

Research on Consumers' Attitudes in China about Using Online-to-Offline Mode for Purchasing Wooden Furniture

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Abstract

The online-to-offline (O2O) business mode, designed to attract online shoppers to participate in in-person retail consumption, is rapidly emerging in popularity in China, and having a significant impact on traditional manufacturing. Taking the wooden furniture industry as a case study, this research surveyed consumers' attitudes toward using the O2O mode for wooden furniture shopping. Respondents were asked to rate their online and in-store experiences and attitudes about wooden furniture shopping via the O2O mode. On the basis of data processing of questionnaires, this study established hypotheses and conducted hypothesis testing by one-way analysis of variance and regression analysis. Results of this research indicated that Chinese consumers' attitudes about using the O2O mode for wooden furniture shopping were significantly affected by the region/city tiers in which the respondents resided. Consumers' attitudes in all regions were affected by subjective perceptions, the reputation and security of the Internet platform, and the quality of enterprise services. Specifically, those who live in tier 1 cities (most economically developed cities, e.g., Beijing, Tianjin) are more concerned about their shopping environment, whereas those who live in tier 3 cities (less economically developed cities) are more concerned about the Internet platform's service and promotions. Tier 2 cities (large cities that may be provincial capitals) are more concerned about convenience of online shopping and environment of the offline store. The results of this study could help enable business managers to develop appropriate marketing strategies for O2O wooden furniture shopping and provide reference for the transformation of business mode of wooden furniture manufacturing enterprises.

China is the world's largest furniture manufacturer, producing over one third of the global total in 2016. The growth of the industry has been dramatic: the value of production nearly tripled from 300.4 billion renminbi (RMB; the average annual exchange rate of the US dollar against RMB was 1:6.6423 in 2016) in 2008 to 856 billion RMB in 2016 (Fig. 1). Originally driven by exports, in recent years the industry has shifted to serving a burgeoning urban middle class. Indeed, since 2012, domestic consumption has more than doubled, from 232.8 billion RMB in 2012 (41% of total production) to 521.5 billion RMB in 2016 (61% of total production; China National Furniture Association 2017).

Even during this period of significant growth, furniture manufacturers of China have faced evolving challenges. Wooden furniture accounts for 60 percent of China's furniture market, and its manufacturers are particularly hard

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Figure 1.—Chinese furniture manufacturing revenue growth. Source: China Economic Research Institute (2017).

hit. The impacts of the Chinese government’s National Forest Protection Plan and export bans by several Southeast Asian countries have made both domestic and import species harder to obtain, and this has in turn raised costs. Furthermore, the wooden furniture industry’s traditional sales channels through a physical storefront have been under pressure from a customer base that is increasingly accustomed to purchasing online. For producers looking to reduce costs and meet changing customer expectations, the online-to-offline (O2O) mode offers an opportunity to transform the industry.

Originating in the United States, the O2O mode integrates offline business activities on the Internet as a trading platform. Initially, enterprises used Internet platforms to publish product information and to attract potential customers to their physical store locations. Consumers could choose products online and then go to offline (brick and mortar) stores to experience and purchase, thereby reducing the risk of consumption (Rampell 2010). A unique trait of the O2O mode is that it puts information flow and capital flow online, while currently affording material flow and business flow offline (Pan et al. 2014).

The rise of a new generation of online payment, marked by Alipay in China, has led to a disruptive change of O2O. The new O2O mode of large durable goods represented by furniture and household appliances puts forward the integration of “online standardization and offline experience,” which provides consumers with standardized goods and services through an Internet platform, whereas traditional sales-oriented physical stores upgraded to a new type of Internet-based store integrating product exhibition, consumer experience, presale and after-sale services, leisure and entertainment, and brand communication (Ge et al. 2018). Retail enterprises in this O2O mode play an intermediary role in the communication and interaction between consumers and manufacturers (Yi 2016).

The benefits to consumers are that they can get comparative information and discounts that they would

expect from online purchases, while also receiving the same shopping experience and after-sales service that they would from purchasing at a traditional brick-and-mortar storefront. Furthermore, they reduce or eliminate the risk that they do not receive the product they paid for and expected to get (Chu 2013). Enterprises also benefit from using the O2O mode. Via the Internet, they can promote their products and potentially attract more customers to brick-and-mortar stores to experience and purchase their products (Tsai et al. 2015). O2O mode improves their ability to provide quality service, while also reducing the need to operate storefront locations in costly retail districts (Chi 2014). Unlike conventional e-commerce, the offline experience of the O2O mode may provide consumers real sensory stimuli that simple online consumption cannot provide. From their in-store experience, consumers can judge both the value of the goods and the integrity of the merchants, thus potentially strengthening the company’s brand. For consumers, these factors can influence their purchasing decisions (Zhang and Hu 2017).

However, in China, as a kind of durable consumer good, wooden furniture relies too much on the effect of consumption experience in the process of consumption because of its large volume and high price. At the same time, the logistics and after-sales service of furniture goods also rely too much on physical stores, resulting in the failure of the rapid development of e-commerce in the furniture industry (Chu 2013). The emergence of the O2O mode enables furniture enterprises to take advantage of the Internet to attract online consumers, while ensuring the quality of consumption through offline experience and services. Making full use of the advantages of online shopping, such as fast dissemination, low promotion cost, and wide coverage, to attract customers and to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty through high-quality service experience and real-store experience, will become an inevitable trend in the future development of furniture commodity transactions (Li et al. 2016).

