

Elderly and heritage tourism: A review

S M Isa^{1,2}, H N Ismail¹ and Z I M Fuza²

¹Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Faculty of Built Environment and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), 81310 Johor, Malaysia

²Department of Tourism, Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Terengganu Branch, Dungun Campus, 23000 Dungun, Terengganu, Malaysia

Corresponding author's email: sulaiha.mohdisa@gmail.com

Abstract. The increment of the ageing population across the globe shows a rapid social change of the generations. The phenomenon that was utterly debated in the past four decades surrounding developed Western countries are now expanding the horizon of concern to developing countries too. However, an extensive review of literature identified that there exists a lack of appeal towards the elderly in heritage tourism of developing countries though they have sufficient disposable income and greater commitment compared to the past. Hence, the objectives of this review paper are to identify the elderly's characteristic and underpin the importance of heritage tourism. Review works of literature were identified through multiple sources including range of tourism databases obtained from the wide sources available in open access journals and Google Scholar (high impact journals and published books) along with tracking citations from the research literature. Result highlights socializing, health wellbeing and cosmopolitan experience as three main characteristics of the elderly while two main importance of heritage tourism are economic and social significance. Hence, a new direction towards fulfilling the needs of this market need to be considered due to noteworthy opportunities for wider visitor economy and eventually ensuring towards heritage tourism sustainability.

1. Introduction

As the current world witnessing a drastic increment of the ageing population, it is predicted that focus adjustment towards the tourism market segment will also likely to occur. This is illustrated in Figure 1 which shows that the elderly group is projected to astonishingly increased more than fivefold by the year 2050 compared to 1980, substantially surpassing faster growth than all younger age groups within the same period [1].

This phenomenon has affected nearly all sectors of society, comprising the labour and financial markets, demand for goods and services (for instance housing, transportation and social protection), as well as family structures and inter-generational ties [1]. In conjunction with this, the tourism industry is likely expected to verge on a new horizon, diverting its attention to elderlies as a new potential market segment. The shifting viewed possibly due to global demographic "megatrends" projection of population growth (fertility), population ageing (mortality), migration and urbanization that anticipated to embrace implications on the world's economic development, social development and environmental sustainability [2] will too prosper positive impact towards the tourism industry. Thus, stakeholders are on the virtue to consider potential market segment from this ageing population who, despite share common characteristics, is individually unique and different from one to another [3], is a noteworthy market that provides opportunities for the wider visitor economy.



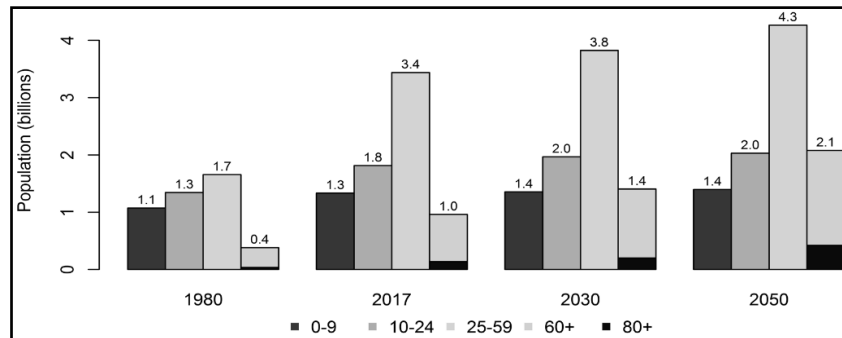


Figure 1. Global population by broad age group, in 1980, 2017, 2030 and 2050 as adopted from United Nations [1].

Since in the tourism industry tourists are characterized by divergent demand [4], they are considered as heterogeneous [4-9]. Often, the tourism and travel market segments are created by either one or a combination of, age or life stage, motive, socioeconomic status, type of travel and geography. With regards to market segments by life stage, traditionally, marketers tend to emphasis attention on younger consumers leaving some tendency to ignore the elderlies consumers [10-11]. The bias concentration is expected to occur due to the low mortality of the elderly population between 1980 until 2017 leading to a greater emphasis on younger age groups. Furthermore, up to three decades ago, the elderlies are presumed discouraged from travelling activities due to personal circumstances including cost, health, age, time constraints, family responsibilities and lack of travelling companion [12-15]. However, in a recent couple of years back, the age cycle started to display a twist in the population growth in which it shows somewhat a static level of younger population growth that is believed due to the decreasing number of fertility but projecting higher mobility that leads towards longer age life of the elderlies.

