

Design for Material: Promoting The Novelty of Furniture Design Industry using Egyptian Traditional Handicrafts

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Abstract:

Design for material is considered nowadays a way of thinking in design and in furniture industry. Egypt is enriched with traditional Materials and Local handicrafts located in different clusters, which express the hidden applied arts in furniture industry and in interior designs. In this study, the researcher signifies the role of Handicrafts furniture industry using traditional materials in Egypt and the ways of promoting the manmade furniture designs to compete in the global market. Using the Tangible and the Intangible aspects of furniture design, the designer can acquire knowledge and ways of understanding to upgrade the design process and the furniture Industry in Egypt. The research analyses different Handicrafts Egyptian clusters such as using Fire Wood Handicrafts (Hatab Al Henna) and the ways of applying this material in Handicrafts Furniture Designs in Egypt. The researcher also analyses the target markets and the way customers may purchase handicrafts furniture designs to promote the small and micro enterprises in the Egyptian furniture Market.

Keywords:

Furniture Industry-
Traditional Materials- Local
Handicrafts

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Introduction:

Egypt is wealthy in local handicrafts and traditional materials that is arranged in distinct clusters and convey the hidden applied arts of interior design and furniture industry. This study describes the function of Egypt's handicraft furniture sector, which uses traditional materials, as well as strategies for developing artificial furniture designs so they may compete on the international scene. The designer can get knowledge and understanding to improve the design process and the Egyptian furniture industry by utilising both the tangible and intangible parts of furniture design. The study examines many Egyptian craft clusters, such as the use of fire wood crafts (Hatab Al Henna) and how Egyptian furniture designs incorporate this material. In order to support small and microenterprises in the Egyptian furniture sector, the study also evaluates target markets and the ways in which buyers might purchase handcrafted furniture designs.

Research Issue:

Neglecting the traditional handicrafts and the use of materials in the Egyptian furniture industry market.

Research Significance:

- Explaining the importance of traditional local handicrafts in the Egyptian furniture design.
- Promoting the role of design for materials in encouraging the small enterprises of the furniture Industry in Egypt.

Theoretical and Methodological approach:

Analytical Methodology:

Through analytical study of Egyptian clusters and the different handicrafts industries.

Handicrafts Industry Clusters: Fire Wood Handicrafts (Hatab Al Henna) at Meet Kenana, Benha-Egypt.

Survey about Handicrafts Furniture Designs to analyse the target customer needs in promoting craftsmen of the traditional handicrafts.

1- Handicrafts Furniture Design Industry:

The handicrafts in Egypt are located in different clusters and sectors and considered to have a huge potential in the Egyptian Industry and in the Global Market. According to the International Trade Center; The global handicrafts market size reached to about \$500 billion in 2020, and it is expected by 20% in 2024. (Center, 2023)

Handicrafts can be defined as the activity of making a something using hands rather than a machine (Dictionary, 2023). It can be made completely using hands or using non automated tools such as carving tools and implements. Handicrafts also are characterized by the presence of artisanal efforts and the knowledge of both the artisanal and the worker in the way of traditional material treatments.



Figure 1 illustrates school of Al Sadaf Handicrafts in Menoufia. Retrieved from: <https://gate.ahram.org.eg/News//2859885.aspx> (24/12/2024)



Figure 2 illustrates Furniture design of a Table made from Al Sadaf Handicrafts. Retrieved from: <https://gate.ahram.org.eg/News//2859885.aspx> (24/12/2024)

2- Handicrafts Clusters in Egypt:

Egypt is characterized by the presence of Furniture manufacturing enterprises and The Hand-crafted Furniture industries which are located in different regions in Egypt, varying from focusing on

furniture making or hand-crafted furniture pieces. Handicrafts Clusters in Egypt are defined as geographical concentrations that produce handmade products carrying the traditional identities of the Egyptian cluster. (Mohamed, 2023)

