INVESTIGATE THE POTENTIAL DEMAND OF CHINESE SENIOR TOURISTS IN THEIR DECISION MAKING TO TRAVEL

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ABSTRACT

The ageing population was a common phenomenon in the majority of countries in the world after baby boomer generation. Driven by the size of the baby boomer generation, population ageing is likely to affect the future choice of tourism activities and destinations. As the baby boomers retire, their demand patterns and preferences will grow in significance and will strongly influence the future structure of tourism product development. Senior or elderly market in all industry is popular because their high demand, senior tourism is already not a new concept introduced, it have been a palmy industry for the economic growth. The aim of the research is to identifying the senior tourism market and their profiles, preferences, and motivation, to analyze the potential demand patterns among different senior tourists group, as well to investigate the market strategies to transfer the potential demand into effective demand. Thus, a total of 100 respondents have been selected through purposive sampling technique where most of them are from older population between 55 - 70 years old. The finding show that senior tourist have different tourism preference based on their characteristic, there are the high demand for special tourism service and product to meet the demand of senior tourist. Therefore, this study contributed investigate the senior traveler's motivation and travel preference, in further to analyze their tourism demand.

ABSTRAK

Populasi penuaan adalah fenomena yang umum di kebanyakan negara di dunia setelah generasi boomer bayi.Driven dengan ukuran generasi boomer bayi, penuaan penduduk kemungkinan akan mempengaruhi pilihan wisata masa depan dan tujuan. Apabila bayi boomer bersara, corak dan keinginan permintaan mereka akan menjadi semakin penting dan akan mempengaruhi struktur pembangunan produk pelancongan pada masa akan datang. Pasaran senior atau tua di semua industri adalah popular kerana permintaan tinggi mereka, pelancongan senior sudah bukan satu konsep baru yang diperkenalkan, ia merupakan industri yang sangat baik untuk pertumbuhan ekonomi. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti pasaran pelancongan kanan dan profil, keutamaan dan motivasi mereka, untuk menganalisis corak permintaan yang berpotensi di kalangan kumpulan pelancong yang berlainan, serta menyiasat strategi pasaran untuk memindahkan permintaan yang berpotensi menjadi permintaan yang berkesan. Oleh itu, seramai 100 responden telah dipilih melalui teknik pensampelan purposive di mana kebanyakannya adalah dari populasi lebih tua antara 55 - 70 tahun. Penemuan ini menunjukkan bahawa pelancong senior mempunyai keutamaan pelancongan yang berbeza berdasarkan ciri-ciri mereka, terdapat permintaan tinggi untuk perkhidmatan pelancongan dan produk khas untuk memenuhi permintaan pelancong kanan. Oleh itu, kajian ini memberi sumbangan menyiasat motivasi pelancong dan keutamaan perjalanan pengembara, dan seterusnya menganalisis permintaan pelancongan mereka.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CNCA	-	Certification and Accreditation Administration of the People's Republic of China
WTO	-	World Tourism Organization
FOH	-	Front-of-House
US	-	The United States
PRC	-	Plan for Enhancing the Competitiveness
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Science
UTM	-	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

LIST OF SYMBOLS

N - Population size

e - The level of precision

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The aging population in the world has been a significant phenomenon all over the world, the overall demand of senior market was graduated increased from the baby-boomer age. This dissertation examines deeply about the senior tourist demand in the travel decision-making process. Generally, the chapter began with background of the study and the overview of senior tourism, to analyze the research gap and followed by the problem statement. Next, there also problems statement been identified. Finally, the research objectives were addressed in the following sections of the study.

1.2 Background of Study

Population aging is an inevitable phenomenon in nowadays. Globally, the number of older persons is growing faster than the numbers of people in any other age group. According to data from World Population Prospects: the 2015 Revision (United Nations, 2015), the number of older persons has increased substantially in recent years in most countries and regions, especially those aged 60 years or over.

