



# A Study on Furniture Design Based on Young People's Consumption Preference—Takes Sofa as an Example

Ruimin Li<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

\*Corresponding author: s3875628@student.rmit.edu.au

## ABSTRACT

In present-day market, the consumption frequency and consumption desire of the young generation have increasingly exerted more prominent impacts, thus more products tend to prioritize the youngsters' demands and style in their design and concept. In this regard, this paper starts from the popular brands among the young people, then a research on the youngsters' consumption attitude and present sofa design is conducted, through the methods of market research, user analysis, questionnaire, material analysis, it carries out a in-depth study and brand-new exploration on the sofa design that are more favored by the younger generation.

**Keywords:** Furniture Design, Sofa, Young People, Consumption Concept

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the sustained and stable growth of economy, China's GDP has been risen year by year [1]. Accordingly, people's living standards have been constantly improved, which is typically represented by people's higher consumption level [2]. Influenced by such transformations, furniture, an essential part of our life, also become more fashionable to adapt to the younger generation and the times change. The purpose of furniture design is to fulfill people's demands in practical, aesthetic and pleasant functions, which is affected by fast-changing economy, culture and lifestyle as well [3]. As a result, contemporary furniture designers have always kept pace with people's needs and regional difference in determining the fashion trend and design tendency. As shown in investigation and research, young people prefer to obtain and improve sort of emotional value through materialistic means such as shopping. Nevertheless, the income of this group is not high, so that they are generally more fond of frequent consumption and lower prices, which indicates that the products bought by them are not of high quality [4]. On this basis, a consumption view is concluded as follows: the young people place more emphasis on the style and price of products, while focus less on the quality nowadays.

Alongside with the development of the times, such consumption attitude of the young generation has gradually become the major influencing factor of current

furniture design and even interior design. In this trend, many brands have shifted to stress young people's consumption habits for targeted design, such as ZARA \ McDonald's \ POPMART \ MINISO and so forth.

The strategy conducted by ZARA is to launch new items around twice a week with about 12,000 new items a year. Most of its consumers are young people aged 20-35 years old. ZARA has put a variety of styles and types with relatively low prices in high frequency on the market. The new products in the season will only be displayed in the store for 3-4 weeks, which greatly stimulates the frequency of consumers' visit, ensures their feeling of freshness, and also makes the company more efficient and dedicated to best-selling styles and popular trend [5]. McDonald's's strategy is to have more than two new products a month. Its consumer population is mostly young people and working class. As one of the leading brands in the fast food industry, McDonald's set meal is priced average at RMB 35 yuan or so, with many optional hamburger taste in each series, Apart from the frequency of new food, it also design some peripheral products, which highly conforms to the young people's consumption preference, and those toys launched on holiday or following brand series greatly attract the young group [6]. POPMART's tactics is that: release a new series almost every month, with young consumers usually aged 15-28. POPMART will develop a series of trendy toys based on the latest trends, festival characteristics, hot anime, classic characters. The unit price of each mystery box is varied yet not expensive, the












price is about RMB 50 yuan on average. In this way, it arouses the purchasing desire of loyal customers, greatly expands the range of choices and attracts more targeted group with various styles in every series [7]. MINISO: there are products launched every week on average, and the consumers are mostly 18-35 years old. MINISO's strategy has always been advocating the concept of quality of life, it upholds the brand philosophy of "respect for consumers", and is committed to providing consumers with truly "quality, creative, adorable" products. MINISO's products are simple in style and superior in quality, while keep abreast of the fashion trends. Most of its products are between RMB 10-100 yuan, a typical model of excellent quality and reasonable price.

Nowadays, more and more products or services in different fields have paid more attention to the young people's consumption preference, but there are still some areas that have not been involved or adequately involved with certain problems. Take the field of sofa design as an example, the problems include single type, old-fashioned style, expensive price and so on. These existing problems are exactly contrary to the consumption preference of young people. In this respect, a series of research and discussion are carried out in this field.

On the whole, the design of furniture is studied and analyzed based on the consumption view of young people. The first section is an user research and analysis on the color, function and price of the furniture design targeted at the younger generation; In the second part, it summarizes the principle should be followed in sofa design as well as the preferences of the young group, Meanwhile, the characteristics of the sofa design are summed up. The third part conducts the design practice, so as to verify the concluded design principles.