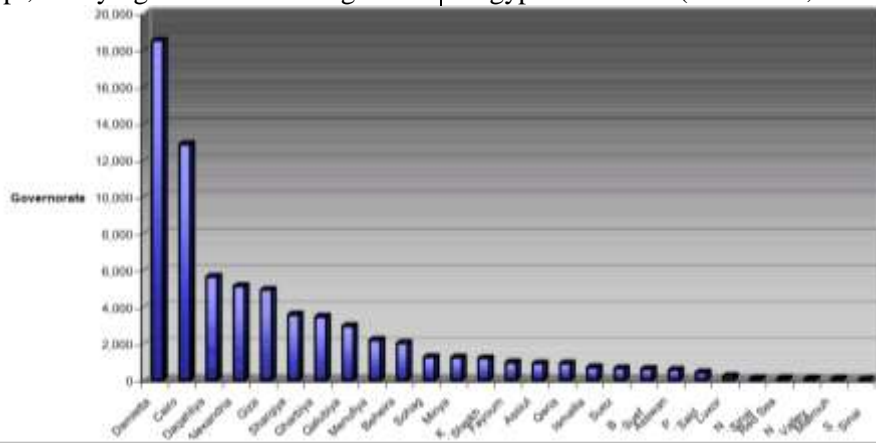


Figure 3 illustrates the geographic distribution of manufacturing of Furniture enterprises in Egypt. Retrieved from: <https://www.entrust-dmc.com/pdfs/p3.pdf> (25/12/2024)

Furniture Handicrafts Clusters are specialized in many traditional handicrafts in Egypt such as Wood carvings in Damietta, Fire Wood Handicrafts (Hatab Al Henna) at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya, Alabaster Industry at Luxor, Shells Handicrafts (Al Sadaf) at Saqyet al Manqady-

Menoufia and many other handicrafts industries in Egypt. Clusters in Egypt provides job opportunities for people located in the same region of cluster; thus, encouraging the small enterprises to grow and expand to achieve the economic development of the Egyptian country.



Figure 4 illustrates the Cluster of Fire Wood Handicrafts (Hatab Al Henna). Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 5 illustrates Fire Wood Handicrafts (Hatab Al Henna) in making sheds in the Cluster. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.

3- Design for Material:

Design using materials is a new trend in furniture design using handicrafts found in various clusters in Egypt. This trend ensures the preservation of the craft from extinction and encourages small and micro projects that can be undertaken by workshop owners. The trend of “Design for Material” towards global exports begins with encouraging local production in the furniture industry from simple handicrafts found in each cluster.

Hand made products are characterized by the presence of main characteristics rather than the furniture made by using machines and tools. These characteristics may be mentioned as follows:

- **Creativity and Uniqueness:** Handmade industries especially handmade furniture is identified as one of the creative industries. (HSU & NGOC, 2016). Handmade furniture also is considered as a unique product as it is exclusive for the customer to buy and possess.
- **Sustainable and Environmental products:** Handmade furniture is considered sustainable and environmentally friendly as it is a green material made from organic or recycled material. These handmade furniture designs

maybe maintained to keep the quality of the product.

- **Quality and Product Customization:** Handmade furniture designs are meant to be made of high quality and are customized according to the customer needs. The crafts man understands the standards and the quality of the handmade product, and the value of each piece of furniture to be one of a kind, and to last to a very long term.

4- Furniture Design Process:

The design process of furniture design includes several stages that take shape in the mind of the designer who designs the piece of furniture. Design thinking varies from one designer to another according to the intellectual structure and design idea that the designer seeks to design and implement. The stages of the design process include the initial idea and the stages of its development, through the process of designing and programming it. After that comes the stage of intellectual visualization in the 2D and 3D dimensional drawings, then developing the design and producing it in form that can be evaluated according to the quality standards to be used by the user.



