

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**SUSTAINABLE FURNITURE DESIGN  
IN MALAYSIA:  
PERCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES**

**SHABBOO VALIPOOR**

Thesis Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Art**


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## DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledges as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

Name of Student	:	Shabboo Valipoor
Student I.D. No.	:	2008511255
Programme	:	AD 780
Faculty	:	Master of Art and Design
Thesis Title	:	Sustainable Furniture Design in Malaysia: Perceptions and Challenges
Signature of Student	:	
Date	:	December 2011

## ABSTRACT

Sustainability is a lasting trend that is changing the profession of all design disciplines. The growing number of sustainable design methods, concepts and tools are assisting designers to mitigate the problems caused by product design activities. Particularly, in developed countries sustainability has become a competitive factor for many manufacturing companies. However, for developing countries, which have started considering sustainability as a new paradigm, there will be more challenges through less resource and experience. This study was performed to provide a particular perspective on the state of sustainable design in Malaysia. The thesis begins with an introduction and background overview of sustainability and design. The relevant principles, strategies, and frameworks, that are developed to support design teams in manufacturing companies, have been also reviewed. The ultimate purpose was to identify the attitudes of design teams towards sustainability, its principles and challenges. To this end, the researcher took part in semi-structured individual interviews in office furniture companies. Interviews were conducted among designers and managers in product development departments. Data gathered show that design teams are mostly aware of the general concept of sustainability and its advantages, especially from environmental aspect. However, they have a limited knowledge of sustainable design principles and process. The study also underlines the challenges of applying sustainable design principles in office furniture companies. Findings show that these challenges include: a lack of clear vision for future progress of furniture industry in sustainability, limited knowledge of sustainable design principles, buyers' lack of awareness, lack of strategic thinking, and weak copyright laws. The findings are not limited to this group and contain the problems which are concluded from the basic challenges and hinder efforts towards sustainable design. Finally, the research stresses the need for further study on expanded population of designers to evaluate their detailed technical knowledge of sustainable design. The discovered challenges can also form the hypotheses for studies with quantitative approaches to estimate the generalizability of the findings. Studying the state of sustainability in other industries based on the presented framework is also suggested.

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