UNITED STATES CONSUMERS' VIEWS ON READY-TO-ASSEMBLE FURNITURE

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ABSTRACT

Older consumers hold an increasing portion of the disposable income in the U.S., and marketers must increasingly recognize the buying power of this group. Ready-to-assemble (RTA) furniture has already captured a strong share of the furniture market in Europe and is experiencing strong growth in the United States. The goal of this study is to compare the attitudes and buying behaviors of older U.S. consumers to younger consumers concerning RTA furniture. Data were collected from nearly 1,500 households in the United States, and older consumers as a group were found to be more negatively disposed toward RTA furniture. They were more inclined to view price as a surrogate for quality and were much less inclined to assemble their own furniture to save money. The older consumers were not a homogeneous group; however, to appeal to them, good quality and convenience are important.

Keywords: Furniture, marketing, promotion, product development.

INTRODUCTION

The United States population is distributed across age groups such that a growing proportion of home furnishings consumers are age 50 or older. As the so-called "baby boomers" (those born from 1946 to 1964) age, the older age groups will grow faster than the general population (Anon 1987a). Increasingly, marketers have realized that although older consumers have lower income figures, they have high disposable incomes that traditionally have not been targeted aggressively (Gilman 1986; Berkman and Gilson 1986). One area that appears to have been overlooked more than others is the home furnishings segment, particularly for the furniture that is commonly referred to as ready-to-assemble furniture (Smith and Sheaffer 1988; Seymore 1987).

Ready-to-assemble (RTA) furniture was earlier termed knock-down or KD furniture for its easy assembly and disassembly. Ready-to-assemble furniture was designed and manufactured as early as the 1830s, when Michael Thonet of Prussia first created his now famous bentwood furniture (Wilk 1980).

Ready-to-assemble furniture, which is more developed and far more prevalent in Europe than in the U.S., has recently made significant gains in the U.S. furniture

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market (Plantz 1988; Scarangella 1986a) and has been called the fastest growing segment of the world's furniture market (Pepke 1988). This article focuses on the dichotomy between assembled and RTA furniture from the consumer's perspective. Furniture purchased unassembled, such that it requires at least some assembly by the final consumer to be functional, is defined as "ready-to-assemble."

IKEA, among a multitude of other furniture retailers that have flourished in the second half of this century, helped make RTA a common form of furniture throughout Europe (Colangelo 1987). In the United States, RTA furniture was estimated at 3 to 12% of the household furniture industry's 1986 shipments, whereas RTA may have represented as much as 40% of shipments in many European countries (Verity et al. 1988; Scarangella 1986b; Keane 1985).

Many marketers of RTA furniture have tried to appeal mainly to younger consumers and new householders while often appearing to overlook older consumers (Smith and Sheaffer 1988; Seymore 1987). This article compares how older and younger consumers evaluate this rapidly growing form of furniture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The older U.S. consumer: An important but hard to reach segment

The United States population is aging, with the median age increasing from 30.0 years in 1980 to 31.7 years in 1986, and it is expected to increase further to over 36 years by the year 2000 (Anon 1987b; Linden 1987a; Anon 1984). Linden (1987a) showed that households headed by persons age 50 and older represented 43% of the population in 1985, and earned 40% of all household income. Although the baby boomers are expected to increase the real income of the 35 to 49 age bracket by 88% by the end of the century, the 50+ households are projected to raise their income by 52% (Linden 1987a). In 1986, households with heads age 55 to 64 earned on average 124% of the U.S. per capita income (Linden 1987b). Consumers age 50 and older now control over 50% of the discretionary income in the United States (Schneidman 1988; Anon 1988a; Gilman 1986). In the first quarter of the next century, the baby boom generation will move into the 50+ age group, further increasing its size and income.

The aging of the population is not unique to the United States. The global population of people 60 and older is expected to increase by over 60% from 380 million in 1980 to 610 million in the year 2000 (Anon 1988b). The increase in economic influence of older consumers is probably greatest in the developed countries of western Europe, North America, and also in Japan (Lee and Lapkoff 1988; Anon 1985).