Figure 6 illustrates the stages of Furniture Design Process. (By Researcher)

4-1 Tangible and Intangible Aspects in Furniture Design:

During furniture designing there is Tangible and Intangible Aspects (Chapter 1: Introduction to

Furniture Design , 2023) that must be taken into consideration to maintain the quality of the product of furniture design. These Aspects include the following:

Table (1) illustrates the Tangible and Intangible Aspect of Furniture Design

Tangible Aspect	Intangible Aspects
Materials (Characteristics- Quality of Finishing)	History of Furniture (Handicraft furniture- Furniture Using Machine)
Fabrication Process (Tools used- Quality of the product- Performance)	Human Dimensions and Ergonomics of Furniture
Resources (Time- Money- Origin- Equipment)	Design Process Branding and Marketing Strategy

Using the previous Tangible and Intangible aspects of furniture; The designer can think and communicate to achieve the steps of design process. The designer must be aware of the materials used and the characteristics as it differs from material to another one according to the origin and the place of material. Furniture designers need

to learn the knowledge and the history of furniture through different ages wither it is a hand-crafted furniture made by human hands or a furniture made using different tools and machine. In regard to the knowledge of furniture and materials, the designer needs experience and knowledge in branding and

ways of marketing strategies in promoting the final product of Furniture.

5- Promoting Furniture design Handicrafts:

Promoting is defined as a way of encouraging people to buy, use or support something or product. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). These products maybe furniture designs made by the craftsmen. Handcrafted furniture can be promoted by developing a sales and marketing strategy that integrates the idea of making furniture with the visual identity of the Egyptian product. The visual identity includes both the design of the identity of the manufactured furniture and the design of the visual and promotional identity of the owner of the workshop or craft that manufactures it. This is to ensure that small, medium and micro industries are encouraged to spread and compete with the Egyptian market in global markets.

5.1 Ways of Promoting Furniture design Handicrafts:

- **Participation in Tradeshows and Exhibitions:** It is considered a way of promoting handicrafts furniture designs, as it can be displayed in tradeshows or local markets and fairs to encourage the connection with furniture industry and industries owners and stakeholders.
- **Furniture design customization:** It is a way of promoting by customizing handicrafts furniture for customers by creating and offering one of a kind piece of handicrafts

furniture, characterized by the high quality of handmade craft.

- **Online Marketing Strategy:** A Marketing strategy defines the goals, the target markets and the value of the product to the customers. It defines a long-term vision of the business to be established. (Coursera, 2024) A Strategy of buying handicrafts furniture designs is the online marketing using pages in social media and online stores which offers different designs and categorizations of furniture designs. It is characterized by the presence of high-quality drawings, 3D designs and real photos, also the full descriptions and the price list of the furniture designs.
- **Collaboration with Governmental Agencies:** To support and encourage the crafts men in different clusters to show their handicrafts furniture designs and to support the local and traditional designs, also to get a funding method to expand their workshops to compete with the global market in the furniture industry.
- **Branding Identity of Furniture:** Brand can be defined as a combination of name, term, symbol and design that can identify a certain product. Brand Identity includes different elements which illustrates the certain identity of a product. (Association, 2024) The Elements of Furniture Brand Identity may be subdivided into the following diagram:

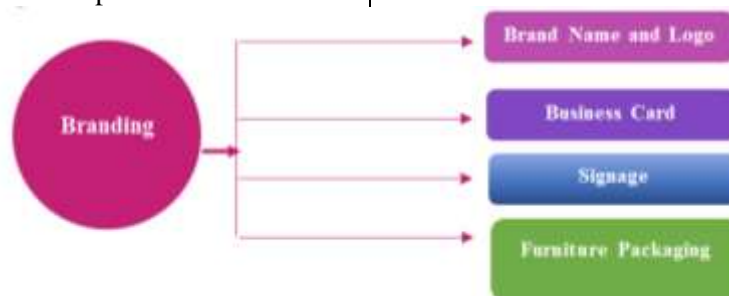


Figure 7 illustrates the elements of Branding. (By Researcher).

