform for firms to maintain good quality relationships between strategic marketing partners and furniture firms (Brandt & Wei, 2012). This will certainly transform furniture firms into being more competitive in