

# AGING PERCEPTION TOWARDS APPEARANCE AND PRODUCTS SATISFACTION

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of existing literature on product appearance and the ageing as a consumer. It also examines the relationship between ageing perception towards product appearance in order to better understand how they will respond to products as they grow older. A general literature review was conducted in an effort to identify the significant, substantive work to date. The collected data in this paper were collected from secondary research method. Finally, suggestions are made as a way forward to identify the product appearance attributes and where can be considered by designers, marketers or researchers in designing a product for an ageing population. With the availability of this study, researchers or the designers, thereby can produce a quality and better product design requirements that meet the consumer needs. There is a need to study the ageing and the relationship to product development, specifically in the appearance of the product. By understanding the needs of aging will be beneficial to marketers and designers, especially in designing a product that will fulfil their needs.

## Key Words

Ageing, consumer, product appearance

## INTRODUCTION

Today, every second two people will reach the age of 60 by 2030, 16% of the world's population will be over 60. Ageing population remains a global phenomenon and has changed the demographic profile of many countries. By 2035 in Malaysia will be an ageing nation, when 15% of the population are classified as senior citizens. Thus the proportion of the elderly is increasing. Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim said a forecast by the statistics department revealed that Malaysia's citizen would number 5.6 million by 2035. For Malaysia, coping with population ageing can be a great challenge (Ong & Phillips, 2007). Since the rise of this generation is becoming an issue, many sectors have to take an action to improve the wellbeing of the ageing particularly in the consumerism aspect in product design development. Despite the importance of this study for understanding the aging and developing better ways to serve older consumers. Research on this issue in Malaysia, particularly still infancy and relatively limited. This paper provides a literature review on different aspects of ageing perception of product appearance in order to better understand how they will respond to products as they grow older. This paper begins by briefing about ageing in Malaysia then followed by reviewing ageing as a consumer. However, the intention is not to discuss or seeking descriptions of biological or sociological ageing. Finally, it focused on the aspects of ageing perception of product appearance in different context. By reviewing existing work and presenting it is hoped that the following benefits will be realized. Having considered these issues, suggestion are made so that

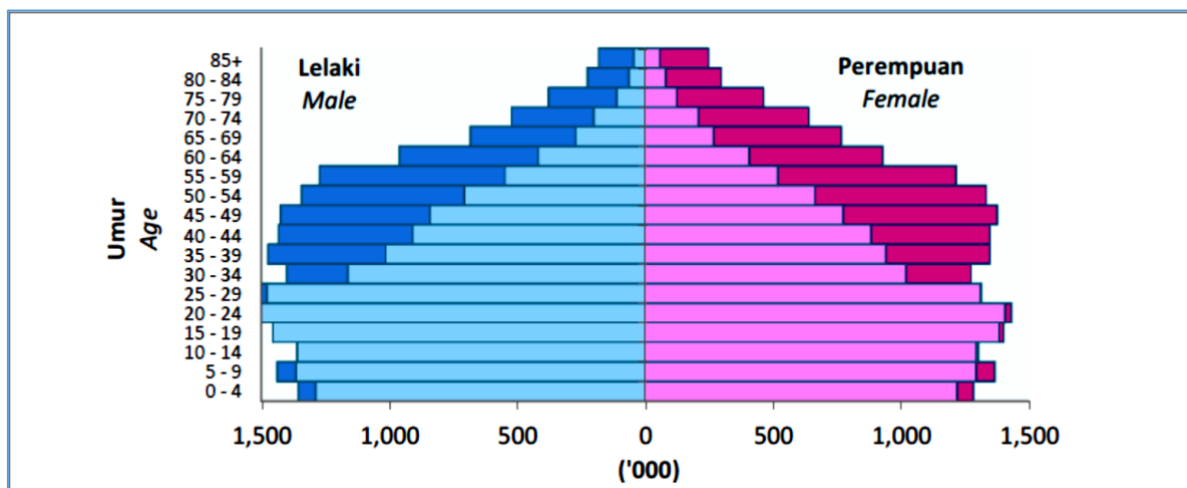
designers may pay more attention as they design for ageing consumer's that will meet their needs for the future.

