

A STUDY OF MATURE TRAVELLERS' BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

This research aims to identify mature traveller behaviour and the influential factors on the satisfaction to fill in a research niche. This study is based on 132 responses collected from mature people (those aged over 50s) in various areas in Glasgow, United Kingdom. The final regression model of satisfaction shows that cost, safety, convenience, time, medical facilities and shopping and recreation are all significant related to mature traveller's satisfaction. This paper adds to the literature assessing the challenges of mature traveller research.

Keywords: Mature consumer, satisfaction, motivation, travel barriers, travel destination choice

INTRODUCTION

The proportion of mature consumers in the United States and in most other developed and developing nations is increasing and their financial power is growing faster than that of most other age groups (Moschis, 2003). In most developed and developing countries, people of age 55 and above possess a relatively large share of discretionary income as their investments in home and family have been made and their children no longer depend on them (US Department of Commerce, 1998). Mature people make up a most important market for the tourism both in number of trips and magnitude of expenditures. Many of them have the time to travel and are willing to spend a significant amount of their savings. Hence, it is the market that cannot be overlooked.

At the present time, we are faced with a demographic transition on a worldwide scale and this is especially true for developed nations. This can be resulted from three main reasons. Firstly, birth rates have decreased, reducing the percentage of young people in the population. Secondly, over the course of the previous century, increased life expectancy has added about 20 years to the average person's life span, therefore increasing the number of senior citizens.

Finally, the aging of the post war baby-boom generation will increase a disproportionate figure of older people to the population by the 2020s (Kressley, 2005). In other words, there are more elder people nowadays than there have been at any time before. Furthermore, this trend will be even more accelerated. There is approximately ten percent of the world population in aged 60+ at the moment. By 2050, this figure will reach twenty percent (Foscht et al. 2005). Moschis (2003) also mentions that there are about 600 million populations over the age of 60 globally. The number is expected to reach 2 billion by year 2050. The demographic changes have raised discussions and questions about the economic implications. Nevertheless, this transition is an opportunity for marketers.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study plans to discover mature traveller behaviours and the significant factors on the satisfaction. More specifically, the objectives of this research are as follows. (1) To uncover underlying factors of travel motivations, barriers and satisfaction. (2) To identify the relationship between travel motivations, barriers and satisfaction factors. (3) Modelling tourism satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of mature consumers

There is lack of agreement regarding the definitions of “mature consumers” among academic scholars and when “later life” starts. Since people do not usually act or look as their age. It seems necessary to use an arbitrary age and even chronological definitions need to be placed in a suitable perspective. For instance, marketers of nursing home usually use a higher age limit than marketers of travel and leisure industry. For practical purpose, practitioners target the mature consumer (Age Concern, Saga) using a lower age boundary, 50. Moreover, there is a consensus of emergence that “later life” begins at 50. Thus, the “mature travellers” is defined as people over 50 years old in this paper.

Travel motivation

Tourists are at the heart of the tourism industry. If the industry continues to grow as projected, it is an essential issue that tourism professionals who are responsible for serving the tourists’ needs to understand tourists’ needs and behaviours. There have been a significant amount of research focusing on understanding why individuals travel and how they reach specific travel decisions (e.g., Hagan & Uysal, 1991). From the research, a number of motivations to travel have been identified such as rest and relaxation, challenge, escape from daily stresses, the need for social interaction, stimulation, to visit family and friends, education and learning.

Moutinho (2000) states that, motivation is a feeling of need or a condition that drives an individual toward certain types of action that are seen as likely to lead to satisfaction.

Travel barriers

In addition to understand why people decide to travel, it is crucial to know what factors may act as barriers and obstacles for travellers (Gladwell & Bedini, 2004). As Kim and Chalip (2004) indicate that even a strong motivation to an event may not be sufficient to generate travel to attend, especially when long distance international journey is needed. Constraints and perceptions of constraint play an important role in the leisure choices (Jackson & Scott, 1999). Um and Crompto (1992) find that monetary costs and risk (particularly health and safety) were perceived as important obstacles to travel. Some of the main constraints to travel are lack of time, financial limitations, poor health, age perception, disability, safety/security concerns, and a lack of information on where to go (Blazey, 1992). Elder people are usually more constrained by environment, health and finances (Romsa & Blenman, 1989). If the motivation to travel is strong enough, these obstacles may be negotiated. However, the barriers may still have the potential to influence destination choices and travel (Goeldner, Ritchie, & McIntosh, 2000).