This article attempts to study the factors that influence the attitudes of wooden furniture consumers who are using O2O sales channels, and explore consumers' perceptions of various elements such as social values, the online experience, and the in-store experience and how these factors affect their attitude toward consumption, so as to provide new ideas for wooden furniture enterprises to develop e-commerce.

Theoretical Foundation and Hypothesis Development

Much of the research on Internet consumer behavior is based on Davis' technology acceptance model (TAM; Davis 1986, 1989; Fig. 2). This model was heavily influenced by Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) and Ajzen's theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1985, 1991). These two theories considered attitude as a function of information or beliefs that was meaningful to the target behavior, proposed factors that influence a person's intention to take a particular action. Davis posited that consumers' attitudes toward technology depend on two main variables: the consumers' perception of usefulness of the technology, and the perception of ease of use. The influence of external variables on intention of use is mediated by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Venkatesh and Davis 2000).

The original purpose of the proposed TAM was to explain the decisive factors widely accepted by computers. Later, it was widely used in research on the adoption behavior of users in the field of computer science, and network shopping could be regarded as an extension of computer application (O'Cass and Fenech 2003). Because of its high reliability, validity, and rigorous structure, the TAM has been widely applied in many research fields and supported by a variety of theories and models. O'Cass and Fenech (2003) used the TAM as a basis for exploring the use of Internet technology in retailing, and proposed that several additional variables affect consumers' adoption of web-based technology for shopping: opinion leadership, impulsiveness, web shopping compatibility, Internet self-efficacy, perceived web security, satisfaction with web sites, and shopping orientation. Gefen et al. (2003) added the online trust factor in the TAM, believing that trust helps reduce the social complexity faced by consumers in e-commerce and encourages customers to conduct online business activities. The empirical results of Liu and Wei (2003) showed that when considering purchasing online, consumers' e-commerce adoption decisions are much more influenced by their risk perception than services, and then introduced the consumers' perceptions of risk into the TAM. Furthermore, Perea y Monsu e et al. (2004) introduced Internet efficiency factors and shopping

experience factors into the TAM. Variables including consumers' demographic characteristics, product characteristics, the network environment, consumers' experience, consumers' level of trust, perception factors, and channel factors were proposed.

The TAM is widely used to study consumers' attitudes toward the acceptance of online shopping and has become one of the most commonly used models in this field. However, for different types of products, consumers tend to have different attitudes toward online shopping, and different concerns determine how cautious consumers are when accepting online shopping. This study sought to determine which factors most influenced consumers' attitudes toward purchasing wooden furniture through O2O mode. At the beginning of the study, we hypothesized that factors related to consumers' demographics and perceptions, the characteristics of the Internet-based sales platforms, and the characteristics of the overall purchasing experience would all positively affect consumers' attitudes toward consumption. The initial research framework was constructed by referring to the traditional TAM of Davis (1986; see Fig. 3).

Methods

Data collection

The questionnaire survey was selected to perform simple random sampling near the furniture store. Considering that the people entering and leaving the furniture store may be potential objects with furniture consumption demand, their subjective intention to participate in the questionnaire survey will be stronger, and the accuracy of answering questions will be higher. The researchers approached 300 shoppers in neighboring stores selling wooden furniture in eight different Chinese cities and asked them to complete a paper questionnaire. These eight cities were chosen to provide examples of the three "tiers" of Chinese cities. Beijing and Tianjin are among the largest, most economically developed tier 1 cities; Harbin, Qingdao, Shenyang, and Daqing were among the tier 2 cities, described as large cities that may be provincial capitals; and Qiqihar and Taian were examples of (relatively) smaller tier 3 cities. Of the total 280 questionnaires collected, 218 were completed and valid.

The questionnaire contained 45 questions in five sections. Demographic variables, as important factors that cannot be ignored, are arranged in part 1 (six questions), including gender, age, occupation, education level, monthly income, and city of origin. The second part asked respondents about their perceptions of peer influence and trust (six questions). The third and fourth parts asked about the relative importance of different characteristics of the Internet sales platform (18 questions) and overall purchasing experience

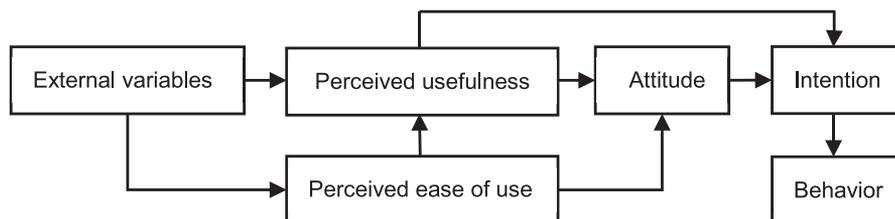


Figure 2.—Technology acceptance model (modified from Davis 1986).