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

### Ageing in Malaysia

Changes in the age structure of the population can be seen from the population pyramid in chart 1 below. In 2010, the shape of Malaysia population pyramid is regressive and is expected to remain until 2040. The regressive population pyramid has a smaller base which indicates a low birth rate and have convex slopes which reflects that the adult population mortality rate is low. In 2040, the pyramid shows a flat and boarder apex indicating a rise in the elderly population. The population of elderly in 2040 is expected to increase and doubled compared to 2010. This indicates that ageing is increasing in Malaysia and elder consumer might increase proportional to the population projected by the Department of Statistics Malaysia. At this point, the consumer will not only the youngsters, but the elderly as well. The focus can now be shifted to the elderly consumers.

Chart 1: Malaysia population pyramid 2010-2040



Source: Department of statistic Malaysia



Malaysia's health ministry defines seniors as those aged 60 years and above and the determination of this age lower than the age adopted by the world health organization (WHO) of 65 years. (Lim, Xin, Sulaiman, & Baldry, 2013) statethat in Malaysia, there is no specific provision of law defining the term of elderly. Now ageing cannot be measured based on age alone as "chronological age" does not represent "physiological age". In other words, the physical and mental capabilities of the elderly can be changed. The issues and the effects of aging is the increase in life expectancy in the elderly occur because there is progress in medical science and technology, improving quality of life, decrease mortality rates, the decline in fertility, increased levels of education and increase the importance of health. This means that many of the issues faced by individuals who may have serious consequences and disastrous for the country (Iv et al., 2009). People or government in Malaysia only concern about the issues mentions, but what about the product that will support them in their daily life. Increasing age also causes physical and psychological changes mean the daily product also is important in helping them to survive and to help them manage in daily life. Besides all the thing mentioned above, good lifestyle including a healthy diet and a healthy social life, have adequate rest, hygiene and good environment etc also important. In addition, (Iv et al., 2009) stated that more than half of the elderly in this country live alone without family. The aging problem is not only a concern among the sectors

involved and policy makers, but it is also a concern among those aged itself due to some challenges to be confronted of their life in their golden years. On the other hand, in the policy statement, the senior citizens of the country are the government's commitment to create a self-sufficient elderly, dignified and respected by optimizing self-potential through healthy aging, positive, active, productive and support to improve the well-being in developing countries.

### **Ageing as a consumer**

The rapid ageing of the world population has numerous implications for product design. As the proportion of the population born in baby – boomers years of 1946-1964 advances into the older age groups over the next decade or so, their changing needs are likely to become economically important for marketers. According to (Bloom, Canning, & Sevilla, 2003) the ageing issues will influence the productivity and economic growth of the nation. The growth of the older generation is estimated to increase up to two times numbers of children from 2010 to 2035 specifically in Malaysia. Particularly with the rise of this generation, consumerism aspect in product design development will be affected in order to cater to this market. The increasingly larger population of ageing makes it difficult for marketers, too, to ignore the segment's attractiveness (Ong & Phillips, 2007). For ageing consumer, new technology products have the potential to make life easier, to support communication with family and friends, to assist with health care, and to help them remain safe and functionally independent in their later years of life (Dickinson & Hill, 2007). Technology is one way of assuring their continued well-being. As stated by (Medeiros ACB et al 2008), promoting social integration and independent life through technology is a way of improving older adults wellbeing, and important in order to keep the resources that are required to provide special care at sustainable levels. Product design has been recognized as an opportunity for differential advantage in the marketplace (Creusen M, Schoormans J, 2005). The satisfaction level of ageing consumer in perceiving a product design are very important and has become an important issue as many factors to take into consideration depending on their condition and lifestyle.

### **Product appearance**

There is a wide variety of literature related to product appearance. The visual appearance of products plays a significant role in determining consumer response (Crilly, Moultrie, & Clarkson, 2004). When consumers see a product appearance, consumers perceived certain physical properties that together make up the design of the product for example colour, shape and texture (Blijlevens, Creusen, & Schoormans, 2009). According to (Bloch 1995,(Veyisoglu, 2010) these elements include the perceptual characteristics of a product, such as shape, scale, tempo, proportion, materials, colour, reflectivity, ornamentation, and texture. (Creusen & Schoormans, 2005) identifies a product appearance can have aesthetic and symbolic value for consumers, can communicate functional characteristic and give a quality impression (functional value), and can communicate ease of use (ergonomic value) and in addition, it can draw attention and can influence the ease of categorization of the product. This study distinguishes the six appearance roles proved relevant to consumers and were sufficient to describe the influence of product appearance on product choice. In a similar manner, (Jamalludin, Md.hashim, & Zalay@zali, 2014) focused on the appearance of colour on a particular brand of product which responded to customer choices. The study explore if colour elements influences customer choices in product appearance by asked to indicate an opinion on impression, emotion and appreciation to understand the customer perception towards physical of product which involved colour from the particular brand. This was done by concluding that the understanding of colour choice and responses of consumer for various products has become very complicated because consumers have developed a wide range of colour associations for various products. Colours carry as much symbolic power as the specific objects of the design. (Desmet & Hekkert, 2007) Introduce a general framework for product experience that applies to all effective responses that can be experienced in human product interaction. Three distinct components or level of product experiences is discussed and there are aesthetic experience, experience of meaning and