## 2. STUDY OF THE CURRENT STATE OF SOFA DESIGN THROUGH CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Various types and styles of sofas on the market are selected and analyzed with regard to their material, quality, price and concept (Figure 1). 20 kinds of most common and most popular sofas were included in total, so as to develop an all-around comprehension of current market environment and commodity style. Different materials can help to identify various textures, the prices are useful to realize the market trends and range, the condition facilitates to check sofa's quality and service cycle, and concept is a way to recognize design philosophy of different products.

	Name	Material	Price	Quality	Concept
	Modern style	Leather, down, oak	30560	+++	Simplicity and coordination
	Japanese style	Ash wood, blended fabrics, sponge	6500	+	Simple and pure, good texture
	Garden style	Pine, blended fabric	8090	+	Casual comfort
	Chinese style	Oak	16640	+++	Cultural charm, dignity & elegance
	American style	Oak, sponge	13000	++	Cumbersome and elegant decoration
	Classical style	Leather, sponge	17500	+++	Learn from the style of the Ming and Qing Dynasties
	Post-modern style	Pine, latex	18800	+++	Sedate luxury, simple anacronistic, thick and generous
	minimalism style	Pine, latex, sponge	19600	+++	High-grade grey as the main tone, simple modeling
	Mediterranean style	Leather, metal	15180	++	Blue, ocean elements, arches and lines
	Rococo style	Birch, blended fabric, sponge	21000	+++	Mellow and soft shape, tight structure, free and smooth curve
	Romanesque style	Cowhide	26890	+++	Golden majority, luxurious magnificent










	Egyptian style	Birch	8500	++	The proportions are reasonable and the magnificence majestic
	Gothic style	Birch, velvety	22320	+++	Exquisite carvings, erect spires
	European style	Leather, sponge	28100	+++	Smooth lines, rich in cultural deposits, noble atmosphere
	Korean style	Laminated fabrics, oak	11000	+	Elegant, warm, simple
	Nordic style	Coehide	12500	++	Natural decoration, scientific structure design, strong functionality
	Italian style	Birch, fabric	39255	+++	Heavy dignified, curvy
	French style	Leather	6500	++	The colors are mainly plain and romantic
	British style	Mahogany	12000	+++	Beautiful, elegant and harmonious
	Southeast Asian style	Bamboo and Vine	8500	++	Mainly natural materials

Figure 1. Materials, prices, quality and concept of different styles of sofas

As shown in the research and analysis, from the perspective of material, most of the sofa style has applied expensive or rare wood or cloth, especially those of Chinese style and Italian style. From the quality point of view, the quality of these products are generally superior due to precious material. Their similarity is that the price is relatively high and the quality is better than average. However, it could undoubtedly be a great economic burden for young consumers who want to change the sofa with the latest trend or their own preferences. Given the characteristics of rapid update and low spending power, the price of household products is slightly higher for young people, and the consumption power of young people is far enough in the market.

### 3. USER RESEARCH STUDIES

The user research is mainly designed for two aspects. On the one hand, in the existing sofa design, whether the design considers the influence of young people's consumption concept and other factors. Secondly, whether the design is targeted for the young people's consumption preference.

#### 3.1 Interview research

The main target population of user research is young people, in which typical cases were selected for interview. In terms of the interview, its content focused on the style, material, color, function, price and other aspects of the sofa (Figure 2,3,4), aiming to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the preferences, habits and purchase desire of the interviewees through these five aspects, so as to further grasp the young people's view of consumption.

Name: Yiran  
Gender: F  
Age: 21  
Occupation: Senior student at university in China

"My favourite style of furniture is a minimalist sofa, because I think this simple and atmospheric style has a certain practicality, no matter what style my home is decorated in the future, this style of sofa will not be too abrupt, after all, I still want to match the sofa with the overall good looks mainly. As for the material and colour of the sofa I don't have too many requirements, I just want it not to be too expensive, and its design function, I want it to be slightly easier to assemble, if it can adjust the height of the backrest and cushion like the office seat that would be better, if not it doesn't matter, I am still more its appearance when I buy the goods"

Figure 2: Interviewee Yiran's interview

Name: Di  
 Gender: M  
 Age: 24  
 Occupation: Australia postgraduate student

"I recently watched a TV show, so I really liked the post-modern style sofa in it, which I thought was cool. And I also like the fact that there is very little decorative furniture. If I went to buy a sofa, I would choose it very carefully, I would think about all aspects of it, the most important thing would be the appearance and comfort, because I should use the sofa for a long time, firstly because it is bigger overall and it is more troublesome to change it, and secondly because if I change it, the old sofa will be unused and there should be no extra space at home to put such a big piece again, and also because it is not like clothes or shoes, it's more expensive. I can accept the price as long as it is not too expensive, because I think it is a commodity that will not be replaced."