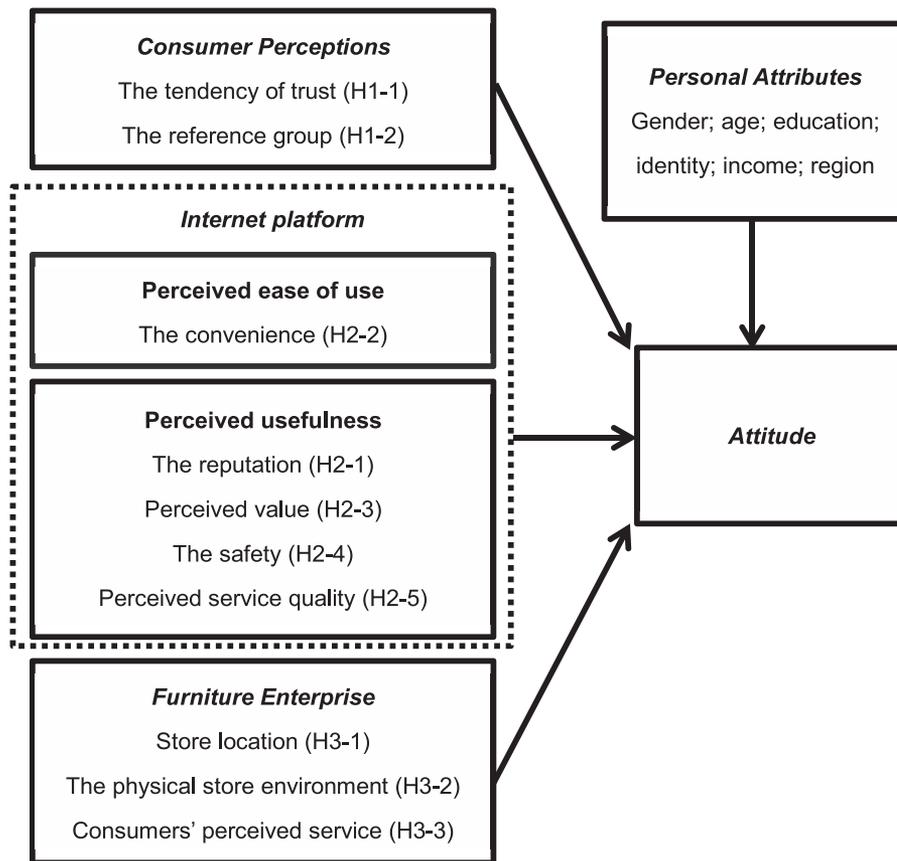


Figure 3.—The technology acceptance model-based framework used for this study.

(12 questions), respectively. Finally, the fifth part investigated the consumers' general attitudes to purchasing wooden furniture through O2O mode (three questions). These final three questions (indicators) would together form the dependent variable of the study. With the exception of the demographic questions, most questions asked respondents to identify how important the different factors were to them, using a 5-point Likert scale. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 1.

The questionnaire design was pretested on 40 consumers who had intentions to purchase wooden furniture. The pretested consumers were not included in the final survey.

Preliminary data analysis and hypothesis formation

This study used factor analysis to combine the 39 original variables into nine common factors using SPSS version 19.0. Principal component analysis with an eigenvalue of 1 was used, which included performing a VARIMAX rotation. Results from the Keiser–Meyer–Olkin test and Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated that the data were suitable for factor analysis (Bartlett 1937, Cerny and Kaiser 1977). Four separate factor analyses were conducted, one for each of the four groups of questions that represented independent variables (parts 2, 3, and 4) and dependent variable (part 5).

The results of the factor analysis indicated that the questions grouped into nine factors, as shown in Table 1. A table showing the factor loadings for each variable is included in Appendix 2.

In the "enterprise factors" group, three questions (questions 31, 36, and 38) failed to load, with scores of about 0.5. Thus, they were not included in either of the two related factors.

Cronbach's α coefficient was used to measure the consistency and reliability inside the questionnaire. The value of Cronbach's α is between 0 and 1, with scores approaching 1 having the higher reliability (Cronbach 1951). Results were good, with the lowest α being 0.720.

On the basis of the above analysis results, the initial research framework was modified, and the revised research model is shown in Figure 4.

Factors related to consumer perception.—The tendency of trust is the general tendency or degree that an individual is willing to trust others in interpersonal communication (Rotter 1971). It is a concept of psychology, influenced by factors such as personality, experience, and social background, and varies from person to person (Xu 2016). Everyone has different personality characteristics, life experiences, social experiences, and cultural backgrounds, and these backgrounds synthetically create the consumer's personal trust tendencies (Li 2007).

In China, there is considerable uncertainty and risk in e-commerce, and trust of online transactions has become an important issue in e-commerce activities (Zhai and Xue 2014), whereas the tendency of trust will influence the evaluation of perceived risk (Zhang and Jiang 2016). Some scholars have proved that trust tendency has a significant positive impact on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use through empirical studies, and the tendency of

Table 1.—Hypothetical factors.

Factor group	Factor name (associated hypothesis number)	Questions included	Cronbach's α
Consumer perception factors (H1)	Tendency of trust (H1-1) Reference group (H1-2)	10–12 7–9	0.720
Internet platform factors (H2)	Convenience of the Internet platform (H2-1) Reputation and safety of Internet platform (H2-2) Perceived service quality (H2-3) Perceived value (H2-4)	16–21 13–15, 25–26 27–30 22–24	0.918
Enterprise factors (H3)	Store environment (H3-1) Consumers' perceived service (H3-2)	32–35 37, 39–42	0.855
Consumption attitude (dependent variable)		43–45	0.729

consumers' personal trust has a positive influence on consumers' trust in both the network platform and the sellers of the platform (Teo and Liu 2007, Jones and Leonard 2008, Zhang and Jiang 2016, Cui and Ma 2018). A person with a high tendency of trust tends to trust others (Lin et al. 2009). If consumers have a high tendency of trust, their perceived risk level will be reduced (Wu 2014).

