
Managing the Tourist Preferences of Seniors

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Abstract:

Purpose: The main objective of this article was to identify and analyse the tourism preferences of seniors (people aged 55+), in particular their needs, motives for tourism and expected benefits. The main objective was complemented by empirical objectives that enabled the identification of a study group of seniors taking into account their age, marital status, income and tourism preferences.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The literature analysis and criticism method, the diagnostic survey method, the comparison method and statistical methods were used to verify the hypotheses. The study was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire survey on a randomly selected research sample of 1,000 seniors from Lower Silesia. A comparative (comparative) analysis of documents published by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, the Lower Silesian Marshal's Office, the Polish Tourist Organisation, the Central Statistical Office and ZUS was also carried out.

Findings: Most of the seniors surveyed chose Poland as their tourist destination. The predominant form was active leisure with an extensive programme, followed by individual leisure tailored during the event and all-inclusive leisure. Least respondents indicated leisure combined with sightseeing. Women mostly preferred active holidays with an extensive programme. Men felt that an individually tailored programme during the event was the most suitable form of leisure for them.

Practical Implications: The practical business implications mainly concern the possibility for managers to use the results of the research in the process of selling a tourism offer to senior citizens by taking their preferences into account.

Originality/Value: It emerged that gender significantly differentiates the tourism preferences of senior citizens.

Keywords: Senior citizens, senior tourism, tourism preferences.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the ways to activate senior citizens, who statistics show are steadily increasing (United Nations, 2023). According to UNFPA data, the global share of people aged 65 and over has nearly doubled from 5.5% in 1974 to 10.3% in 2024. This figure is projected to reach 20.7% by 2074, with the number of those aged 80 and over more than tripling. Currently, developed countries have the highest proportion of elderly populations, while developing countries are typically witnessing rapid population aging (UNFPA, 2023).

Business is increasingly recognising the potential of senior tourism especially in the context of operating tourist destinations outside the main holiday season (Patterson and Balderas, 2020; Kolasińska and Sporek, 2021). Especially as the previous stereotype of seniors as poor, sickly and interested in meeting basic needs is clearly changing in Poland (Byłok, 2013).

There is an apparent increase in interest in tourism (Kociszewski, 2017). In their work, Tung and Ritchie point to 'the importance of the senior travel market, which has been recognised by marketers and tourism researchers. While academic research has begun to look at the psychological aspects of older travellers, more progress needs to be made in the area of psychology, particularly in relation to the memories behind the nature of their memorable experiences' (Tung and Ritchie, 2011).

The issue of different stakeholder groups operating in the tourism space is also unfamiliar to other academic disciplines, including management and quality sciences, economics and finance, socio-economic geography and spatial management, sociology, pedagogy and physical culture sciences (Włodarczyk, 2016). Product preferences in economics (preferences) are a fundamental concept in consumer choice theory. According to Kreps, they contribute to 'reflecting and formalising the consumer's tastes, whereby they do not depend entirely on the price of goods or the consumer's budget, but on the satisfaction, happiness or utility they provide.

Preferences allow the consumer to make choices in the face of a variety of alternatives". The issue of senior citizens' tourism is not yet fully recognised. Therefore, the aim of this article is to identify the main preferences of seniors in various aspects related to undertaking tourism activities and to answer the main

research question, i.e. what are the tourism preferences of Polish seniors, their hierarchy, structure and conditions?

2. Literature review

The issue of senior citizens' tourism has been addressed in numerous studies (Borges Tiago *et al.*, 2016; Kociszewski, 2021). Some of them dealt with tourism preferences (Agrusa and Kim, 2008; Moschis and Unal, 2008; Spasojević and Božić, 2016). The subject of analyses of tourism preferences and tourism activity is taken up by Alejziak in the publication *Determinants and social differentiation of tourism activity* (2009), reviewing the methods and techniques used in research into tourism activity. Consumer behaviour in general is presented in a 2010 publication edited by Dobiegała-Korona, which discusses aspects of businesses competing for customers in the tourism services market.

This research also covers the issue of tourism preferences, which determine the choice of tourism products offered on the market by senior citizens. Górska demonstrates in her work that "the development of social tourism in the next decade may contribute to a full range of new opportunities for tourism transformation, in particular because of the financial support contemplated by the European Union authorities".