Figure 3: Interviewee Di's interview

Name: Dingping  
 Gender: F  
 Age: 24  
 Occupation: Middle school teacher

"I like the Mediterranean sofa best because I love blue the most and I have bought many blue pieces to decorate my home. If I were to decide to come and buy a sofa on my own, I would consider a Mediterranean style first, but other styles are acceptable to me, I like the kind of items that I like at first sight. So now I have a bit of a mess in my house and a variety of furniture I want to try, and the most important thing I look for in choosing a sofa is the appearance."

Figure 4: Interviewee Dingping's interview

After the interview with three young people, it is found that they all attach more importance to the appearance of the products, while require less for quality and functional design. At the same time, they hope that the price can be lower. These characteristics are more in line with the consumption view of the young group. However, considering the above interviews belong to individual case study, the data volume is relatively limited, and the persuasion remains to be discussed. In this regard, this paper then adopts the method of questionnaire to conduct a more in-depth research.

### 3.2 Questionnaire research

The questionnaire covers a total of 50 young people, the questions were designed respectively from their preferred sofa style, considerations for purchasing and usage functions, the contemporary young generation's inclination to sofa style and design features were studied and discussed, which helps to put forward the design

principle in line with consumer's demand subsequently (Figure 5-11).

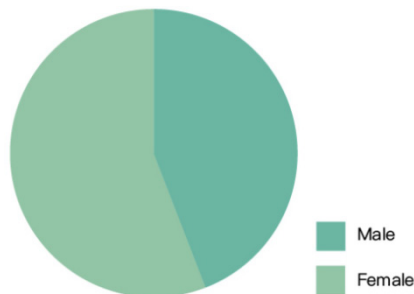


Figure 5: Gender ratio of survey questionnaire

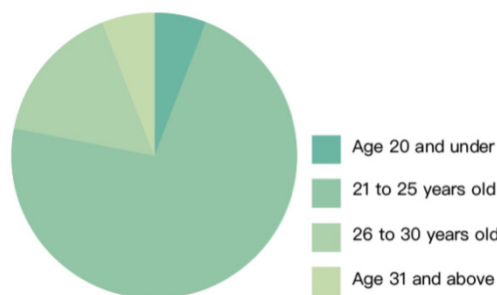


Figure 6: Age distribution of survey questionnaire

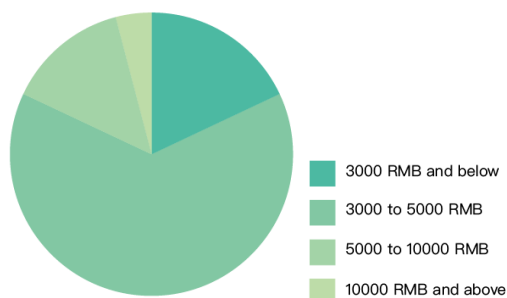


Figure 7: Income, cost-of-living distribution of questionnaire research

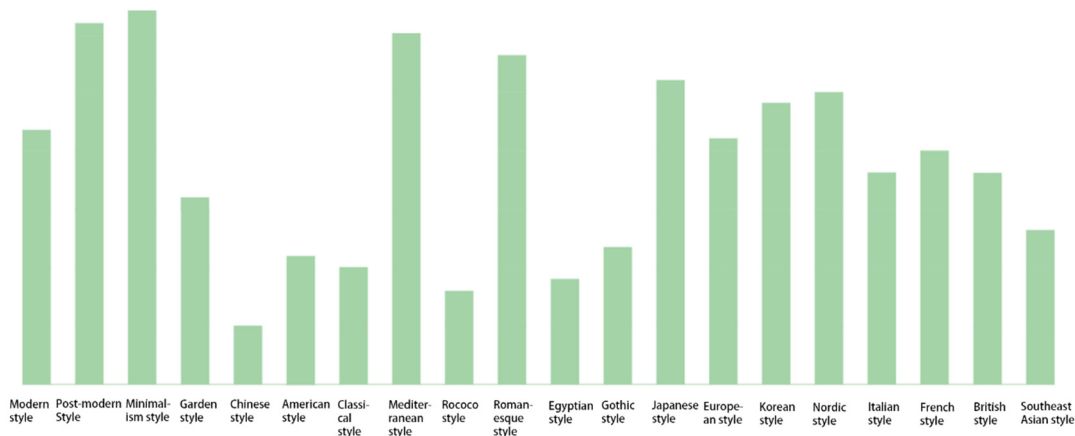


Figure 8: Proportion of sofa styles that users' favourite

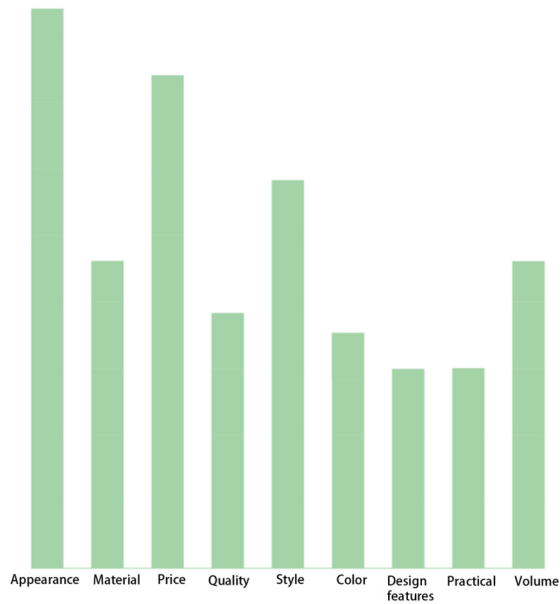


Figure 9: Questionnaire research on the factors that users focus on when buying a sofa

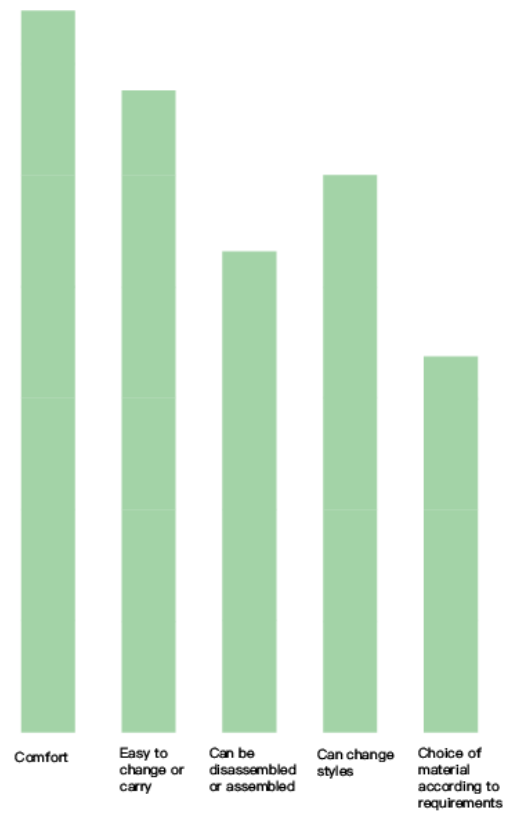


Figure 11: Questionnaire on the features users would like to see in a sofa

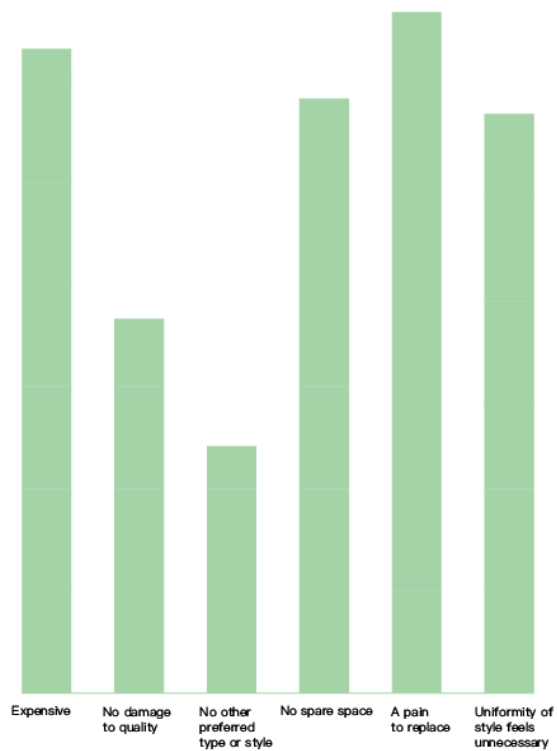


Figure 10: Questionnaire researching the reasons why users do not replace their sofas for a long time