Failed approaches to the older market

Gilman (1986) points out several cases in which attempts to reach the 50+ market had surprisingly negative results. Wolfe (1987) states: "Few marketers understand older Americans well enough to hit responsive chords. In fact, corporate marketers often deliver messages that repel the over-50 group."

Failures in targeting older consumers have been attributed to an over-emphasis on the single demographic segmentation variable: age, and how this makes these consumers "so different" (Towle and Martin 1975). Older consumers still buy goods the way younger people do, i.e., based on wants and needs, rather than on

how old they are. Older people also tend to think of themselves as younger than their actual age, and their behavior is often determined more by their life experiences than by their chronological age (Wolfe 1987; Towle and Martin 1975).

Earlier research on the older consumer

Many researchers have studied aspects of the physical and cognitive characteristics and special needs of older consumers (Rahtz et al. 1988; Barak et al. 1988, French et al. 1983; Ensley 1983). Fewer have provided marketing information that could be useful in addressing the elderly market segment.

Towle and Martin (1975) clustered 209 consumers 65 and older on self-reported buying style, but found no significant differences among six clusters on the 13 demographic variables measured. Bernhardt and Kinnear (1976) compared the over 65 group to younger consumers and found that they shop more often in department stores (and less in discount stores), are less likely to have credit cards, and have different media and leisure time habits. Merrill and Weeks (1983) based a segmentation study of the elderly on a sample of campground users in Wisconsin, which limited the potential to generalize the results. In a more recent study of 2,600 consumers over age 50, six subgroups were reportedly identified (Anon 1988a). The study found that older consumers are not as brand-loyal, nor as uniform a group, as has commonly been thought (Anon 1988a). This is consistent with findings by Merrill and Weeks (1983) and Towle and Martin (1975).

Lumpkin et al. (1985) discovered in a study of older apparel consumers in the U.S. that ". . . while differences can be found across age groups, the elderly generally base their patronage decisions on the same (retail store) attributes as their younger counterparts." Consumers under age 59 place a greater emphasis on price and sales when choosing retail stores, than did consumers age 75 and older. This emphasizes the fact that older consumers often have high disposable incomes in spite of lower income levels (Berkman and Gilson 1986; Merrill and Weeks 1983). Tongren (1976) calculated imputed income for the over 65 age group to show how the greater than expected spending power of older consumers can be estimated.

Later research by Tongren (1981) suggests that older consumers are more likely to differ from younger consumers in their purchases of durable goods than of nondurables. As shown by Wascher et al. (1986), statistics indicate that durable goods purchases decline with increasing age as a percentage of personal consumption expenditures. Tongren (1981) found that over age 65 consumers desired new durable goods, but were reluctant to replace their old but serviceable products. Two general strategies for increasing purchases of durable goods under these circumstances were presented: rationalize the purchase of a new durable good or add new dimensions such as offering supplementary durables rather than replacing present goods. Tongren (1981) reported that when asked for the one item they would like to replace, ". . . only a few wanted to replace any furniture item, suggesting they are satisfied with what they have."

When is a consumer "old"?

In most studies of older U.S. consumers, "old" is defined as beginning at age 65, as this constitutes the beginning of retirement with full benefits in the U.S. (Lumpkin et al. 1985). A majority of U.S. consumers retire before they reach 65

and some expect the average retirement to be at a younger age in the future (Wascher et al. 1986). Moreover, the 1983 World Assembly on Aging defined the aged population as those 60 years and older (Anon 1985). In this study, three segments of the older population are recognized: 50–59; 60–69; and 70 and older.