In Poland, at the end of 2021, the number of people who have reached the age of 60 or more will be 9.7 million. The percentage of elderly people in the Polish population has reached 25.7% and, according to the forecasts of the Central Statistical Office, in 2050 will be equal to 40% of the total population of our country. "Turning grey" in Polish society will result in changes in the functioning of the whole state, as well as of individuals and families. Seniors as clients are characterised by Kociszewski (2020) in his work from 2020.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his 1999 message on the occasion of International Seniors' Day, pointed to the ageing processes of the world's population. In it he stated: "Our times are also - without doubt - an era of longevity. During the second half of the 20th century, human life expectancy increased by 20 years. In 30 years' time, one third of the population of the developed world will be over 60 years old, and on a global scale we will see such a figure in 2125.

The senior population itself is ageing. Already today, around 10% of the population over 60 will live to be at least 80 years old. By 2025, their percentage will rise to 25%. (...) In short, we are in the middle phase of a quiet revolution. It is a revolution that goes well beyond the realm of demographics and has serious economic, social, cultural, psychological and spiritual consequences.

"Population ageing is a challenge faced by an increasing number of countries in the world. On the one hand, it is a clearly positive process, as it has been possible to

eliminate or reduce some of the risks that had a direct impact on the level and quality of life, but also on its length" (Frąckiewicz and Iwański, 2021).

Studies of groups of seniors in Poland indicate that retirement age is being reached by people with a more favourable educational structure, an increasing income and an awareness of the importance of physical activity, hence it should be assumed that tourism and recreation in this social group will play an increasingly important role (Markiewicz-Patkowska *et al.*, 2018).

3. Materials and Methods

In the prepared article, the authors applied methods, techniques and research tools used to solve the research problem, which concerned checking the feasibility of tourism preferences of senior citizens. Qualitative-quantitative methods were used in the research process and a study of domestic and foreign literature covering the tourism of "silver heads" was undertaken. Survey research techniques and a structured interview were used. In the empirical research on tourism preferences of senior citizens, planned research methods were applied, which were used depending on the methodological paradigms developed in the publications by Glabinski (2018).

A literature analysis and critique method, a diagnostic survey method, a comparative method and statistical methods were used. The comparative (comparative) qualitative-quantitative analysis is based on an examination of documents published by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, the Lower Silesian Marshal's Office, the Polish Tourist Organisation, the Central Statistical Office and ZUS. Its aim was to generally identify the preferences of senior citizens in the area of tourism, as well as to determine the offer of tourism market players aimed at them.

The literature review included publications on the analysis of the Polish senior citizens' tourism market and the directions of tourism development in the world. A comparative method was used, which enabled a multidirectional analysis of concepts and definitions. The result was the collection, selection, description and interpretation of acquired data on senior tourism. The diagnostic survey involved collecting data from primary sources on senior tourism and developing a statistical analysis. Its result was to determine the characteristics of the research group and its tourism expectations.

The research was based on extensive research material, collected mainly by means of empirical direct research, based on the questionnaire technique.

This raises the important research problem of identifying and systematising the tourism preferences of senior citizens (seniors). The solution to this problem in this article is to answer the basic research question, i.e. What are the tourism preferences of Polish seniors, their hierarchy, structure and conditions?

The empirical research was conducted from March 2021 to May 2022. This was a period of partial restrictions introduced as a result of the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the effects of which were felt by the tourism industry as well as by the seniors themselves who were interested in travelling (Zaleska, 2021). "The tourism economy became the most affected component of the economy by the restrictions. And the period of recovery to its pre-pandemic state will probably take the longest of all other industries" (Panasiuk, 2020).

At that time, it was already possible to move and organize trips, with sanitary rules. Survey information was obtained in the Lower Silesia area, using a questionnaire sheet that was given to surveyed seniors in paper form. A total of $n = 1,280$ questionnaires were distributed, of which $n = 1,000$ were properly completed. A 2015 publication by Olesnech and Widawski provides information on impediments to seniors' travel decisions. Among the obstacles listed, the authors pointed to a lack of original offers - as defined, offers that break stereotypes (Oleśniewicz and Widawski, 2015).

