

Identifying Seniors' Travel Motivations and Travel Barriers in China: An Exploratory Study in Beijing

by
Yandi Pan



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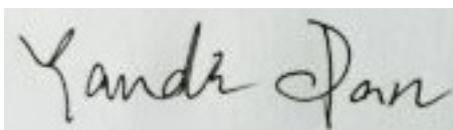
By
Yandi Pan

Presented as part of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management within the
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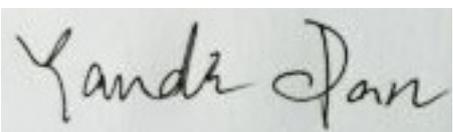
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DECLARATION

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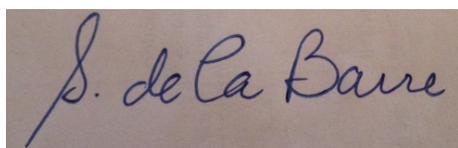
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THESIS EXAMINATION COMMITTEE SIGNATURE PAGE

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Department of Recreation & Tourism Management for acceptance, the thesis titled “*Identifying Seniors’ Travel Motivations and Travel Barriers in China: An Exploratory study in Beijing*” submitted by *Yandi Pan* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management.



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ABSTRACT

This research focused on exploring travel motivations and barriers to travel faced by seniors who live in Beijing, China. Travel motivation and travel barrier were two key factors in studying people's travel decision-making process and travel behaviours. China has already entered into an aging society and the aging population will continue to increase steadily. In this modern society, seniors have less responsibilities, more discretionary savings and more free time compared to other age groups. As a result, travelling has become an increasingly popular leisure activity among Chinese seniors. The senior tourism market has huge development potential in China and should not be overlooked. A more comprehensive understanding of Chinese seniors' characteristics and needs lays the foundation of developing sound senior tourism in China. Thus, this research aimed to study travel motivations and travel barriers as two key concepts in helping to understand senior tourism in China.

This exploratory study adopted a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interview and document analysis research methods to collect primary data. The research findings identified 'relaxation', 'knowledge and education', 'enhancement of kinship', 'novelty' 'social interaction' and 'escape' as key travel motivation push factors for seniors; 'perceived safety', 'natural experience', 'cultural appreciation', 'ease of travel', 'cost', 'tourism infrastructure', 'local delicacy' and 'climate' were the pull factors that seniors were concerned with when choosing a tourists destination. The identified travel barriers for seniors were three-fold, including individuals' personal problems, limitations of travel agencies and shortcomings in government policy.

The findings of this study reinforce the established theory on travel motivation - the 'push and pull' model used to explore seniors' motivation to travel, and provide primary evidence to support three categories of travel barriers that seniors face as mentioned by Huang and Tsai in 2003. The implications of this study provide both private travel sectors and public institutions practical detailed guidance on developing senior tourism to better serve Chinese senior tourists.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

According to a recent report from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2013), the population of people aged 60 years or over is predicted to increase from 841 million in 2013 to more than 2 billion in 2050, which will account for 21.2% of the world's total population. In 1950, 1 in 15 people were aged 60 years or over; in 2000, 1 in 9 people were aged 60 years or over and, in 2050, this ratio is estimated to be approximately 1 in 5 people aged 60 years or over (United Nations, 2001). Population aging is a worldwide, predominant demographic phenomenon as a result of "the dynamic evolution of past variations in birth and death rates, declines in fertility rates and increases in life expectancy" (Bloom, Canning & Fink, 2010, p. 583).

Asia is one of the regions with the fastest aging populations, and the ratio of people aged 60 years old and over in the total population is expected to increase from 10.1% in 2010 to 24.6% in 2050 (United Nations, 2015). According to the data from Population Division of United Nations, China is a populous country with over 1.3 billion people, of whom 200 million are aged 60 and older in 2015, the largest aging population in the world. Furthermore, China's aging population has been predicted to exceed 400 million by 2050, accounting for 35% of China's total population (United Nations, 2015).

Based on the United Nations' definition, an aging society refers to a society with at least 10% of its total population aged 60 and older or 7% of its total population aged 65 and older, which China reached 7.6% in 2005, and this ratio will increase to 26.8% in 2050 (Flaherty et al., 2007; Ortman, Velkoff & Hogan, 2014). *Figure 1* shows a prediction of China's aging population structure in 2030 and 2050, with the comparison between three of the world's largest countries: United States, India

and Indonesia. As evidenced by this figure, China is facing an increasingly serious situation of population aging.

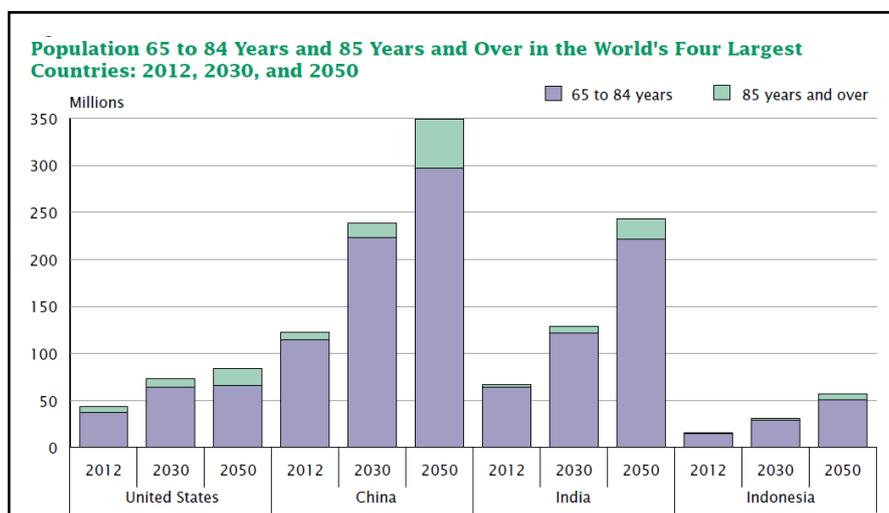


Figure 1. China's aging population structure in 2012, 2030 and 2050. (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2012).

Seniors are considered a unique group since they have large amounts of discretionary savings due to the wealth they have accumulated over their lifetime (Bai, Jang, Cai & O'leary, 2001); they have more flexible time to spend and fewer family responsibilities than any other adult groups (Jang & Wu, 2006). More importantly, many seniors in China have changed their traditional concept of earning and saving money for their children to being more willing to spend their savings on their own interests (Huang & Tsai, 2003). Based on a rapidly growing senior population and the unique characteristics of this group, increasing attention is being given to how this population uses free time and their well-being condition in China (Su, Shen & Wei, 2006). Travelling as a leisure activity has become prevalent among seniors since it can bring both physical and psychological benefits (Mence, 2003; Zimmer et al., 1995).

Consensus on the definition of 'senior' has not been reached. Different definitions from various scholars were examined in detail in the section of seniors' leisure time and leisure participation in

Chapter 2. In this study, people aged 55 years old and over were defined as seniors and used as the age criteria to select the interviewees. According to the World Tourism Organization (2015), senior tourism targets on “elderly people aged over 55, who have more time and money to spend on travel and leisure on a regular basis” (p. 47). In China, “State Council Provisional Regulations on Retirement” stated 60 years of age for males and 50 years of age for females are the minimum age limits when people should retire (Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 1978).

In recent years, numerous organizations in China have begun collecting and publishing relevant information pertaining to senior tourism. This represents a changing attitude of placing more importance on senior tourism. According to a recent report from China Silver Industry Association (2014), the number of Chinese senior tourists already accounts for more than 20% of the total number of tourists countrywide. Many travel companies in Beijing, Shanghai, and more developed cities are focusing on launching more tailored tourism products and services for seniors. In addition, national official organizations, such as China National Tourism Administration regularly release senior tourism related information, policies and reports. Many websites exclusively tailored to seniors’ affairs, such as The Chinese Union for Elder People, China Silver Industry Association and Chinese Seniors’ Tourism Website provide practical information and resources about senior tourism.

However, senior tourism in China still has much space to develop. Travel companies in China generally operate with a lack of understanding of the characteristics and concerns of senior tourists (Su, 2009). According to Zhang and Cui (2013), most Chinese tourism enterprises are still at the beginning stage of growth in terms of senior tourism. Their design of senior tourism products and the quality of services does not fully reflect senior tourists’ needs. In addition, government lacks the supporting policies towards seniors’ leisure and tourism in China (China Silver Industry Association,

2014). Given the present situation of senior tourism in China, comprehensively understanding seniors' characteristics and demands serves as one of the prerequisites is needed for the development of a more mature tourism market in China.

1.1 Context of the Study

1.1.1 Demographic shifts in age and family structure. In the late 1970s, the Chinese government launched a family planning campaign named “one-child policy” which allowed only one child per family. The original intent of formulating this policy was to alleviate the burden on resources to feed an enormous population and to minimize the imbalance between economic development and population growth (Chiu, 2004). As a result, the one-child policy has been considered a great success in sharply reducing the birth rate as it prevented an estimated 400 million extra births (Bailey, Ruddy & Shchukina, 2012). As early as 1990, Culter et al. proposed that the declining fertility rate was one of the most crucial factors that caused the demographic shift to aging in China. Furthermore, the standard of living has improved significantly and medical technology has become more advanced, both positively affecting seniors' health, physical abilities and life expectancy (UNWTO, 2015). China now has a significant imbalanced age structure as a result of the low birth rate with increasing life expectancy. According to the statistical data from Central Intelligence Agency (2016), China's age structure in 2015: 0-14 years: 17.08%; 15-24 years: 13.82%; 25-54 years: 47.95%; 55-64 years: 11.14%; 65 years and over: 10.01%. *Figure 2* shows the China Population Pyramid in 2015, which is used to illustrate the age and sex structure of a country's population.