The traditional model of attitudes

In traditional attitude research, it has been hypothesized that product attributes influence consumer perceptions of products, thus influencing consumer attitudes towards products and this in turn influences product choice (Bagozzi 1988; Berkman and Gilson 1986; Lumpkin et al. 1985). Further, it has long been hypothesized according to the multi-attributes model that a consumer's *belief* about a specific product attribute combines with the consumer's *evaluation* of the attribute's desirability to produce a partial attitude towards the product (Bagozzi 1988). A consumer's complete attitude towards a product is seen as the sum of the belief-evaluation combinations for each product attribute (Bagozzi 1988). Researchers have continued to debate the most appropriate methods for measuring attitudes and beliefs, but the general model finds wide acceptance and use (Lumpkin and McConkey 1984; Hoyer and Alpert 1983; Wilkie and Pessemier 1973; Cohen et al. 1972; Sheth and Talarzyk 1972; Alpert 1971; Myers and Alpert 1968).

DATA COLLECTION

To investigate consumer behavior, perceptions and attitudes regarding ready-to-assemble furniture in the United States, a nationwide survey of United States households was conducted. A sample of 2,200 households was selected to be representative of the United States population from a Consumer Mail Panel maintained by Market Facts, Inc. During June of 1988, a mail survey was used to obtain data from the households. The 1,446 usable responses were well balanced, with 47.9% female and 52.1% male respondents. Overall, the responding households were found to represent closely the United States population on most demographic variables. In a few instances, the sample appeared to vary slightly from national averages, with sampled households being slightly larger, more often married couple households, and earning a somewhat lower average household income.

RESULTS

The incidence of RTA furniture purchases declines with consumer age. Among all respondents, 32.1% purchased some RTA furniture in their most recent furniture purchase. As Fig. 1 shows, the percent of most recent furniture purchases that included RTA furniture decreased from a high of 45.1% for the under age 30 group, to 27.6 and 19.0% among the 50–59 and 60–69 age groups, and then increased slightly to 21.5% for consumers 70 and older.

Wide differences in purchasing behavior between age groups pointed to the question of whether attitudes varied or stayed the same among older consumers. Therefore, the attitudes across age groups were investigated.

Differences across age groups in attitudes relating to RTA furniture

Respondents were compared on general attitudes regarding RTA and assembled furniture, the perceived differences between assembled and RTA furniture in

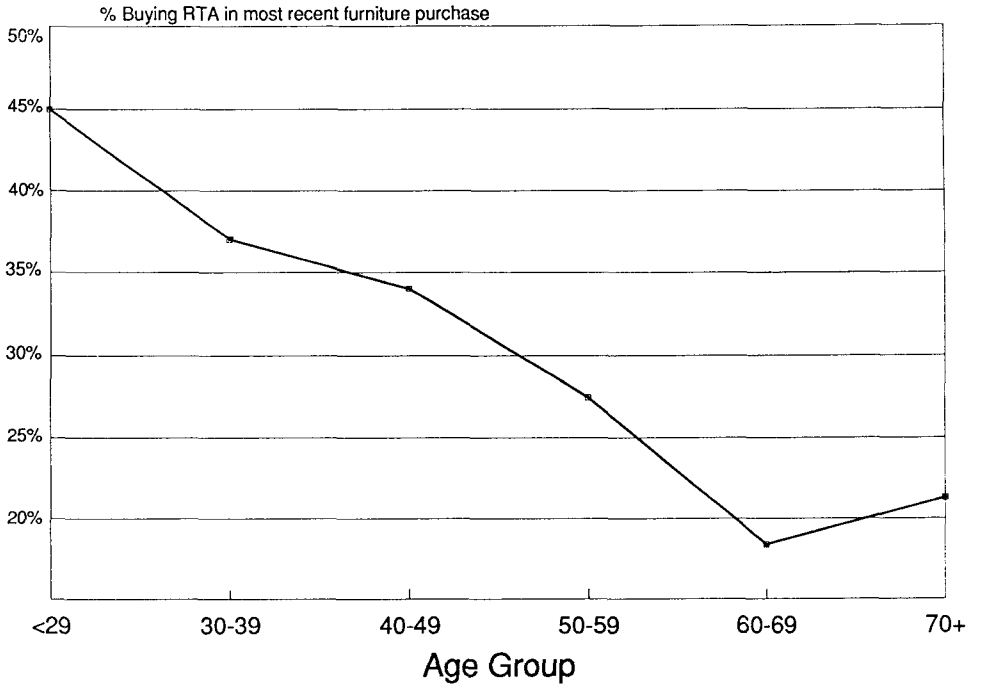

FIG. 1. Percent of U.S. consumers buying RTA furniture in their most recent furniture purchase.

delivering furniture attributes, and stated preferences for RTA versus assembled in nine categories of furniture. A multitude of differences across age groups were discovered in the response patterns.