4. Identification of Tourism Preferences in the Senior Citizens Group

Among the analysed seniors from Lower Silesia, 76.5% declared their participation in organised tourist events, while the remaining part realised their tourist needs individually, without using the offer of travel agencies. Table 1 presents the results of the analysis of the participation of the analysed group of senior citizens by gender. Women participating in organised travel events were $n = 322$, or 64.4% of their study group; men who chose organised travel were $n = 153$, or 57.7% of this group; $N = 1,000$ correctly completed questionnaires were submitted for analysis, of which in $n = 235$ questionnaires this response was omitted, hence a sample of $n = 765$ people was analysed in this area.

Table 1. Characteristics of participation in organised tourism events for seniors

Category	Total (n = 765)		Women (n = 500)		Men (n = 265)	
	N	\hat{p} [95% CI]	n	\hat{p} [95% CI]	n	\hat{p} [95% CI]
I	475	62,1% [58,6; 65,5]	322	64,4% [60,1; 68,5]	153	57,7% [51,7; 63,6]
II	290	37,9% [34,5; 41,4]	178	35,6% [31,5; 39,9]	112	42,3% [36,4; 48,3]
	χ^2 (1) = 44,74, $p < 0,001$, W = 0,24		χ^2 (1) = 41,47, $p < 0,001$, W = 0,29		χ^2 (1) = 6,34, $p = 0,012$, W = 0,15	
	χ^2 (1) = 3,27, $p = 0,071$, V = 0,07					

Legend: I - yes, II - no.

n - number of subjects, \hat{p} - proportion of subjects, CI - confidence interval for proportion, χ^2 - chi-square goodness-of-fit/independence statistic, p - test probability level for χ^2 goodness-of-fit/independence, W - effect size measure for the χ^2 goodness-of-fit test (where $W = 0.10$ is a small effect, $W = 0.30$ is a medium effect, $W = 0.50$ is a large effect), V - effect size measure for the χ^2 independence test (where $V < 0.20$ is a small effect, V between 0.20 and 0.30 is a medium effect, $V > 0.30$ is a large effect) (Cohen, 1988).

Source: Own study.

Seniors who declared participation in organised tourist events determined the frequency of participation in such events in the next question included in the survey questionnaire. In order to determine the frequency of trips, the analysed group was divided into two types:

- I - participating in organised trips once a year;
- II - participating in organised trips more than once a year.

Among the respondents, $n = 400$ declared participating in organised travel events once a year, while 365 respondents use organised events several times a year. These preferences are similarly distributed between the groups of female and male respondents. The analytical data collected are presented in Table 2. It is important to note that the respondents gave their answers during the COVID-19 pandemic, which probably also influenced the determination of the frequency of trips due to travel and interpersonal restrictions.

Table 2. Characteristics of frequency of participation in organised tourism events

Category	Total (n = 765)		Women (n = 500)		Men (n = 265)	
	N	\hat{p} [95% CI]	n	\hat{p} [95% CI]	n	\hat{p} [95% CI]
I	400	52,3% [48,7; 55,8]	255	51,0% [46,6; 55,4]	145	54,7% [48,7; 60,6]
II	365	47,7% [44,2; 51,3]	245	49,0% [44,6; 53,4]	120	45,3% [39,4; 51,3]
	$\chi^2(1) = 1,60, p = 0,206, W = 0,05$		$\chi^2(1) = 0,20, p = 0,655, W = 0,02$		$\chi^2(1) = 2,36, p = 0,125, W = 0,09$	
			$\chi^2(1) = 0,96, p = 0,327, V = 0,03$			

Legend: I - 1 time per year, II - 2 and more times per year.

n - number of respondents, \hat{p} - proportion of respondents, CI - confidence interval for proportion, χ^2 - chi-square statistic of goodness of fit/independence, p - test probability level for χ^2 goodness of fit/independence, W - effect size measure for the χ^2 goodness-of-fit test (where $W = 0.10$ is a small effect, $W = 0.30$ is a medium effect, $W = 0.50$ is a large effect), V - effect size measure for the χ^2 independence test (where $V < 0.20$ is a small effect, V between 0.20 and 0.30 is a medium effect, $V > 0.30$ is a large effect) (Cohen, 1988).

Source: Own study.