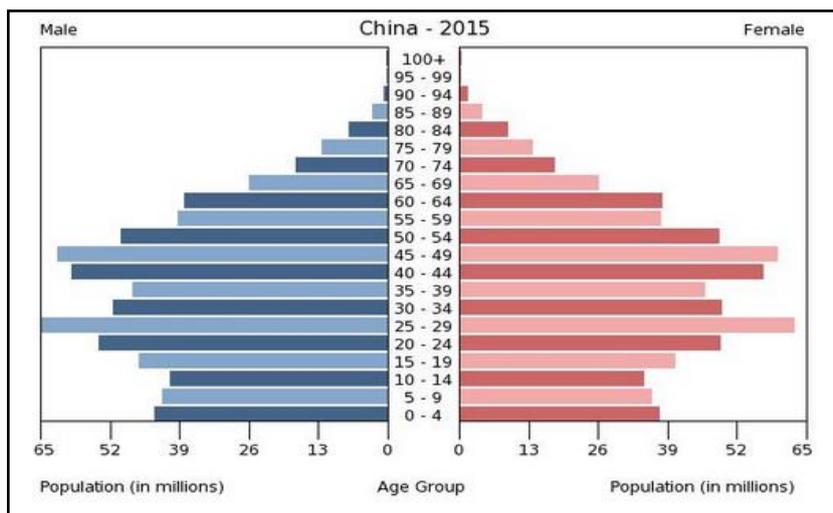


Figure 2. China Population Pyramid in 2015. (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016).

The implementation of the one-child policy has also had negative impacts on Chinese society. It has led to a continuing imbalanced demographic age structure and further dramatic increases in China's aging population over the next decades (Chiu, 2004). This aging phenomenon is also responsible for a declining labor force. As a consequence, the task of supporting tomorrow's seniors will fall on a shrinking working-age population (Chiu, 2004; Zhang, 2012).

Chinese family structure has changed since 2010 as a result of the one-child policy. Currently, Chinese families tend to face the "4-2-1 phenomenon"; when the only child from single-child parents reaches working age, he/she might need to take care of his/her two parents and four grandparents in retirement (Bailey, Ruddy & Shchukina, 2012). As a result, the "empty nest family" is a widespread social phenomenon in many cities where retired senior couples live together and their children live in another home either in the same city or in a different city. The frequency of visiting their parents is based on the adult child's workload and home location (Xu & Chen, 2001). The number of seniors living alone is significant and it will continue to grow (Feng, 2010). Therefore, seniors who cannot rely on their children for emotional support may feel lonely and increasingly have the desire to engage in social activities in their later life (Su, 2009).

1.1.2 Economic growth and the pension system in China. Since the early 1980s, China has been undergoing massive economic reforms. One of the most recognized and successful reforms is the transition from a “government planning and direct control economy” to a “market-oriented economy” (Riley, 2004). With the implementation of more open economic policies, more foreign trades and foreign investments has been attracted to China (Chow, 2004). As a result, China has experienced a dramatic economic growth with the average GDP rate increasing by 9.6% annually in the first two decades after economic reform, and an increase of 7-8% annually subsequently (Chow, 2004; Su, 2009). According to Futagami and Nakajima (2002), the aging of the population has long been regarded as a driving force for economic growth since it stimulates more investments in human capital and changes the structure of the working-age population. From a long-term perspective, continued stable economic growth can be expected in China.

The old-age pension system in China has been undergoing continued reforms since it was redesigned in 1997 (Salditt, Whiteford & Adema, 2007). Currently, there are three public pension systems: the rural residents system, the urban employee system, and the public service employee system (Chen, 2015). The rural residents pension system requires voluntary participation. If residents sign up, they pay a small fee every month and, after age 60, they will receive monthly fixed pension payments. The urban employee pension system consists of two tiers: a pay-as-you-go pension funded by employers' contributions, and a funded individual account financed by the employee's contributions. The public service employee system is for people who work directly for government agencies and public institutions; this pension is entirely funded by the government from its general revenue (Chen, 2015). As the reforms continue, pension coverage will become more extensive and the government will gradually allocate more funds, improving the pension system (Dewen, 2006).

Senior citizens in modern Chinese society have increasing disposable income and more life savings compared to young people due to the growth in the economic environment, an evolving pension systems and changes to the traditional value of parents earning and saving money for their children to more willingness to spend money on their own interests (Jang & Wu, 2006). These changes to China's aging population have opened the door to a potentially significant market in the tourism industry.

1.2 Research Purpose and Questions

The senior tourism market in China cannot be overlooked by the travel industry since the population of aging people is significant and will continue to increase exponentially. Moreover, a large portion of seniors have substantial disposable time and money to spend on travelling (Bai et al., 2001; Jang & Wu, 2006). However, this population has very unique physical and emotional characteristics compare with other age groups. As a result, seniors have their own demands and habits when they travel (Zhang & Li, 2009).

Chinese senior tourism market is not fully-developed, and travel sectors often operate senior tourism without comprehensively understanding seniors' characteristics and needs. In China, senior tourism is in great demand, but in reality the number of senior who often travel is low. Senior tourism products and services provided by travel agencies cannot meet the needs of market. In addition, some seniors' physical condition and their traditional consumption concept of frugality lead to the inactive senior tourism market in China.

In light of the above, the purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of Chinese seniors regarding leisure travel. It is focused on identifying Chinese seniors' travel motivations and travel

barriers for the purpose of exploring their leisure travel experiences and to provide theoretical implications and practical insights for the advancement of senior tourism development in China. The main research question is ‘what are the travel motivations and barriers identified by Chinese seniors?’ In order to answer the research question and achieve the research purpose, there are two research sub-questions:

- 1) What are the travel motivations of Chinese seniors?
- 2) What are the travel barriers of Chinese seniors?

1.3 Importance of the Study

Developing the senior tourism market forms part of a larger body of knowledge that seeks to better understand and develop the connection between leisure and sustainability. When it comes to leisure, it is associated with relaxation, entertainment and individual development-social and personal, consequently, for the purpose of pursuing a better life quality (Bedford et al., 2011). Physical and outdoor activities are part of the elements that support leisure participation; increasing attention is given to fitness and natural environment (Rieger, 2013).

The concept of sustainability dates back to the 19th century. It relates to the responsibility taken today for the future generations of tomorrow; the principles have been implemented in politics, the economy and society worldwide (Gill, Dickinson & Scharl, 2008; Spindler, 2013). In leisure, sustainability has three dimensions: economic productivity, environmental protection, and culture identity (Rieger, 2013). Therefore, leisure participation does not only mean achieving a good quality of life; it is also linked to the development of sustaining environmental resources, promoting social identity and boosting the local economy.

Developing senior tourism market is specifically beneficial to social-cultural and economic sustainability in the following ways. First, participating in tourism activities can enhance seniors' psychological well-being and physical health, as well as their overall life satisfaction and positive self-identity and happiness (Menec, 2003; Morgan & Bath, 1998; Wang, 2008). Seniors can have rich and happy years in the later stages of their lives, and their quality of life can be significantly improved through satisfying travel experience (Zhang & Cui, 2013). As a result, seniors can increase their quality of life and contribute to promoting social-culture sustainability.

Second, developing senior tourism market segment can bring considerable economic benefits to travel companies and tourism destinations. This can help create more job opportunities, stimulate commercial trade and may help to eliminate poverty in some remote communities (Zhang & Cui, 2013). Accordingly, and given the growing number of seniors and their disposable income, economic sustainability can be supported through senior tourism development.

1.4 Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters. This current chapter, Chapter 1, provides an overall introduction to and the context for the study. Chapter 2 provides a review and synthesis of literature on key study themes: seniors' leisure time and leisure participation, senior tourists, senior tourism market, seniors' motivations for travel and barriers to travel experienced by seniors, which include the perspectives from Western countries and Asia countries. Chapter 3 describes the methodology including research design, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, challenges and research ethics. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and Chapter 5 provides a discussion and conclusion based on the study's findings.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents a literature review on seniors' leisure time and leisure participation, senior tourists, senior tourism market, seniors' motivations for travel and barriers to travel experienced by seniors. In the final section, a summary is provided to highlight the important findings from the literature review and their relationship to this study.

2.1 Seniors' Leisure Time and Leisure Participation

There is a lack of universal consensus on the definition of a 'senior', in terms of an age limit. According to UNWTO (2015), elderly people over 55 are the target group for the senior tourism market. Hossain, Bailey and Lubulwa (2007) also used the term 'seniors' to refer to people who are 55 years and older. The senior category is further broken into two groups: 'younger senior' (55–64 years) and 'older senior' (65 years and over). On the other hand, a person is at least 60 years old or 65 years old is defined as a senior according to different scholars (Jang & Wu, 2006; Lee & Tideswell, 2005; Walker, 2004; Zimmer, Brayley & Searle, 1995). *Figure 3* represents four subcategories of seniors, from Walker (2004).

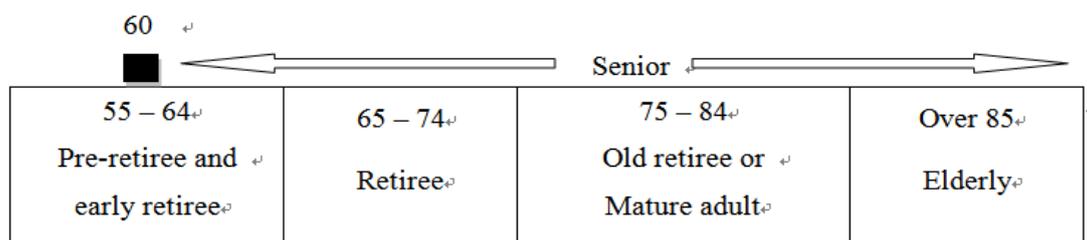


Figure 3. Senior categories. (Walker, 2004).

In the Western world, leisure as a disciplinary field has been studied for a long time. From a historical point of view, leisure was first introduced and defined as cultivation of self by Aristotle in

ancient Greek times (Iso-Ahola, 1980). In 1967, Joffre Dumazedier known as the “Father of Leisure Studies” defined leisure as ‘free-time activities that are different from productive work’ (p. 25). He proposed that:

Leisure has three main functions: first, relaxation as leisure provides recovery from fatigue; second, entertainment as leisure relieves boredom through diversion and escape through fantasy; and third, leisure helps to liberate people from the drudgery associated with their daily routine of thought and action. (p. 78)

Building on his work, in addition to free-time and activities, leisure was also conceptualized as ‘a state of mind’ (Iso-Ahola, 1989; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Mannell, 1984). Iso-Ahola (1989) stated “leisure is viewed as activity done primarily for its own sake, with an element of enjoyment, pursued during unobligated time” (p. 118), which includes all three categories of leisure.