Social environmental factors of consumers, especially the trust tendency in their most trusted social circle, will directly affect the trust tendency of consumers (Taylor and Todd 1995). This social circle then becomes the reference group that influences consumers' trust tendency. The reference group is a sociological concept describing the group to which people compare and evaluate themselves according to their similar values and behaviors (Hyman 1942). In the process of the gradual acceptance of e-commerce, consumers tend to seek opinions from closely related reference groups. Therefore:

H1-1: The tendency of trust has a significant positive influence on consumption attitude.

H1-2: The reference group has a significant positive influence on consumption attitude.

On the basis of the above considerations, questions 7 through 12 in the questionnaire are constructed.

Factors related to the Internet platform.—The empirical results of Ranganathan and Ganapathy (2002) on the characteristics of the Internet platform that affect consumers' perception indicated that information content, design, security, and privacy were the four most important key dimensions, and these key characteristics had a positive impact on consumers' trust in the Internet platform. Although consumers' trust in the Internet platform greatly affects their attitudes toward online shopping, perception of the ease of use, security control, usefulness, and the perception of product and service value of an Internet platform are important prerequisites for generating trust (Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa 2004).

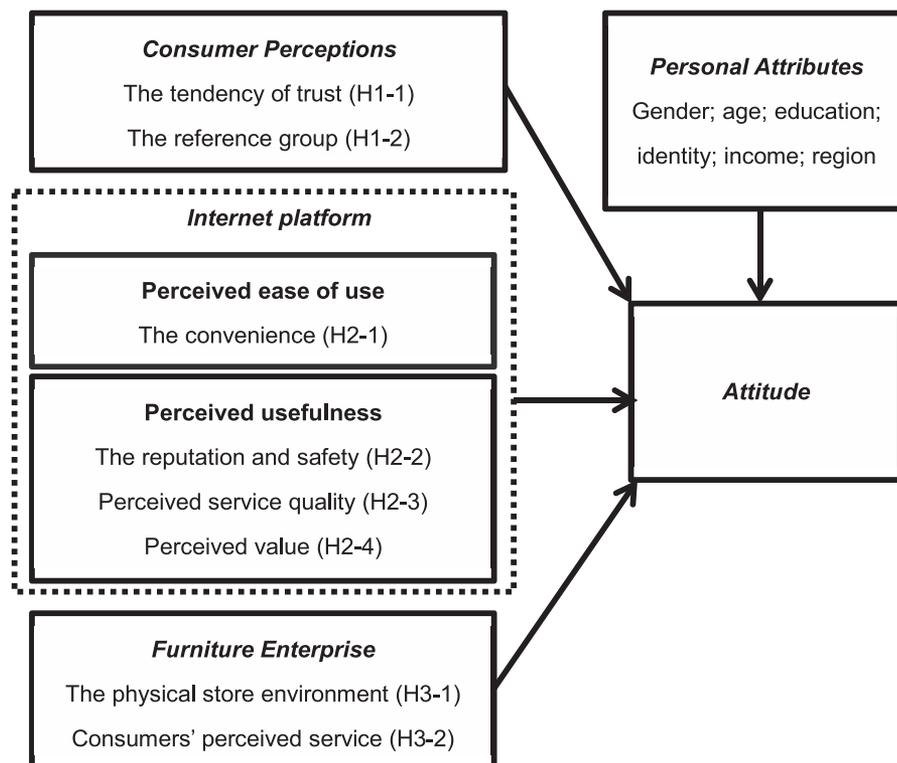


Figure 4.—The technology acceptance model-based framework used for this study (modified).

The convenience of searching commodities and shopping operation (registration, login, payment, etc.) on the Internet platform, the richness of content design of commodity information, and the stability of the website can enhance customers' perceptions of the ease of use of the Internet platform (Lu et al. 2009, Handa and Gupta 2014). Therefore:

H2-1: The convenience of the Internet platform has a significant positive influence on consumption attitude.

Perceived usefulness is another key predictor of users' attitudes. Consumers' perceived usefulness of the Internet platform comes from perceived risk, perceived customer service quality, and perceived value (Teng et al. 2018).

Trust in the content and technology of the Internet platform can make consumers feel safe, and then positively influence consumers' attitudes toward online shopping by enhancing their perceived usefulness. The trust of content is mainly expressed through the reputation of the Internet platform, and the trust of technology is reflected in the security of payment and the protection of customers' privacy (Patton and Jsang 2004). When the Internet platform has a good reputation, high product quality evaluation, and product description is highly consistent with the real object, consumers are more inclined to trust the Internet platform (Kim and Choi 2012); when the Internet platform achieves security mechanisms, especially payment security and privacy protection, consumers tend to believe that online purchasing is safe (Laforet and Li 2005, Roca et al. 2009, Riquelme and Román 2014, Basak et al. 2016).