In the process of preparing an offer for seniors, an important parameter is its duration, on which depends not only the optimal calculation of the price, but also the satisfaction of the participants, for whom the duration of the holiday is important. Table 3 collects information on the characteristics of preferences regarding the duration of a tourist event.

The seniors surveyed in the survey questionnaire were given the opportunity to choose two response options in this research area. The first group were those choosing a tour duration of up to 7 days, while the second group chose the option of more than 7 days. Tourist trips of up to 7 days were chosen by 59.8% of female

respondents; among men, this group accounted for 54.0%. Overall, the choices of a short (up to 7 days) tour duration also predominated. Tour duration longer than 7 days was indicated by $n = 422$ people, which represented 42.2% of the population of seniors surveyed. The choice of a tour duration longer than 7 days was at a similar level for women (40.2%) and men (46.0%). The study sample in this area was $n = 1,000$ people.

Table 3. Characteristics of preference for tour duration

Category	Total (n = 1000)		Women (n = 654)		Men (n = 346)	
	N	\hat{p} [95% CI]	n	\hat{p} [95% CI]	n	\hat{p} [95% CI]
I	578	57,8% [54,7; 60,8]	391	59,8% [56,0; 63,5]	187	54,0% [48,8; 59,2]
II	422	42,2% [39,2; 45,3]	263	40,2% [36,5; 44,0]	159	46,0% [40,8; 51,2]
	$\chi^2(1) = 24,37, p < 0,001, W = 0,18$		$\chi^2(1) = 25,05, p < 0,001, W = 0,22$		$\chi^2(1) = 2,27, p = 0,132, W = 0,09$	
			$\chi^2(1) = 3,06, p = 0,080, V = 0,05$			

Legend: I - ≤ 7 days, II - > 7 days.

n - number of subjects, ' \hat{p} ' - proportion of subjects, CI - confidence interval for proportion, χ^2 - chi-square goodness-of-fit/independence statistic, p - test probability level for χ^2 goodness-of-fit/independence, W - effect size measure for the χ^2 goodness-of-fit test (where $W = 0.10$ is a small effect, $W = 0.30$ is a medium effect, $W = 0.50$ is a large effect), V - effect size measure for the χ^2 independence test (where $V < 0.20$ is a small effect, V between 0.20 and 0.30 is a medium effect, $V > 0.30$ is a large effect) (Cohen, 1988).

Source: Own study.

The next analysis presents seniors' preferences for forms of leisure during a tourism event. Here, a division into four different activities was used:

- Group I are those choosing active leisure with a rich programme;
- Group II were those preferring individual forms tailored during the event;
- Group III preferred all-inclusive static leisure;
- Group IV seniors opted for leisure combined with sightseeing.

A detailed analysis of this research question is presented in Table 4, which, in addition to the previously mentioned groups of older people surveyed, indicates their preferences in this area overall and by gender. A total of $n = 886$ seniors surveyed answered this research question, but some gave more than one answer - this results in a difference between the number of respondents and the number of answers, of which there were a total of $n = 968$. In order to standardise the interpretation of the results, the number in each group of respondents was analysed first. The largest number of respondents overall preferred active leisure with an extensive programme - this was the answer given by $n = 420$ respondents.

Another group was made up of seniors choosing individual, tailor-made holidays during the event - there were $n = 364$ of them. Static, all-inclusive holidays were

indicated by $n = 151$ of all seniors, while the least number, $n = 33$, preferred a form of holiday combined with sightseeing. Women mostly preferred active leisure with an extensive programme, while men in greatest numbers chose individual leisure tailored during the event.

For both women and men, leisure combined with sightseeing was the least popular form of leisure during tourism events. The results recorded in this research question indicate a high interest in an active and rich programme among both women and men, which may indicate a good physical condition of the group surveyed, but also a high level of cognitive needs that can be satisfied during tourism events.