2. Literature review

2.1. Elderly

The growing population of the elderly across the globe is presently showing a rapid social change of the generations. This phenomenon was utterly debated in the past four decades surrounding developed Western countries of Europe Union and the United States [6, 14-23] but now expanding the horizon of concern to developing countries as well including Japan, Korea and Taiwan [7, 15, 24-26]. As per review works of literature, the subject on elderly appears to be discussed typically in the main disciplines of business, applied sciences and social sciences with greater attention given to the branch discipline of economics, medical, nursing, psychology, philosophy and tourism. Focusing on the context of tourism alone, reports concerning the subject of elderly are found mostly debating surrounding the subfields of either gerontology or leisure. Viewing at gerontology in tourism perspective, the context of study was identified to focus mainly on the physically, mentally and psychologically challenges faced by the elderlies. In contrast, the interest of the previous study on leisure perspective emphasizes greater on elderly's behaviour, motivation and determinants. This indicates that attention on the elderly market, as a result of population ageing, does gain interest for further investigation to how this market could assist various niche of the tourism industry in different parts of the world to gain additional visitors economy.

2.2. Population ageing

Concern on population issues and trends have been extensively discussed by the United Nations from the moment its Population Commission was established in 1946. Ever since then, intergovernmental involvement was established and knowledge regards to world population has become essential information prior to assist policymakers not just to define, formulate and evaluate goals and programmes, but also to assist in raising public awareness and support for necessary policy changes [27]. In the early phase of its presence, discussions were made with particular interest of population

and development, population and the environment, population and the family, and population and human rights. However, UN reports in the last decade starts to stress on a specific focus that emphasizes on world's population ageing, a process whereby older individuals account for a proportionally larger share of the total population. With the new shift given, it has geared not only towards the key demographic outcome of population trends during the 20th century but has also projected towards consistent distinctive trait of future populations in the 21st century [27]. As life expectancy increases, no country in the world can hide from the inevitable greying of its population and its increasing presence [15, 28]. Ever since then, it has come to be an increasingly critical issue for governments in developed countries [29] and a global driver force [30] that impacts the country's economic and social development, in addition to environmental sustainability [2]. Nevertheless, the unprecedented ageing of the world's population confirms the ongoing global increases in longevity, narrowing the mortality gap between the rich and poor countries [2].

At the global level, approximately 9% of people today are aged 65 or over [2]. Surprisingly, the report also indicates that the proportion of older persons in the world is anticipated to rise and projected to reach almost 12% in 2030, 16% in 2050 and closely to 23% by 2100. This showed that all countries and areas are experiencing close to threefold growth of population ageing [2] in the following decade with the world's average rate of population change is projected to reach 1.09% annually [31]. Looking by geographic region, after Africa (2.51%), Oceania (1.37%) and also Latin America and the Caribbean (0.94%), Asia is ranked 4th with an expected average annual rate of population change reaching 0.92% defeating Northern America (0.65%) and Europe (0.12%) regions [31]. A surprising fact is that this statistic points out that the less developed regions are now experiencing robust population growth as compared to the more developed regions. With a further focus on Asia, countries within the sub-region of East Asia and Western Asia are considered more developed compared to the countries located in South-Eastern Asia. In the case of South-Eastern Asia, the average annual rate of population changes between year 2015 until 2020 is experienced the highest in Timor-Leste (1.94%) followed by Lao People's Democratic Republic (1.53%), Cambodia (1.49%), Philippines (1.41%), Malaysia (1.34%), Indonesia (1.14%), Brunei Darussalam (1.06%), Vietnam (0.98%), Singapore (0.90%), Myanmar (0.65%) and Thailand (0.31%) [31]. Hence, this proves that the elderly will become an evolving and changing market segment [32] in the projected forthcoming especially in the surprising regions of the developing countries, and therefore, a suitable appealing target population for the global tourism industry [6].

2.3. Evolution of the elderly term

So who is the elderly of the population ageing? Since it is a very heterogeneous segment, thus there occurs significant variability among subgroups within the older age cohorts [33-34]. To date, there is a lack of consensus between previous researches regarding the elderly market [7-8, 32, 35-36]. Review on past literatures indicates extensive terms used to direct this specific market [5, 9, 37-53]. Henceforth, a summary of the evolution of term referring to the elderly in the context of tourism is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Similarly, in the context of marketing, different terms to indicate the elderly market are also identified to have been used. Previous scholars notified that marketers originally identified the ageing population group as either *the mature market* [54], *the older market* [55] or *the senior market* [56]. In contrast to both the context above, the definition has been more consistent in the research fields of gerontology, in which the term *seniors* are extensively used by previous researchers. Nonetheless, the term *seniors* only considering those who have reached the official retirement age of 65 years and older [8]. Based on the metrics of recent studies published in high indexed journals in the context of tourism and hospitality, the term *elderly* has the largest number of citations (h=176) compared to other terms. Henceforth, this term will be extensively used in this review paper.

