WP 15-28

Roberto Patuelli
University of Bologna, Italy
The Rimini Centre for Economic Analysis, Italy

Peter Nijkamp
VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland
The Rimini Centre for Economic Analysis, Italy

TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF SENIORS: A REVIEW AND A META-ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENT

Travel Motivations of Seniors: A Review and a Meta-Analytical Assessment

Roberto Patuelli[1,3]

Peter Nijkamp[2,3]

[1] Department of Economics, University of Bologna, Italy. Email: roberto.patuelli@unibo.it
[2] Department of Spatial Economics, VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. Email: p.nijkamp@vu.nl
[3] The Rimini Centre for Economic Analysis (RCEA), Italy

This version: 02/04/2016

Abstract

Over the past decades, leisure travel has become increasingly popular in older segments of the world population, as a consequence of global factors such as a rise in life expectancy, improved health conditions, a higher disposable income, and increased availability of discretionary time in retirement age. Consequently, researchers have become more interested in studying the motivations for travel of seniors. A number of questions may be raised or have been addressed in the recent past: What are the main factors explaining the travelling choices of seniors? Are their travel motivations different from the ones of the younger population, which have been widely studied in the past? Are geographical differences in terms of motivations comparable between different age groups? Why is senior tourism a topic of particular interest with regard to Asia? In order to answer such questions, in this paper we provide a review of the literature on the travel motivations of seniors. On the basis of 29 articles published between 1988 and 2015 on the topic, we provide a qualitative and meta-analytic assessment of past findings, by investigating the dimensions of travel motivations most frequently employed in past seniors surveys. Finally, we discuss a research agenda for further analysis of senior travel motivations and for the integration of this branch of travel research within the wider framework of senior tourism analysis and management.

Keywords: travel motivations; seniors; literature review; research agenda.
JEL Classification: C35; L83

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, leisure travel has become increasingly popular in older segments of the world population, as a consequence of global factors such as a rise in life expectancy, improved health conditions, a higher disposable income, and increased availability of time in retirement age due to changes in family structure (e.g., the increase in empty-nesters). Consequently, age aspects of tourism have received a great deal of attention in social science research. Early studies – especially on senior tourism and on travel life-cycle – can be found, amongst others, in Lawson (1991), Blazey (1992), Oppermann (1995), Zimmer *et al* (1995), Hong *et al* (1999) and Faranda and Schmidt (2000). The effects of age on tourism behaviour has increasingly become a focal point of research in the past decade, now that the signs of an ageing society become more visible. Examples of recent studies on the tourist pattern of seniors can be found in Reece (2004), Moschis and Ünal (2008), Nimrod (2008), Nyaupane *et al* (2008) and Boksberger and Laesser (2009). It turns out that market segmentation – across age groups and thus in relation to the life cycle of tourists – is an important handle for understanding differences in tourist behaviour. Understandably, because of the rising relevance of the senior tourism market segment, more researchers have grown interested in studying the motivations for travel of senior citizens, so to understand how to shape adequate policies, both in private and public contexts. It is not surprising that most of such studies focus on marketing issues or are published in marketing-oriented journals: the relevance of a growing segment of travel demand poses operative and long-term planning questions related to supply strategies in travel and tourism, for both private and public stakeholders. In particular, knowledge of senior tourists' motivations may facilitate the choices of destination managers and tour operators in terms of horizontal differentiation or simply in terms of the variety of the touristic product. Senior tourists form a specific market segment, with more emphasis on quiet, culture, environment, climate, quality of life and accessibility (including walking and public transport facilities).

While travel motivations have been widely analysed for the general population (see, e.g., Cha *et al*, 1995; Hanqin & Lam, 1999; Jang & Cai, 2002), contributions which focus on seniors are much more limited (for a recent review, see Patterson, 2006). Studies are available in which, among other factors, age was found to mitigate financial constraints to travel (Alegre *et al*, 2010), or where mature age has been shown to affect the willingness to travel negatively and tourism expenditure positively (Bernini & Cracolici, 2015). Still, senior travel motivations in particular have been largely neglected in the past. Nonetheless, a number of questions have been – and may still be – raised in this regard, such as: What are the main factors explaining the travelling choices of seniors? Do their travel motivations depend on the definition of 'senior'? An intriguing question is also: why is senior tourism a topic of particular interest with regard to Asia? The latter question does not only stem from many Asian studies on senior tourism, but also from the fact that cruise tourism in Asia is a rapidly growing market segment for seniors (see, e.g., Chen *et al*, 2015).

To address various above-mentioned questions, we review in this paper the literature on the travel motivations of seniors. Our objective is to shed light on the recurring characteristics and findings of studies in this particular literature, in order to uncover possible factors explaining the heterogeneity in the obtained results. It is customary, when investigating senior travel motivations empirically, to develop and administer a survey, and to subsequently analyse the collected information by means of multivariate analysis (data reduction) techniques like factor analysis or cluster analysis, in order to obtain synthetic travel motivation dimensions, or to categorize the respondents into internally homogeneous groups. We review all available past studies that have provided such analyses. In particular, we first

provide a qualitative systematic assessment of the findings of 29 studies published between 1988 and 2015 on the basis of their characteristics, by discussing the dimensions of travel motivations most frequently found and highlighting the main critical points in the literature. We define, and focus on, five main dimensions: culture and nature; experience and adventure; relax, well-being and escape; self-esteem and ego-enhancement; socialization. On the basis of the above points, we provide a preliminary meta-analysis and discuss statistical evidence on how the study characteristics drive their results. We conclude by pointing to the dimensions in which further efforts are needed, and to how this strain of research can be integrated into a wider theoretical and applied research framework concerning senior tourism and its related policies.