Travel destination choice

Papatheodorou (2001) states that most of destinations choice models follow a time-series, single-equation approach whereas in a more advanced context a number of demand systems is also estimated. In general, the dependent variable (usually the number of arrivals in a particular destination) is regressed on the tourist's disposable income, a group of cost factors for the examined area and its competitors, such as prices of local tourist products, transportation costs, and exchange rates (Johnson & Ashworth, 1990; Sheldon, 1990). In addition, the inclusion of lagged variables or of a time trend (Martin and Witt, 1988) captures dynamic elements unless these are explicitly modeled (Syriopoulos, 1995). Kim and Chalip (2004) recognize that events have become an increasingly significant component of destination marketing. Events have been used to increase visitation (Light, 1996), decrease the seasonality of tourist flow (Ritchie & Beliveau, 1974), raise a destination's position in the tourist market (Brown, Chalip, Jago, & Mules, 2002), and improve destination development. Price is also generally regarded as a main determinant of demand. Tourism has two price elements: the cost of travel to the destination and the cost of living for tourists in the destination. Previous researches where econometric forecasting models have been developed for international tourism demand usually take the consumer price index in a nation to be a proxy for the cost of tourism in that country due to lack of appropriate data (Martin & Witt, 1987).

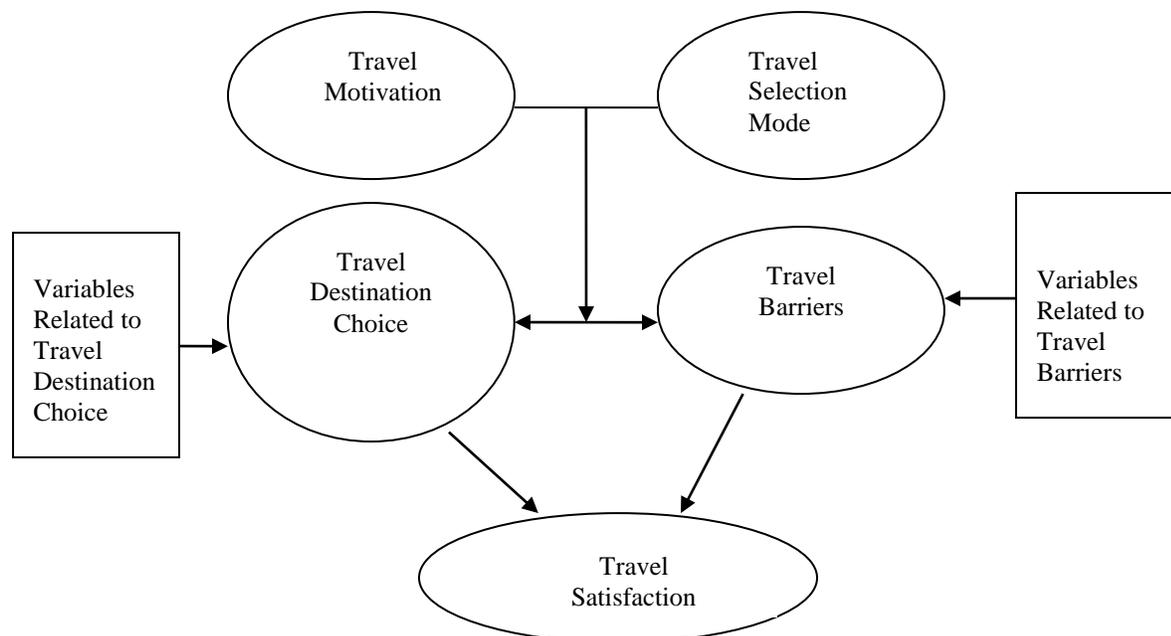
Tourism satisfaction: conceptual background

Tourism scholars have been interested in measuring the overall levels of tourism satisfaction with their experiences in particular destinations and satisfaction with specific attributes at service encounter level, for example, at an attraction or in accommodation (Foster, 2000). It has been generally recognized that tourism satisfaction standard can be attributed to different destination attributes including tangible products, prices, intangible service quality and local people's attitude (Qu & Li, 1997). Service providers at tourism destinations need to focus also on supplementary services as they will impact on the tourist's overall level of satisfaction as well. Hence, travellers' satisfaction with their experience in a particular destination includes all activities tourists participate in while staying at a destination, and their perceptions of pricing and service quality (Augustyn & Ho, 1998). Undoubtedly, understanding tourists' satisfaction standards with and reaction to their experiences in the destination is therefore a key issue for destination managers in order to improve products and services, and promoting successfully to target markets for both new and revisit tourists (Yu & Goulden, 2006).