Moreover, the aging populations in developing countries more significant. The growth of the population aged 60 years or over in the developing regions is more accelerated than those developed regions (United Nations, 2015). Consequently, today's developing countries must adapt much more quickly to ageing populations. Especially for some Asian countries including Japan and China, Japan is home to the world's most aged population, 33 percent were aged 60 years or over in 2015. Followed by China, due to China's large population base, the total number of elderly

people has always been at the top of the world, CNCA emphasized that the Chinese senior market will be the largest market as well as the demand.

	Persons aged 60 years or over (millions)				Percentage change		Distribution of older persons (percentage)			
	2000	2015	2030	2050	2000-2015	2015-2030	2000	2015	2030	2050
World	607.1	900.9	1402.4	2092.0	48.4	55.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Development groups										
More developed regions	231.3	298.8	375.2	421.4	29.2	25.6	38.1	33.2	26.8	20.1
Less developed regions	375.7	602.1	1027.2	1670.5	60.3	70.6	61.9	66.8	73.2	79.9
Other less developed countries	341.9	550.1	938.7	1484.9	60.9	70.6	56.3	61.1	66.9	71.0
Least developed countries	33.9	52.1	88.5	185.6	53.8	70.0	5.6	5.8	6.3	8.9
Regions										
Africa	42.4	64.4	105.4	220.3	51.9	63.5	7.0	7.2	7.5	10.5
Asia	319.5	508.0	844.5	1293.7	59.0	66.3	52.6	56.4	60.2	61.8
Europe	147.3	176.5	217.2	242.0	19.8	23.1	24.3	19.6	15.5	11.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	42.7	70.9	121.0	200.0	66.1	70.6	7.0	7.9	8.6	9.6
Oceania	4.1	6.5	9.6	13.2	56.2	47.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6
Northern America	51.0	74.6	104.8	122.7	46.4	40.5	8.4	8.3	7.5	5.9
Income groups										
High-income countries	230.8	309.7	408.9	483.1	34.2	32.0	38.0	34.4	29.2	23.1
Upper-middle-income countries	195.2	320.2	544.9	800.6	64.0	70.2	32.1	35.5	38.9	38.3
Lower-middle-income countries	159.7	237.5	393.9	692.5	48.8	65.9	26.3	26.4	28.1	33.1
Low-income countries	21.2	33.2	54.0	114.8	56.2	63.0	3.5	3.7	3.9	5.5

Figure 1.1 Population aged 60 years or over and aged 80 years or over for the world, development groups, regions and income groups, 2000, 2015, 2030 and 2050(Data source: United Nations (2015). World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision.）

The United Nations has recognized the fact that the older generation are growing at a rapid rate, and have estimated that over two billion people will be aged 60 years and over by the year 2050. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2014), the population of mainland China reached 1.36 billion, indicating an increase of 7.1 million over that of the previous year. The labor force (i.e., people with ages between 16 and 59) considerably decreased to 915 million in 2014, whereas the number of seniors (i.e., people with ages 60 years or above) gradually increased and constituted 15.5% of the entire population. The trends in population aging are expected to persist until at least 2050. As the population ages, relevant industries also flourish. According to the "China Report on the Development of the Silver Hair Industry" (China National Committee on Aging 2014), the senior market contributed US$652 billion in 2014, accounting for 8% of the GDP. The senior market is expected to