The results of questionnaire survey indicate that: as for age, the cases are mainly between 20- 25 years old, The population of this age has a certain power of consumption, but their demand for furniture design may mostly focus on its practical value (Figure 6); In terms of income, the range is largely between RMB 3,000-5000 yuan, showing that the overall spending power is relatively low and may not pay too much on furniture, the population of this income range are probable to choose low-price products (Figure 7); When it comes to sofa-style preferences, users are more inclined towards post-modern style, Minimalism style, Mediterranean style, Romanesque style and Japanese style. The least favorite style is Chinese style, Rococo style, Egyptian style, Classical style and American style (Figure 8); In terms of purchasing selection, users consider most about appearance and price, while the design features and practical value are the least considered factors (Figure 9). With respect to sofa durability, the most chosen reasons why not changing the sofa for a long time is inconvenience and high price (Figure 10), In terms of demands, the questionnaire found that the functions that users most need for the sofa include comfortable, can be disassembled or assembled, and can be changed into different styles (Figure 11).

Based on the results of interviews with 3 young people and a questionnaire with 50 young people, three aspects have been concluded. First, the population aged

20-25 is the major part of the user group. For such consumers, the practical value is the most important consideration. In addition, the results show that young people's preferred sofa style include post-modern style, Minimalism style, Mediterranean style, Romanesque style and Japanese style. What these styles have in common is that they all have a stylish and progressive appearance, it also accords with the conclusion that the young people attach more importance to the appearance when purchasing a sofa. Second, since the surveyed users are mainly young people, it is proven that the contemporary young generation prefer fashionable, avant-garde, simple sofa style, while dislike the traditional and old-fashioned style. Third, the results suggest that young people are reluctant to replace new sofas for a long time because it is costly, troublesome and there's no spare space, meanwhile, they hope that the sofa can be easily replaced or moved. Hence, it concluded that products that can be disassembled or assembled with low price will arouse users' desire to purchase new ones. According to the above conclusions, the design principles were put forward revolving around the comfort level, fashionable appearance, the function of changing different styles through various sofa parts.

#### 4. DESIGN FEATURES ARE SUMMARISED AND SUMMARISED

According to the aforementioned research, especially the "young people's preferences" factor, three sofa styles are selected and analyzed in detail, namely, post-modern style, Mediterranean style and Minimalism style. Among them, the post-modern style is characterized by plenty of shape changes, bright color contrast, a strong sense of art and fashionable design. Mediterranean style is mainly featured by more blue tone with obvious arch and bar shape in an ocean style, while Minimalism style features a simple shape and a uniform color.

The mood versions of post-modern style, Minimalism style and Mediterranean style were made on the basis of the sofa style favored by young people, and the key words of their respective styles were summarized (Figure 12-14).

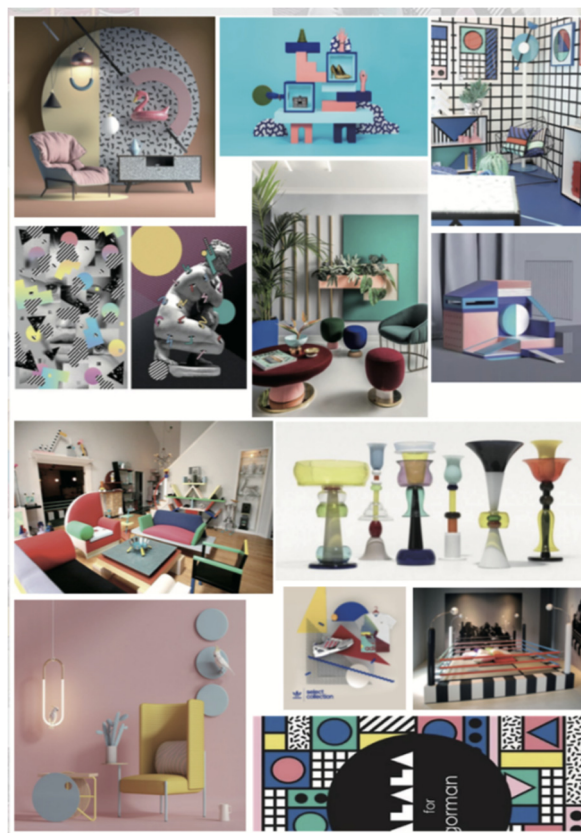


Figure 12: Post-modern style mood board: strong visual impact, pursuit of personality, more abstract and artistic

