

Shanghai IKEA bans old people from dating

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(via [mstrminda](#) on [pixabay.com](#))

The Swedish furniture giant IKEA has banned old people from dating at its store in Shanghai, China. Store managers decided to clamp down on what they described as 'illegal date clubs'. Since the store opened several years ago, hundreds of lonely, divorced or widowed elderly people have descended on the cafeteria in search of love and companionship. Many of them simply used the café as a meeting place and did not buy anything. Management said they occupied seats for 'extended periods,' 'spoke loudly,' 'spat on the floor,' 'flirted' and had 'quarrels and fights'. The store posted a notice saying: "From today, the restaurant will only be for people who purchase their food first."

The older clientele are up in arms over the ban. They say they have nowhere else to go. An 88-year-old IKEA regular said: "We've been to McDonald's and KFC, but there are barely any of our peers there. We feel like aliens there - surrounded by youngsters." Another frequent visitor to the restaurant said: "I guess few people know just how lonely old people are. Our kids are not around, and some visit only on weekends. I feel quite good when I come here. I talk with friends, but some elderly do meet people who become lovers." Some customers have little sympathy for those in search of love. They have complained that there is nowhere to sit because of the matchmaking groups.

Sources: [nationalpost.com](#) / [asiaone.com](#) / [independent.co.uk](#)

Writing

Restaurants should allow old people to sit in their seats to find love. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

furniture / giant / store / managers / lonely / divorced / meeting place / flirted / food / clientele / up in arms / regular / peers / aliens / youngsters / weekends / lovers

True / False

- IKEA has banned old people from dating at all of its stores in China. T / F
- Managers at IKEA Shanghai described "illegal date clubs" at the store. T / F
- Most of the elderly buy tea and cookies at the cafe. T / F
- The restaurant told customers they need to eat food before sitting down. T / F
- The elderly customers fully understand and accept IKEA's dating ban. T / F
- The elderly customers say they prefer going to McDonald's. T / F
- An aged person said few people understand their loneliness. T / F
- IKEA customers are full of sympathy for the old people. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. banned | a. pity |
| 2. clamp down on | b. took up |
| 3. descended on | c. arguments |
| 4. occupied | d. angry |
| 5. quarrels | e. put a stop to |
| 6. up in arms | f. regular |
| 7. barely | g. prohibited |
| 8. frequent | h. protested |
| 9. sympathy | i. hardly |
| 10. complained | j. arrived in hordes |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- What should IKEA do about the older people?
- Where can the older people go to find love?
- Could IKEA use the matchmaking as a business opportunity?
- How difficult is it to be old and alone?
- What is wrong with using a store's café as a meeting place?
- Should coffee shops stop people using seats for extended periods?
- What advice do you have for the IKEA managers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. managers decided to clamp | a. peers there |
| 2. divorced | b. by youngsters |
| 3. Many of them simply used the café | c. on the floor |
| 4. spat | d. nowhere to sit |
| 5. only be for people who purchase | e. or widowed |
| 6. The older clientele are up in | f. those in search of love |
| 7. there are barely any of our | g. down |
| 8. surrounded | h. their food first |
| 9. customers have little sympathy for | i. arms over the ban |
| 10. complained that there is | j. as a meeting place |

Discussion – Student B

- Is this the same as young people spending ages in McDonald's?
- What makes society a place where old people feel alienated?
- How do old people find friends in your country?
- How does this story reflect on IKEA?
- What can the old people do to help IKEA?
- Would you let the old people have your seat if you had bought a meal?
- What is the compromise here?
- What questions would you like to ask the IKEA managers?

Spelling

- The Swedish unfeiturr giant IKEA
- divorced or iwodedw elderly people
- dddncsee on the cafeteria
- ccdiepuo seats for extended periods
- had lreursaq and fights
- for people who serhapuc their food first
- The older lleetenic are up in arms
- there are alryeb any of our peers
- ruodrneds by youngsters
- Another tfeuqrn visitor
- customers have little hsyatmyp
- They have elpadmoinc

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. j	4. b	5. c
6. d	7. i	8. f	9. a	10. h

Role Play

Role A – IKEA

You think IKEA is the best place for romance. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their places. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): Disneyland, a French restaurant or the Sahara Desert.

Role B – Disneyland

You think Disneyland is the best place for romance. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their places. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): IKEA, a French restaurant or the Sahara Desert.

Role C – A French restaurant

You think a French restaurant is the best place for romance. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their places. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): Disneyland, IKEA or the Sahara Desert.

Role D – The Sahara Desert

You think the Sahara Desert is the best place for romance. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their places. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): Disneyland, a French restaurant or IKEA.

Speaking – Romance

Rank these with your partner. Put the best places for romance at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| • Disneyland | • a shopping mall |
| • a movie theatre | • a French restaurant |
| • the beach | • the Sahara Desert |
| • a train | • an IKEA restaurant |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.