From the point of view of Chinese culture, the concept of leisure can be dated back to ancient times. “休闲” are the two Chinese characters that translate to “leisure”. From the pictographic meaning, they represent a man leaning against a tree, generally imply to take a rest in an agricultural setting (Liu, Yeh, Chick & Zinn, 2008). Confucius has long been considered as “China’s First Teacher”, and the values and norms of Confucian philosophy have had great impacts on the concept of leisure in Chinese culture. Confucianism highly values harmonious relationships within a family; Confucius believed that the value of family is central to one’s life and a person’s most important duty is to be responsible for his family (Tan & McCullough, 1985). Confucianism also emphasized a strong work ethic; a person’s self-fulfillment including spiritual fulfillment can be achieved through the dedication and devotion to work (Rarick, 2007). Regarding Confucian philosophy on lifestyle, the harmony between people and nature is very important and leisure activity, centered around the idea of serenity and peace when enjoying nature, reflects this value of harmony (Liu et al., 2008). In China,

people, especially the aged people, who are more deeply influenced by Confucianism, tend to be more work and family oriented than the aged people in Western countries; Chinese prefer quiet and more passive activities such as spending peaceful moments outdoors and appreciating the beauty of nature's landscapes (Wang & Stringer, 2000).

Participation in leisure activities generally has been considered to have made significant contributions to improving individual's physical and mental health (Mannell, 1993; Mence, 2003) and overall life satisfaction (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987). Lawton's (1994) study indicated that the elderly people who participated in various leisure activities more frequently, have better psychological well-being. Moreover, leisure involvement can help to maintain individual's social identity which seniors normally feel decrease in the aging process (Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2005).

As early as 1993, Bevil, O'Connor and Mattoon proposed that retired people tend to return to a leisure lifestyle, which they regard as the reward for many years of hard work. Today's seniors have increased free time as well; they can engage in a wide variety of leisure activities since they have less demands and obligations from work and family (Chen & Fu, 2008). Seniors begin to experience new feelings of freedom to do what they want, when they wish, and an opportunity to try something that they did not have a chance to do when they had family to take care of and work to do (McGuire, Boyd & Tedrick, 2004).

In China, leisure activities in which seniors participate in are different than those activities the general population participates in because of their specific physical condition and mental status (Wang, 2008). Across Asia, seniors' daily leisure activities are varied. According to Chen and Fu's (2008) study results with 499 Taiwanese senior respondents; the most popular leisure activities favoured by seniors were reading books, watching TV/DVDs/videos, socializing with friends and engaging in

physical activities. Each type of leisure activity has its respective benefits for seniors. Physical leisure activities help seniors greatly improve functional ability and physical health (Laukkanen, Kauppinen & Heikkinen, 1998; Morgan & Bath, 1998); social leisure activities can enhance seniors' psychological well-being, happiness, life satisfaction and self-identity (Menec, 2003; Wang, 2008); and individual leisure activities such as reading and watching TV can provide seniors with a strong sense of engagement with life and achieve psychological benefits (Menec, 2003).

Within China, there is a rural-urban gap existing due to social and economic inequalities, ethnic and educational differences (Riley, 2004). The rural-urban gap impacts senior citizens' leisure participation. Based on the research conducted by Su, Shen and Wei (2006) with 335 rural senior residents in Hangzhou city and 356 urban senior residents in Yuhang country, nearly one-third of rural seniors in China considered 'playing with children' as their favourite leisure activity. This is because traditional Chinese culture highly values on family. Another leisure activity favoured by rural seniors was 'chatting and visiting with friends or neighbours'. Su et al. (2006) noted that "instead of driven by personal interests rural seniors' personal preferences for leisure activities are largely shaped by their day-to-day routines" (p. 393). In consideration of leisure time, rural seniors are less active both physically and mentally due to the relatively low availability of recreational resources and fewer choices for leisure activities for seniors in rural areas (Su et al., 2006).

Compared to the seniors living in China's rural areas, urban seniors receive a steady monthly pension with higher compensation and have more recreational resources and facilities. Therefore, seniors in urban areas have more extensive leisure activity choices (Su, 2009). As for daily leisure activities, Su et al.'s study (2006) showed that 49.1% urban senior residents read, go to parks, watch films and TV, listen to the radio and play chess, and 21.8% of them also attend senior schools and

senior centers for fun. Their study revealed that 45.1% of urban seniors travel for enjoyment, which expresses their cultural and life outlook.

According to Su (2009), 81.7% of 456 senior participants who live in China urban areas have at least one chance to travel annually. From general perspective, seniors feel that tourism activities can enrich their lives, that they gain knowledge and broaden their minds (Patterson & Pegg, 2009). In addition, travelling provided opportunity for social connection which benefits seniors' psychological well-being (Menec, 2003; Wang, 2008).

2.2 Senior Tourists

According to UNWTO, the term 'tourist' generally refers to a person travelling to and staying in places outside his/her usual environment for more than 24 hours and less than a year, for the purpose of leisure (recreation, holiday, family, and sport), business, or meetings (Leiper, 1979). However, examining previous literature, the term 'senior tourists' cover a broad spectrum of classification and characteristics, such as retired or not retired, over 55 years old or 60 years old, along with several other social-demographic (sex, education level, occupation, etc.) and subjective variables (health and economic status, personal value, etc.) (Alén, Losada & Domínguez, 2015).

Nimrod's (2008) study interviewed 20 recently retired seniors ranging in age from 57 to 87 in a mid-sized south-eastern city in the United States of America. Her study found that the retirement period was viewed by most interviewees as a valuable opportunity to travel more frequently, learn new things and explore new places, culture, and people (Nimrod, 2008). Su's (2009) study concluded that most urban senior residents who retired from government, teaching, scientific and technical professions showed great interest and enthusiasm to travel. Zimmer, Brayley and Searle (1995)

examined the characteristics of senior travellers and non-travellers by using a sample of 1406 seniors, living in Manitoba, Canada. Their study results revealed that the factors which affect travel decisions are diverse; income, education level, health status, rural-urban residency and willingness to spend money on travelling were the influential factors affecting travel decisions (Zimmer et al., 1995).

In addition to senior tourists' characteristics, considerable research has been devoted to examining the area of senior tourists' travel-related behaviours (Bai et al., 2001; Huang & Tsai, 2003; Patterson, 2006b; Rosenfeld, 1986; Śniadek, 2006; Zimmer et al., 1995). In general, senior travel-related behaviours that have been studied include travel frequency, travel period, travel mode, expenditure pattern and destination choices. In the research of Rosenfeld (1986), American seniors tended to travel more often, go longer distances, take longer trips and rely more on travel agents than other population segments. Zimmer et al. (1995) concluded that seniors prefer to travel in the off peak season and travel for longer periods of time because many of them have the flexibility of time for leisure and less family obligations. Senior tourists also show a great concern for personal safety when they travel. Studies showed that "senior citizens devote 40% more time to travel and recreation than younger people and they are willing to leave for trips outside the peak season" (Śniadek, 2006, p. 104). For travel destination choices, Huang and Tsai (2003) noted that historical areas and beautiful nature sites were most favoured by Taiwanese senior tourists after analyzing the results from 284 senior respondents in Taipei and Kaohsiung recreation centers for elders.

Several studies proposed that senior tourists show a strong preference for selecting package tours as their preferred travel mode, especially tourists from Asian countries, such as China, Taiwan, Japan and Korea (Bai, et al., 2001, Huang & Tsai, 2003; Jang & Wu, 2006; Sangpikul, 2008). Package tours usually consist of a prearranged trip that is charged a specific price in advance by travel agencies.

Usually the single price includes transportation and accommodation, and often also covers destination attractions and meals (Morrison, 1989). Package tours are prevalent among senior tourists because they are very convenient, worry-free and low-cost; personal safety can be ensured which is a primary concern of seniors (Morrison, 1989; Quironga, 1990).

‘Collectivist culture value’ is the reason why Asian seniors more favour package tours (Lee & Tideswell, 2005). In Asian countries, people are raised in a collective culture advocating the importance of the group over the individual (Triandis, 1995). Collectivism values tight social networks including family, neighbourhood, occupational groups and other organizations which a person is socially connected to. As well, people’s social identity and sense of belonging are satisfied through harmonious relationships within the groups (Kagitcibasi, 1997). Senior tourists travelling by means of a package tour can easily encounter opportunities to socialize and make friends with people of the same nationality and with common culture values (Bai et al., 2001; Patterson, 2006b).

2.3 Senior Tourism Market

Because of an aging population, senior tourism has been gaining great importance in the tourism industry worldwide and it is still growing steadily (Alén, Losada & Domínguez, 2012; Chen, & Shoemaker, 2014; Patterson & Pegg, 2009). Shoemaker (2000) stated numbers of studies that focused on conducting the research on the market of people aged 55 years or older to better comprehend their travel behaviours. Originally, this population group was labelled as the “mature market” (Lazer, 1985), then the “older market” (Allan, 1981), and most recently the “senior market” (Shoemaker, 1989) which has been generally accepted and widely used.

Already in 2001, the World Tourism Organization reported that in the year of 1999, over 593 million international tourists were aged 60 years and older, and this number was estimated to be more than 2 billion annually by 2050. This segment of tourists will significantly increase the overall volume of tourism (Alén et al., 2012). The trend of growing senior tourists in the tourism market is especially obvious in Western countries such as United States of America, Canada, Germany and Australia due to the increasing 'baby boomer' cohort group in those countries (Patterson, 2006a). American Demographics showed that seniors over 55 years old spend on vacation accounted for 80% of tourism revenue in United States (Rosenfeld, 1986). Seniors over 65 belonging to the Swiss travel market group scored 82% on the net travel propensity indicator (Bieger & Laesser, 2005); in Germany, seniors between 60 and 69 year-old, scored, 76% on the net travel propensity indicator (Boksberger & Laesser, 2009). 'Net travel propensity' refers to "the percentage of the population that takes at least one travel trips in a given period of time" (Chowdhary, 2011, p. 11). It can be expected that seniors' travel demands will increase more than threefold by the year 2050 and seniors will soon become one of the largest market segments for the hospitality and tourism industries worldwide (Boksberger & Laesser, 2009; Huang & Tsai, 2003).

In addition to Western countries, the senior tourism market is also seen as a vital and promising market for Asia (Huang & Tsai, 2003; Jang & Wu, 2006; Lee & Tideswell, 2005; Sangpikul, 2008).

Figure 4 presents the number of outbound senior tourists over 65 years old in 2011 and 2030, in several Asian countries.