Table 4. Characteristics of preferences for the form of leisure during a tourist event

Legend: I - active leisure with an extensive programme, II - individually tailored leisure during the event, III - static all-inclusive leisure, IV - leisure combined with sightseeing;

Category	Total ($n = 886$)			Women ($n = 576$)			Men ($n = 310$)		
	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2	N	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2
I	420	47,4% [44,1; 50,7]	43,4%	290	50,3% [46,3; 54,4]	46,2%	130	41,9% [36,5; 47,5]	38,2%
II	364	41,1% [37,9; 44,3]	37,6%	232	40,3% [36,3; 44,3]	36,9%	132	42,6% [37,2; 48,1]	38,8%
III	151	17,0% [14,7; 19,6]	15,6%	84	14,6% [11,9; 17,6]	13,4%	67	21,6% [17,3; 26,4]	19,7%
IV	33	3,7% [2,6; 5,1]	3,4%	22	3,8% [2,5; 5,6]	3,5%	11	3,5% [1,9; 6,1]	3,2%
Total	968	109,3%	100,0%	628	109,0%	100,0%	340	109,7%	100,0%

Legend: I - active leisure with an extensive programme, II - individually tailored leisure during the event, III - static all-inclusive leisure, IV - leisure combined with sightseeing.

n - number of respondents, \hat{p}_1 - proportion of respondents, CI - confidence interval for proportion, \hat{p}_2 - proportion of responses.

Source: Own study.

The surveyed group of seniors from Lower Silesia specified their preferences in terms of tourist destinations. The study involved $n = 1,000$ senior citizens, of whom $n = 963$ responded to the survey questionnaire. The categories of tourist destinations are detailed in Table 5, which also divides the analysed group of older people by gender. In order to facilitate the choice of tourist destination, six basic groups of responses were identified in this research area:

- I - Poland (in general, sea, mountains, Masuria);
- II - Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Balkans);
- III - Western Europe (France, Austria, Germany);
- IV - Northern Europe (Baltic States);
- V - Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Belarus);
- VI - world.

Overall, respondents preferred Poland as a tourist destination, with a focus on the Polish sea, mountains and Masuria. This destination was chosen by $n = 881$ respondents. Within the survey questionnaire, several answers could be given to this

question, resulting in a total number of selected tourist event destinations of $n = 1559$. Among women, the total number of answers to this question was $n = 1009$ and among men, $n = 550$. The number of women and men who completed this questionnaire item was $n = 627$ and $n = 336$ respectively.

The analysed group of women selected Poland as their preferred tourist destination in 91.5%; among men, the same destination was indicated by 91.4% of respondents. The next most preferred destination was Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, the Balkans) - selected by 24.6% of all respondents who answered this question on the questionnaire; in turn, the female seniors surveyed selected this tourist destination in 22.8% and the male seniors in 28%.

Western Europe as a tourist destination was indicated by a total of 17.4% of respondents in the analysed group; 18.5% of women and 15.5% of men chose this destination. The smallest number of responses was assigned to group VI, representing the world in general as a tourist destination - respondents here included exotic travel in addition to the previously mentioned destinations.

There were 42 women in this group, representing 6.7% of women who answered this question, and 23 men. A total of 65 people, or 6.7% of respondents who answered this question, chose this direction. Relatively low levels of interest were reported in the majors: Northern Europe (Baltic States) (13.1% of total responses given) and Eastern Europe (8.5% of all respondents who answered this question from the survey questionnaire).

Table 5. Characteristics of preference for tourist event direction

Category	Total ($n = 963$)			Women ($n = 627$)			Men ($n = 336$)		
	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2
I	881	91,5% [89,6; 93,1]	56,5%	574	91,5% [89,2; 93,5]	56,9%	307	91,4% [88,0; 94,0]	55,8%
II	237	24,6% [22,0; 27,4]	15,2%	143	22,8% [19,7; 26,2]	14,2%	94	28,0% [23,4; 32,9]	17,1%
III	168	17,4% [15,1; 19,9]	10,8%	116	18,5% [15,6; 21,7]	11,5%	52	15,5% [11,9; 19,6]	9,5%
IV	126	13,1% [11,1; 15,3]	8,1%	79	12,6% [10,2; 15,4]	7,8%	47	14,0% [10,6; 18,0]	8,5%
V	82	8,5% [6,9; 10,4]	5,3%	55	8,8% [6,7; 11,2]	5,5%	27	8,0% [5,5; 11,3]	4,9%
VI	65	6,7% [5,3; 8,5]	4,2%	42	6,7% [4,9; 8,9]	4,2%	23	6,8% [4,5; 9,9]	4,2%
Ogółem	1559	161,8%	100,0%	1009	160,9%	100,0%	550	163,7%	100,0%

Legend: I - Poland (in general, sea, mountains, Masuria), II - Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Balkans), III - Western Europe (France, Austria, Germany), IV - Northern Europe (Baltics), V - Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Belarus), VI - World; n - number of respondents, \hat{p}_1 - proportion of respondents, CI - confidence interval for proportion, \hat{p}_2 - proportion of responses.