2.4. Idiosyncratic of elderly

Besides the lacking of consensus term, previous researchers had raised concern, bearing in mind though evidence of the importance of the elderly is outlined by previous studies, that the travel businesses have generally operated with a lack of understanding on the characteristics and concerns of elderly travellers [57-59]. Hence, one needs to understand the idiosyncratic of this lucrative market prior to design and deliver appropriate heritage tourism products that appeal to their diversity of

preferences. An overview extracted from the work of Patuelli and Nijkamp further summarize the elderly's characteristics as illustrated in Table 1 [60].

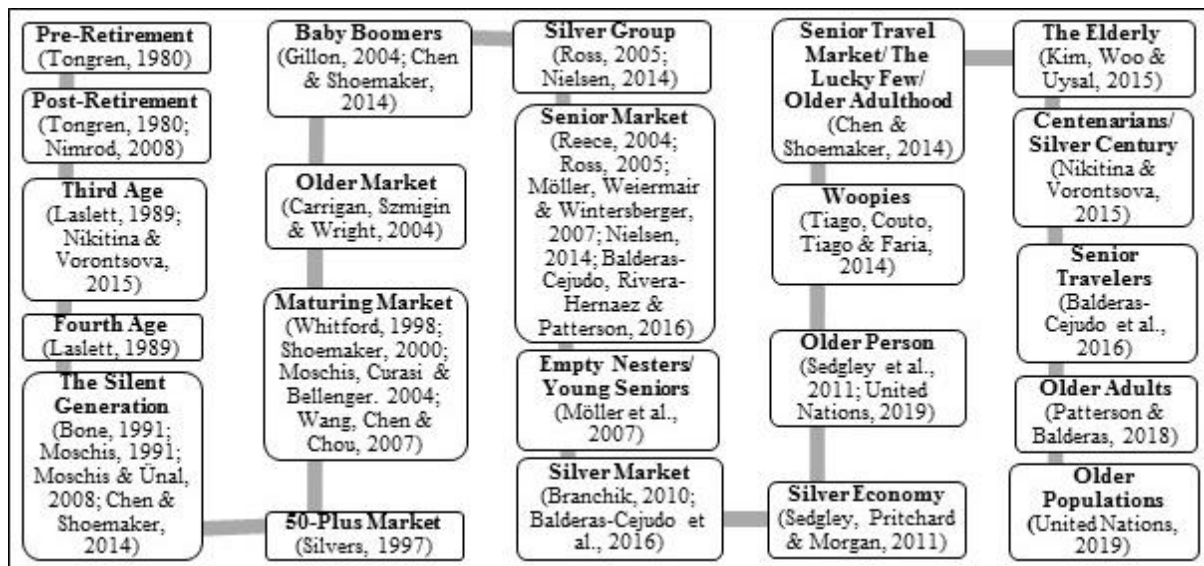


Figure 2. The evolution term of elderly

With different countries around the world have different retirement ages, the elderly's characteristic is also expected to show different preferences that lead towards changing the motivation of travelling. From the table, it highlights that elders aged between 50 and 55 are the most active travellers as compared to aged 56 and above. As their age increases, they prefer to socialize more during trips and appreciating their good health conditions before it deteriorates as they aged. Preferring cosmopolitan experiences through visiting nostalgic cultural and rural attractions as opposed to visiting parks, it shows that they favour relaxation and knowledge prior to escape from previous hectic work life. Those who retired at a later age of 60 and above seem to show a preference for ego-enhancement in which they seek novelty of something new that has not experienced before. From the numerous characteristics listed above, further applied scientific literatures conducted by other researcher have further classified the travel motivations of the elderly into several motivation drivers that fit each of the unique characteristics. Five main motivation driver was recognized which includes culture and nature; experience and adventure; relax, well-being and escape; socialization; as well as self-esteem and ego-enhancement [60].