General attitudes relating to RTA furniture

Information was gathered on consumers' agreement with ten general attitude statements relating to RTA furniture and furniture buying. Significant differences across age groups were found for seven of the ten statements (Table 1).

Most respondents expressed neutral to negative attitudes on assembling their own furniture. Respondents under age 30 were more neutral on assembling their own furniture than any other age group, and respondents aged 30 to 49 were less negative than those 50 and older. Those under 30 agreed more than those 30 to 69 years old that "once put together, I can't tell RTA from assembled."

Consumers under 30 were most neutral that "assembled furniture is not worth a higher price," and those under 40 more often agreed with "I prefer assembled, but may buy RTA to save money." Respondents age 70 and older stated more strongly than any other group that price is a good measure of quality in furniture.

It appears that older consumers more often dislike assembling RTA furniture, feel that they can tell RTA and assembled apart, and consider assembled furniture worth a higher price. Older consumers view price as a more direct indication of the quality of furniture than do younger consumers, and they appear less inclined to choose RTA furniture over assembled solely for the purpose of saving money. This is consistent with Lumpkin et al.'s (1985) finding that attractive prices influenced younger consumers more than older consumers.

TABLE 1. *General attitude variables related to ready-to-assemble furniture compared across age groups.*

Attitude variable measured	Group means[1] 1 (<29)	2 (30–39)	3 (40–49)	4 (50–59)	5 (60–69)	6 (70+)	*F*-Test probability	SNK test (alpha = 0.05)
Price is a good measure of quality in furniture	3.66	3.79	3.82	3.50	3.43	2.98	0.000	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 from 6[2] 2 from 5
I enjoy assembling my own furniture	4.15	4.55	4.75	5.32	5.43	5.25	0.000	1 from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6
I prefer assembled, but may buy RTA to save money	3.06	3.11	3.61	3.63	3.72	3.72	0.000	1, 2 from 3, 4, 5, 6
I expect to buy some new furniture within 12 months	3.17	3.69	3.88	4.49	4.85	4.91	0.000	1 from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6
Once put together, I can't tell RTA from assembled	3.50	3.88	3.88	4.03	4.06	3.95	0.008	1 from 2, 3, 4, 5
Assembled furniture is not worth a higher price	3.97	4.20	4.43	4.46	4.39	4.46	0.011	1 from 3, 4, 5
I enjoy shopping for furniture	3.27	3.58	3.59	3.82	3.69	3.50	0.048	1 from 4
I dislike waiting for furniture to be delivered to my home	3.27	3.23	3.13	3.40	3.35	3.54	0.255	N.S.
My next furniture purchase will be RTA	4.25	4.35	4.60	4.57	4.43	4.34	0.348	N.S.
I feel confident in judging the quality of furniture	2.89	2.89	2.97	2.93	3.04	3.06	0.742	N.S.

[1] Responses ranged from (1) "strongly agree" to (7) "strongly disagree," with (4) representing "neither agree nor disagree."
[2] Interpret as follows, group means 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 are significantly different from group 6 and group 2 is significantly different from group 5.