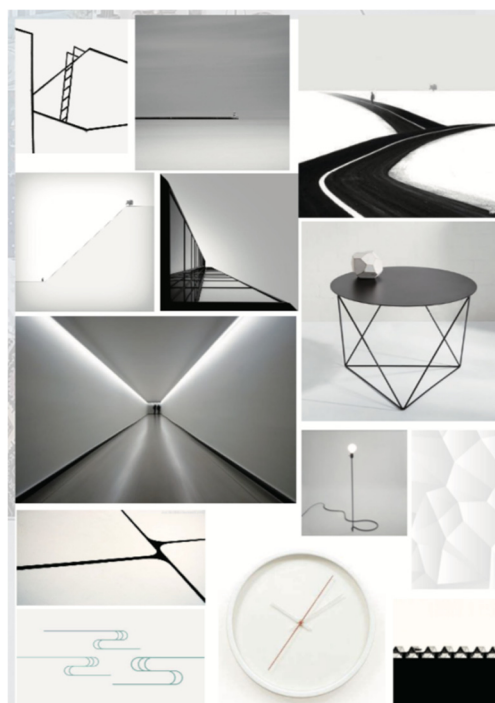


Figure 13: Minimalist style mood board: Clean lines, Colors are mostly monochrome

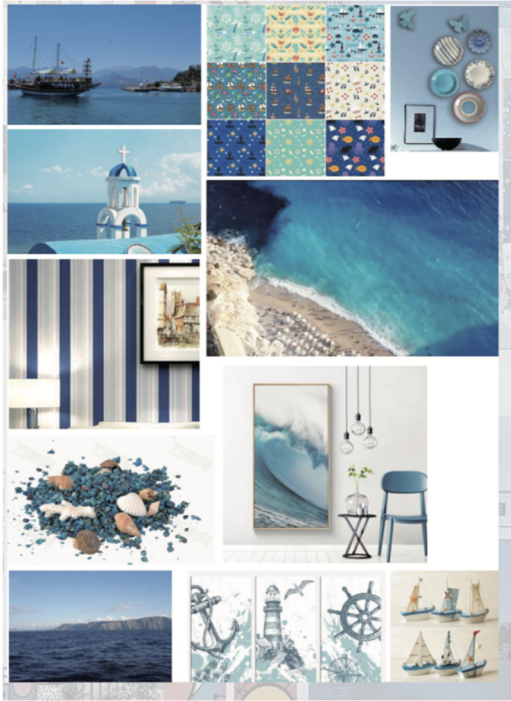


Figure 14: Mediterranean style mood board: Azure hue, Decorations have original arched style, Randomness

Given the core features of the three different styles, this paper also analyzes the overall structure of the sofa. It is found that the shape of sofa can be generally divided into cushion, armrest, back and leg (Figure15).

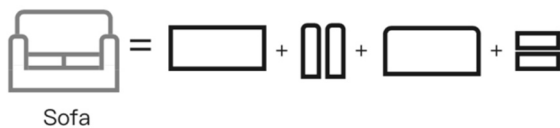


Figure 15: Analysis and anatomy of the sofa structure

## 5. DESIGN SKETCHES AND DESIGN SOLUTIONS

As mentioned above, sofa is composed by cushion, back, armrest and leg, the transformation of various styles is also because of the different shape, material and color of these four structures. Therefore, the design scheme is adjusted to change the different basic structure of the sofa so as to turn it into different styles. Subsequently, the price of the sofa structure is investigated and listed from expensive to cheap: cushion> back> armrest> legs. As a result, it is assumed that the sofa cushion is the fixed structure, while the rest of the three types can be replaced, thus the sofa can be transformed into different styles, at the same time, this way can save a large amount of money and the idle sofa will not take up a huge space.

According to the above (Figure 1) and market research, the shapes of the sofa cushion include rectangular, semicircular, oval, triangle, trapezoid, etc.

As for young people's favorite sofa styles, the semicircular sofa cushion is mostly appeared in Post-modern style, Minimalism style and Mediterranean style with most appealing appearance. Hence, the semicircular sofa cushion should be the fixed structure.

Three molds of different shapes were fabricated based on the traits and characteristics of the post-modern style, Minimalism style and Mediterranean style (Figure 16). As for post-modern style, the priority is given to different shapes sofa handle and sofa leg, with sofa backrest in triangle shape, quarter round shape and so on, so as to create strong visual impact and sharp contrast. Minimalism style is mainly shaped with toothpicks to make the overall appearance more concise. The dominating shapes chosen for Mediterranean style include arc and vertical bars.