2. Characterizing the Senior Travel Motivations Literature

2.1. Classification of Studies

Through systematic search procedures and 'snow-balling' processes, we have been able to identify 29 studies in which the travel motivations of senior tourists have been investigated from an applied perspective, and making use of factor analysis or principal components analysis. In our systematic typological comparison we review these 29 studies on the travel motivations of seniors, which are summarized in Table 1. In particular, we focus on studies providing factor-analytical results in order to identify the seniors' main travelling drivers. More studies exist employing cluster analysis, and therefore providing a different perspective. They are not considered, in our paper, since they cannot be matched with the ones using factor analysis. The typical study analysed here is structured as follows: (i) in most cases, a specific aspect of interest or approach pertaining to travel motivations is identified and discussed (such as gender issues, quality of life, or tourism via specific transportation means); (ii) a questionnaire is developed as the basis for empirical evidence; (iii) the questionnaire is administered to a group of seniors, either during a trip (e.g., in You & O'Leary, 2000) or at senior facilities (e.g., in Le Serre *et al*, 2013). As it may be expected, due to obvious differences in the questionnaires employed, the studies analysed provide a multitude of identified factors, which are given subjective interpretation and naming by the respective authors.

The applied scientific literature provides a rich array of attempts to classify the travel motivations of seniors. Several years back already, Guinn (1980) provided a five-class taxonomy, with the main motivation drivers being: rest and relaxation, family and friends, physical exercise, learning experience, self-fulfilment and accomplishment. Later contributions provided similar classifications; for example, Snepenger *et al* (2006) found four core motivations (personal seeking, personal escape, interpersonal seeking, and intrapersonal escape). Traveller segmentation (by means of cluster analysis techniques) was also employed in multiple studies (see, e.g., Wang *et al*, 2008; Ward, 2014). Le Serre *et al* (2013) recently pointed out how research on senior travel motivations in Western countries generated similar results in a number of separate studies (while suggesting that differences with Asian – Chinese to be precise – motivations could exist).

For the purposes of this review, we attempt to devise a comparative macro-categorization of findings, by grouping each study's first three dimensions identified by factor analysis (given in Table 1 as F1/F2/F3) along five dimensions:

- culture/nature (22 occurrences);
- experience/adventure (21 occurrences);

- relax/well-being/escape (20 occurrences);
- socialization (16 occurrences);
- self-esteem/ego-enhancement (12 occurrences).

Within the top three factors of each study, the most frequently occurring macro-factors are culture/nature, which includes all factors relating to interest in cultural aspects and natural resources, experience/adventure, which incorporates experiential motivations (see, e.g., Sangpikul, 2008a), and relax/well-being/escape, pertaining to relaxation, more generally well-being, and escapism (see, e.g., Cleaver *et al*, 1999). Macro-factors related to socialization and self-realization are less common. Additional details on the studies reviewed can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Studies analysed, their main characteristics and top-three identified factors

Authors (Year)	Focus	Nationality of seniors	Nationality of seniors (recode)	Minimum age	Sample	Extent of travelling	Extent of travelling (recode)	Extent of travelling (recode2)	F1	F2	F3
Hawes (1988)	Women	USA	USA	50	534	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Can afford a vacation	Experience desire/adventure	Laziness
Kim et al (1996)	Travel motivations	USA	USA	55	914	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Knowledge	Escape	Kinship
Backman et al (1999)	Nature-based travellers	USA	USA	55	131	Any	Unknown/Any	Any	Education/nature	Camping/tenting	Social
Cleaver et al (1999)	Travel motivations	Australia	Else	56	356	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Nostalgics	Friendlies	Learners
You and O'Leary (2000)	Travel motivations	Japan	Asia	55	691	Intercontinental	International	Any	Cultural heritage activity	Nature-oriented activity	Beach/water activity
Bai et al (2001)	Leisure activities	Japan	Asia	55	1013	Intercontinental	International	Any	Visiting rural/cultural attractions	Shopping/Dining/Sightseeing	Visiting parks
		United Kingdom	Else	55	274				Visiting park/rural attractions	Participating in guided tour	Visiting cultural/arts attractions
		Germany	Else	55	273				Visiting park/rural attractions	Participating in guided tour	Visiting cultural/arts attractions
Baloglu and Shoemaker (2001)	Motorcoach use	USA	USA	55	234	Domestic	Domestic	Any	Travel enjoyment	Short trips	Single-destination trip
Muller and O'Cass (2001)	Subjective age	Australia	Else	55	356	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Physical stimulation	Camaraderie	Status seeking
Norman et al (2001)	Travel motivations	USA	USA	50	374	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Escape	Education	Family
Kim et al (2003)	National parks	Korea	Asia	50	2235	Domestic	Domestic	Any	Appreciating natural resources and health	Escaping from everyday routine	Family togetherness and study
Cleaver Sellick (2004)	Travel motivations	Australia	Else	50	986	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Excited learners	Self-esteem builders	Indulgent relaxers
Littrell et al (2004)	Travel motivations	USA	USA	50	146	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Outdoors tourism	Cultural tourism	Sports and entertainment tourism
Lee and Tideswell (2005)	Travel motivations	Korea	Asia	60	200	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Constraints to travel	Quality of life	Energy to travel
Jang and Wu (2006)	Travel motivations	Taiwan	Asia	60	353	Any	Unknown/Any	Any	Ego-enhancement	Self-esteem	Knowledge-seeking
Sangpikul (2008a)	Travel motivations	USA	USA	55	438	Intercontinental	International	Any	Novelty & knowledge-seeking	Ego-enhancement	Rest & relaxation