6- Egyptian Handicrafts Clusters (Analytical Study):

6-1 Fire Wood Handicrafts (Hatab Al Henna) at Meet Kenana, Benha-Egypt.

- **About the Material:** The Origin of the Material of Fire Wood (Hatab Al Henna) is located in Edfu in Aswan, Located in the south of Egypt. The crafts men took the material and settled in Meet Kenana at Benha – Al Qalyubia Egypt, where the researcher had the site visit to gather the information about the material and its usage in the handcrafted furniture.
- **The Material Characteristics:** is the ability of absorbing water to be used in the

handcrafted furniture later on. It is firstly submerged in water and salt with the mixture of Al Henna leaves in a large Bowl made of mud and bricks (Figure 8), for only 10 days to get the color and the scent, also to be ready to be used by the handcrafted men in products. (AbdelMonem, 2023)

- **Furniture Production:** The craftsmen worked in the cluster responsible for the production of furniture made from Fire Wood (Hatab Al Henna). The furniture may be made from the Fire Wood (Hatab Al Henna) only, or it can be used with another material such as wood or steel for the main skeleton of the piece of furniture.



Preparation And Processing of
Fire Wood (Hatab Al Henna)

Figure 8 illustrates the preparation of the plant of Fire Wood Handicrafts (Hatab Al Henna) in the cluster. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 9 illustrates the bowl in which the Hatab Al Henna submerged for 10 days in water and salt. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 10 illustrates a tent made by the craftsmen of the Hatab Al Henna. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 11 illustrates the steps of Tent forming. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 12 illustrates the way the craftsman makes the rods in the tent. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 13 illustrates the way the craftsman finalizes a line in the tent. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 14 illustrates the tent after finishing by the craftsman. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 15

illustrates the craftsman making a gate from Fire Wood (Hatab Al Henna). Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 16

illustrates the crafts man using the rods of Fire Wood (Hatab Al Henna) in the gate. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 17

illustrates the way the crafts man finishing the gate with Fire Wood (Hatab Al Henna) material.



Figure 18

illustrates the gate after finishing in the cluster. Photographed by Researcher at Meet Kenana in Benha-Qalubiya.



Figure 19

illustrates Pendent Light made From Hatab Al Henna Material in the Cluster.



Figure 20

illustrate a hanged Lighting Unit made From Hatab Al Henna Material in the Cluster.



Figure 21

illustrate a double hanged Lighting Unit made From Hatab Al Henna Material in the Cluster.



Figure 22 Handmade furniture made from Fire Wood (Hatab Al Henna) material. (Designed By MSA University Students).

This furniture designs were designed by students of MSA University as a part of an Egyptian Competition in 2023 with Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (Masharee Masr) in Egypt – Presidency of the Council of Ministers, under the supervision of the Researcher as the head of the Interior design and furniture team in the competition and as A Lecturer in the Interior Design Department. It was made and produced at the Cluster in Meet Kenana in Benha - Qalubiya, Egypt.

7- Survey about Furniture Handcrafts Furniture:

7-1 About the Survey:

- The researcher designed a survey about handcrafts furniture design to gather information and statistics about the target market of handcrafts industry to achieve a customer satisfaction when purchasing a piece of Furniture.
- The survey was subdivided into 9 questions varying from customer point of view and the ways of promoting the handcrafts furniture craftsmen to support their small enterprises.

7-2 Survey Questions and Statistics:

The following questions and the statistics of the survey were as follows:

Table (2) illustrates the Survey Questions about Handicrafts Furniture Design Industry

The survey is subdivided into 9 Questions. It was done using An Online Tool of Survey and was answered by customers from different fields.