Overall, post-modern style is designed based on color, the bright color preferred by young people is selected for sharp contrast and high saturation. In terms of, each part of the sofa in post-modern style is shown in a variety of shapes to express its design concept. For Mediterranean style, blue and warm colors are the main tone with Marine features. Arches and bars are commonly used in Mediterranean style. As to Minimalist style, the uniform dark color tone of black, white and gray is applied for the young people's preference. Simple lines constitute the main body of each part. In the three different styles, the material and the price, such as pine, birch and other wood in low price as well cloth, leather and metal of medium quality, which are all in line with the young people's consumption view and consumption level.



Figure 16: Simple monochrome grass moulds shaped from specific elements of the three styles

After the shape is basically determined, the connector mode requires further studies. Since the chair back, armrest, chair legs, cushion and other styles can be replaced at will, the position and shape of the connector need to be adjusted repeatedly. Given the position of the sofa pad can't be changed, the interface position design of the connector is more focused on the part of the sofa

pad. Through repeated tests, 5 connectors were recognized to be most stable eventually (Figure17).



Figure 17: Sofa parts and the use of connectors

The sketch was detailed based on the appearance, shape and color of the whole model. According to the characteristics of different styles, the most representative and most appealing sofa style was selected for further design (Figure 18). Subsequently, the final model and the size were determined according to the sketch, the size of the standard single sofa is 850mm in length and 840mm in height, such a single sofa design is suitable for small-sized apartment, and also saves the cost of design and production (Figure 19). In the overall structure, it is featured by small space occupation and ergonomic comfort (Figure 22). In the connector design of the sofa, all structures are detachable that meet user’s demands of changing the sofa parts (Figure 20).

The final part introduces how to replace the sofa parts. First of all, prepare the original sofa and the parts or fabrics to be replaced, pick and reassemble each part with the connectors, it is convenient to fulfill the demand of replacing the design style (Figure 23). The sofa of different styles not only can adapt to the overall style of the house, but also can meet the young people’s needs in the variety of necessary products while conveniently replace them in adorable price. The design concept is also fully in line with the consumption habits of modern Chinese youth.