flourish continuously until 2050 and generating US$17 trillion or a third of the Chinese economy.
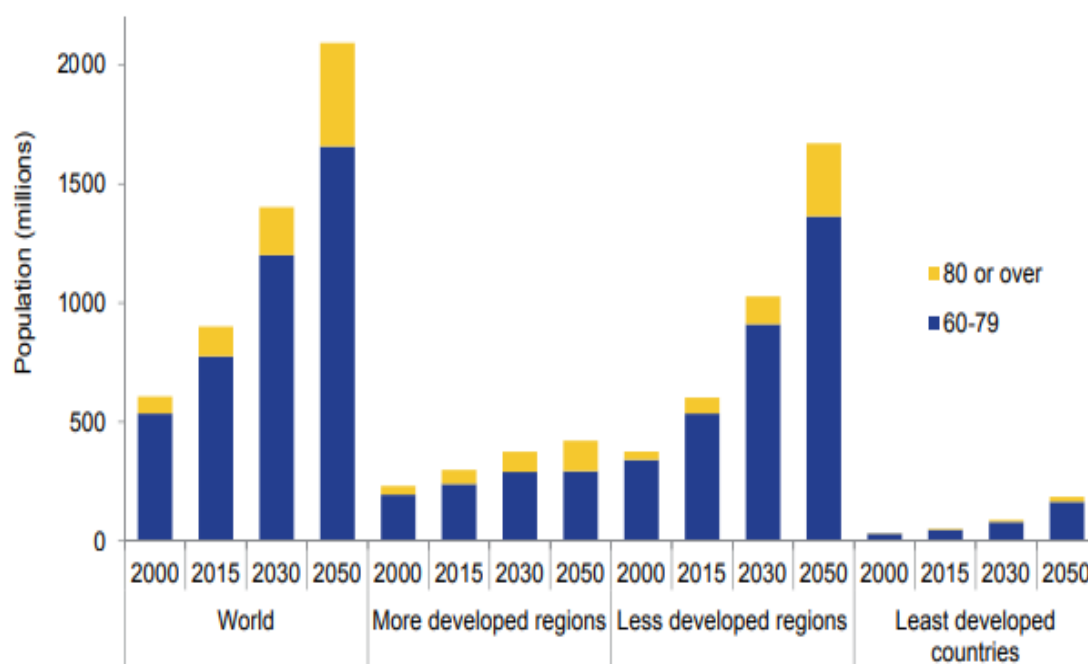
Figure 1.2 Population aged 60-79 years and aged 80 years or over by development group, 2000, 2015, 2030 and 2050.(Data source: United Nations (2015). World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision)

Because the significant increase of senior group market, not only the tourism industry, all the economy activities were very active in senior market and have low barrier to enter the business, so it is very necessary to investigate the senior tourists market and to find the best way to meet the need.

1.3 Problem Statement

Due to the increasing number of aging persons in modern society, the senior, mature, gray, silver, or elderly population (as it is variously referred to), is projected to be one of the most important segments for the tourism industry in the coming three decades (Alén, Nicolau, Losada, & Domínguez, 2014; Oliveira, Brochado, & Correia, 2018; Wijaya, Wahyudi, Kusuma, & Sugianto, 2018). The benefits expected to be accrued from the senior tourism market will also impact the hospitality sector where senior tourists will soon constitute one of the largest prospective market segments for the hotel, restaurant, and shopping industries (Bai, Jang, Cai, & O'Leary, 2001; Burritt, 2001; Caber & Albayrak, 2014; Chen, Liu, & Chang, 2013; Huang & Tsai, 2003). A report by the United Nations (2015) projects that by the year 2050 adults in the developed world will constitute one third of the population structure from a current one-fifth position.

Most developed countries have aging populations, and consequently seniors represent a growing market for the tourism economy (World Tourism Organization, 2013), which reflecting that the aging population are richer with good health and they have desire to travel, the senior or "grey" tourism segment gradually become a very significant part in tourism market. Most previous research focused on descriptive issues including the travelers' profiles, preferences, and behavioral intentions, and tended to focus on the differences and similarities between senior travelers and travelers from other age groups (Bai et al., 2001; Batra, 2009; Boksberger & Laesser, 2009; Cleaver et al., 1999; Jang & Wu, 2006; Patterson, 2006; Sellick, 2004). There are little research in several Asian countries to study this potentially lucrative market segment, lack of comprehensive study about their potential demand patterns.

The expansion of Chinese senior tourism market depends not only on the large number of old population in China, but also on the elderly demographic change in the old population. Recently, the characteristics of senior travelers have become an important area of interest because of the market size and its potential for growth senior tourists. Senior tourists are already one of the most important market segment to the tourism industry because of the increase number in size and wealth (Adarsh Batra,

2009). Overall, China's elderly tourism market is an important part of China's overall tourism market, the demand for tourism products and services has been increased significantly.