<p>Question 1</p>	<p>Do you know about Handicrafts Furniture Designs?</p> <p>Answered: 11 Skipped: 0</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>0.00%</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>0.00%</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Yes	100.00%	11	No	0.00%	0	Other	0.00%	0
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES												
Yes	100.00%	11											
No	0.00%	0											
Other	0.00%	0											
<p>Question 2</p>	<p>Have you ever purchased a Handicrafts furniture or Product?</p> <p>Answered: 11 Skipped: 0</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>72.73%</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>27.27%</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Yes	72.73%	8	No	27.27%	3	TOTAL		11
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TOTAL		11											
<p>Question 3</p>	<p>Which one do you prefer in shopping?</p> <p>Answered: 11 Skipped: 0</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Online and Social Media Stores</td> <td>18.18%</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stores Located in Certain Place</td> <td>81.82%</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Online and Social Media Stores	18.18%	2	Stores Located in Certain Place	81.82%	9	TOTAL		11
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TOTAL		11											
<p>Question 4</p>	<p>How important to you to support New Brands of Furniture Designs?</p> <p>Answered: 11 Skipped: 0</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>81.82%</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>18.18%</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Yes	81.82%	9	No	18.18%	2			
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Question 5	<p>What Types of Handicrafts furniture designs you like the most?</p> <p>Asked: 11 Skipped: 0</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Lighting units</td> <td>81.82%</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tables</td> <td>18.18%</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chairs</td> <td>0.00%</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>other</td> <td>0.00%</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Lighting units	81.82%	9	Tables	18.18%	2	Chairs	0.00%	0	other	0.00%	0
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Question 6	<p>Have you ever visited Egyptian Trade shows and Exhibitions exhibited handicrafts Furniture?</p> <p>Answered: 11 Skipped: 0</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>64.29%</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>35.71%</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Yes	64.29%	7	No	35.71%	4						
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No	35.71%	4														
Question 7	<p>Is it important to you to purchase a unique handicrafts furniture or you prefer a mass production one?</p> <p>Answered: 11 Skipped: 0</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Handicrafts Furniture</td> <td>72.73%</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mass production Furniture</td> <td>27.27%</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Handicrafts Furniture	72.73%	8	Mass production Furniture	27.27%	3						
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Question 8	<p>Which factor you prefer when buying a furniture piece?</p> <p>Answered: 11 Skipped: 0</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ANSWER CHOICES</th> <th>RESPONSES</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Quality</td> <td>54.55%</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Functionality</td> <td>27.27%</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aesthetic Values</td> <td>22.27%</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Price</td> <td>5.91%</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES		Quality	54.55%	6	Functionality	27.27%	3	Aesthetic Values	22.27%	3	Price	5.91%	1
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Question 9	<p>What is your additional Information you would like to see in Handicrafts Furniture Designs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality vs. price is the most important thing. I would support a small brand over a well-established one if they offer better quality. - Reasonable prices. 															

7-3 Survey Results and Conclusion:

From the previous survey the researcher concluded the importance of Handicrafts Furniture Industry to customers and the appreciation of the furniture piece to be displayed in a visualized store. The researcher also concluded the preferability of customers to purchase a handcrafted furniture piece

with unique design more than a mass production one, thus encouraging Furniture designers, the small and micro enterprises and the craftsmen workshops to design and produce handcrafted furniture pieces to compete with furniture in the local and global markets.

Quality of Handicrafts Furniture and the Cost are the most important factors affecting when buying furniture pieces. These factors were according to the survey applied on the research sample.

Research Results:

- The need for cooperation between Academic Universities and Governmental Agencies that support the small, medium and micro enterprise sectors in order to advance small workshop owners in the manufacture of Traditional and Handicrafts furniture.
- Encouraging the dissemination of the idea of heritage and traditional exhibitions to revive the heritage aspect of each country, also encouraging the cultural exchange of handicrafts furniture manufacturing between the countries of the world.
- The Integration between the different disciplines of design such as Furniture Design and Graphic Design to promote the Handicrafts furniture industry in Egypt, thus expanding the branding strategies of the Local products to be exported in the Global Markets.
- Expanding the Handicrafts furniture projects on a large scale to be applied and used in Hospitality industry such as Resorts and Hotels, Restaurants and in Residential Interior spaces.

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