TABLE 2. *Perceived difference between RTA and assembled furniture on product attributes compared across age groups.*

Furniture attribute evaluated	Group means[1] 1 (<29)	2 (30–39)	3 (40–49)	4 (50–59)	5 (60–69)	6 (70+)	*F*-Test probability	SNK test (alpha = 0.05)
Inexpensive	5.17	5.03	4.93	4.69	4.66	4.30	0.000	1, 2, 3, from 6[2] 1 from 4, 5
Stylish appearance	3.34	3.29	3.17	2.94	2.86	2.64	0.000	1, 2 from 4, 5, 6 3 from 5, 6
Looks modern	3.62	3.70	3.67	3.44	3.21	3.17	0.000	1, 2, 3 from 5, 6
A good value	4.42	4.13	4.11	3.46	3.13	2.88	0.000	1, 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6 4 from 6
Quality construction	2.94	2.81	2.76	2.46	2.41	2.25	0.000	1, 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6
Attractive	3.32	3.27	3.11	2.85	2.59	2.46	0.000	1, 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6 4 from 5, 6
Durable	3.06	2.84	2.82	2.43	2.35	2.41	0.000	1, 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6
Quality materials	3.09	3.02	2.92	2.71	2.64	2.46	0.000	1, 2 from 4, 5, 6 3 from 6
Practical	3.93	3.82	3.86	3.59	3.34	2.96	0.000	1, 2, 3 from 5, 6 4, 5 from 6
Satisfying to own	3.62	3.53	3.42	2.90	2.83	2.49	0.000	1, 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6 4, 5 from 6
Broad style selection	3.06	2.73	2.74	2.62	2.52	2.42	0.000	1 from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Status	3.40	3.30	3.24	3.23	3.35	3.28	0.775	N.S.

[1] Responses ranged from (1) "assembled has/is more" to (7) "RTA has/is more," with (4) being "no difference."
[2] Interpret as follows, group means 1, 2, 3 are significantly different from group 6 and group 1 is significantly different from groups 4, 5.

Perceived differences between RTA and assembled furniture

Consumers' comparisons of RTA and assembled furniture on twelve attributes varied significantly across age groups for eleven of the variables, as shown in Table 2. For most attributes, all age categories were mostly neutral in agreement that assembled furniture outperformed RTA. However, older respondents agreed most strongly that assembled furniture outperformed RTA on all of the significant variables. Only in the case of 'inexpensive' did older consumers consider RTA to delivery slightly more of the attribute than assembled furniture.

Stated preference for RTA or assembled furniture

Table 3 shows that in eight of nine different furniture categories older consumers had stronger preferences for assembled furniture than younger consumers. No age group strongly preferred RTA furniture. The stated preference for assembled furniture corresponded well with the differences observed in purchasing behavior previously mentioned (see Fig. 1). Older consumers preferred assembled furniture more strongly and were less likely to have purchased RTA furniture in their most recent furniture purchase.

Attitude clusters

Cluster analysis has been widely used as an analytical tool in identifying groups of people with particular attitudes. Bahn and Granzin (1985), Saunders (1980), and Towle and Martin (1975) have used cluster analysis to identify discrete market

TABLE 3. *Stated preference for RTA and assembled furniture in nine categories of furniture compared across age groups.*

Category of furniture evaluated	Group means[1]						*F*-Test probability	SNK test (alpha = 0.05)
	1 (<29)	2 (30–39)	3 (40–49)	4 (50–59)	5 (60–69)	6 (70+)		
Dining table and chairs	2.51	2.16	2.08	1.79	1.36	1.61	0.000	1 from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6[2] 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6 4 from 5
Bedroom dresser	2.45	2.00	1.94	1.69	1.40	1.58	0.000	1 from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 2 from 4, 5, 6 3 from 5
Youth furniture	3.67	3.23	3.07	2.72	2.62	2.24	0.000	1 from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6 4 from 6
Entertainment center	4.03	3.99	3.53	3.16	2.67	2.52	0.000	1, 2 from 3, 4, 5, 6 3 from 4, 5, 6 4 from 5, 6
Kitchen table and chairs	2.80	2.59	2.49	2.00	1.78	1.96	0.000	1, 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6
Computer furniture	3.99	3.98	3.73	3.23	2.89	2.58	0.000	1, 2, 3 from 4, 5, 6 4 from 6
Microwave cart	4.26	4.38	3.96	3.46	3.38	2.92	0.000	1, 3 from 4, 5, 6 2 from 3, 4, 5, 6 4, 5 from 6
Coffee/end table	3.00	2.89	2.58	2.33	2.15	2.26	0.000	1, 2 from 3, 4, 5, 6 3 from 5
Couch and easy chair	1.61	1.51	1.59	1.45	1.33	1.49	0.143	N.S.