Authors (Year)	Focus	Nationality of seniors	Nationality of seniors (recode)	Minimum age	Sample	Extent of travelling	Extent of travelling (recode)	Extent of travelling (recode2)	F1	F2	F3
Sangpikul (2008b)	Travel motivations	Japan	Asia	55	415	International	International	Any	Novelty and knowledge-seeking	Rest and relaxation	Ego-enhancement
Wang et al (2008)	Travel motivations	USA	USA	50	217	No travel information	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Novelty	Family and sports	Intellect
Chen and Wu (2009)	Overseas travel	Taiwan	Asia	50	224	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Relaxation	Novelty	Escape
Hsu and Kang (2009)	Urban mature travellers	China	Asia	55	800	Domestic	Domestic	Any	Well-being	Escape	Connection
Jang et al (2009)	Travel motivations	Taiwan	Asia	65	282	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Novelty seeking	Self-esteem	Ego enhancement
Nimrod and Rotem (2010)	Benefits gained	Israel	Else	50	298	International	International	Any	Excitement	Social bonding	Meeting role expectations
Ahn and Janke (2011)	Educational travel	USA	USA	55	426	Domestic	Domestic	Any	Health	Engaging and socialization	Achievement
Le Serre and Chevalier (2012)	Marketing	France	Else	50	300	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Social	Ralaxation	Sport/competency
Prayag (2012)	Travel motivations	Any	Else	50	200	Any	Unknown/Any	Any	Cosmopolitan experiences	Novelty	Socialization
Le Serre et al (2013)	Motivations and perceived risks	France	Else	55	300	Unknown	Unknown/Any	Unknown	Social	Relaxation	Sport/competency
		China	Asia	55	264				Social/past-oriented	Relaxation/intellectual	Sport/competency
Carneiro et al (2013)	Social tourism	Portugal	Else	63	667	Any	Unknown/Any	Any	Novelty and socialization	Culture	Entertainment
Ward (2014)	Travel motivations	Ireland	Else	50	266	Unknown	Unkown-Any	Unknown	Escaping	Exploring	Spiritual and social
Chen and Shoemaker (2014)	Cohort effects	USA	USA	55	423	Unknown	Unkown-Any	Unknown	To have new experience	To socialize	To rest and relax
Woo et al (2015)	Quality of life	South Korea	Asia	65	208	Unknown	Unkown-Any	Unknown	Novelty	Entertainment	Relaxation

Note: See the Appendix for the actual reclassification of factors into the macro-factors analysed.

A major distinction that should generally be made for travel motivation studies is the one between push and pull motivations. Push motivations pertain to the individual's needs and desires. As such, they are internal (or intrinsic) drivers, 'yielding the satisfaction of emotion-dominant values' (Carneiro *et al*, 2013). They are intangible, 'general and non-destination-specific attributes' (Le Serre *et al*, 2013). As such, they represent the 'true' travel motivations based on individual needs, and are the dimension of motivations on which most of the literature has focused over the years. On the other hand, much less studies have focused on pull motivations, most typically when a specific interest in supply characteristics of a destination risk factors or travel impediments are of interest. Indeed, pull factors are external, cognition-related attributes, which could be tangible or not, and are perceived by the potential tourist as existing at the destination. On the basis of the above discussion, we choose to focus, for comparative reasons, on push motivations only, discarding 'pull' factor-analytical results, which are provided in 8 of the 29 studies considered in a meta-analytical comparison.

The studies analysed in this paper have been published over a period of about 25 years, going from 1988 (Hawes, 1988) to 2014 (Chen & Shoemaker, 2014; Ward, 2014), to still forthcoming ones (Woo *et al*, 2015). Seniors of various nationalities (USA, Europe, Asia and Australia) have been interviewed in the studies, either while travelling or on the basis of preliminary questions on their travelling experience, or, as in several cases, without any screening procedure rather than the sole age.

In the following subsections, we discuss the main critical issues and findings pertaining to the literature on senior travel motivations.

2.2. Selection of Interviewees

Interviews in studies on senior travel motivations are usually carried out by administering a questionnaire to a group of seniors. A critical issue in this regard pertains to the criterion with which the interviewees are selected for the survey. Most typically, we can distinguish between two main location criteria – at senior aggregative locations or on-trip – and between two interviewee selection criteria, according to which either seniors who have travelled in recent periods/are currently travelling (on-trip) are interviewed, or no prior information is obtained.

Researchers do not seem to focus very often explicitly on this issue. Within our sample, only 15 out of 29 studies provide information on the travelling experience/patterns of the seniors, either by interviewing only those who declare of having travelled recently, or by interviewing them during the trip itself. For the remaining set of studies, no information is provided, which leads us to assume that available seniors at the chosen location(s) were selected and interviewed solely on the basis of their age. In the best case (11 studies), information is available also on extent of the travelling carried out: domestic, international, or intercontinental.

It is easy to imagine why information on past travelling patterns is important for a study on travel motivations. Interviewees who do not travel might have unrealistic expectations about the potential benefits of a leisure trip, while individuals who did not travel recently (e.g. seniors who have not travelled for years) might refer their answers to what travelling used to be for them when they were younger and stronger, and not to what they would look for at the current age.

2.3. Definition of Senior

Connected to the above issue is the actual definition of 'senior'. The studies surveyed here employ various age thresholds for selecting their sample of seniors. In 12 out of 29 studies, a minimum age of 50 (the lowest in the literature considered) is used, which provides a rather broad definition of 'senior',[1] which is far from being consistent with the idea of retired individuals enjoying tourism in their newly gained free time. The samples of a considerable number of studies are therefore heterogeneous in the characteristics of the interviewees, mixing those who could alternatively be defined as mid-age individuals/workers with individuals who are retired or close to retirement. For instance, Chen and Wu (2009) use a sample of 50+ year olds, which includes about 50 per cent of retired individuals, while in Sangpikul (2008a) retirees account for about 39 per cent of the sample. In Bai *et al* (2001), factor-analytical results are compared for three samples (from Japan, UK and Germany), which contain rather different shares of retirees, amounting to 23, 54 and 43 per cent, respectively. Only three studies (Jang *et al*, 2009; Carneiro *et al*, 2013; Woo *et al*, 2015) employ only individuals aged at least 63 or 65, which can be thought to be relatively homogeneous internally. In particular, Woo *et al* (2015) interview only retired seniors. Additional exceptions are Nimrod and Rotem (2010), who, despite interviewing seniors aged 50 or more, have a sample made up entirely of retirees. The samples of two more studies (Cleaver *et al*, 1999; Wang *et al*, 2008) include mostly retirees.