Conceptual framework for mature travellers

Figure 1 indicates a tentative model of travel destination choice and travel barrier criteria hypothesised to be important for travel destination selection and satisfaction. In the model, observed data is written in boxes and the underlying constructs are depicted in ellipses.

Figure 1. the Conceptual Framework for Mature Travellers



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study adopted a descriptive research design. Data was collected using questionnaire. The questionnaire is adapted from Huang and Tsai's (2003) "The study of senior traveller behaviour in Taiwan". The self-administered survey includes three sections. The first section consists of four questions that are designed to determine tourists' 'travelling motivation characteristics', 'the selection attributes for all-inclusive package tours', 'the planned durations for all-inclusive package tours' and 'the planned expenses for all-inclusive package tours'. The second section is made up of 12 attributes of 'travel destination choice'; 10 attributes of 'travel barriers' and 9 attributes of 'travel satisfaction'. These attributes are measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important). However, the scaling was changed from a 7-point scale by Huang and Tsai to a 5-point scale for this study. The reason for following Huang and Tsai's model is that their study provides a comprehensive list of tourism attributes, destination selection attitudes and tourism behaviours for measuring tourist experience.

The empirical research was conducted in various areas in Glasgow (UK). Mature travellers from different backgrounds were approached in order to better understand key issues of mature travellers' behaviours. The target population was the people aged over 50 years old. The sample for this study included members from sport centres, lifelong learning classes, churches, and the University staff. In addition, some participants were chose from cafeteria and high street in order to yield a reasonably representative sample. The author approached the mature people and asked them if they are over 50 years old. More specifically, the participants were convenience sample.

The survey was carried out over a six-week survey period in Glasgow. Among 320 self-administered questionnaires distributed, a total of 132 usable questionnaires for this study were obtained (response rate: 41.25%).

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=132)

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age				
50 to 54	29	22.0	22.0	22.0
55 to 59	22	16.7	16.7	38.6
60 to 64	36	27.3	27.3	65.9
65 and older	45	34.1	34.1	100.0

Gender				
Female	73	55.3	55.3	55.3
Male	59	44.7	44.7	100.0
Marital status				
Single	19	14.4	14.4	14.4
Married	81	61.4	61.4	75.8
Divorced/Separated	6	4.5	4.5	80.3
Widowed	25	18.9	18.9	99.2
Co-habiting	1	.8	.8	100.0
Education				
Illiteracy	1	.8	.8	.8
Primary	3	2.3	2.3	3.1
Junior high school	5	3.8	3.9	7.0
Senior high school	37	28.0	28.7	35.7
College	28	21.2	21.7	57.4
University	29	22.0	22.5	79.8
Post graduate	19	14.4	14.7	94.6
Other	7	5.3	5.4	100.0
System (missing)	3	2.3		
Health				
Well	92	69.7	69.7	69.7
Few problem	35	26.5	26.5	96.2
Sick	2	1.5	1.5	97.7
Disabled	3	2.3	2.3	100.0
Residence				
Alone	45	34.1	34.1	34.1
Couple	69	52.3	52.3	86.4
Couple with children	12	9.1	9.1	95.5
Long term with children	1	.8	.8	96.2
Other	5	3.8	3.8	100.0
Employment				
Work full-time	51	38.6	38.6	38.6
Work part-time	16	12.1	12.1	50.8
Retired more than 1 year	58	43.9	43.9	94.7
Retired 1 year or less	4	3.0	3.0	97.7
Unemployed	3	2.3	2.3	100.0
Income source				
Salary	52	39.4	39.4	39.4
Pension	51	38.6	38.6	78.0
Own savings	3	2.3	2.3	80.3
Relatives or friend's donation	1	.8	.8	81.1

Social benefits	2	1.5	1.5	82.6
Other	4	3.0	3.0	85.6
Salary+other income	1	.8	.8	86.4
Pension+own savings	11	8.3	8.3	94.7
Pension+other income	1	.8	.8	95.5
Salary and/or pension and/or ownsavings and/or socialbenefit	6	4.5	4.5	100.0

The characteristics of the sample indicate that there are no significant differences between respondents (Table 1). Respondents consisted of 59 males (44.7%) and 73 females (55.3%). Among respondents who participated, all of them were aged above 50 (as they are target population of the study). The majority of the respondents were aged 65 or order (34.1%); 27.3% were between age 60 and 64; 16.7% were between age 55 and 59; and 22% were between 50 and 54. More than 60 percent of respondents were married (61.4%), followed by widowed (18.9%). Nearly 58% of the respondents reported having a college or graduate degree, while 28% had a senior secondary education background. More than two-third (69.7%) have good health status. Those that had a few health problems were 26.5%.