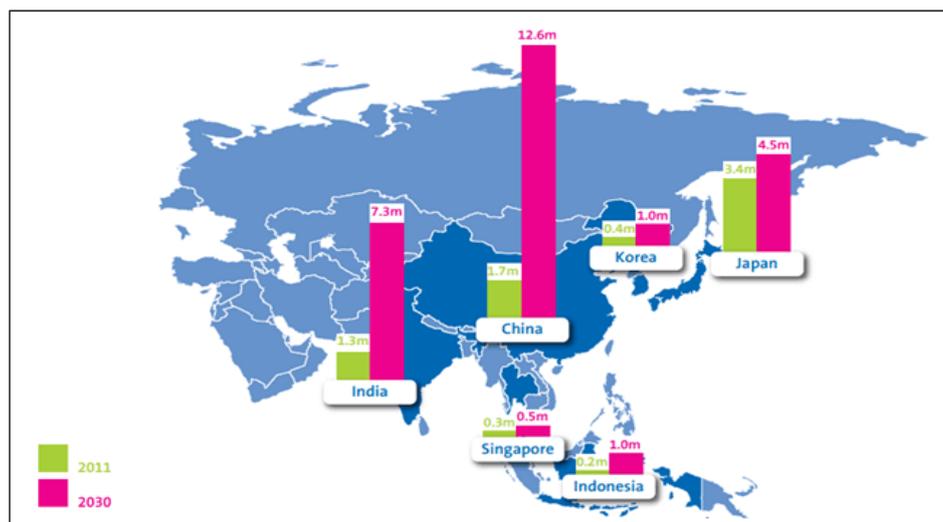


Figure 4. Outbound senior tourists over 65 years old in 2011 and 2030. (Frost & Sullivan, 2013).

In China, the number of the senior tourists aged 55 years and older accounts for approximately 30% of the total number of tourists countrywide and aged 65 years and older accounts for 6%, indicating that senior tourists' population will continue to increase at an estimated rate of 7.3% annually over the next three decades (China Silver Industry Association, 2014). Package tours were found to be the most popular travel mode, particularly for Chinese senior tourists on international trips. Convenience was the most important attribute in their deciding to join a package tour (Huang & Tsai, 2003; Jang & Wu, 2006).

The senior tourism market has drawn increasing attention from travel companies due to an expanding senior population and their high dependency on package tours. However, by reviewing the related research and official documents on the senior tourism market in China (China Tourism News, 2011; China Silver Industry Association, 2014; Zhang & Cui, 2013; Zhang & Li, 2009), there are three main challenges identified. First, most travel agencies in China are in the beginning stages of senior tourism development and the tourism products and services presently offered to seniors cannot meet the increasing senior tourist market demand. Second, service coordination is not reliable; some

travel businesses in China are profit-driven and, as a result, offer low-quality service, low-cost travel products or false advertising in this market. Third, attention given to seniors' special needs is not comprehensive. More attention needs to be paid to seniors' physical and psychological conditions and many travel agencies do not treat them differently from other population segments.

In the light of the above challenges, it is critical for tourism operators to seriously consider the essential role of senior tourism. There is a need for tourism operators to respond to seniors' unique characteristics and modify their product design and service quality to achieve the long term-goal of development of senior tourism. Together with the growing senior population and increasing travel frequency by this group, there should be a positive and sustainable effect on senior tourism (Alén et al., 2012; Nedelea, 2008).

2.4 Seniors' Motivations for Travel

According to Moutinho (2011), motivation is a "state of need or a condition that drives an individual toward certain types of action that are seen as likely to bring satisfaction" (p. 38). Fodness (1994) suggested that "people's motivation to travel begins when the individual realises that there are certain needs and perceives that certain trips could have the purpose of satisfying those needs" (p. 557). Travel motivation can be conceptualized as the product of expectancy and intrinsic value (Hsu, Cai & Li, 2009).

From a theoretical point of view, travel motivation is one of the most important variables that can influence tourists' travel decisions and explain tourists' consumption behaviours (Fodness, 1994; Snepenger, King, Marshall, & Uysal, 2006). Travel motivation is the driving force behind all travel behaviours, and it provides clear clues for why seniors travel (Jang, Bai, Hu & Wu, 2009). In order to

better comprehend seniors' travel decision-making process and psychological needs, a thorough understanding of seniors' travel motivation is necessary for travel sectors to explore (Cleaver, Muller, Ruys & Wei, 1999; Snepenger et al., 2006). Analyzing seniors' travel motivations is critical to predict their future travel behaviours, patterns and trends, and, with this analysis, travel sectors can develop their senior tourism products, services and overall marketing strategies to meet senior tourists' needs (Boksberger & Laesser, 2009; Cleaver et al., 1999; Jang & Wu, 2006; Sellick, 2004).

2.4.1 Prominent travel motivations models. Through a review of previous literature on travel motivations, several prominent models have been applied to guide the study of travel motivations. These include the 'seeking-escaping' model (Mannell & Iso-Aholo, 1987), the 'travel career ladder' model (TCL) (Pearce, 1988) and the 'push and pull' model (Dann, 1977).

Mannell and Iso-Aholo (1987) proposed a two dimensional travel motivation model which states people participate in leisure or tourism activities because of two interactional motivation forces: to escape from their personal and/or interpersonal environment (routine and stressful life), and to seek personal (self-development) and/or interpersonal rewards (social interaction).

The 'travel career ladder' model (TCL) developed by Pearce (1988) was based on the well-known Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs Model. The TCL model emphasizes that tourists' needs or motivations are organized in a hierarchy or ladder of five layers (from the lowest level to highest level): relaxation needs, safety/security needs, relationship needs, self-esteem and development needs, and fulfillment needs. The TCL model presumes that with accumulated travel experience, tourists will gradually ascend the ladder and satisfy their higher-level needs.

The 'push and pull' model was adopted to examine seniors' travel motivations in this study because it focuses on investigating why people travel and where they want to travel. These forces are

the important dimensions and greatly influence people's travel decision-making. In addition, the 'push and pull' model has been extensively used in research that aims to understand tourist behaviour (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The 'push and pull' model is explained in detail in the following section.

2.4.2 'Push and Pull' model. The most common and well-known model used to examine tourists' motivations is the 'push' and 'pull' factors model (Boksberger & Laesser, 2009; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977, 1981; Fleisher & Pizam, 2002; Horneman, Carter, Wei & Ruys, 2002; Jang & Cai, 2002; Jang & Wu, 2006; Sangpikul, 2008; Sellick, 2004; Shoemaker, 2000; You & O'Leary, 1999; Yuan & McDonald, 1990). Dann (1977, 1981) and Crompton (1979) were the two researchers who provided empirical evidence for the 'push and pull' model to analyze travel motivations. Dann (1977) proposed push factors are the internal, socio-psychological motive that create an individual's desire to travel and pull factors are the external attributes that attract an individual towards a particular travel destination. Based on Dann's (1977) preliminary idea about push and pull factors, Crompton (1979) took it one step further to explore the motives that influence vacation travellers' selection of specific destinations. He identified seven socio-psychological motives (escape, explore and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, kinship-enhancement, and social interaction) and two cultural category motives (novelty and education). Generally, push factors are used to explain travellers' desire to go on a trip, while pull factors are used to examine travellers' choice of destination (Crompton, 1979).

Since the initial empirical effort from Dann (1977, 1981) and Crompton (1979), many subsequent studies have devoted to using 'push and pull' model to explore seniors' travel motivations in diverse settings such as different nationalities and different socio-demographic variables (Boksberger & Laesser, 2009; Cleaver et al., 1999; Fleisher & Pizam, 2002; Horneman et al., 2002;

Huang & Tsai, 2003; Hsu et al., 2007; Jang & Wu, 2006; Prayag, 2012; Sangpikul, 2008; Sellick, 2004; You & O'Leary, 1999). Most existing studies on using push and pull factors to explore seniors' travel motivations have been in Western (European and North American) settings. In the study of Boksberger and Laesser (2009), 1101 Swiss senior travellers, aged 55 and older, were surveyed, and three segments were classified based on 25 travel motives. First, the term, 'grizzled explorers', was used to describe travellers who were motivated to travel by novelty, by natural/cultural sites, socialization and family union time. The second segment was called 'time-honored bon vivants', they were motivated to travel to escape from daily routine, for relaxation, for good weather, to spend time alone or with partner(s). The third segment was called 'retro-travellers' and they were mainly driven by novelty and outdoor activities. You and O'Leary (1999) also segmented senior travellers in the United Kingdom into three groups by using push and pull factors: 'passive visitors', 'enthusiastic go-getters' and 'culture hounds'. 'Visiting family and friends', 'family union time', 'novelty seeking', 'escape from daily routine', 'relaxation', 'knowledge gain' were their push factors; 'personal safety', 'nice weather', 'historical place's and 'good standards of hygiene' were selected as pull factors. Horneman et al. (2002) concluded that the most frequently identified push factors by Australian senior tourists were 'education and learning', 'relaxation', 'physical exercise and fitness', and 'visiting friends and relatives'; while 'attractive natural landscapes' and 'historical sites' were most favoured by respondents as destination attributes. Prayag (2012) investigated 200 senior tourists for their motivations for visiting Nice, Italy, and the results showed the main push factors that drove senior tourists to Nice were 'relaxation', 'socialization', 'escape and spending time with family', while 'the local cuisine', 'nice weather and climate', 'beautiful scenery' and 'natural attractions' were the most identified pull factors.

Some studies exploring push and pull factors to analyze seniors' travel motivations can also be found from Asian perspectives. Sangpikul's (2008) study investigated 415 Japanese seniors' travel motivations to Thailand. He found that 'novelty', 'knowledge-seeking', 'relaxation' and 'ego-enhancement' were the significant push factors, while 'culture and historical sites', 'safety and cleanliness', 'facilities', and 'shopping and leisure activities' were the significant pull factors that attracted them to Thailand. In the study of Jang and Wu (2006), 353 valid questionnaires were obtained from Taiwanese seniors. 'Relaxation', 'knowledge-seeking', 'evaluation of oneself', 'self-esteem' and 'socialization' were identified as push factors; while 'cleanliness and safety', 'facilities and cost', 'natural and historical sights' were identified as pull factors. For the Taiwanese seniors, 'knowledge-seeking' and 'cleanliness and safety' were the most important push and pull factors respectively. Huang and Tsai (2003) conducted a study to investigate senior travellers' behaviours in Taiwan which includes their travel motivations. The study revealed getting 'rest and relaxation', 'socialization' and 'spending time with family' were their travel motivation push factors, while, pull factors consisted of Taiwanese seniors enjoyment of 'attractive natural landscapes', 'historical sites', 'facilities', 'safety' and 'cost'.