On the other hand, some authors actually focus on the age factor while analysing travel motivations of seniors. Cleaver Sellick (2004) focuses on cognitive age, while Sangpikul (2008a) shows that the share of retirees included in the two clusters resulting from an analysis of US travellers to Thailand are different (43% vs 24%) and that, more generally, occupations significantly differ between the two clusters. Hawes (1988) carries out a factor analysis for his entire sample as well as by age group (50–54, 55–59, 60–64, 65–69, 70+), but unfortunately reports incomplete results in the latter case and does not interpret the emerging factors. Similarly, Norman *et al* (2001) focus on the differences between neo-mature (aged 50–65) and veteran-mature (aged 65+) respondents, but only provide factor-analytical results for the pooled sample, analysing their findings ex post on the basis of various subsamples. They find that age alone is not enough to identify homogeneous senior tourist clusters. Finally, Chen and Shoemaker (2014) focus on analysing whether travel motivations within the same cohort but at different life cycles (i.e., different ages) significantly differ. They find that a hypothesis of invariant travel motivations cannot be rejected, while the opposite result is found with regard to perceived barriers to travel.

Overall, the literature on senior travel motivations does not appear to explicitly consider, aside from the few cases documented above, problems related to a precise or uniform definition of 'senior', and in particular to his/her working status (active vs inactive). The brief review by Sie *et al* (2015), in wich aspects related to cognitive age and inter-cohort differences are discussed, represents one of the few exception in this regard.

2.4. Nationality of Seniors

A final aspect on which the literature surveyed here differs is the nationality of the seniors interviewed. For easier intuition, we can roughly split the studies into three categories, pertaining to the macro-origin of the interviewees: USA, Asia and a miscellaneous 'Else' category, which includes Europe, Africa and Oceania. US and Asian individuals are surveyed

---

[1] The literature alternatively refers to these individuals as 'mature' travellers/tourists.

in 10 and 11 studies, respectively. On the other hand, Europeans (including Israelis) are present in only 7 studies.

Such geographical divide in the literature shows a limited interest of the European tourism field in the topic of senior travel motivations, as well as a predominance of US and Asian researchers. The case of Asia appears to be particularly interesting, as the continent is overrepresented in this field of study. This evidence can maybe be seen in a wider context. For example, a high share of Asia-related studies in the study of consumer behaviour is observed in Leung *et al* (2015), who link the interest for research on tourism in Asia to the recent trends in the tourism industry (i.e., the increase of tourism to Asia), and underline the prominent role of Korean researchers and the future relevance of Chinese tourism studies.

A more general observation should be made on this matter: no study attempts to systematically analyse and identify potential differences in the travel motivations of seniors from different countries or continents. The only exceptions are Bai *et al* (2001), who, as mentioned above, compare three samples from Japan, the UK and Germany, Le Serre *et al* (2013), who analyse two samples of individuals from France and China, and Chen *et al* (2015), who analyse in their empirical research both the age of tourists and their country of origin (with a major overrepresentation of Asian visitors in cruise line tourism). However, these are mostly convenience samples surveyed ad hoc for single studies, and can only provide evidence for the specific countries and contexts in which they are carried out. No empirical work is available instead – maybe for understandable reasons related to budget constraints – that attempts to expand such attempts to a wider set of countries.

3. A Preliminary Meta-Analysis

3.1. Logit Meta-Regression Models

The considerations made in Section 2 above show that, although the senior tourism literature has indeed attempted, at times, to tackle different aspects related to their travel motivations, limited unifying contributions exist. In particular, the available literature, while often covering a number of previous studies on senior tourism motivations and their results, fails to wonder what drives differences between results across studies.

The aim of this section is to try and fill this gap in the literature. In this view, we provide a meta-analytical exercise attempting to explain the occurrence of the macro-factors identified in Section 2.1 within each study's top-three identified factors. The Appendix reports the list of all (subjectively named) factors and their corresponding macro-factor.

Meta-analysis is an established technique adopted in many fields of research for analysing and comparing results from multiple studies based on a similar empirical research question (e.g., estimating the elasticity of demand for gas with respect to price) (see, among others, Crouch, 1995; van den Bergh *et al*, 1997; Sutton *et al*, 2000; Stanley, 2001). The main idea of meta-analysis is to evaluate the consistency of empirical results provided in the scientific literature against varying approaches, sites of application, and so on. The meta-analysis carried out by Abreu *et al* (2005), where the authors investigate the two-per-cent rate-of-convergence 'myth', exemplifies meta-analysis in this regard.

Practically, meta-analysis boils down, when empirical estimates are of interest (such as in the aforementioned case of a specific estimated elasticity), to regressing estimated parameters from a number of studies on their characteristics. These characteristics may be declined in terms of the study focus, the data structure (cross-sectional, time-series, panel) and the year to which they refer, the modelling approach, or the publication status of the study (i.e., to look

for publication bias). The resulting regression model includes, in many cases, only binary variables on the right-hand side.