Knowing that the elderly has larger feelings of freedom to do what they want, when they wish, the chance of taking risks and trying something that perchance they were previously were unable to do before, it is worth acknowledging that the elderly market segment does provide great opportunity to the growth and sustainability of the tourism industry, both globally and locally. However, as yet, this prospect is noticed as an important determinant merely in developed countries such as Europe where governmental programs had been implemented for years promoting senior tourism [15] such as Senior Citizens Holiday Programme and Senior Tourism Program in Spain, Senior Citizens Holiday Programme in Chile as well as Senior Health and Thermal Wellness Programme in Portugal, and benefitted from the visitors economy [61]. For that reason, developing countries should also reflex on such a golden opportunity and put forward effort of concern to expansively promote this segment in own respective country. Henceforth, in the exertion to develop an enticing strategy and gain noteworthy opportunities for wider visitor economy, stakeholders too must respond to the new demographic challenges in society and understand the travel behaviours of the elderly market prior to develop new types and forms of tourism and provide new service technologies [14] that suits the elderlies.

2.5. Heritage tourism

With the growing scale of the elderly markets, it is expected to bridge new opportunities and challenges with the global tourism sector [26]. Looking back at the elderly travellers' characteristic of

travelling motivation, one foreseeable area that may gain beneficial impact is heritage tourism. Previous scholars pointed out that both the cultural and natural is part of heritage [62]. Associations that exist between culture and heritage is believed to be made due to the obvious link in which heritage is part of the cultural landscapes of the pasts and along with the presents [63]. Besides that, cultural heritage is one of the well-known essences of tourism in many destination areas worldwide. It is relatively known for people travelling to myriads of historic sites of international renowned with the purpose of involvement is due to general mass interest, personal ties to the sites or just personal nature [64]. In contrast, heritage does not only restore sense of a time when people were more innocent and had simpler pleasures, but it also reflects the values yearned for in the presence of complex society [65]. The availability of numerous motive of travelling is assumed due to the varied classification regarding the type of heritage attraction itself as summarized in Table 2.

Table 1. Literature review about senior tourism characteristic (by age) based on culture/nature factor as adopted from Patuelli and Nijkamp [60]

Author	Year	Topic	Country	Age	Characteristic
Hawes	1988	Women	USA		Can afford a vacation
Norman et al.	2001	Travel motivations			Escape
Kim et al.	2003	National parks	Korea		Appreciating natural resources and health
Cleaver Sellick			Australia		Excited learners
Littrell et al.	2004	Travel motivations	USA		Outdoors tourism
Wang et al.	2008			50	Novelty
Chen & Wu	2009	Overseas travel	Taiwan		Relaxation
Nimrod & Rotem	2010	Benefits gained	Israel		Excitement
Prayag	2012	Travel motivations	Any		Cosmopolitan Experiences
Le Serre & Chevalier		Marketing	France		Social
Ward	2014	Travel motivations	Ireland		Escaping
Kim et al.	1996	Travel motivations			Knowledge
Backman et al.	1999	Nature-based travellers	USA		Education/ nature
You & O'Leary	2000	Travel motivations	Japan		Cultural heritage Activity
Bai et al.		Leisure activities	UK		Visiting rural/ cultural attractions
	2001		Germany		Visiting park/ rural attractions
Baloglu & Shoemaker		Motorcoach use	USA	55	Travel enjoyment
Muller & O'Cass		Subjective age	Australia		Physical stimulation
Sangpikul	2008	Travel motivations	USA Japan		Novelty & knowledge-seeking
Hsu & Kang	2009	Urban mature travellers	China		Well-being
Ahn & Janke	2011	Educational travel	USA		Health
Le Serre et al.	2013	Motivations and perceived risks	France China		Social Social/ past-oriented
Chen & Shoemaker	2014	Cohort effects	USA		To have new experience
Cleaver et al.	1999		Australia	56	Nostalgic
Lee & Tideswell	2005	Travel motivations	Korea	60	Constraints to travel
Jang & Wu	2006		Taiwan		Ego-enhancement
Carneiro et al.	2013	Social tourism	Portugal	63	Novelty & socialization
Jang et al.	2009	Travel motivations	Taiwan	65	Novelty seeking
Woo et al.	2015	Quality of life	South Korea		Novelty

Table 2. Classification type of heritage attraction as adapted from Timothy and Boyd [62]

Type of heritage attraction	Characteristic / example	Author & Year
Natural	Associated with protected areas (Eg. national parks)	Dearden & Rollins (1993); Boyd (1995); Butler & Boyd (2000)
Living cultural	Fashions, food, customs	Boniface (1995); Nuryanti (1996); Richards (1996); Butler & Hinch (1996)
Built	Historic cities, cathedrals, monuments, castles	Ashworth & Tunbridge (2000)
Industrial	Elements of a region's past that were influential in its growth and development (eg. coal, textiles)	Edwards & Llurdés (1996); Jansen-Verbeke (1999)
Personal	Aspects of regions that have value and significance to individuals/groups of people (eg. cemeteries, religious sites)	Timothy & Boyd (2003)
Dark	Places of atrocity, symbols of death and pain, elements of the past some would prefer to forget	Lennon & Foley (1999)