Based on the literature review of seniors' travel motivations, there are some similarities and differences between the frequent push factors and pull factors identified by seniors in Western countries and Asian countries. From the worldwide perspective, the most frequently identified push factors by seniors include: 'novelty', 'enhancement of kinship', 'evaluation of self', 'prestige', 'knowledge and education', 'relaxation' and 'social interaction'; and the most common pull factors include: 'cultural and historical sites', 'unique natural landscape', 'safety', 'cost' and 'facilities'.

2.5 Barriers to Travel Experienced by Seniors

Numerous studies have been conducted analyzing the travel barriers that prevent or limit seniors from travelling, as these barriers significantly impact travellers' decision-making process (Blazey, 1987; Fleischer & Pizam, 2002; Hsu & Kang, 2009; McGuire, 1984). Previous studies have suggested that many factors, including lack of time, physical limitations, low income and concern for safety, prevent seniors from travelling more extensively (Fleischer & Pizam, 2002; Lee & Tideswell, 2005). It is important to know why seniors do not travel, so that corresponding strategies can be suggested for overcoming barriers.

McGuire (1984) was the first researcher to conduct a study on barriers for seniors to travel (Alén, Losada & Domínguez, 2015). He identified five main barriers to explain why seniors do not travel as often as younger people: external resources (lack of information, too much planning, insufficient money, etc.), time factors (no time to travel, tourism interrupting normal routine, etc.), lack of approval (family and friends would not approve, feel guilty about going on trips, etc.), lack of company (spouse dislikes travel, no companion), and physical well-being (lack of energy, health reasons, afraid to take certain modes of transportation, and too old or disability to travel) (McGuire, 1984, p. 318-319). Blazey (1987) used the survey method to examine barriers to travel for seniors in the southwestern region of Washington State. The study identified financial limitation as the number one travel barrier. Health-related issues were considered a major barrier; lack of travel companion and security concerns were also seen as barriers to travel. Shoemaker (2000) surveyed 234 American seniors aged 55 and over to find out their travel barriers to overnight pleasure trips, and the results showed the main travel barriers being: financial considerations, health issues, lack of someone to travel with and fear of hassles (making reservations, lack of assistance). Fleischer and Pizam (2002)

conducted telephone interviews on 400 Israeli seniors who were 55 and older to explore their travel patterns and preferences. The study results suggested that individuals' self-assessed health status and income level affected their decisions to travel. The researchers concluded declining income, deteriorating health status and lack of time were the main barriers to travel.

For Asian senior tourists, Lee and Tideswell (2005) conducted a study on identifying any barriers that may restrain Korean seniors from maximizing their travel experience. The researchers surveyed 200 seniors who were over 60 years old in Seoul. The results showed that 85% of the respondents believed they were healthy enough to travel and could afford trips. However, the major barriers were their own beliefs and family's and friends' perceptions about travelling. 88% of the respondents claimed that they felt guilty about travelling, and 68% of the respondents respected the opinions of family and friends to not travel (Lee & Tideswell, 2005). According to the study of seniors' travel behaviour conducted by Huang and Tsai in Taiwan (2003), individuals' capabilities and lack of suitable travel suppliers were the two main travel barriers for seniors. What is interesting to note is that barriers such as health-related issues, low income and lack of time were considered to be the primary travel barriers for seniors in Western countries as mentioned in the previous literature review, while not discounting the importance of these factors, personal belief and lack of suitable travel products were the significant travel barriers faced by seniors in Asian countries.

From a broader perspective, government also plays an influential role in the tourism industry. It has enormous power and control over travel policy making which affects a wide range of tourism-related issues from the general travel environment to specific travel policies affecting individuals. As a result, based on the findings from the previous studies (Blazey, 1987; Fleischer & Pizam, 2002; Lee & Tideswell, 2005; McGuire, 1984; Shoemaker, 2000), and the fact that Asian

seniors more favour joining package tours to travel (Bai et al., 2001; Jang & Wu, 2006; Sangpikul, 2008), the major travel barriers for seniors can be classified as:

- a. Seniors' personal problems such as lack of time, financial limitations, health status, etc.
- b. Travel product providers' responsibilities such as lack of information, lack of desirable tourism products, etc.
- c. Government travel policy responsibilities such as development and exploitation of tourism resources, security concerns, lack of seniors' travel preferential policy, etc. (Huang & Tsai, 2003).

2.6 Summary

Senior tourism has been a much-discussed topic in numerous studies for a long time. Through reviewing the relevant literature, several important findings were identified. A large portion of seniors are considered to have plenty of free time to participate in various leisure activities, especially for those seniors who have already retired. The senior tourism segment is seen as a crucial and potential market in the tourism industry. Travel motivations and travel barriers are useful concepts when the objective is to understand tourists' travel decisions and travel behaviours. Among many travel motivation models, the 'push and pull' model is the most widely used.

As informed by the relevant literature, there are a number of research opportunities related to studying seniors' travel motivations and travel barriers in the setting of China. Since much of the past research has been conducted in Western countries, little attention has been paid to senior tourists in Asia, especially mainland China. The literature highlights that Confucianism has had a great influential impact on people's values and leisure concepts in Asian countries. Seniors' travel decisions are also affected by their social-demographic variables, and package tours are found to be the most

popular travel mode for Asian senior tourists. Cultural context is a significant factor that also greatly influences people's values and perceptions toward travelling. Past studies also demonstrate that qualitative research is useful to identify and analyse seniors' motivations to travel and the barriers that prevent them from travelling in the cultural context of China.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

This chapter introduces in detail the methodology used in this research which included various dimensions and steps that were adopted to solve the research problem along with the logic and rationale behind them. Methodology is the overall work plan for the research, and, in this methodology chapter, research design, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, challenges and research ethics are examined to illustrate the methodology related issues stage by stage.

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Qualitative research. Neuman (2000) defined qualitative research as “a systematic, subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning” (p. 44). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) also described qualitative research as highly focused on studying problems in people’s natural setting and attempting to interpret phenomena according to the meanings that people provide. Qualitative research focuses on subjective assessment of people’s attitudes, opinions and behaviours, and it is a more subjective and inductive approach which offers a different lens to view the world and significantly contributes to the valuable scientific body of knowledge (Goddard & Melville, 2004; Neuman, 2000). In general, qualitative research is the collection of various empirical materials such as case studies, personal experience, interviews, observations and visual text used to describe routines and meanings in individual’s lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 4).

In the tourism industry, tourism services and products are often considered to be heterogeneous, consisting of a complicated bundle of characteristics based on diverse motivations of tourists. As a result, a qualitative approach can precisely represent the phenomenon in the specific context (Davies, 2003). This research was designed to be a qualitative research because the aim of qualitative research

is to discover and gain richness of detail of the phenomena existing in a context of a group of people's experience (Goddard & Melville, 2004). The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of Chinese seniors regarding leisure travel through identifying seniors' travel motivations and travel barriers which focused on investigating people's perceptions and thoughts about a particular subject. Qualitative data generally contains personal experience, personal perspective and interviews which preserve the complexities of human behaviours from an integral angle (Davies, 2003; Strong, 2002). A qualitative approach gives an opportunity for participants to freely express their own opinions without any concerns (Jennings, 2005). Based on these features, applying the qualitative approach enables the researcher to "gain a better and more in-depth recollection and understanding of the participants' actual trip experience" (Patterson, 2006b, p. 40), which is the appropriate way to gather data in this research design.

3.1.2 Exploratory study. Exploratory studies are generally conducted when there are few or no earlier studies about a research topic (Sarantakos, 2005). The aim of exploratory studies is to develop an initial understanding of a research problem under investigation by gaining new insights, generating new ideas and increasing knowledge of phenomena (Brown, 2006; Creswell, 2003; Sarantakos, 2005). Stebbins (2001) stated that the great majority of exploratory studies are conducted in a qualitative research design in the social sciences. In tourism research, the results that are produced by exploratory qualitative studies can commonly constitute a firm basis for directing further research (Mason, Augustyn & Seakhoa-King, 2010).

This research was designed as an exploratory qualitative study focusing on identifying seniors' travel motivations and travel barriers. Exploratory studies can generate new insights and ideas on the research topic with depth. Previous research has generally explored seniors' travel motivations and

travel barriers using Western settings and perspectives; they also adopted quantitative research designs. Therefore, simply applying past research designs and assuming the results of previous studies to examine the research problem in the context of China is not feasible.

Beijing was selected as the study site for the following reasons. First, Beijing is one of the biggest cities in China with a senior citizens' population proportion over 20.3% in 2012 (Beijing Aging Committee office, 2013), and the annual growth rate for seniors has reached 5%. There is a large pool of seniors in Beijing. Second, its GDP per person is higher than other cities, and the number of seniors who receive stable pensions is highest domestically (Beijing Aging Committee office, 2013). Third, due to the more developed medical facilities and services, the citizens of Beijing have longer life expectancy than any other urban city in China (Beijing Aging Committee office, 2013). Based on these facts, choosing senior residents in Beijing as study participants is useful. This qualitative study adopts two data-collection methods to investigate a phenomenon within its real-life context, and with the objective of gaining an in-depth understanding of seniors' travel motivations and barriers.

3.2 Data Collection

Document analysis and semi-structured interviews were the two data collection methods used in this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Beijing, China and focused on identifying the push and pull factors that influence seniors' travel decisions and their travel barriers. Official documents collected online were used to examine seniors' travel barriers and focused on identifying the two categories of seniors' travel barriers: limitations of travel agencies and shortcomings in government policy.

3.2.1 Document analysis. Document analysis is extensively used as a qualitative research data collection method in tourism research. The method is commonly used to increase understanding of a specific topic (Decrop, 2004). Qualitative document analysis involves using emergent coding, defined as the identification of relevant terms, policies and topics upon reviewing a number of documents from electronic information databases. The next step is to develop a protocol for more systematic analysis (Altheide, 1996).