Because the literature analysed in this paper focuses on travel motivations and provides factor analytical results, there are no numerical parameters to be used as dependent variable. Instead, following the reclassification of factors given in Section 2.1, we model the probability, for each macro-factor, of emerging within the first k estimated factors. Consequently, for each macro-factor i ($i = 1, \ldots, 5$), we define our dependent variable $Pr_{i,k}$, so that:

- $Pr_{i,k} = 1$, if macro-factor i (e.g., culture/nature) is found within the top factors;
- $Pr_{i,k} = 0$, if it is not found.

We test three possible values of k, from towards more restrictive hypotheses: (i) $k = 3$: to be found within the top three factors; (ii) $k = 2$: to be found within the top two factors; (iii) $k = 1$: to be found as the top factor. Testing three values of k for five macro-factors leads to estimating 15 logit meta-analytical models. Logit-based extensions of meta-analysis have been used before, for instance when the actual numerical findings from the studies collected come from heterogeneous methods and cannot be interpreted in the same way (Roscoe & Jenkins, 2005), or when coding results into categories helps answering a specific research question (see, e.g., the ordered logit approach followed in Longhi *et al*, 2008).

On the basis of the discussion provided in Section 2, we attempt to explain $Pr_{i,k}$ by means of the following variables:

- *Year*: year of publication of the study (1988–2015);
- *Nationality*: nationality of the interviewees, coded as:
    - Asia (11);
    - USA (10);
    - Else (11) (baseline);
- *Minimum age*: age-based definition of senior (50–65);
- *Extent*: extent of travelling, coded as:
    - Domestic (4);
    - International (7);
    - Any/Unknown (21) (baseline).

In our model, the variable *Year* is meant to capture possible trends in travel motivations, for which certain dimensions could become more or less relevant over time, given the wide temporal window in which the studies analysed were published (from 1988 to 2015). The variable *Nationality*, following the discussion of Section 2.4, splits the sample into Asian, US and 'the rest', which includes 7 cases for different European countries. From this viewpoint, it is particularly interesting to evaluate the extent to which the Asian wave in tourism literature is justified by different travel motivations. *Minimum age* models possible travel motivations differences due to the subjective choice of the age defining a 'senior', as discussed in Section 2.3. Finally, the variable *Extent* splits again the sample on the basis of travel information, so to investigate whether domestic and international travellers are driven by different motivations. The baseline level for this polichoric unordered variable is given by the studies in which there is either no travel information or only a generic assessment about having travelled recently (see Section 2.2)

3.2. Results

This section reports our meta-analytical results. Three models are estimated for each macro-factor (for a total of 15), and reported in Table 2, by indicating in particular statistically significant results.[2] Our results show that two study characteristics mainly influence factor analytical findings: the year of publication, and the nationality of the interviewed seniors.

Table 2. Summary meta-analytical results

Variable	k	Macro-factors				
		Culture/ nature	Experience/ adventure	Relax/ well-being/ escape	Social	Self-esteem/ self-awarding
Year	$k = 3$	–0.19**	0.25***	0.08	0.15*	–0.04
	$k = 2$	–0.17**	0.19**	0.04	0.19**	–0.13
	$k = 1$	–0.29**	0.34**	0.06		–0.84
Nationality: Asia	$k = 3$	–0.36	1.29	1.54	–3.40**	0.28
	$k = 2$	–0.47	1.28	1.98	–3.62**	1.39
	$k = 1$	0.04	0.85	0.06		24.97
Nationality: USA	$k = 3$	–0.34	2.07	0.65	–1.01	0.32
	$k = 2$	–0.31	3.13**	–0.93	–0.81	0.93
	$k = 1$	–1.47	4.78**	–0.26		13.82
Minimum age	$k = 3$	0.02	–0.06	–0.17	–0.12	0.06
	$k = 2$	–0.01	–0.10	–0.25*	0.10	0.11
	$k = 1$	–0.07	0.08	–0.19		0.01
Extent: Domestic	$k = 3$	–0.88	–2.84*	0.08	0.07	0.03
	$k = 2$	–0.02	–1.78	1.72	0.06	–17.17
	$k = 1$	1.18	–1.48	1.58		–22.44
Extent: International	$k = 3$	0.18	0.26	–1.60	–3.08**	1.45
	$k = 2$	1.07	0.87	–2.33	–1.20	0.48
	$k = 1$	2.85	3.08	–16.97		–24.80

Note: All models included an intercept term. ***, **, * denote statistical significant regression coefficients at the 1, 5, 10 per cent level, respectively.

    With regard to the former, a temporal trend in the relevance of travel motivations seems apparent. Probabilities for the culture/nature motivation are found (for all values of k) to be negatively correlated with *Year*, suggesting that the importance of this travel motivation has diminished over time. On the other hand, the experience/adventure and the social dimensions show a positive coefficient, and appear to be on the way up. All in all, cultural and naturalistic motivations, presumably based mostly on observation, seem to leave way to an interest for more active forms of tourism, based on sports, discovery, and socialization. This result is consistent with the view of a new definition of 'senior', whose cognitive age (as discussed, e.g., in Cleaver Sellick, 2004; Sie *et al*, 2015), as well as improved physical conditions, cannot be ignored.

    The other variable in our meta-analysis that shows statistical significant and stable results is *Nationality*. As mentioned above in Section 2.4, what is lacking in the literature is a large-scale comparison of senior travelling motivations over different countries. Our results appear to suggest that indeed such differences exist, and that therefore single-country results cannot be trivially generalized to a wider context. The meta-analysis shows that the

---

[2] Full meta-regression results, as well as the database, are available upon request from the authors.

experience/adventure motivation is more important for US seniors. At the same time, Asians interviewees appear to be less interested in socialization activities. While this result could to a certain extent be expected, it is surprising, in this regard, not to find a relevant role for self-rewarding kind of motivations, as suggested for instance in Jang and Wu (2006).