Source: Own study.

Another area of analysis in the field of senior tourism was to determine the respondents' preference for the mode of transport chosen during the tourist event. In the group of $n = 1,000$ questionnaires analysed, $n = 936$ respondents answered the question on transport, of which $n = 608$ were women and $n = 328$ were men. Respondents were able to provide more than one answer to this question in the survey questionnaire, as reflected in Table 6 (a total of $n = 2562$ responses were recorded).

The survey was based on an analysis of the preferences indicated in the responses as to modes of transport, which were divided into eight different types for analytical purposes: I - bicycle; II - public transport bus (PKS, etc.); III - seagoing ship; IV - ferry; V - aeroplane; VI - private car; VII - train; VIII - tourist group-only coach. As can be seen from the overview, the majority of seniors chose the bicycle for their travel activity; overall, this transport was preferred by $n = 611$ people, among whom there were $n = 399$ women and $n = 212$ men. The bicycle was not the only mode of transport chosen during a tourism event, but it was complementary in this area.

Of importance to the seniors surveyed is transport based on public bus transport, which was chosen by $n = 412$ total respondents; $n = 406$ indicated a seagoing ship, $n = 335$ a ferry, $n = 298$ an aeroplane, $n = 241$ a passenger car, $n = 190$ a train, $n = 69$ a tourist group-only coach. These preferences were similarly distributed in the surveyed group of women, in which 65.6% chose the bicycle, 48% the seagoing ship, 43.4% the public transport bus, 37% the ferry, 34% the plane, 24.3% the passenger car, 19.9% the train, 7.9% the tourist coach.

Men also mostly chose the bicycle (64.6% of respondents), followed by the public transport bus (45.1%), seagoing ship (34.8%), ferry (33.5%), passenger car (28.4%), aeroplane (27.7%), train (21%) and tour bus (6.4%).

Due to the possibility of misinterpretation of the responses regarding the public transport bus and the coach exclusively for tourist groups, the results for these two groups can be added up and thus the total level of interest in these modes of transport can be obtained (total $n = 412 + 69 = 481$ respondents). This error may be due to the order of the survey responses, as shown by the results obtained in the interview sheet with senior citizens - the tourist (chartered) bus was chosen more often than the public transport bus.

Table 6. Characteristics of the preference for the mode of transport chosen during a tourist event

Category	Total ($n = 936$)			Women ($n = 608$)			Men ($n = 328$)		
	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2
I	611	65,3% [62,2; 68,3]	23,8%	399	65,6% [61,8; 69,3]	23,4%	212	64,6% [59,3; 69,7]	24,7%
II	412	44,0% [40,9; 47,2]	16,1%	264	43,4% [39,5; 47,4]	15,5%	148	45,1% [39,8; 50,5]	17,2%
III	406	43,4% [40,2; 46,6]	15,8%	292	48,0% [44,1; 52,0]	17,1%	114	34,8% [29,8; 40,0]	13,3%

IV	335	35,8% [23,8; 38,9]	13,1%	225	37,0% [33,2; 40,9]	13,2%	110	33,5% [28,6; 38,8]	12,8%
V	298	31,8% [28,9; 34,9]	11,6%	207	34,0% [30,4; 37,9]	12,1%	91	27,7% [23,1; 32,8]	10,6%
VI	241	25,7% [23,0; 28,6]	9,4%	148	24,3% [21,1; 27,9]	8,7%	93	28,4% [23,7; 33,4]	10,8%
VII	190	20,3% [17,8; 23,0]	7,4%	121	19,9% [16,9; 23,2]	7,1%	69	21,0% [16,9; 25,7]	8,0%
VIII	69	7,4% [5,8; 9,2]	2,7%	48	7,9% [5,9; 10,2]	2,8%	21	6,4% [4,1; 9,4]	2,4%
Ogółem	2562	273,7%	100,0%	1704	280,3%	100,0%	858	261,6%	100,0%

Legend: I - bicycle, II - public transport bus (PKS, etc.), III - seagoing ship, IV - ferry, V - aeroplane, VI - passenger car, VII - train, VIII - tourist coach designed exclusively for a tourist group, n - number of respondents, p_1 - proportion of respondents, CI - confidence interval for proportion, p_2 - proportion of responses.