In this study, document analysis was used to identify the limitations of travel agencies and the shortcomings in government policy toward senior tourism. These both serve as categories of barriers for seniors to travel. Document analysis supports and enriches our understanding of the senior tourism market in the context of China. It also acts as a tool that can confirm particular details that interview participants discuss or allude to (Shenton, 2004). Document analysis is necessary and relevant because it provides supplementary information on travel barriers at the agency level and government level, in addition to information that semi-structured interviews provide. Document analysis is also valuable because it is cost-effective, is often readily available, and can provide large coverage, both in time and breadth of subject matters (Decrop, 2004).

Several steps for document analysis were taken by the researcher. First, official websites that offer information on senior tourism in China were identified, and documents were collected from them and reviewed by the researcher. These websites include China Tourism News, Visit Beijing Website, China Association of Travel Services, and China Silver Industry Association. Second, the collected documents and reports from websites were analyzed to illuminate the challenges existing in the present senior tourism market and recommending strategies for senior tourism development. Four documents containing the most relevant information were chosen for analysis. Among the four

selected documents, ‘The Observation of Chinese Senior Tourism Market and Future Trend’ (http://www.ssyg.com.cn/lvyou/news_in.php?f=lilun&nohao=64) and ‘The Norm of Travel Agencies’ Senior Tourism Service in Beijing’ (<http://www.visitbeijing.com.cn/news/n215068765.shtml>) were obtained from travel sector websites. The contents of these documents mainly focus on the problems and challenges that caused by irregular operation of travel agencies in the current senior tourism market in China. The other two documents ‘Senior Tourism Market Development Strategy in China’ (<http://cats.org.cn/lilunyuandi/yewu/21038>) and ‘The Standardization of Senior Tourism Management in China’ (<http://www.zgllyc.org/chanye/news2014.php>), are from official government websites. Data collected from these documents presents the deficiencies of senior tourism services and the tourism market from a broader point of view, and are used to identify strategies to better develop the senior tourism market in China. *Table 1* presents the list of analyzed documents.

Table 1. Analyzed documents

No.	Name of the document	Source	Year Issued
1	The Observation of Chinese Senior Tourism Market and Future Trend	China Tourism News (Travel sector)	2011
2	The Norm of Travel Agencies’ Senior Tourism Service in Beijing	Visit Beijing Website (Travel sector)	2014
3	Senior Tourism Market Development Strategy in China	China Association of Travel Services (Government website)	2013
4.	The Standardization of Senior Tourism Management in China	China Silver Industry Association (Government website)	2014

The next step involved organizing and classifying the relevant information into corresponding categories based on specific themes, in a process known as ‘thematic analysis’. Thematic analysis is an independent and reliable descriptive data analysis approach which extensively used in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Section 3.3 will explain the analytical process in more detail.

3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews. Interviewing is a global research method for understanding and making sense of people's lives; it is a social interaction and two-way exchange (Jennings, 2005). A semi-structured interview is considered to be an in-depth and flexible data collection method which is designed as a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the conversation between researcher and interviewees (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Jennings (2005) pointed out that the semi-structured interview is a primary tool of data collection which is widespread in tourism research.

This research used the face-to-face, semi-structured interview research method to collect participants' thoughts and perspectives on several aspects of travelling in order to acquire the answers to the two research questions. There are three main reasons for using semi-structured interviews; first, semi-structured interview is a straight forward, useful way for the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of participants, enabling probing for more information and clarification of the answers (Louise Barriball & While, 1994). Second, the form of the semi-structured interview is very easygoing, and the atmosphere created between the researcher and the participant is relaxing which in turn, makes the interviewees feel relaxed and willing to express their opinions (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). As a result, the researcher acquired comprehensive and in-depth information about interviewees' perspectives and thoughts. Third, semi-structured interview has a flexible agenda and list of themes to focus on during the interview, which makes data analysis become more efficient after data collection (Jennings, 2005).

In this study, convenience sampling strategy was used to identify potential interviewees. Convenience sampling relies on data collection from the population who are easy to access and conveniently available to participate in the study (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Twelve seniors aged over 55

years from two senior activity centers in Beijing participated in this study. LiZe Senior Activity Center and Huixin Community Center were the two locations from where the researcher selected the interviewees since senior activity centers are places where a large number of seniors gather.

LiZe Senior Activity Center was built in 2001 and it is the biggest and most well-facilitated senior activity center in Beijing. It provides various services to seniors, including physical fitness, entertainment activities, educational training and catering services. It also offers conference reception and exhibition areas. Seniors need to pay an annual fee to become members and then have unlimited access to the center to enjoy the services and facilities. Huixin Community Center is also a senior activity center which is relatively casual and does not require an admission fee. Seniors, who live in or around this community, often gather there to read, chat and play cards together.

To select the interviewees, the researcher wrote an email to the manager of LiZe Senior Activity Center about the research and the interview; then, the researcher and the manager communicated several times by phone (see APPENDIX A). Finally, after receiving permission from the manager, the researcher gave a brief presentation about the research project to the seniors in the lounge of LiZe Senior Activity Center as planned (see APPENDIX B). After the presentation, several seniors showed their interest in participating in an interview. The researcher wrote down their contact information and set dates with the qualified candidates for interviewing. Two interviews were conducted on that same day and the other five interviews were conducted on different days at LiZe Senior Activity Center. The researcher interviewed seven seniors in total at LiZe Senior Activity Center.

For the Huixin Community Center, the researcher went to the center, observed the seniors who were free at that time, asked them if their age was above 55 years old and if they were willing to be interviewed. The researcher went to Huixin Community Center four times to identify five

interviewees in total and conducted the interviews. In order to gather broad and comprehensive information from interviewees, diverse demographic characteristics were taken into consideration when the researcher selected the interviewees, such as gender, retired or working elements. The interviewees' profile is presented in *Table 2*, organized by whether the interviewee was working or retired.

Table 2. Interviewee profiles

Interviewee	Occupation Category	Gender	Living with Offspring	Travel Frequency/Year
1	Retired (Government officer)	Male	Yes	At least one time
2	Retired (Educational worker)	Male	No	One or two times
3	Retired (Government officer)	Male	Yes	Two times
4	Retired (Service industry worker)	Female	No	One or two times
5	Retired (Engineer)	Male	No	One time
6	Part time Education worker	Female	No	Two times
7	Part time Service industry worker	Female	Yes	One or two times
8	Full time Government officer	Male	No	At least one time
9	Full time Management worker	Female	No	Two times
10	Full time Educational worker	Female	Yes	One or two times
11	Full time Government officer	Male	Yes	At least one time
12	Full time Educational worker	Male	No	One time

The interview process lasted one month from mid-June to mid-July, 2015. Sixteen questions on travel behaviours, travel motivations and travel barriers were asked to the participants. These included questions about domestic and international travel, independent travel, and packaged tours (see APPENDIX C). Before each interview began, the consent form was issued to each interviewee to introduce the research and describe confidentiality issues (see APPENDIX D). The interviews were conducted in Mandarin and digitally recorded by a recording device. The interviews were transcribed into Word documents in Mandarin and marked by date in the order they were conducted. The average interview time was 40 minutes. Interviewees were ensured that they would remain confidentiality and a number was used to identify each participant in the research findings chapter.

3.3 Data Analysis

A system for organizing the data needs to be developed after the data has been collected (Merriam, 2014). A thematic analysis approach was used to analyze the data from documents and interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) described thematic analysis as an independent and reliable qualitative descriptive data analysis approach which mainly focuses on “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). Its aim is to examine both manifest content (explicit and descriptive data) and latent content (implicit elements which need further interpretation of the inferred and implied meanings) by breaking the narrative materials (interviews and analyzed documents) into relatively small units of content and provide a systematic and transparent form of the findings (Sparkes, 2005; Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013).

The process involved can be broken down into several phases or steps. The first step was to become fully familiarized with the data. This step is often described as “immersion”, meaning

repeated re-reading of the data. This step is critical and is why small sample size is often used in qualitative analysis; extra effort is employed to ensure all data is rigorously transcribed, interpreted and understood (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second step involved coding, which means picking out conversation that has underlying themes that can be categorized. In this study, important words, phrases or expressions that can be grouped into any travel motivation push and pull factors or travel barriers were highlighted for later categorization. The third step involved threading codes into smaller themes, or identifying the categories for both push factors and pull factors and three categories of barriers in this study. The last step before writing the report was defining and naming the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis consists of two approaches: inductive and deductive. Inductive, or “bottom up” approach, is used to construct themes based solely on the collected data. The inductive approach is used in cases where there were no previous recognised theories, models or frameworks dealing with the phenomenon (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Deductive analysis, or theoretical thematic analysis, often attempts to verify a previous firm theory in a different situation, and compare the difference between the previous theory and study findings at different periods (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Deductive and inductive thematic analyses were both used to analyze data in this research. Deductive thematic analysis was used for analyzing seniors’ travel motivations in relation to the travel motivation - ‘push and pull factors’ model developed by Dann (1977, 1981) and Crompton (1979). According to the examination of the literature on seniors’ travel motivations, ‘novelty’, ‘enhancement of kinship’, ‘evaluation of self’, ‘prestige’, ‘knowledge and education’, ‘relaxation’ and ‘social interaction’ were the most common push factors for seniors to travel; on the other hand, ‘cultural and historical sites’, ‘unique natural landscape’, ‘safety’, ‘cost’ and ‘facilities’ were the most identified

pull factors. These push and pull factors were used as the reference framework for the findings of this study to compare. *Table 3* presents the seniors travel motivation framework.

Table 3. Senior travel motivation framework

Seniors' Travel Motivation	Push Factors	Novelty	Enhancement of Kinship	Evaluation of Self	Prestige
		Knowledge and Education	Relaxation	Social Interaction	Others
	Pull Factors	Cultural and Historical Sites	Unique Natural Landscape	Safety	Cost
		Facilities	Others		

Both deductive and inductive thematic analysis approaches were used for identifying seniors' travel barriers. Because much research has been conducted on "individuals' personal problems" as a category of barriers for seniors to travel, deductive analysis was conducted for this theme/category. On the other hand, an inductive analysis approach was conducted for identifying "limitations of travel agencies" and "shortcomings in government policy toward senior tourism" as these two themes/categories emerged through data analysis since not much discussed in previous literature. Especially, these two themes have emerged specific in the context of senior tourism in China. This is an area that may be explored in future studies, and is discussed more in Chapter 5.