The variables regarding the age-based definition of seniors and the extent of travelling do not provide consistent results. The lack of a significant result for the *Minimum age* variable may be considered as the most surprising. On the other hand, it should be kept in mind that this is only the lower limit of the age distribution of each study's sample, and as such it is a rather raw proxy of the average age of the interviewed seniors. Unfortunately, no study provides separate factor analyses by age-group. Authors who look into this issue prefer to compute a single analysis and employ ANOVA-type techniques to inspect how much each subgroup is represented by each obtained factor. While this approach may be valid, it also makes it impossible for travel motivations which are unique to specific age ranges – if present – to emerge.

With regard to the extent of travel patterns, a sensitivity analysis (not shown here) is carried out by simplifying the *Extent* variable to just two levels: (i) Any, and (ii) Unknown (see Table 1), in order to verify a possible bias from the selection of seniors on which travel information was not collected. This additional analysis is based on the idea that non-travelling seniors might idealize travel motivations which have no actual application in real life. However, no significant results emerge from this sensitivity analysis.

In summary, the findings of our meta-analysis are mixed. On the one hand, we find that some factors (the year of publication, and the nationality of the seniors) drive the factor-analytical results of the studies. On the other hand, further expected differences between studies are not confirmed. Overall, partly because of the limited number of studies available, it is still not possible to draw a wider, unified picture of the heterogeneous body of work on the travel motivations of seniors, which calls for increased and coordinated efforts.

4. Senior Tourism: A Panorama

The world population is showing signs of an unprecedented change. First, the next decades will be a period of drastic population increase on a worldwide level, to the extent that by the year 2050 the total world population may amount to more than 9 billion people (see Lutz *et al*, 2014). Next, the population rise shows a highly skewed distribution, with a rapid increase in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and a stable (or even declining) population volume in Europe, North America and some Asian countries (e.g., Japan and China). And finally, the structural ageing process means worldwide that the senior cohorts in all demographic profiles will rapidly increase.

In many countries, this ageing population will not be a poor or impoverished part of the population, but a 'healthy and wealthy' cohort. Against this background, senior tourism may be expected to assume a prominent position in domestic and international tourism. In general, tourism is an economic sector that is on a rising edge, but with more seniors it seems plausible that tourism is becoming an even more important economic sector in the future.

It goes without saying that the new cohort of 'senior tourists' prompts important research and policy challenges. On the empirical side, it is clear that the current ambiguity on 'seniors' has to be clarified; are we talking about 50+ years old tourists, 'mature' tourists, retired tourists (with different retirement ages in different countries)? Furthermore, it would be important to know the gender balance and the educational profile of senior tourists. This also implies that the system of tourism satellite accounts (TSA) needs urgently an update towards the needs of the emerging senior tourist markets.

It is obvious that the rising importance of the tourist sector – as a major export industry in many countries – calls for an improvement in empirical data on volumes of international tourism, origin-destination patterns, gender, age, education, and so on. Clearly, in order to develop informed policies, the motivations of senior tourists would need more empirical investigation as well, based on systematically and consistently composed and administered survey data, especially from a multicountry perspective. Our meta-analytical results show that some factors such as temporal trends or the nationality of the seniors, lead to different travel preferences, suggesting that these differences should be acknowledged and carefully taken into consideration. Parameters to be addressed in particular are: distance travelled, healthcare facilities and cultural amenities.

It has also been argued that the world population will increasingly be a mobile population, with a rise in temporary and structural international migration (see Lutz *et al*, 2014). One of the consequences of the 'age of migration' is also a rapid rise in international tourism (see, e.g., Gheasi, 2015). The causal mechanisms involved with the tourism-migration nexus call for solid applied research on the interwoven linkages between cross-border tourism and foreign migration.

Finally, it has become clear from our comparative analysis that senior tourists are by no means standard tourists. They have specific preferences and motivations codetermined by their age (and related attributes), such as the 'pensionado tourism' in climatologically favourable places (see Ridderstaat, 2015). A logical policy consequence of such diversity is to call for targeted investments, in tourism destinations, based on data collection and in-depth analysis of senior motivations and constraints, for example in terms of health care, cultural facilities, accessible amenities, or walking facilities. It seems plausible that the next decades will show a remarkable rise in the importance of senior tourism, especially in the light of their spending capacity. Long-term seasonal senior tourism is on a rising edge, so that the need for destination competitiveness prompts the supply of client-oriented facilities for senior tourists.

References

Abreu, M., de Groot, H.L.F., and Florax, R.J.G.M. (2005), 'A Meta-Analysis of β-Convergence: The Legendary 2%', Journal of Economic Surveys, Vol. 19, No. 3, 389-420.

Ahn, Y.-j., and Janke, M.C. (2011), 'Motivations and Benefits of the Travel Experiences of Older Adults', Educational Gerontology, Vol. 37, No. 8, 653-73.

Alegre, J., Mateo, S., and Pou, L. (2010), 'An Analysis of Households' Appraisal of Their Budget Constraints for Potential Participation in Tourism', Tourism Management, Vol. 31, No. 1, 45-56.

Backman, K.F., Backman, S.J., and Silverberg, K.E. (1999), 'An Investigation into the Psychographics of Senior Nature-Based Travellers', Tourism Recreation Research, Vol. 24, No. 1, 13-22.

Bai, B., Jang, S.S., Cai, L.A., and O'Leary, J.T. (2001), 'Determinants of Travel Mode Choice of Senior Travelers to the United States', Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing, Vol. 8, No. 3-4, 147-68.

Baloglu, S., and Shoemaker, S. (2001), 'Prediction of Senior Travelers' Motorcoach Use from Demographic, Psychological, and Psychographic Characteristics', Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 40, No. 1, 12-8.

Bernini, C., and Cracolici, M.F. (2015), 'Demographic Change, Tourism Expenditure and Life Cycle Behaviour', Tourism Management, Vol. 47, No., 191-205.