[1] Responses ranged from (1) "definitely buy assembled" to (7) "definitely buy RTA," with (4) being "either one."
[2] Interpret as follows, group mean 1 is significantly different from groups 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and groups 2, 3 are significantly different from groups 4, 5, 6 and group 4 is significantly different from group 5.

segments, such that people seeking similar benefits were grouped, and differences between groups were maximized. Cluster analysis was used in this study to group respondents that were alike in their comparisons of RTA and assembled furniture. The clusters were then analyzed further to determine if people with the same views were of similar ages.

Respondents clustered on attitudes regarding product form differences

Three standardized composite variables were used to group respondents into three distinct attitude groups. Factor analysis of the individual variables shown in Table 2 indicated that three underlying attitude constructs (quality, attractiveness, price) explained the responses to individual variables. Reliability analysis helped identify the variables in the proposed composite variables that appeared inconsistent across the sample, and these were excluded from the cluster analysis.

The cluster analysis was performed with SPSS[x]® using Ward's method of hierarchical clustering and the squared Euclidean distance measure between respondents and cluster means (Norusis 1985). The unstandardized cluster means on the three composite clustering variables are shown in Table 4.

Among the clusters, cluster A had intermediate means on the quality and attractiveness variables, and the highest mean on the price variable. Cluster A

TABLE 4. *Cluster means on unstandardized composite clustering variables.*

Composite clustering variable	Cluster means[1] A "Inexpensive"	B "Inferior"	C "Value"	*F*-Test probability level	Differing clusters SNK test (alpha = 0.05)
Quality	2.18	1.46	3.92	0.000	A, B from C; A from B[2]
Attractive	2.89	1.67	3.82	0.000	A, B from C; A from B
Price	4.82	2.65	4.63	0.000	A, B from C; A from B

[1] Responses ranged from (1) "assembled has/is more" to (7) "RTA has/is more," and (4) represented a midpoint with "no difference."
[2] Interpret as follows, cluster means A, B are significantly different from cluster C and cluster A is significantly different from cluster B.

essentially viewed RTA furniture as 'inexpensive,' i.e., cheaper, but not as good as assembled furniture. Cluster B had the lowest mean on all three variables, showing a consistent bias towards viewing RTA furniture as 'inferior' to assembled in all aspects, including price. Cluster C appeared the least biased against RTA with the highest mean on quality and attractiveness, and the second highest on price. Cluster C respondents saw RTA as being practically as good as assembled furniture but less expensive, i.e., RTA was a good 'value.'

The differences in product attributes between clusters corresponded with their observed buying behaviors. Respondents with the least favorable view of RTA were the least likely to purchase RTA, and conversely those with the most favorable view were the most likely to buy RTA furniture. Respondents in the 'inferior' cluster (B) saw RTA as a poor substitute for assembled, and purchased RTA in a low 17.2% of their most recent furniture purchases, while members of the 'value' cluster (C), who viewed RTA as a comparable product at a good price, bought RTA in a high 41.1% of their purchases. The 'inexpensive' cluster (A) members viewed RTA as somewhat inferior, but lower priced, and, therefore had utilitarian reasons to purchase RTA in an intermediate 33.7% of their most recent furniture purchases.