Source: Own study.

Preferences in terms of travel providers were indicated by n = 911 seniors (91.1% of the returned questionnaires). This question sought to determine the importance of travel agents in organising trips for older people. Several answers could be provided on the survey sheet, resulting in a total number of n = 1190. The collected results are shown in Table 7. To identify the groups of travel event providers, the survey identified seven basic groups of responses:

- I - senior citizens' clubs;
- II - parishes / pilgrimage agencies;
- III - local travel agencies;
- IV - national travel agencies;
- V - foreign travel agencies;
- VI - independent organisation of trips;
- VII - other (Internet, friends, private offer, NGOs).

The majority of older people in the survey indicated senior citizens' clubs as their preferred providers of tourism events; in total, this answer was selected by n = 382 respondents in the survey sheet. The next choice in this area of preference analysis was parishes/pilgrimage offices, which were indicated by n = 316 people, representing 34.7% of respondents.

The third ranked tourism organiser was local travel agencies, which were chosen as a tourism event provider by n = 213 of all respondents in this research aspect. Nationwide travel agencies also appeared to be an important tour operator for the respondents, which were selected in this area of preference analysis by n = 193 people, which accounted for 21.2% of the total respondents.

Foreign travel agencies were indicated by 3.7% of the seniors surveyed, while the option of organising it themselves was preferred by n = 31 people, representing 3.4% of the group analysed. The 2.3% of seniors surveyed chose "other" providers of the tourism product (Internet, friends, private offerings, NGOs).

This answer can be seen in this study as a complement to the first choices, but special attention should be paid to the low interest in it among the respondents.

Among the female and male respondents, the highest level of preference for tourism providers was recorded for senior citizens' clubs, parishes / pilgrimage offices, local travel agencies and national travel agencies. Women selected senior citizens' clubs as tourism providers in 42.6%, parishes / pilgrimage offices in 36.6%, local travel agencies in 22.9% and national travel agencies in 21.1%. Men, like the analysed women's group, selected senior citizens' clubs as tourism providers in 40.6%, followed by parishes / pilgrimage agencies in 31.3%, local travel agencies in 24.3% and national travel agencies in 21.4%.

Among both women and men, each of the other responses received a few percent of indications. The results reflect the great importance of senior citizens' clubs in offering tourism services. Similarly, parishes/pilgrimage offices and - important for the purposes of this study - local and national travel agencies are important to the group analysed in this research area.

Table 7. Characteristics of preferences in terms of tourism event providers

Category	Total (n = 911)			Women (n = 598)			Men (n = 313)		
	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2	n	\hat{p}_1 [95% CI]	\hat{p}_2
I	382	41.9% [38,8; 45,2]	32,1%	255	42,6% [38,7; 46,6]	32,3%	127	40,6% [35,2; 46,1]	31,8%
II	316	34,7% [31,6; 37,8]	26,6%	218	36,5% [32,7; 40,4]	27,6%	98	31,3% [26,4; 36,6]	24,5%
III	213	23,4% [20,7; 26,2]	17,9%	137	22,9% [19,7; 26,4]	17,3%	76	24,3% [19,8; 29,3]	19,0%
IV	193	21,2% [18,6; 23,9]	16,2%	126	21,1% [17,9; 24,5]	15,9%	67	21,4% [17,1; 26,2]	16,8%
V	34	3,7% [2,6; 5,1]	2,9%	20	3,3% [2,1; 5,0]	2,5%	14	4,5% [2,6; 7,2]	3,5%
VI	31	3,4% [2,4; 4,7]	2,6%	20	3,3% [2,1; 5,0]	2,5%	11	3,5% [1,9; 6,0]	2,8%
VII	21	2,3% [1,3; 3,8]	1,8%	14	2,3% [1,3; 3,8]	1,8%	7	2,2% [1,0; 4,3]	1,8%
Ogółem	1190	130,6%	100,0%	790	132,0%	100,0%	400	127,8%	100,0%

Legend: I - senior citizens' clubs, II - parishes / pilgrimage offices, III - local travel agencies, IV - national travel agencies, V - foreign travel agencies, VI - independent organisation of trips, VII - other (Internet, friends, private offer, NGOs); n - number of respondents, \hat{p}_1 - proportion of respondents, CI - confidence interval for proportion, \hat{p}_2 - proportion of responses.