Furthermore, around 52.3 percent of the interviewees lived with their couple; however, 34.1 percent of the sample population lived alone. This may due to mature. Approximately half of the respondents (50.8%) worked as full-time or part-time; by contrast, the rest half of the respondents (49.2%) did not work at all. This could result from that the majority of people who aged between 50-65 still work as the retire age in UK is 65 years old. Therefore, around half of the participants their income source came from salary or salary and other income; on the other hand, income source of half of the respondents came from pension or pension and other income.

Statistic Package of Social Science (SPSS) 13.0 for Windows was utilised for data analysis. A factor analytic technique was used to offer a more parsimonious description of the data used to represent attributes of travel destination choice, travel barriers and travel satisfaction. Furthermore, categorising the data into specific factors allows a simpler interpretation and also enables these factors to be included in regression models (Graeme and Moutinho, 1998). The Kasier-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.788 for the “travel destination choice” construct, 0.889 for the “travel barriers” construct and 0.810 for the “travel satisfaction” construct. Values of KMO statistics are between 0 and 1, when the values approach 1 indicating that there are likely to be patterns of correlation in the data. This suggests that a factor analysis could be a suitable technique to use (Veloutsou et al., 2005).

The first stage of running a factor analysis was to determine and extract the factors that would be used to describe the data set. The technique for extracting factors that the author would be concerned here was Principle Components Analysis (PCA) with oblique rotation. The oblique rotation allows for some correlation between factors (Moutinho and Graeme, 2006).

Travel destination choice attributes of respondents

The travel destination choice items were factor analyzed to test their dimensionality. Principal components extraction with oblique rotation was used (it was appropriate to allow a certain degree of correlation between the factors). All factors with eigenvalues greater than one were originally extracted. The three factors extracted explained 55.43% of the overall variance. Analysis suggested that three factors adequately described the travel destination choice attributes.

The three factors are show in Table 2, along with the variables loading highly on these factors (above 0.6). The extracted factors are interpretable as the “destination prerequisites” (factor 1), the “shopping and recreation” (factor 2) and the “local culture and fare” (factor 3). The factor loadings indicate the strength of the relationship among each variable and each factor. Factor 1, 2 and 3 are all positively related to the variables, which means that high loading on these factors corresponds with high scores on the associated variables.

Table 2: Factor Analysis of Travel Destination Choice Criteria

	Factor Loading
Factor 1: Destination prerequisites	
Convenient customs, immigration, quarantine procedure	.825
Availability of medical facilities	.776
Reasonable consumer prices	.665
Good travel safety of site	.626
Factor 2: Shopping and recreation	
Availability of shopping facilities	.850
Special events and attractions	.626
Factor 3: Local culture and fare	
Local people's attitude	.836
Adapted local food and custom	.833

Barriers to travel attributes

The two factors are show in Table 3, along with the variables loading highly on these factors (above 0.6). The extracted factors are interpretable as the “travel indirect motivators” (factor 1) and the “traveller's ability” (factor 2). The factor loadings indicate the strength of the relationship among each variable and each factor. Factor 1 and 2 are all positively related to the variables,

which means that high loading on these factors corresponds with high scores on the associated variables.

Table 3: Factor Analysis of Travel Barriers Criteria

	Factor Loading
Factor 1: Travel indirect motivators	
Fear of leaving home unattended	.813
Lack of information on where to go	.812
Age problem	.764
Dietary considerations	.726
Fear of hassles	.604
Factor 2: Traveller's ability	
Financial considerations	.901
Finding the time	.850
Lack of someone to travel with	.601

Travel satisfaction attributes

The two factors are show in Table 4, along with the variables loading highly on these factors (above 0.6). The extracted factors are interpretable as the “tour quality related dimensions” (factor 1) and the “environmental mobility” (factor 2). The factor loadings indicate the strength of the relationship among each variable and each factor. Factor 1 and 2 are all positively related to the variables, which means that high loading on these factors corresponds with high scores on the associated variables.

Table 4: Factor Analysis of Travel Satisfaction Criteria

	Factor Loading
Factor 1: Tour quality related dimensions	
Service quality of travel agent	.892
Service quality of tour leader and tour guide	.830
Service quality of airlines	.800
Quality of accommodation	.665
Factor 2: Environmental mobility	
Visit attractive scenery	.845
Transport and entertainment facilities	.707

Modelling satisfaction

Modelling satisfaction for tour quality

Since there are two factors in the satisfaction attributes. Firstly, the author used the satisfaction factor 1:“tour quality related dimensions” as depend variable, and used the “destination prerequisites” (destination choice factor 1), the “shopping and recreation” (destination choice

factor 2), the “local culture and fare” (destination choice factor 3), the “travel indirect motivators” (travel barrier factor 1) and the “traveller’s ability” (travel barrier factor 2) as explanatory variables. Although they are ordinary variables, the writer assumed that they are continuous data in order to run ordinary least squares regression (OLS regression).