Perceived quality is a consumer's judgment of the overall excellence or superiority of a product or service; perceived value is the trade-off between perceived benefits and perceived costs of a product or service, and it is the overall evaluation of product utility on the basis of costs and benefits. Both of them have positive effects on consumption attitude (Zeithaml 1988). Consumers' perceived service quality of the Internet platform is reflected in the whole process of online shopping, including presales consulting services, in-sales interaction, and after-sales logistics tracking (Piercy 2014). In the network context, consumers' perceived value is the preference and evaluation of the degree to which they achieve their consumption purpose and intention through the Internet platform. It includes not only the perceived value of products, but also the added value they experience in the process of purchasing products (Dong and Yang 2008). Therefore:

H2-2: The reputation and safety of the Internet platform have a significant positive influence on consumption attitude.

H2-3: The perceived service quality (offered by the Internet platform) has a significant positive influence on consumption attitude.

H2-4: The perceived value of the products and services offered by the Internet platform has a significant positive influence on consumption attitude.

Referring to the research of relevant scholars (Parasuraman et al. 1988, Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa 2004, Lin 2007, Roca et al. 2009, McCole et al. 2010, Handa and Gupta 2014, Piercy 2014, Shan 2017, Li et al. 2018), questions 13 through 30 were designed in the questionnaire.

Enterprise factors.—Consumers' experiences in physical stores will directly influence their consumption behavior (Roy and Tai 2003). This experience includes the emotional stimulation from the store environment (including location, layout and design, decorations, etc.), as well as the consumers' perceived service provided by the physical store (Turley and Milliman 2000, Wu 2013). The physical store environment will influence the overall consumers' judgments about a given product (Baker et al. 1994, Sipahi and Enginoglu 2015). Consumers' perceived service provided by enterprises has a positive impact on consumers' attitudes toward online shopping (Wang 2012). Especially for wooden furniture, which is a large durable good, consumers are more concerned about transportation, installation, maintenance, and other after-sales services (Chu 2013). Therefore:

H3-1: The physical store environment has a significant positive influence on consumption attitude.

H3-2: The consumers' perceived service provided by enterprise has a significant positive influence on consumption attitude.

Drawing on the research results of relevant scholars (Baker et al. 1994, Turley and Milliman 2000, Roy and Tai 2003, Chu 2013, Wu 2013), questions 31 through 42 in the questionnaire were designed.

Results

Of 280 questionnaires collected, 218 were valid (Table 2). Approximately equal numbers of questionnaires were completed in each classification of city (tier 1, tier 2, and

Table 2.—Sample characteristics.

Demographic characteristics	Frequency in the sample	Rate (%)
Gender		
Male	118	54.1
Female	100	45.9
Age		
<25 yr	39	17.9
25–34 yr	148	67.9
35–44 yr	29	13.3
>45 yr	2	0.9
Education level		
Secondary education	14	6.4
Junior college	30	13.8
Undergraduate	129	59.2
Graduate	45	20.6
Employer		
Student	12	5.5
Civil servant	45	20.6
Nonprofit organization	7	3.2
Corporate staff	132	60.6
Business owners	15	6.9
Others	7	3.2
Monthly average income		
<3,000 yuan	37	17.0
3,000–6,000 yuan	90	41.3
6,000–8,000 yuan	53	24.3
>8,000 yuan	38	17.4
Region		
First-tier city	70	32.1
Second-tier city	75	34.4
Third-tier city	73	33.5

tier 3). The overwhelming majority of the sample was relatively young (75.8% were <34 yr old) and well educated (79.8% had at least one university degree). Large corporations represented the largest employer group (60.9%), followed by government (20.6%). Monthly incomes varied by tier city.

Influence of consumers' personal attributes on furniture consumption attitude

To study the influence of consumer demographic characteristics on the consumption attitude in O2O mode, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. This study mainly used this method to reveal the differences in consumption attitudes of consumers with different personal characteristics and different network closeness (Table 3). As shown in Table 3, the only demographic variable that had a significant impact on consumer attitude was the region (tier 1, 2, or 3) in which the respondents lived. Therefore, the consumers' residence was added as a control variable to study the influence factors of consumers' attitudes to the O2O mode of wooden furniture consumption in different regions.

Regression analysis on consumers' attitudes of each factor in hypothesis to O2O mode of wooden furniture consumption

The ANOVA determined that the classification of the respondent's region of residence (i.e., tier 1, tier 2, or tier 3) had a significant influence on their attitude toward consumption. We therefore conducted separate analyses for each category of region (Table 4). Separate analyses were also conducted for each category of factors (consumer perception, Internet platform, and furniture enterprise). Nine total regressions were conducted (Table 4).

Consumer perceptions

Both factors in the category of consumer perceptions (the tendency of trust and the reference group) indicated a significant correlation to the dependent variable for all three tier cities. Generally, the β values for the reference group were higher than those for the tendency of trust, indicating that respondents' consumption attitudes were more influenced by peer perceptions than by their tendency to trust others. However, relatively low adjusted R^2 values of 0.116 for tier 1 cities, 0.379 for tier 2 cities, and 0.091 for tier 3 cities indicated that the consumer perception models only accounted for a small part of the overall variability within the dependent variable (consumption attitude).

Table 3.—One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of consumer demographics on online-to-offline (O2O)-mode wooden furniture consumption attitude. Bold indicates significantly different at $P < 0.05$.