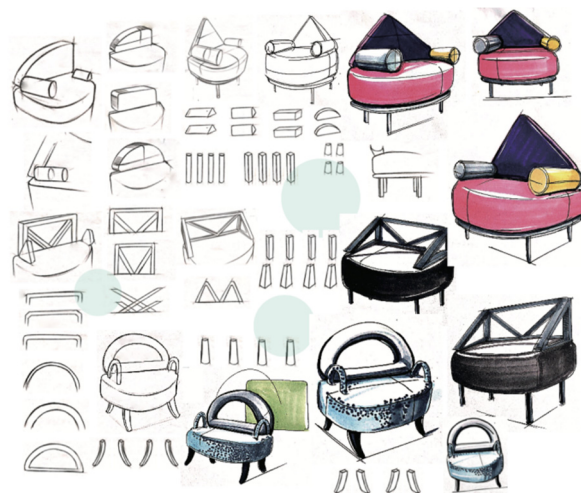


Figure 18: Different styles of sketches based on sketches

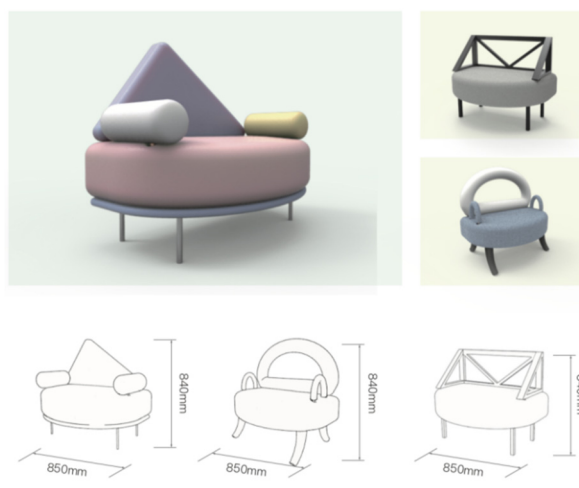


Figure 19: Sizing and rendering of the model from the sketch

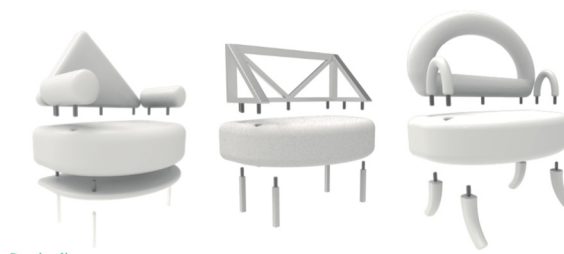


Figure 20: Exploded view of the model



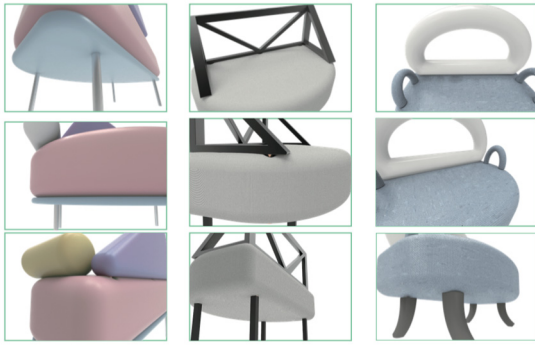


Figure 21: Detail view of the three models

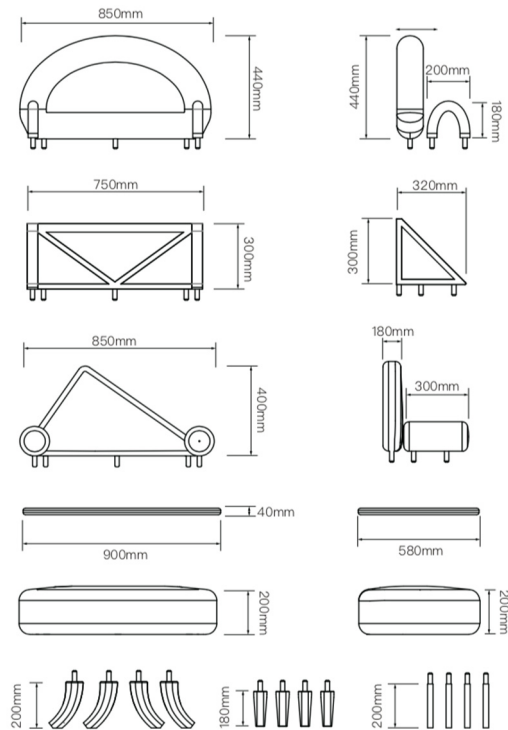


Figure 22: Dimensional drawings of the various parts of the three models

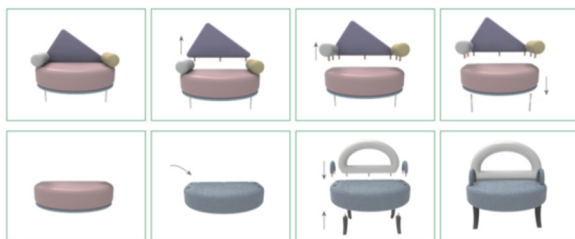


Figure 23: Step-by-step diagram when changing styles

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this research found that the modern young people's consumption preference is to purchase frequently for products of medium quality and low price. Based on this view, this paper interpreted such concept

through sofa design, in which the price is lower and can change different styles of sofa, so that more in line with the consumption philosophy of the young generation. For the future sofa design, material and design innovation will play a vital role, thus, integrated means will facilitate to explore consumer's demands and experience and provide fresh ideas and methods for sofa design.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Lai P, Zhu T. Deflating China's nominal GDP: 2004–2018[J]. *China Economic Review*, 2022, 71: 101709.
- [2] Yu H. Profiling Chinese fashion shoppers in Beijing: Mall activities, shopping outcome, and demographics[J]. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 2011, 2(1): 11-19.
- [3] Pan X, Wang Y, Zhong S, et al. Discussion of Design Innovations and Development Trend of Bedroom Furniture[C]//3rd International Conference on Management Science, Education Technology, Arts, Social Science and Economics. Atlantis Press, 2015: 667-670.
- [4] Filieri R, Lin Z. The role of aesthetic, cultural, utilitarian and branding factors in young Chinese consumers' repurchase intention of smartphone brands[J]. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2017, 67: 139-150.
- [5] KAPUSTINA L, AGABABAEV M, DREVALEV A. COMPETITIVE POSITION OF THE ZARA BRAND IN THE CLOTHING MARKET[J]. *Challenging the Status Quo in Management and Economics*, 779.
- [6] Yeu C S, Leong K C, Tong L C, et al. A comparative study on international marketing mix in China and India: The case of McDonald's[J]. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2012, 65: 1054-1059.
- [7] <https://global.popmart.com/>

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