As the number of aging populations increased in recent decades, today's seniors are healthier and more affluent than seniors were in previous generations (World Tourism Organization, 2013). Most of senior people are desire to travel in different purpose, the demand of senior tourists market increased. Tourism industry became one of the most important service export for the most world economies. Since the World War II, the number of travelers and the geographic spread of their movements has continuously increased (World Tourism Organization, 2013). For all the above reasons, the senior travel market has become an increasingly important area of interest to hospitality and tourism agents (Huang & Tsai, 2003), and also to tourism researchers.

In the context of a competitive environment, consumer behaviors today changed a lot because of rapid technological transformations, and aging populations. Tourism sales and services are no exception, and tourism operators need to adapt quickly to the changes occurring in tourism markets. According to the Glover and Prideaux (2008), population ageing has been identified as a critical element of demographic change which is a key driver for future consumer demand. Driven by the size of the baby boomer generation, population ageing is likely to affect the future choice of tourism activities and destinations. As the baby boomers retire, their demand patterns and preferences will grow in significance and will strongly influence the future structure of tourism product development.

The senior tourist segment is still considered very new; therefore, there is not much literature that addresses their issues. This leads to a dearth of a description of the concept, as there is no clear definition of it or agreement by authors (Chen, 2009; Le Serre, 2008). This lack of consensus highlights its fragility and its impact on two key issues: from a theoretical view, the lack of a conceptual framework to research the behaviour of the elderly, and from an applied perspective, the lack of suitable tools to identify the senior consumer (Le Serre, 2008). This phenomenon is clearly reflected when analyzing the literature.

From all above, it is necessary to study the senior tourists' travel motivations and preference, decision-making patterns, In order to analyze the characteristics of senior tourists' needs in travel.

1.4 Aim of Study

The aim of the research is to address this research gap by identifying the senior tourism market and their profiles, preferences, and motivations. To analyze the potential demand patterns among different senior tourists group. To investigate the market strategies to transfer the potential demand into effective demand.

1.4.1 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

(a)   To identify the senior tourists' travel motivations and preference based on their segmentation.

(b)   To analyse the potential demand in different subgroups of senior tourists in China.

(c)   To investigate the market and product strategies according to the potential-effective demand analysis.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions of the research are:

(a)   What is the senior tourists' travel motivations and preference, decision-making pattern based on their segmentation?

(b)   What is the potential demand in different subgroups of senior tourists?

(c)   What is the market strategies according to the potential-effective demand analysis?

1.6   Background of Chinese Aging Population

China has undergone rapid demographic change over the past three decades. Because of the fast economic growth and strict family planning policy, China's fertility rate has been declining in the past three decades. As well as a significant decline in the death rate during the 1960s and 1970s. Furthermore, average life expectancy at birth has substantially increased - from 66 years to 73 years in the last three decades. The result of the above mentioned trends has been rapid ageing of the population. The World Bank (2008) announced that people aged 65 and above accounted for 8.1 per cent of the country's total population in 2007.

During the past three decades China has undergone a rapid demographic transition. Strict family planning policies implemented since the 1970s, dubbed the "later, longer, and fewer" campaign, encouraged later marriage, a longer interval between births and fewer children. In urban areas married couples were allowed to have one child, the famous "one child policy". In many provinces, rural couples were allowed to have their second child after a certain interval if the first child is a girl.

As Figure 1 shows, in the 1960s China had both high crude death rates and high birth rates, typical features of a country before a demographic transition. Since the end of the 1970s, China has achieved significant economic growth with crude death rates declining and remaining at a low level since the 1980s. At the same time, birth rates have been decreasing, which makes China a country with low fertility rates and

low mortality rates. In 2008 the crude birth and death rates were 12.14‰ and 7.06‰ respectively and the natural growth rate only 5.08‰.