emotional experience. All of these three components are distinguished in having their own lawful underlying process. The aesthetic level involves a products capacity to delight one or more of the sensory modalities. Meaning level involves the ability to assign personality or other expressive characteristics and to assess the personal or symbolic significance of the product. Emotional level involves those experiences that are typically considered in emotion psychology and in everyday language about emotions which are elicited by the appraised relational meaning of products. The framework overall indicates patterns for the process that underline the different types of affective product experience which are used to explain the personal and layered nature of the product. The appearance of a product influences the consumer product choice in several ways (Schumacher, 2007, Jamalludin, et al 2014). Furthermore, product appearance can provide a satisfaction to a consumer and as stated by (Creusen M, Schoormans J, 2005) many people like to buy a product that looks aesthetically pleasing and the visual appearance of a product can influence consumer product evaluation and choice in several ways. According to Berkowitz (1987)(Veyisoglu, 2010), especially in aggressive price markets, design variants of size, colour, shape, packaging, features and accessories (i.e., product appearance) are a basic means for creation of the differential advantage which sells new products and enables firms to cope with demographic, social, cultural and economic changes (Berkowitz 1987). However, the purpose of this study review was to view the product appearance and the relationship to aging as a consumer. It is clear all the opinion on product attribute are relevant and the visual element meaningful to physical of product. This is significant because product appearance plays a role in determining consumer response. Along with this, the product experience such as aesthetic, meaning and emotional experience explained the personal and nature of the product. There has been much research and discussion conducted on this topic, but still lack of study focusing on this topic on ageing as a respondent particularly in Malaysia. More research is required to gain a better understanding as ageing population is growing.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENTS**

The progress of ageing and product design research in this area has been limited and still new especially in Malaysia. Most of the research has been done in Malaysia are focusing on social welfare, retirement, medical services, economic and other facilities for ageing. Hence, the issues clearly highlights, especially in providing edequate facilities,infrastructure nad healthcare for the senior citizens (Lim et al., 2013). For instance, in other countries such as United State of Amerika, United Kingdom, Canada and a few Asian countries such as Japan, China have been doing research on product development for ageing ages ago. In relation to that, there is a need on this issue to be studied and there is an impact on the ageing population in Malaysia to support their activities in daily life.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Secondary research has been used as a method to assess the literature. It is collected from other sources such from books, journal, newspaper and government department.The advantages of secondary data it helps to make primary data collection more specific and are able to make out what are the gaps and deficiencies also additional information needs to be collected. Generating new insights from previous analyses(Fàbregues, 2013).

### **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

The literature indicates that a consumer has different needs and expectations with respect to product appearance. Preliminary studies on aging and the appearance of the product when combined will determine the acceptance and satisfaction of use of a product and appearance. It is interesting to note that the form or the exterior appearance of a product is important as a way of communicating information to consumers. Appearance may also influence the consumer preferences. Many of these scholars tried to conceptualize the types of information communicated by the product and how design and visual appearance of a product influenced consumers' cognitive/behavioral

responses in a consumer/product context. More research is needed to identify factors that influence ageing responses to product designs.

## CONCLUSION

Demographic trends regarding the issue of ageing highlight the fact that both current situations and future trends directly concern all of us. Ageing for some is their present reality, for others is their future. In considering the relationship between ageing and product development, the future research continued to seek to improve understanding of how ageing influences user experience on product appearance. Ageing the user who the product is designed for, the product should meet their needs. Users want a good quality product at a convenient price they can afford. The designer needs to understand the market into which the product is to be sold and should consider the products will be used by different people at different stages in life.

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