Demographic characteristics	One-way ANOVA	
	F value	P value
Gender	0.031	0.861
Age	0.784	0.504
Education level	1.067	0.363
Employer	0.789	0.559
Monthly average income	1.889	0.132
Region	4.281	0.006

Internet platform

Respondents' consumption attitudes varied greatly in the category of Internet platform, depending on the regional classification (tiers 1 to 3) in which they lived. Generally, respondents' views of Internet platform characteristics had the greatest influence on consumption attitudes in tier 3 cities, showing an adjusted R^2 value of 0.541 and three of the four factors (reputation and safety, perceived service quality, and perceived value) having a significant impact. The R^2 value of tier 2 cities is 0.453 with two significant factors (convenience, reputation and safety). Respondents from tier 1 cities showed a lower tendency to be affected by characteristics of the Internet platform: they had an adjusted R^2 value of 0.250 with only one significant factor (reputation and safety).

Furniture enterprise

There are two factors in the category of furniture enterprise: store environment and consumers' perceived service. For the development of all three levels of a city, the standardized β values of consumers' perceived service are higher than that of store environment, indicating that this factor was more influential. Both factors had a significant impact on consumer attitudes in the tier 1 and tier 2 cities; however, only service quality in the tier 3 cities was measured as significant. Adjusted R^2 values were relatively low for tier 1 and tier 2 cities (0.183 and 0.228, respectively), but greater for tier 3 cities (0.404).

Results summary

Results of the empirical research on the wooden furniture consumption attitude of O2O mode are presented; this study adopted multiple linear regressions to verify the hypotheses. The conclusions are presented in Table 5.

Discussion

Consumer perception factors

It is found that in areas of different economic development levels, the tendency of trust and reference groups had a significant positive effect on consumption attitude, but the degree of influence was different. The impact on the tier 1 cities was particularly obvious, and the impact on the tier 3 cities was the lowest. The main reason may be that e-commerce was not equally available in all regions. After more than a decade of development, e-commerce has become a very important means of consumption in China's major cities. Employees in big cities are busy with their work and the need to take care of their family life, which reduces their shopping time. They may be more likely to get others' opinions from social circles and the Internet, and then to purchase wooden furniture online conveniently. E-commerce in the tier 3 cities is not as popular as in big cities. Even if consumers wanted to buy wooden furniture online, they would also be more cautious and rational.

Internet platform factors

In this study, the hypotheses of the Internet platform were divided into four factors: convenience, reputation and safety, perceived service quality, and perceived value. The results showed that four factors had different influences on consumption attitude of the three regions. In tier 1 cities with relatively high income levels and Internet penetration

Table 4.—Regression analysis of consumers' attitudes (dependent variable) of online-to-offline (O2O)-mode furniture consumption.

Variable	Regional classifications								
	Tier 1 city, N = 70			Tier 2 city, N = 75			Tier 3 city, N = 73		
	Beta	T-statistic	Adjusted R ²	Beta	T-statistic	Adjusted R ²	Beta	T-statistic	Adjusted R ²
H1			0.116			0.379			0.091
Constant	1.632			0.252			2.133		
Tendency of trust	0.231**	2.102		0.324**	2.710		0.191**	1.627	
Reference group	0.314**	2.122		0.710**	6.028		0.297**	2.289	
H2			0.250			0.453			0.541
Constant	1.278			0.214			1.004		
Convenience	0.057	0.408		0.327**	2.282		0.223	1.770	
Reputation and safety	0.274**	2.418		0.418**	3.038		0.223**	2.218	
Perceived service quality	0.069	0.515		0.162	1.420		0.276**	2.300	
Perceived value	0.216	1.978		0.086	0.876		0.431**	0.360	
H3			0.183			0.228			0.404
Constant	1.559			1.427			1.690		
Store environment	0.236**	3.141		0.287**	2.978		0.149	1.380	
Consumers' perceived service	0.381**	3.840		0.341**	2.430		0.365**	3.322	

** Significantly different at the 0.05 level.

rate, reputation and safety were the main factors influencing the attitude of wooden furniture consumption under O2O mode, especially the security of online payment and privacy of personal information. The convenience and reputation and safety of Internet platforms in tier 2 cities have greater influence on the attitude of wooden furniture consumption than in tier 1 cities. Office workers in big cities are busy with work and family care, which may explain their emphasis on the ease of use of the Internet platforms. With limited leisure time, they also want to buy furniture from the reputable and high-security Internet platform. Consumers in tier 3 paid more attention to preferential policy (possibly due to income disparity and consumption demand), but they also paid attention to security and services provided by the platform when they consume online. Consumers in the tier 3 cities were less concerned about the convenience of website access, which may be related to the popularity of e-commerce.

Enterprise factors

The influence of store environment and consumers' perceived service on consumers' attitudes toward purchasing furniture using O2O mode differed in the three different regions. Consumers in tier 1 and tier 2 cities put forward higher requirements on the environment of store experience and service quality of enterprises, and attach equal importance to them. The store environment and service quality are the evolution of the traditional business model.

In an increasingly competitive market, standards of consumers' perceptions of the physical store environment and service quality are also improved. In tier 3 cities, the store environment was not the main factor that affected consumers' attitudes toward wooden furniture consumption. They paid more attention to the presale, in-sale, after-sale, and logistics services provided by the enterprises. A hypothesis test also showed that consumers were more sensitive to the price, paid attention to the preferential strength of the merchants, and tended to have more realistic and rational consumption concepts.