3.4 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is employed to achieve "an understanding of how people make sense of their lives, delineating the process of meaning-making, and describing how people interpret what they experience" (Merriam, 2014, p. 14). However, qualitative research is often seen as less rigorous and criticized for its lack of reliability and validity in research methods, sampling, data and findings (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

In order to enhance the overall trustworthiness of the study, several measures can be integrated during the research process. Triangulation, as a practical technique, is widely used in qualitative research and is described as investigating the same phenomenon from multiple sources of data (Decrop, 2004). In this exploratory research, semi-structured interviews and documents analysis were the two research methods. Data sources came from participants' responses and the related official documents on senior tourism. Using multiple sources of data enables the researcher to study the phenomenon from a broader and credible perspective. For the sampling strategy, Palmquist (2006) argued that the qualitative research has the risk of recognizing circumstance rather than fact by purely relying on a small sample size. However, the semi-structured interviews conducted with the twelve seniors in this exploratory study, generated rich data; the researcher looked at these twelve interviewees' opinions as a whole instead of investigating separated demographic variables' influence on travel motivations and barriers.

During the process of translating the transcript from Mandarin to English, a "back-translation" method was used in order to maintain the genuine meaning of the original language and to achieve the precise usage of the target language. "Back-translation" is a procedure that a document is first translated into another language and then is translated back to the original language (Ozolins, 2009). In the phase of presenting the findings, the researcher ensured the structure of the findings was systematic and that the findings covered all the topics of the research (Elo et al., 2014). In addition, using representative quotations can highlight the connection between the findings and rich data which is essential to improving the trustworthiness of findings (Sandelowski, 1995).

3.5 Challenges

One of the challenges during the data collection process was identifying the potential interviewees at HuiXin Community Center. Because Chinese seniors are generally introverted, they were not comfortable with being interviewed, especially when the interview needed to be recorded. Some seniors at HuiXin Community Center refused to participate in the interviews when the researcher tried to invite them. As a result, the researcher went to HuiXin Community Center four times and finally interviewed five seniors successfully. A second challenge was that both the interviewing process and data analysis were time-consuming. In order to maximize the accuracy of the interviewees' responses, the researcher needed to listen to the tape recordings several times to finish transcribing, word by word.

3.6 Research Ethics

The ethics application for this research project was approved by Vancouver Island Research Ethics Board (VIU REB) on March 18th, 2015. To respond to ethics requirements, four forms were developed for the interview process: 1) interviewees' participation; 2) interviewees' consent; 3) interviewees' information; and 4) researcher's further exploitation. The following strategies were also in effect: 1) interviewee participation in the study was completely voluntary, and participants had the right to disengage from the research study at any time; 2) the researcher effectively informed interviewees about the nature of the study and each interviewee signed the consent form to participate before each interview began; 3) interviewees' personal information was protected and the interviewees' real names along with any other information that might identify them was not presented in the research findings; 4) interviewees' personal information and their responses were not further explored or used for the researcher's personal gain except in this research.

CHAPTER 4: Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 details the methodology utilized in the thesis. In this chapter, findings from the analysis of the documents and semi-structured interviews with twelve seniors from two senior activity centers in Beijing are presented. Section 4.2 presents interviewees' travel behaviours which included travel modes and travel destination choices. The section focuses on investigating interviewees' detailed travel practices provided additional perspectives for exploring seniors travel motivations since the reasons for choosing the specific travel mode and their travel destination choices are closely related to push and pull factors. Section 4.3 presents the findings from interviewees' responses and identifies their travel motivations. Section 4.4 presents the findings on seniors' travel barriers obtained from the analysis of documents and semi-structured interviews.

4.2 Interviewees' Travel Behaviours

4.2.1 Travel modes. Travel mode is an important aspect of studying senior tourists' travel behaviours. There are three common travel modes: package tour, self-organized tour and semi self-organized tour. When selecting a package tour, consumers pay an all-inclusive price to the tourism company in advance which covers transportation, accommodation, meals, tour guides and tickets to tourist attractions; usually a group of people are organized into one package tour. Self-organized tour refers to tourists planning a trip independently. Semi self-organized tour means customers pay a certain fee to the tourism company, which only includes hotel reservations and airline (train) tickets. Understanding the reasons behind interviewees' specific choices help analyze their travel motivations.

Interviewees were asked what type of travel mode they usually choose when travelling. Three travel modes were provided as examples in case interviewees would be confused about what this question is about. A follow-up question asked them the reasons for choosing their specific travel mode. Interviewees' choices for the travel modes are summarized in *Figure 5*.

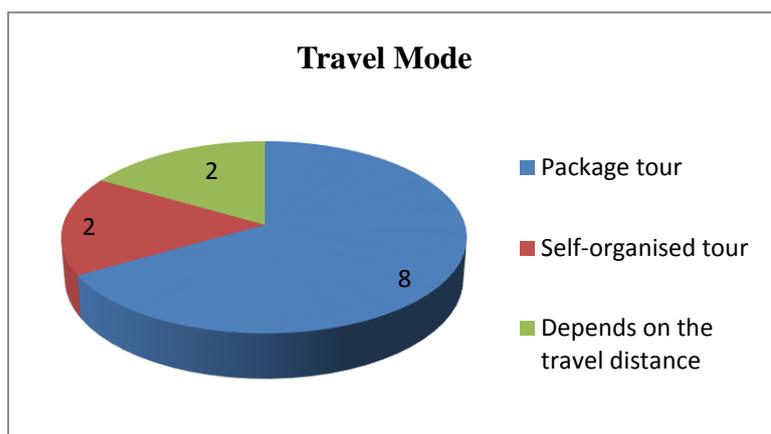


Figure 5. Interviewees' travel mode

From the results in *Figure 5*, eight interviewees stated they chose a package tour when they travel. Two interviewees chose the self-organized tour and two interviewees chose travel modes depending on travel distance indicating they would travel with a package tour if the travel destination is abroad or far from home. Interviewees' answers for their choice of travel modes are summarized into several key points below.

Among interviewees' responses, there are four main reasons interviewees provided for choosing a package tour over other travel modes. First, a package tour is convenient and the arrangement of the itinerary is efficient. Secondly, safety can be better ensured when travel with a package tour. Thirdly, a package tour is relatively cost effective. Fourthly, a package tour promotes socialization because tourists can make friends with other group members during the trip. One of the interviewees who is a full time educational worker who supported selected to use package tours commented:

I usually sign up for a package tour, this kind of travel mode is quite convenient, I do not need to worry about anything and the travel company will take care of everything. Besides, I will not feel lonely if I travel alone because other tourists can take care of each other, and I can make new friends with them, that will make a great trip. Oh, another aspect I like this kind of travel mode is that the expense can be under control well. (Interviewee 12)

Another interviewee provided his perspective on why he preferred package tours, which is representative of the others as well:

Because of my old age sometimes I cannot think comprehensively and I am not so energetic, so I always need others to remind me of something. For my case I prefer the travel company to arrange everything in advance for me, which quite relieves my burden. Based on my experience with the package tour, their arrangement for the itinerary is effective and safety problem will never be my concern. (Interviewee 2)

There are two main reasons for the interviewees' preference of the self-organized tour. First, tourists can make their own personal travel plans; it gives them freedom. Secondly, the pace of the whole trip is not restricted by time. One interviewee stated her opinion for why she liked self-organized tours:

I prefer to arrange a trip all by myself. I think this kind of travel mode gives me much freedom. I can decide where I want to stay and what I want to eat. Besides, the most important reason is I can visit a place deeply, for example if I go somewhere I am really interested, I can stay at that place long enough for me to fully explore. But if I am with a package tour I am afraid it is not my call to decide how long I can stay to visit. For me, I care about the quality of the trip. That is why I prefer self-organized tours. (Interviewee 7)

From the interviewees' responses, they care about the quality of travelling but also about safety and cost of travelling. The ability to socialize was also mentioned as one of the reasons for choosing the package tour travel mode. As a result, through using the 'push and pull' model to examine travel motivations, 'socialization' becomes the travel motivation push factor; and 'cost' and 'safety' become the pull factors when seniors select a specific tourist destination.

4.2.2 Travel destination choices. Interviewees were asked where their last travel destination was. Ten interviewees travelled domestically and the other two interviewees travelled abroad. Those who travelled domestically last traveled to Jiangxi, Xiamen, Sichuan, Yunnan, Qingdao, Wuhan, Shenzhen, and Hainan. Those who travelled overseas, travelled to Taiwan and Jeju Island (South Korea). *Figure 6* is a map of China with the interviewees' last domestic travel destinations highlighted.



Figure 6. Map of China

From the interviewees' answers and highlighted locations on the map, domestic travel was the typical choice, with travel destinations centered on southeast parts of China. Interviewees expressed that they preferred to travel to a destination not far from home with nature landscapes and mild weather. Overseas travel is gradually becoming more popular among seniors; interviewees indicated a desire to travel to exotic places and to experience different cultures if there is a chance. Travel destination choices can reflect travel motivation pull factors. From the interviewees' destination choices, 'beautiful nature landscape', 'good weather' and 'ease of travel' can be their pull factors.

4.3 Identified Travel Motivations

In this section, interviewees' travel motivations are identified. Based on the travel motivation model from Dann (1977, 1981) and Crompton (1979), travel motivations consist of push factors and pull factors. The term 'push factor' refers to the internal, socio-psychological motives that influence an individual's desire to travel, while the term 'pull factor' is used to describe the external attributes that attract an individual toward a particular travel destination.

4.3.1 Push factors. Interviewees were asked why they travel and what they expect to gain from a trip. These questions helped to explore interviewees' internal desires and needs when participating in tourism activities which reflect their travel motivation- push factors. Interviewees' travel motivation – push factors are summarized in *Figure 7*. In order to demonstrate the degree of concern for different push factors among interviewees, mentioned time of each push factor are also presented on the graph.