Both the strict population control policy and economic development have played an active role in the decline of fertility, making it possible for China to experience within 30 years a demographic transition that took more than a hundred years in most industrialized countries. China's population growth rate has been consistently below 10‰ since 1998, with a further decline from slightly above 6‰ in 2003 to 5.08‰ in 2008(National Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

The changing age structure will continue to shape future population dynamics. Various predictions of China's population suggest the trend will continue. While total population is likely to increase, reaching its peak in the next two decades, the age structure of the population – which is one of the main determinants of labour supply and ageing in the long run – is set to reach a turning point in the next decade. As Table 1 shows, there is a decreasing share of children in the population over the next decade and an increasing share of elderly, while the population of labour age rises until it peaks in 2016 at 1 billion and then decreases after 2016. Those aged 64 and above will account for more than 10 per cent of the total population after 2016.
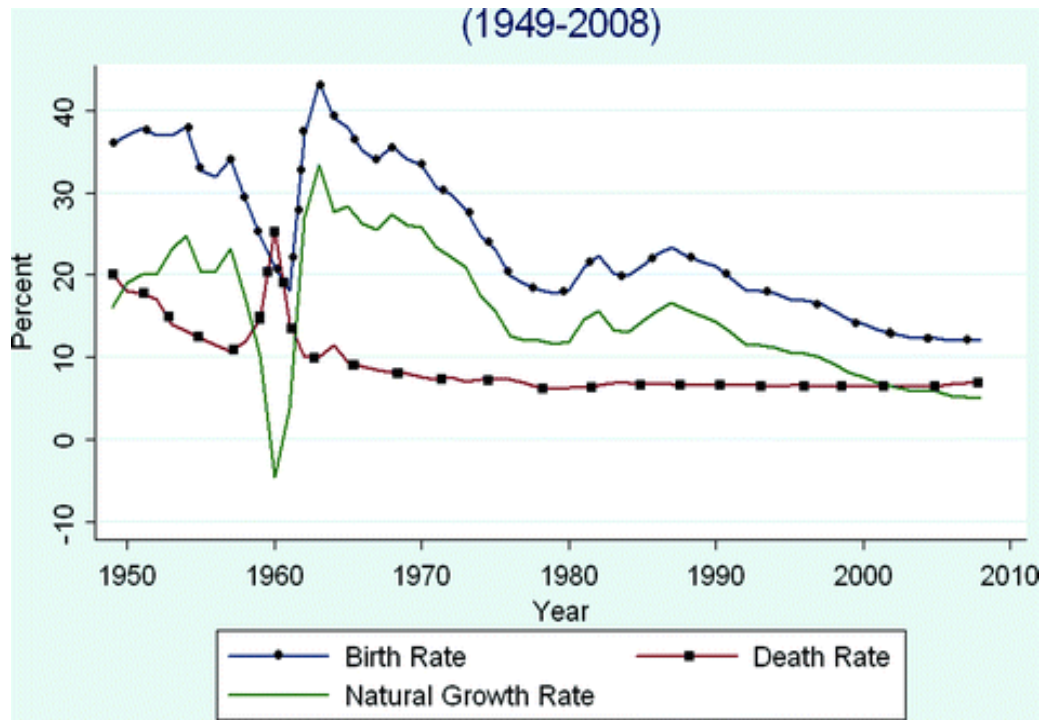
Figure 1.3   Changing patterns of China's population (1949 - 2008). (Sources:
China Statistical Yearbooks (various years), China Statistics Press

1.7   Conceptual Framework

      To analyse the senior tourist's traveling preferences and motivations, as well as the potential demand of senior tourist, this research adopted conceptual framework as follow. As the population ages, the characteristics of the older generations become more predominant in the society than those of the younger generations. Individual factors, such as family structures, employment, education, health status, travel experience and generational values, influence individual tourism demand. An increasing number and proportion of older individuals in a society suggests that the older generations' consumption patterns and preferences will have a significant influence on overall tourism demand. An ageing population is likely to create changes in the patterns of demand for the choice of activities and destinations. As a consequence, tourism demand is likely to change over time. There are five variables: time, family, health condition,money and personal own interest which are the main reason which influencing the potential demand in senior tourism market, following are the detail framework as Figure 1.4.

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