Older consumers represented in all attitude clusters

The 'inferior' cluster had a significantly higher average age at 50.8 years than the 'inexpensive' and 'value' clusters with 44.7 and 43.3 years,[1] respectively. Although a greater proportion of older consumers were in the 'inferior' cluster, older respondents were present in all three clusters. Figure 2 shows two clear trends among the clusters. The percent of respondents in each age group belonging to the 'value' cluster decreased as age increased, and similarly the percent belonging to the 'inferior' cluster increased in higher age groups. In the 50–59 age group, 24.0, 33.9 and 42.1% belonged to 'inexpensive,' 'inferior' and 'value' clusters. In the 60–69 age group, percentages were an unchanged 24.9% in 'inexpensive,' but a higher 39.9% in the 'inferior' cluster, and a lower 35.2% in 'value.' The 70 and older group continued the trend with a nearly unchanged 23.4% in 'inexpensive,' a greater 42.6% in 'inferior,' and a lower 34.0% in the 'value' cluster.

In spite of the relatively high incidence of consumers with a negative view of RTA furniture in the older groups, the oldest age group was well represented among the 'value' consumers. Some older consumers had similar attitudes to

[1] *F*-test had a probability of 0.00005, and cluster B was significantly greater than A and C with Student-Newman-Keuls procedure at the 0.05 level.