Blazey, M.A. (1992), 'Travel and Retirement Status', Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 19, No. 4, 771-83.

Boksberger, P.E., and Laesser, C. (2009), 'Segmentation of the Senior Travel Market by the Means of Travel Motivations', Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 15, No. 4, 311-22.

Carneiro, M.J., Eusébio, C., Kastenholz, E., and Alvelos, H. (2013), 'Motivations to Participate in Social Tourism Programmes: A Segmentation Analysis of the Senior Market', Anatolia, Vol. 24, No. 3, 352-66.

Cha, S., Mccleary, K.W., and Uysal, M. (1995), 'Travel Motivations of Japanese Overseas Travelers: A Factor-Cluster Segmentation Approach', Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 34, No. 1, 33-9.

Chen, C.-F., and Wu, C.-C. (2009), 'How Motivations, Constraints, and Demographic Factors Predict Seniors' Overseas Travel Propensity', Asia Pacific Management Review, Vol. 14, No. 3, 301-12.

Chen, M., Neuts, B., and Nijkamp, P. (2015), Demand Determinants of Cruise Tourists in Competitive Markets: Motivations, Preference, and Intention. In: ERSA Congress 2015, Lisbon.

Chen, S.C., and Shoemaker, S. (2014), 'Age and Cohort Effects: The American Senior Tourism Market', Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 48, No., 58-75.

Cleaver, M., Muller, T.E., Ruys, H.F.M., and Wei, S. (1999), 'Tourism Product Development for the Senior Market, Based on Travel-Motive Research', Tourism Recreation Research, Vol. 24, No. 1, 5-11.

Cleaver Sellick, M. (2004), 'Discovery, Connection, Nostalgia', Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, Vol. 17, No. 1, 55-71.

Crouch, G.I. (1995), 'A Meta-Analysis of Tourism Demand', Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 22, No. 1, 103-18.

Faranda, W.T., and Schmidt, S.L. (2000), 'Segmentation and the Senior Traveler: Implications for Today's and Tomorrow's Aging Consume', Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, Vol. 8, No. 2, 3-27.

Gheasi, M. (2015), Social Economic Aspects of the Diaspora World. Ph.D. thesis. VU University Amsterdam.

Guinn, R. (1980), 'Elderly Recreational Vehicle Tourists: Motivations for Leisure', Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 19, No. 1, 9-12.

Hanqin, Z.Q., and Lam, T. (1999), 'An Analysis of Mainland Chinese Visitors' Motivations to Visit Hong Kong', Tourism Management, Vol. 20, No. 5, 587-94.

Hawes, D.K. (1988), 'Travel-Related Lifestyle Profiles Of Older Women', Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 27, No. 2, 22-32.

Hong, G.-S., Kim, S.Y., and Lee, J. (1999), 'Travel Expenditure Patterns of Elderly Households in the US', Tourism Recreation Research, Vol. 24, No. 1, 43-52.

Hsu, C.H.C., and Kang, S.K. (2009), 'Chinese Urban Mature Travelers' Motivation and Constraints by Decision Autonomy', Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, Vol. 26, No. 7, 703-21.

Jang, S., Bai, B., Hu, C., and Wu, C.-M.E. (2009), 'Affect, Travel Motivation, and Travel Intention: a Senior Market', Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, Vol. 33, No. 1, 51-73.

Jang, S., and Cai, L.A. (2002), 'Travel Motivations and Destination Choice: A Study of British Outbound Market', Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, Vol. 13, No. 3, 111-33.

Jang, S.S., and Wu, C.-M.E. (2006), 'Seniors' Travel Motivation and the Influential Factors: An Examination of Taiwanese Seniors', Tourism Management, Vol. 27, No. 2, 306-16.

Kim, S.S., Lee, C.-K., and Klenosky, D.B. (2003), 'The Influence of Push and Pull Factors at Korean National Parks', Tourism Management, Vol. 24, No. 2, 169-80.

Kim, Y., Weaver, P., and McCleary, K. (1996), 'A Structural Equation Model: The Relationship Between Travel Motivation and Information Sources in the Senior Travel Market', Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 3, No. 1, 55-66.

Lawson, R. (1991), 'Patterns of Tourist Expenditure and Types of Vacation across the Family Life Cycle', Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 29, No. 4, 12-8.

Le Serre, D., and Chevalier, C. (2012), 'Marketing Travel Services to Senior Consumers', Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 29, No. 4, 262-70.

Le Serre, D., Legohérel, P., and Weber, K. (2013), 'Seniors' Motivations and Perceived Risks: A Cross-Cultural Study', Journal of International Consumer Marketing, Vol. 25, No. 2, 61-79.

Lee, S.H., and Tideswell, C. (2005), 'Understanding Attitudes Towards Leisure Travel and the Constraints Faced by Senior Koreans', Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 11, No. 3, 249-63.

Leung, R., Au, N., and Law, R. (2015), 'The Recent Asian Wave in Tourism Research: The Case of the Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing', Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, Vol. (forthcoming), No.

Littrell, M.A., Paige, R.C., and Song, K. (2004), 'Senior Travellers: Tourism Activities and Shopping Behaviours', Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 10, No. 4, 348-62.

Longhi, S., Nijkamp, P., and Poot, J. (2008), 'Meta-Analysis of Empirical Evidence on the Labour Market Impacts of Immigration', Région et Développement, Vol. 27, No. 1, 161-91.

Lutz, W., Butz, W.P., and Kc, S. (2014), World Population and Human Capital in the Twenty-First Century. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Moschis, G.P., and Ünal, B. (2008), 'Travel and Leisure Services Preferences and Patronage Motives of Older Consumers', Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, Vol. 24, No. 4, 259-69.

Muller, T.E., and O'Cass, A. (2001), 'Targeting the Young at Heart: Seeing Senior Vacationers the Way They See Themselves', Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 7, No. 4, 285-301.