According to the results of this study, suggestions are put forward to implement the O2O business mode for wooden furniture enterprises. Consumers are increasingly rational about the risk of purchasing durable products like wooden furniture from the Internet. The O2O mode can help them avoid some of the risks in the process of online shopping. Online shoppers' attitudes and intentions are not only influenced by the ease of use, usefulness, and fun of the websites, but also influenced by external factors such as customer characteristics, situational variables, product characteristics, shopping experience, and trust in online shopping (Perea y Monsuwé et al. 2004). Information flow and capital flow of O2O mode is online, whereas the logistics and business flow are offline. Therefore, the online promotional advantage of O2O should be brought into full play, including integrated web advertising, search engines, and low-cost self-media promotion to attract online

Table 5.—Conclusions of hypothesis test.

Hypothesis		Conclusions		
		Tier 1 city	Tier 2 city	Tier 3 city
Tendency of trust (H1-1)	Significant positive influence	Accept	Accept	Accept
Reference group (H1-2)	Significant positive influence	Accept	Accept	Accept
Convenience of platform (H2-1)	Significant positive influence	Refuse	Accept	Refuse
Reputation and safety of platform (H2-2)	Significant positive influence	Accept	Accept	Accept
Perceived service quality (H2-3)	Significant positive influence	Refuse	Refuse	Accept
Perceived value (H2-4)	Significant positive influence	Refuse	Refuse	Accept
Store environment (H3-1)	Significant positive influence	Accept	Accept	Refuse
Consumers' perceived service (H3-2)	Significant positive influence	Accept	Accept	Accept

consumers. Enable consumers to obtain more abundant information and service information of commodities online, attract them to experience products and services in offline physical stores, and facilitate the screening and purchase of commodities and services (Chu 2013).

The promotion of O2O mode also has distinct regional characteristics. The experience process needs to be completed offline, but the store coverage is limited. Babin and Attaway (2000) suggested that retail stores could satisfy consumers by creating a good shopping environment, such as improving service facilities, upholstery colors, patterns, and playing music, so as to increase consumers' enjoyment value. The store construction should fully consider different consumption levels, costs, service levels, and consumers' characteristics in different regions.

In O2O mode, the feedback and review systems provided by the Internet platform are the most frequently accessed online information sources that can promote consumers' tendency of trust. They help to alleviate consumers' uncertainty and risk perception related to online transactions, thereby affecting consumers' attitudes and decision-making behavior (Lea et al. 2001). The quality of reviews will influence consumers' attitudes. The higher the quality of comments, the higher credibility will be. The more specific the comments, the more satisfied consumers will feel (Racherla et al. 2012). However, negative affective content with high argument quality will reduce the purchase intention of the consumer (Ludwig et al. 2013). Online retailers should pay attention to managing the consumers' shopping environment effectively by improving consumers' reviews of the product and service (Bitner 2000). It is wise to encourage customers to describe their product experience in a vivid way that suits a particular type or product category.

Levin et al. (2003) pointed out that consumers have different preferences for shopping for different products at different stages. They have more control over online than offline, and are more aware of the risks than they are in physical stores. Chinese consumers pay more attention to the risk of personal property, so the Internet platform should pay attention to the control of risk when designing the function of online payment. Online electronic payment is the core of e-commerce development; it is a necessary step to complete online transactions, but also a bottleneck restricting the development of shopping online (Jiang and Yang 2007). Considering the characteristics of wooden furniture consumption in terms of price, quality, and transportation, consumers often tend to complete the transaction payment in two steps when shopping online. Generally, they place an order online and pay a deposit, then go to the physical store for the experience, and complete all the transaction payments after obtaining a sense of satisfaction. In design of the payment function, an Internet platform based on O2O mode needs to consider this function, and provide consumers with options of payment, such as "full transfer payment," "third-party platform payment," or "deposit + final payment."

Conclusion

This study indicates that Chinese consumers' attitudes about using the O2O mode for wooden furniture shopping were significantly influenced by the region/city tiers in which they reside. Consumers' perceptions, the reputation and safety of the Internet platform, and the perceived

service quality of the enterprise all influence the consumers' attitudes from all kinds of regions. Specifically, consumers who live in tier 1 cities are more concerned about shopping environment, whereas those who live in tier 3 cities are more inclined to the service and promotions provided by the Internet platform. Consumers in tier 2 cities are more concerned about the convenience of online shopping and the shopping environment of the physical store.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study

This study is exploratory in nature. It draws the conclusion that the difference in the consumers' attitudes in regions from different economic levels is the most significant, on the basis of the existing survey samples. However, as a limitation, the survey area is concentrated in cities in eastern China, and the selection of survey samples is not comprehensive enough. In future research, the area of investigation can be further extended to the central and western regions of China. Further research is needed to determine whether it can be repeated with other samples, and to study consumers' attitudes toward e-commerce of wooden furniture in different regions more comprehensively.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Part 1: Personal Information

Q1. Gender

A. Male B. Female

Q2. Age

A. Under 25 B. 25–34 C. 35–44 D. Over 45

Q3. Education

A. Secondary education B. Junior college C. Undergraduate D. Graduate

Q4. Identity

A. Student B. Civil servant C. Social group employee D. Corporate staff E. Business owners F. Others

Q5. Monthly average income

A. Under 3000 B. 3001–6000 C. 6001–8000 D. Over 8000

Q6. Region

A. Tier 1 city B. Tier 2 city C. Tier 3 city

Part 2: Here's a survey of your social network's shopping attitudes and your personal trust. Please choose the importance of the following options based on your actual situation:

1. Very unimportant 2. Unimportant 3. General 4. Important 5. Very important

No.	Question	1	2	3	4	5
Q7	Family and people around think that buying furniture online is a good choice.					
Q8	Most people who have purchased furniture online thought it better.					
Q9	Family and people around are not opposed to buying furniture online.					
Q10	Even if I don't know the person, I am willing to believe his opinion.					
Q11	I easily trust others					
Q12	I think most people are sincere and kind.					