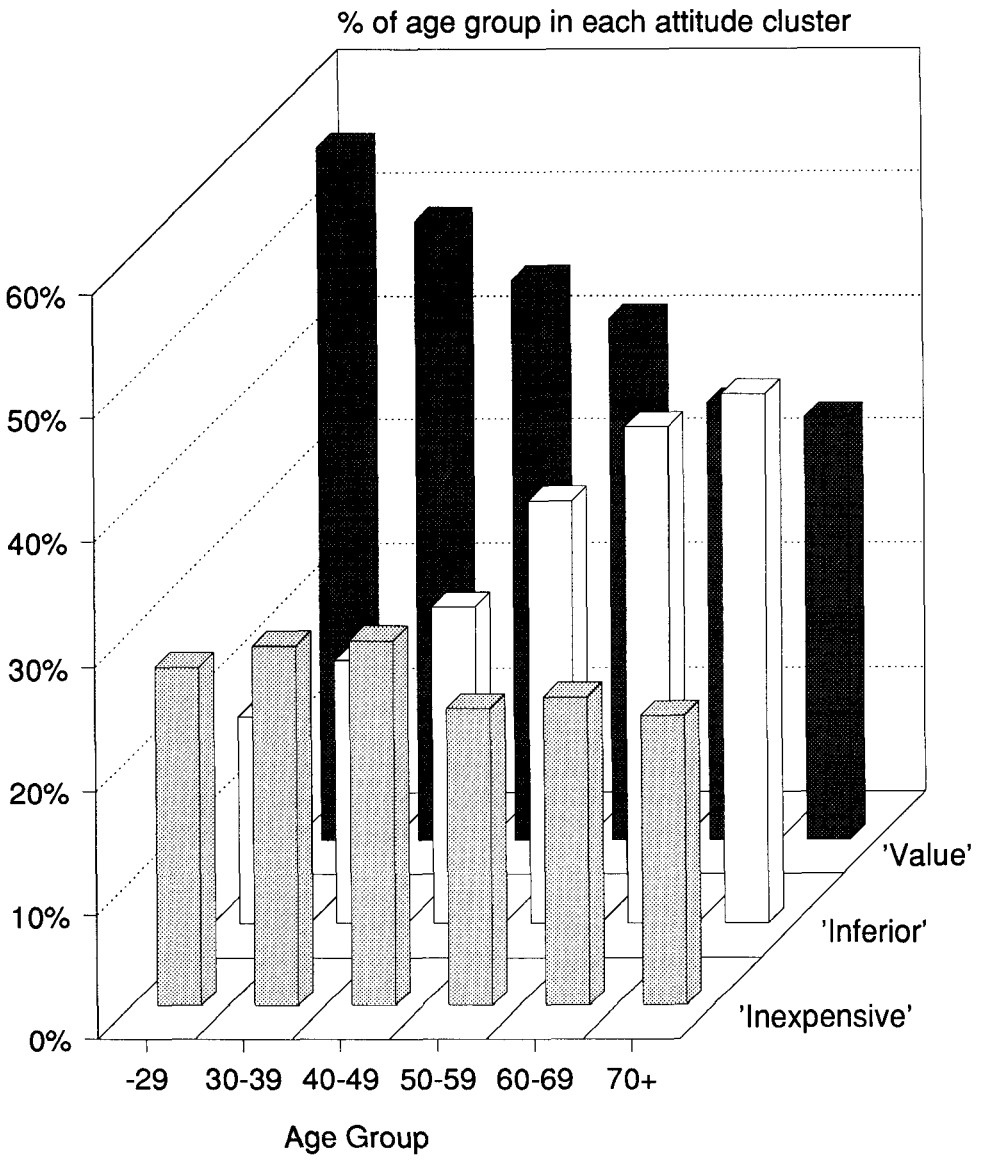

FIG. 2. Age distribution of respondents across the three cluster grouping.

those of younger respondents; however, the distribution of consumers from different attitude groups varied across age groups. In the oldest age group, fewer had the positive RTA 'value' attitudes and more felt that RTA furniture was an inferior product to assembled furniture.

CONCLUSIONS

Older consumers are an important and growing segment of the U.S. consumer market, with those 50 and older holding over 50% of the purchasing power. In spite of this, many firms have failed to develop winning strategies for this segment.

This study showed that RTA furniture has not been widely accepted by older consumers. To assess some possible reasons for this apparent lack of acceptance, attitudes among consumers were studied across age groups. It was found that significant differences in attitudes regarding RTA furniture by age group paralleled differences in purchasing behavior.

In terms of general attitudes relating to RTA furniture, most respondents were negative, with older respondents being the most negative. Consumers of age 50 and older were more reluctant to assemble their own furniture than younger consumers, and consumers 40 and older felt more strongly that assembled furniture was worth a higher price.

When consumers compared RTA and assembled furniture on specific product attributes, attitudes differed by age group on eleven of twelve attributes. Respondents in general rated RTA furniture inferior to assembled furniture; however, those age 50 and older on average assessed RTA as being more inferior.

A study of the age distributions in the three attitude clusters revealed that the higher age groups had greater proportions of members in 'inferior,' the cluster with the least favorable view of RTA furniture. Consumers in the 'value' cluster held the most favorable view of RTA, chose RTA the most often in their last furniture purchases, and were less often represented among higher age groups. Consumers of age 50 to 59 had a greater proportion of members in the 'value' cluster than in the 'inferior' cluster. Respondents aged 60 to 69 had more 'inferior' members than 'value' members, and those 70 and older had the highest proportion of 'inferior' cluster members. Thus, among the different age groups all RTA furniture attitude clusters were well represented. The proportions of cluster memberships varied across the age groups and the attitudes paralleled the RTA versus assembled furniture form choice.

Management implications

Older consumers view the relative quality, attractiveness, and price of RTA furniture more negatively than younger consumers. To increase the general competitiveness of RTA furniture among older consumers, the attitudes of older consumers in the 'inferior' attitude cluster must be changed towards those of the 'value' cluster consumers. To do this, the extent to which RTA furniture delivers the main product attributes—quality, attractiveness, and price factors—relative to assembled furniture must be emphasized.

The strategy of promoting supplementary durables rather than actual replacements as suggested by Tongren (1981) may be particularly appropriate for RTA furniture. Much of the RTA furniture sold in the U.S. today is well suited for supplementary uses, and older consumers are more likely to be receptive to supplementary furniture offerings.

Among the implications for developing marketing strategies for RTA furniture, one of the more striking may be that "responsive chords" in older consumers might be better reached with easier-to-assemble, higher priced, and better quality RTA furniture. Previous research has found that older consumers are less concerned about price than younger consumers. The older respondents to this study were more likely to view price as an indicator of quality in furniture. Older consumers more often saw RTA as inferior to assembled furniture on quality variables, and this may be due to their stronger cognitive connection between price and quality, and the generally lower price of RTA furniture.

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