Traditionally, heritage tourism has continued to grow even in times of recession [66]. Even after 2 decades, heritage tourism has grown as a result of higher levels of education, more income, growing awareness of the world, globalisation process, technology, effects of media and telecommunication as well as new types of heritage attractions [62]. A surge to preserve everything from the past is believed to lead towards heritage tourism sustainability. Feasibly, [67] explained four interrelated areas of significance in heritage namely economic (value offers in terms of expenditures of visitors to sites), social (personal and collective identity that people and society have), political (reinforcing what is conserved) and scientific significance (national parks and protected areas ecosystem). However, through a preliminary Meta-Analysis conducted suggest that the importance of travel motivation to cultural related heritage tourism is expected to diminish over time [60]. One shocking evidence is perhaps due to the heritage market is usually younger (young generations) than that of other tourism types [62]. Thus, this brings a concern to the sustainability of one of the oldest form of tourism. One possible solution is to reach out to the attentiveness of the ageing population. Hence, stakeholders of heritage tourism should consider the phenomenon of the rapid growth of the elderly prior to providing intriguing touristic product that fits all elderlies in every country [15].

3. Methodology

Reviews of literatures was identified through multiple sources including range of tourism databases obtained from the wide sources available in the open access journals from institution subscription, tracing full text scholarly literature via Google Scholar's freely accessible web search engine that indexed published journal in Tourism and Hospitality disciplines, as well as other related online articles via Google web search engine. Selected keywords in previous research papers were identified and used to extract further related online articles. Besides that, several printed books available in the institution's library open shelf access were also reviewed.

4. Findings

The number of Elderly Tourism publications shows there is a growing interest in the recent years, as the ageing population is projected to increase fivefold by the year 2100. This signals the shift of attention to the elderly group due to the higher projection of mortality rates across the world. In the subfields of leisure tourism, five main motivation drivers were recognized, namely, culture and nature; experience and adventure; relax, well-being and escape; socialization; as well as self-esteem and ego-enhancement. Meanwhile, four interrelated areas of significance in heritage were specified which are economic, social, political and scientific significance.

5. Research Limitations

The major limitation of this study is the overview merely derived from accessible databases only either a full text or abstract. Besides that, the number of elderly terminologies and the major focus of leisure tourism instead of heritage tourism have led to limited extensive reviews. Meta-analysis tool is expected to make a better comparison between references of relevant articles and portrays further accurate and comprehensive detail about Elderly Heritage subject.

6. Value

This paper revealed the various terminologies related to the elderly and their characteristics as well as highlighting the importance of this market towards heritage tourism sustainability. The results aimed to appeal to the interest of various stakeholders to consider providing tourism activities and facilities that are desired by the elderly, a new potential heritage tourism market segment.

7. Conclusion

Development of technologies aimed at the preservation of health, as well as trends in the quality of life leads to the fact that many elderly do not experience significant health problems [14]. Perceive themselves to be increasingly self-confident, this group feels younger in age and outlook, more in control of their lives, increasingly self-confident [68]. As a result, interest to travel is still at heart. Due to that, this market is demanding for products and services that able to cater to their needs, preferences and insights [69]. Though retiring from work is one of the major transitions in later life, however, it signifies as an opportunity for a new beginning [70]. They devote their additional free time to leisure interests [71-72], place tourism higher in their priorities [73] and more obligation-free than older people in the past [74-75]. Hence, the opportunity to travel seems almost likely the “essence of retirement” [76] as there are no limitations on the timing of travel and the duration of stay any more. Timothy and Boyd [62] emphasized that heritage is characterized by two seemingly contradictory phenomena; the unique and the universal. Tourism development plans must not only maintain unique attributes to be attractive but also heading forward to tourism destination sustainability. Simultaneously, the heritage sites should maintain universal meaning prior to being shared and valued by different visitors all over the world. In future, stakeholders, local authorities, local tourism businesses and entire communities are expected to benefit from the elderly tourists. Therefore, a new direction towards fulfilling the needs of this market should be considered to poses noteworthy opportunities for wider visitor economy and ensuring towards heritage tourism sustainability.

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