Source: Own study.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The research results obtained in the areas of seniors' tourism preferences and the offers of travel agencies organising tourism trips for the elderly made it possible to fulfil the formulated research objectives. The main objective of the dissertation was

to identify the tourism preferences of senior citizens, in particular their needs, motives for tourism and expected benefits, and to check the market offer of tourism services in terms of its adaptation to the identified preferences. Their preference for tourist trips in the survey was identified by 93.3% of the seniors surveyed, among whom the largest number indicated domestic trips as their preferred tourist destination, which confirmed the results of other studies conducted in this group of people.

In line with market expectations, all travel agencies surveyed had domestic tours and packages for seniors in their product offering. In addition to domestic trips, European destinations were preferred in senior travel tourism - here the majority indicated Southern and Western Europe. Fewer people preferred trips to Eastern European countries, which may have been a result of the already unstable situation in Ukraine at the time of the study. Older people's preferences related to the choice of domestic tourism were also noted in other studies conducted among Polish seniors; their results are similar to those obtained in this study.

Among the destinations preferred by the surveyed group, the Polish sea and mountains dominated, which was linked to preferences for the length of trips. Seven-day trips were most frequently indicated. The same results in this research area were obtained in the group of seniors and tour operators, which may prove good identification of customer needs. The surveyed group of seniors, who were characterised by high monthly income, defined in the questionnaire as greater than PLN 3,000, included exotic destinations in their travel preferences.

The results of the surveys also reflected a high degree of alignment between the tourism offer and preferences in the area of travel motives. Respondents cited the desire to be active and curiosity about the world as motives for travel. Travel agencies cited active holidays in the country in their offer for seniors in the largest number of responses. As a form of leisure, senior citizens chose a trip with an extensive programme, which is in line with the programmes of tourist events offered by senior tourism organisers.

At the outset of the research, it was hypothesised that the travel services market was characterised by a low level of linkage between seniors' travel preferences and the offers made for them by tour operators. The results of questionnaires and interviews with seniors and randomly selected representatives of travel agencies showed a different situation. The offer prepared for senior citizens is, to a large extent, correlated with their expectations.

Such results may be the result of good market knowledge and the limited tourism needs of the surveyed group of seniors. "The changes taking place in the population structure make it necessary to adapt to them, as well as to anticipate the challenges that will arise as the next generation enters old age" . In the research area related to the organisation of tourist offices, it was assumed at the outset that the tried and

tested methods of running a tourist enterprise limit the possibilities of creating a customised model for researching customer needs, including an analysis of the tourism preferences of senior citizens.

The results of the survey of $n = 61$ companies organising tourism for seniors showed that there is no uniform model for researching customer needs. The surveyed companies carry out market analyses using different, often fully unverifiable methods, and are guided by the experience of the owners when making product decisions. The assumptions of the model for researching and satisfying the tourism needs of seniors, developed by the author, filled the existing gap in this area of the activities of tourism companies.

One of the first cognitive objectives was to identify the preferences of seniors in the area of leisure and, in particular, tourism. This objective was achieved both in the area of the general research group and with a breakdown in terms of gender, age, health status and family situation of the seniors surveyed. As already indicated, the majority of respondents in all analysed groups chose Poland as a place for tourist trips. The predominant form was active holidays with an extensive programme, followed by individual holidays tailored during the event and all-inclusive holidays. The smallest number of respondents indicated leisure combined with sightseeing.

Women mostly preferred active trips with an extensive programme. Men found that an individually tailored programme during the event was suitable for them. The research was conducted during the pandemic, which had a significant impact on its length and conduct. The respondents themselves were unsure how tourism would work in the following months. On the basis of the analyses carried out, it can be concluded that senior tourism in Poland will continue to develop and that the tourism preferences of those participating in it will evolve towards greater interest in new forms of tourism.

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