Part 3: When purchasing furniture from Internet platform, please choose the importance of the following options according to your actual situation:

1. Very unimportant 2. Unimportant 3. General 4. Important 5. Very important

No.	Question	1	2	3	4	5
Q13	The quality of the furniture is guaranteed					
Q14	The network platform has a good reputation and is reassuring.					
Q15	Product description matches the actual					
Q16	Easy to find and easy to operate					
Q17	Website products are complete					
Q18	Website page design is fine and feature-rich					
Q19	Provide detailed product introduction, image and user evaluation					
Q20	Strong website stability, low login exception rate					
Q21	A variety of online payment methods, simple operation					
Q22	The same type of furniture is cheaper here.					
Q23	More website promotions					
Q24	Buying furniture from this website will get a lot of added value.					
Q25	Pay attention to the security of customer information					
Q26	Pay attention to the security of payment					
Q27	Pre-sales consultation reply in a timely, accurate and detailed					
Q28	Network platform customer service staff' attitude is good					
Q29	Various ways of communication, besides online communication, you can replied by phone or email					
Q30	Track order status, logistics information in a timely manner					

Part 4: The furniture enterprise has an experience store, please choose the following options according to your actual situation:

1. Very unimportant 2. Unimportant 3. General 4. Important 5. Very important

No.	Question	1	2	3	4	5
Q31	Store location is easy to find					
Q32	The store is located in the heart of the business					
Q33	The store area is very large					
Q34	The store's decoration is elegant and neat					
Q35	The store air flow is good, very hygienic					
Q36	The store has a full range of furniture					
Q37	The store staff has a good service attitude					
Q38	The store provides additional services, and professional home improvement designer's services.					
Q39	The enterprise provides home delivery service with fast delivery					
Q40	The enterprise provides professional transportation and installation, maintenance					
Q41	The enterprise provides guaranteed after-sales service and provides complete return and repair					
Q42	The enterprise carefully handles customer complaints					

Part 5: The following is an investigation of the attitude of buying furniture online. Please choose the one that you think is the best according to the actual situation:

1. Very disagree 2. Disagree 3. General 4. Agree 5. Very agree

No.	Question	1	2	3	4	5
Q43	Buying furniture from the internet is a good idea.					
Q44	Going to the store experience first, then going online to make a purchase decision is a wise choice					
Q45	I am willing to go to the O2O website to buy furniture.					

Appendix 2. Factor Analyses

Consumer perception	Factor load		Eigenvalues	Cumulative interpretation variance percentage	Common factors
	1	2			
Q7	0.811	0.154	2.204	37.104%	The tendency of trust (H1-1)
Q8	0.878	0.046			
Q9	0.871	0.042			
Q10	0.054	0.815	2.021	70.431%	The reference group (H1-2)
Q11	0.093	0.816			
Q12	0.073	0.812			

Internet platform	Factor load				Eigenvalues	Cumulative interpretation variance percentage	Common factors
	1	2	3	4			
Q16	0.626	0.245	0.201	0.235	3.471	19.198%	Convenience of the Internet platform (H2-1)
Q17	0.671	0.097	0.263	0.291			
Q18	0.781	0.198	0.192	0.149			
Q19	0.643	0.297	0.078	0.190			
Q20	0.668	0.091	0.336	0.104			
Q21	0.651	0.248	0.147	0.113			
Q13	0.131	0.772	0.062	0.238	3.291	37.482%	Reputation and safety of Internet platform (H2-2)
Q14	0.253	0.647	0.143	0.337			
Q15	0.112	0.746	0.165	0.246			
Q25	0.335	0.691	0.281	-0.06			
Q26	0.315	0.762	0.141	0.065			
Q27	0.271	0.336	0.681	0.203			
Q28	0.196	0.365	0.768	0.022	2.441	50.984%	Perceived service quality (H2-3)
Q29	0.217	-0.095	0.734	0.286			
Q30	0.331	0.233	0.583	0.167			
Q22	0.310	0.229	0.124	0.618			
Q23	0.194	0.182	0.226	0.819	2.371	65.191%	Perceived value (H2-4)
Q24	0.193	0.165	0.145	0.846			
Enterprise	Factor load		Eigenvalues	Cumulative interpretation variance percentage	Common factors		
	1	2					
Q37	0.692	0.287	3.303	36.475%	Consumers' perceived service (H3-2)		
Q39	0.803	0.171					
Q40	0.809	0.182					
Q41	0.821	0.051					
Q42	0.772	0.198					
Q32	0.167	0.793					
Q33	0.094	0.841	2.635	65.974%	Store environment(H3-1)		
Q34	0.146	0.827					
Q35	0.379	0.627					
Q31	0.428	0.506					
Q36	0.521	0.495					
Q38	0.478	0.442					
Consumer attitude	Eigenvalues		Cumulative interpretation variance percentage	Common factors			
	Q43	0.846			2.007	Consumption attitude	
	Q44	0.787					
	Q45	0.857					