Table 5 shows that the power of the prediction of this model is good (Adjusted R Square = 0.413). Hence, the regression model of satisfaction for tour quality could use as an explanatory tool to identify significant relationships among factors and to predict the degree of satisfaction for tour quality. The regression model shows that the “destination prerequisites factor” and the “traveller’s ability factor” were both significantly related to satisfaction for tour quality factor.

Table 5: Regression Model of Satisfaction for Tour Quality

Dependent variable: tour quality related dimensions							
Step	Variables entered	Coefficients		t	Sign.	R Square	Adjusted R Square
		Unstandardised (B)	Standardised (Beta)				
	Constant	-0.053		0.375	0.708		
1.	Destination pre-requisites	0.578	0.574	8.068	0.000		
2.	Traveller’s ability	0.204	0.202	2.840	0.005	0.422	0.413

Modelling satisfaction for environmental mobility

At this stage, the author used the satisfaction factor 2: “environmental mobility” as dependent variable, and used the “destination prerequisites” (destination choice factor 1), the “shopping and recreation” (destination choice factor 2), the “local culture and fare” (destination choice factor 3), the “travel indirect motivators” (travel barrier factor 1) and the “traveller’s ability” (travel barrier factor 2) as explanatory variables. Table 6 indicates that the power of the prediction of this model is good (Adjusted R Square = 0.494). Therefore, the regression model of satisfaction for environmental mobility could use as an explanatory tool to identify significant relationships among factors and to predict the degree of satisfaction for environmental mobility. The regression model shows that the “destination prerequisites factor” and the “shopping and recreation factor”, and “local culture and fare factor” were all significantly related to satisfaction for environmental mobility factor.

Table 6: Regression Model of Satisfaction for Environmental Mobility

Dependent variable: environmental mobility related dimensions							
Step	Variables entered	Coefficients		t	Sign.	R Square	Adjusted R Square
		Unstanda -rdised (B)	Standardi -sed (Beta)				
	Constant	0.016		0.259	0.796		
1.	Destination pre-requisites	0.469	0.469	6.728	0.000		
2.	Shopping and recreation	0.307	0.308	4.763	0.000		
3.	Local culture and fare	0.207	0.208	2.994	0.003	0.506	0.494

CONCLUSIONS

Studies relating to mature travellers generally focus on Americans. As Szmigin and Carrigan (2001) point out that there has been extensive academic interest in the elder consumers in the America. However, in the UK far less marketing research activities have been undertaken with a view to understanding mature consumers and relevance, importance, to marketing in tourism market. Besides, even less attention has been directed to understanding mature travellers' behaviours in developing countries such as Taiwan. This research reveals that mature travellers in Glasgow do want to join package tours. They want a tour with high quality content, safe, reasonable price, and availability of medical facilities. They are also attracted by good shopping facilities and special events and attractions. Nevertheless, financial considerations, lack of time, and lack of someone to travel with are the main constraints to travel. Mature travellers are far more concerned with quality-related dimensions and want to buy a tour from travel agents that understand their needs. According to Birtwistle and Tsim (2005), the mature consumer group does have market strength owing to its affluence and size. The mature traveller is ready and willing to spend a high disposable income on travel (Huang and Tsai, 2003; Moschis, 2003). Thus, this market will have great potential in the near future as the mature travellers have money, time and will to travel.

There are some limitations of this research. Firstly, although respondents were randomly selected to participate in the study, the sampling structure still could not fully represent the population. Moreover, the nature of the sample may limit the validity of any generalization. Besides, as this research only conducted in UK, there still have some significance differences owing to cultural differences.

Future research should further explore from different cultural perspectives. Because tourists from different nations are thought to place different standards of emphasis on different aspects of service, for example, entertainment, safety, security, hygiene, and even employee appearance. Hence, the differences between the levels of emphasis and the actual service

received lead to differences in the level of satisfaction. (Yu & Goulden 2006). In addition, future study should employ triangulation of procedures using an appropriate mix of both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to reach both high reliability and high validity (Deshpande, 1983). Finally, future researchers have to focus on mature travellers more thoroughly, offering theory and applications to the tourism field.

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