Nimrod, G. (2008), 'Retirement and Tourism Themes in Retirees' Narratives', Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 35, No. 4, 859-78.

Nimrod, G., and Rotem, A. (2010), 'Between Relaxation and Excitement: Activities and Benefits Gained in Retirees' Tourism', International Journal of Tourism Research, Vol. 12, No. 1, 65-78.

Norman, W.C., Daniels, M.J., McGuire, F., and Norman, C.A. (2001), 'Whither the Mature Market', Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing, Vol. 8, No. 3-4, 113-30.

Nyaupane, G.P., McCabe, J.T., and Andereck, K.L. (2008), 'Seniors' Travel Constraints: Stepwise Logistic Regression Analysis', Tourism Analysis, Vol. 13, No. 4, 341-54.

Oppermann, M. (1995), 'Travel Life Cycle', Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 22, No. 3, 535-52.

Patterson, I. (2006), Growing Older: Tourism and Leisure Behaviour of Older Adults. CABI, Wallingford.

Prayag, G. (2012), 'Senior Travelers' Motivations and Future Behavioral Intentions: The Case of Nice', Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, Vol. 29, No. 7, 665-81.

Reece, W.S. (2004), 'Are Senior Leisure Travelers Different?', Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 43, No. 1, 11-8.

Ridderstaat, J.R. (2015), Studies on Determinants of Tourism Demand Dynamics in a Small Island Destination. Ph.D. thesis. VU University Amsterdam.

Roscoe, D.D., and Jenkins, S. (2005), 'A Meta-Analysis of Campaign Contributions' Impact on Roll Call Voting*', Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 86, No. 1, 52-68.

Sangpikul, A. (2008a), 'A Factor-Cluster Analysis of Tourist Motivations: A Case of US Senior Travelers', Tourism, Vol. 56, No. 1, 23-40.

Sangpikul, A. (2008b), 'Travel Motivations of Japanese Senior Travellers to Thailand', International Journal of Tourism Research, Vol. 10, No. 1, 81-94.

Sie, L., Patterson, I., and Pegg, S. (2015), 'Towards an Understanding of Older Adult Educational Tourism through the Development of a Three-Phase Integrated Framework', Current Issues in Tourism, Vol. (forthcoming), No.

Snepenger, D., King, J., Marshall, E., and Uysal, M. (2006), 'Modeling Iso-Ahola's Motivation Theory in the Tourism Context', Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 45, No. 2, 140-9.

Stanley, T.D. (2001), 'Wheat from Chaff: Meta-Analysis as Quantitative Literature Review', The Journal of Economic Perspectives, Vol. 15, No. 3, 131-50.

Sutton, A.J., Abrams, K.R., Jones, D.R., Sheldon, T.A., and Song, F. (2000), Methods for Meta-Analysis in Medical Research. John Wiley and Sons, New York.

van den Bergh, J.C.J.M., Button, K., Nijkamp, P., and Pepping, G.C. (1997), Meta-analysis in Environmental Economics. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht.

Wang, Y., Zhang, Y., Xia, J., and Wang, Z. (2008), 'Segmenting the Mature Travel Market by Motivation', International Journal of Data Analysis Techniques and Strategies, Vol. 1, No. 2, 193-209.

Ward, A. (2014), 'Segmenting the Senior Tourism Market in Ireland Based on Travel Motivations', Journal of Vacation Marketing, Vol. 20, No. 3, 267-77.

Woo, E., Kim, H., and Uysal, M. (2015), 'A Measure of Quality of Life in Elderly Tourists', Applied Research in Quality of Life, Vol. (forthcoming), No.

You, X., and O'Leary, J.T. (2000), 'Age and Cohort Effects: An Examination of Older Japanese Travelers', Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, Vol. 9, No. 1-2, 21-42.

Zimmer, Z., Brayley, R.E., and Searle, M.S. (1995), 'Whether to Go and Where to Go: Identification of Important Influences on Seniors' Decisions to Travel', Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 33, No. 3, 3-10.

Appendix

The factors identified in the studies collected are reclassified into macro-factors, for the purposes of the meta-analytical analysis, as follows (number of occurrences between parentheses):

- **Culture/nature** (22): Camping/tenting; Nature-oriented activity; Knowledge; Visiting parks; Visiting park/rural attractions; Education/nature; Learners; Cultural heritage activity; Appreciating natural resources and health; Visiting rural/cultural attractions; Participating in guided tour; Excited learners; Cultural tourism; Knowledge-seeking; Intellect; Nostalgics; Connection; Culture; Education.
- **Experience/adventure** (21): Experience desire/adventure; Beach/water activity; Travel enjoyment; Outdoors tourism; Sports and entertainment tourism; Novelty; Novelty seeking; Excitement; Cosmopolitan experiences; Novelty and knowledge-seeking; Sport/competency; Relaxation/intellectual; Entertainment; Exploring; To have new experience; Sport/competency; Physical stimulation.
- **Relax/well-being/escape** (20): Laziness; Indulgent relaxers; Quality of life; Rest and relaxation; Relaxation; Well-being; Health; Escape; Escaping from everyday routine; Escaping; To rest and relax.

- **Socialization** (16): Kinship; Social; Friendlies; Family togetherness and study; Family and sports; Social bonding; Engaging and socialization; Socialization; Social/past-oriented; Family; Social; Camaraderie; Novelty and socialization; Spiritual and social; To socialize.
- **Self-esteem/ego-enhancement** (12): Can afford a vacation; Shopping/Dining/Sightseeing; Ego-enhancement; Ego-enhancement; Self-esteem; Meeting role expectations; Achievement; Self-esteem builders.
- **Others** (5): Nostalgics; Short trips; Single-destination trip; Constraints to travel; Energy to travel.