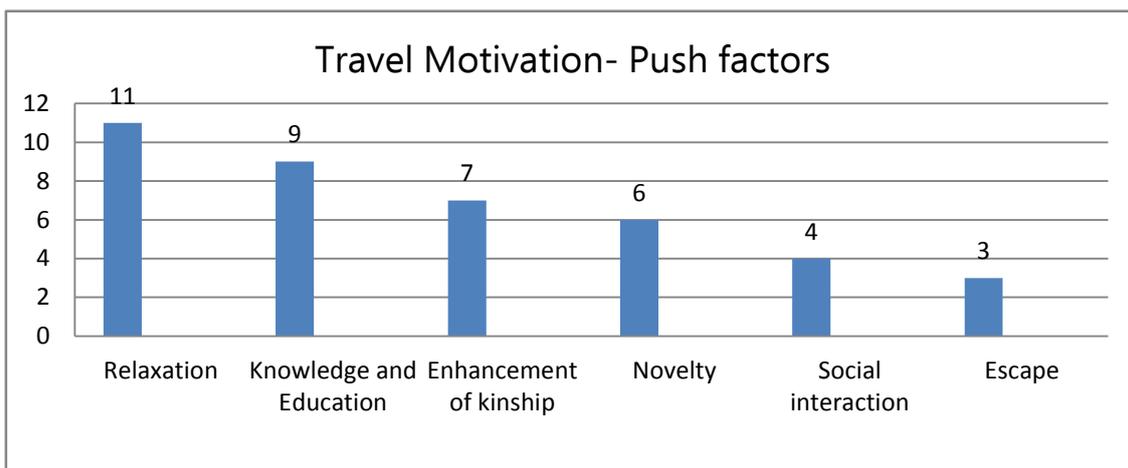


Figure 7. Interviewees' travel motivations – push factors

Relaxation

“Relaxation” was the most mentioned push factor by interviewees. Eleven out of twelve interviewees stated relaxation is their reason for travel and they hoped to get fully rested both physically and mentally during a trip. One of the full-time employed interviewees described his feelings:

First, I travel because it can relieve the stress from my work; I can fully get relaxed through the whole trip. I am usually up to my neck in work, after a period of time I would feel very tired and stressful. At this time, my primary reason to travel is getting relaxed. Also I can breathe the fresh air and build up my body strength through travelling. (Interviewee 12)

Getting relaxed was not only needed by the seniors who are still working but also by the seniors who have already retired. Interviewee 1, a retiree, expressed his opinions:

From my point of view, getting relaxed for both my mind and my body is one of my reasons to travel. Although I do not work anymore, I still feel tired and bored sometimes maybe because I am getting older and older and my physical condition cannot compare to

the past. So I guess travelling can bring many new elements to my life which can disperse the tiredness and depression, as a result both my mind and my body can get relaxed.

(Interviewee 1)

Knowledge and Education

The second most selected push factor was “knowledge and education”. Nine of twelve interviewees described how they can increase knowledge and expand their horizons through travelling and they expected to learn local culture and history. They considered the whole trip as a learning opportunity. The process of aging does not impede their desire to learn and pursue knowledge. One of the interviewees, a retired government officer, described it this way:

Speaking of my driving force to travel, the first thing comes to my mind is I can learn new things. Travelling give me great chances to enjoy the beautiful nature landscapes and acquire knowledge of local history and culture. This is pretty beneficial for me to improve myself with gaining much information and knowledge on various subjects. (Interviewee 3)

Enhancement of kinship

The third most mentioned push factor was “enhancement of kinship relationships”. Seven interviewees said that they travel because they want to increase the affections between family members. In daily life, family members may not have many chances to communicate with each other because of busy work, household chores, or because some of them do not live together. When a family travels together, they have the same schedule which makes them live, eat, visit and share their feelings together. They also take care of each other during the trip. This can narrow the distance between family members and make them become more united. Interviewee 4, who is not living with her children, stated:

Another reason I travel because this can strengthen family ties with my two children. They all have their own homes and do not live with me any longer. Although we are not living together, these two children treat me very well. They come to visit me occasionally and always buy me lots of things. We traveled together several times and those experiences are very precious and unforgettable. Travelling provides great chance to bring every family member together. The atmosphere was very harmonious and pleasant during the trip when I travelled with my family. (Interviewee 4)

Novelty

Six interviewees expressed “novelty” was one of their travel motivations. They stated that they travel because they want to experience something new and something they have never seen before. In the past, because of the busy work, family responsibilities or financial reasons, seniors did not have the chance to travel often. As time goes by, now seniors have the conditions to realize their wishes. Meanwhile, they still maintain the curiosity towards novelty and desire of exploring new things. Interviewee 3 and Interviewee 6 expressed their opinions on this topic:

When I was young I liked outdoor exercise very much, but I was too busy with my work so I did not have much spare time to enjoy my life. Now I am retired, I would like to travel around to visit exotic places, experience new things and feel the different culture. This is the meaning of travelling and also motivating me to travel. (Interviewee 3)

Experiencing fresh things is another reason for why I would like to travel. I always think world is so big and I should seize every chance to travel around to expose myself to the new environments. The more exotic scenery and culture I experience, the more profound understanding of the world I can get. I would acquire new interpretations of life after every time I travelled. (Interviewee 6)

Social interaction

“Social interaction” was mentioned by four already retired interviewees. Since they do not work anymore, they have less chance to get involved with society and people. They feel bored and lonely in their daily life; therefore they seek to participate in some leisure activities to fulfill their social needs. They start to have a sense of belonging when they maintain contact with other people. One retired interviewee’s perspective was very informative; she said:

From my point of view, I travel because it provides a good chance for socializing; not only I can meet many different people in the tour group but also I can get in touch with other tourists or local people which makes me feel I am still a member of the society, and it gives me a sense of belonging. (Interviewee 4)

Interviewee 3 is also a retiree and he stated that:

Since I retired, I always feel I am isolated from the society because I barely get in touch with anybody except my family members. However, sign up for a package tour to travel can relieve me that feeling, and I pretty enjoy communicating with others. (Interviewee 3)

Escape

Escape from life’s daily routines was mentioned by three interviewees. Staying in the same environment and repeating the routine everyday can be boring. Travelling brings fresh elements to life and let seniors get away from the same routine for a while. Interviewee 9, a full time working seniors, stated that “I can run away from the daily routine life and hustle which is the good thing that travelling can bring me and motivate me to go outside.”

4.3.2 Pull factors. In order to explore travel motivation-pull factors, interviewees were asked what kind of destination attracts them most and what factors they care about when they choose a tourist destination. Findings were organized by using the ‘pull factors’ of the travel motivation model. *Figure 8* presents the results of interviewees’ travel motivation-pull factors. In order to demonstrate the degree of concern for different pull factors among interviewees, mentioned time of each pull factor was also presented on the graph.

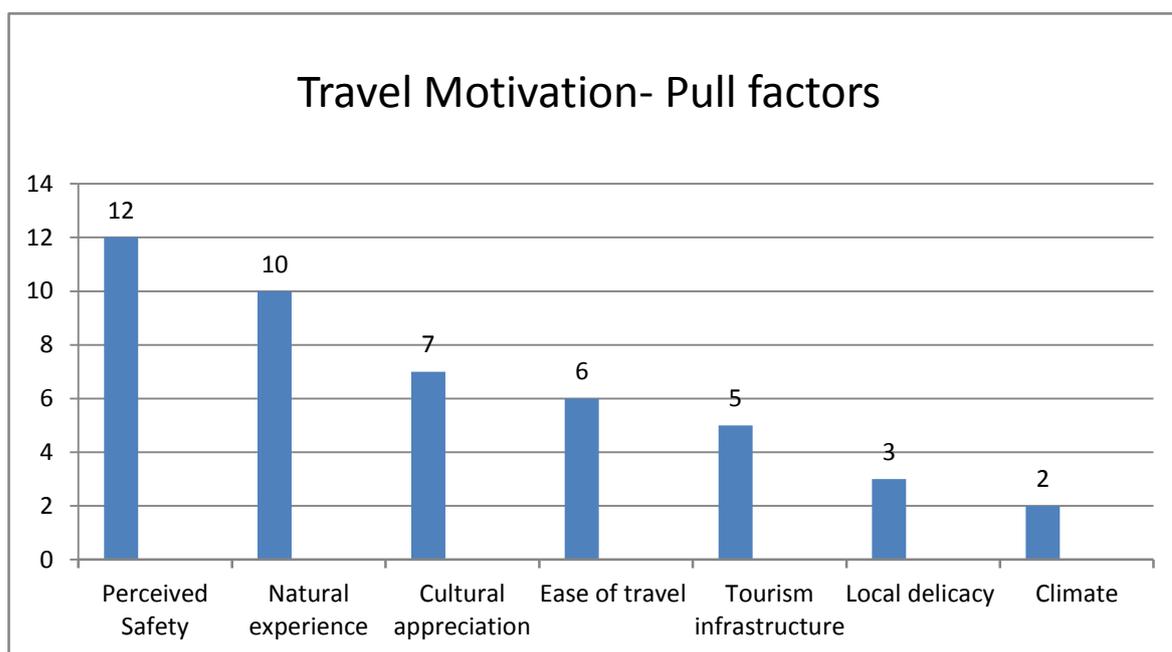


Figure 8. Interviewees’ travel motivation – pull factors

Perceived safety

All the interviewees indicated that ‘safety’ is one of their concerns when choosing a travel destination. They would pay close attention to the social political situation and public security situation of the tourist destination before they decide where to visit. Interviewee 10, a full time educational worker, noted “safety factor is my first concern; safety needs to be ensured as a precondition to travel”. Interviewee 7 also noted that:

Every time I plan a trip, I would select several places where we want to go most after discussion with my husband, and then I check the security condition at local one by one online. I also pay close attention to the reported News of that place for the past few months to see if it is safe. This is the first step of choosing a tourist destination, then I would consider....

Natural experience

‘Unique natural environment’ is a pull factor to describe the type of tourist destination. Ten interviewees mentioned that they would like to go somewhere with unique natural landscapes. One of the interviewees described her feeling: “For me, I would like to go to the natural tourists’ site because the air is fresh and the scenery is beautiful which makes me forget about all the annoyance and I can get myself fully immersed in nature.” (Interviewee 4) Interviewee 5 also explained the reason why he favours a tourist destination with unique natural landscape features:

Personally speaking, somewhere with beautiful natural landscape is the top choice for my tourist destination selection. The meaning of travelling is to see the very different environment from where I live. I have lived in Beijing for more than 60 years, and I could not be more familiar with this modern city. So I would definitely choose to go to somewhere with more natural scenery for travelling. The charm of nature is infinite which always gives people inspirations and strength. (Interviewee 5)

Cultural appreciation

‘Culture and history’ is another pull factor to describe the type of tourist destination. The culture and history pull factor was mentioned seven times by the interviewees. Seniors with lifelong accumulated experience usually look back with nostalgia to the old times. They cherish the memory of the past and tourist destinations with rich culture and history can strike a sympathetic chord in

seniors' minds.

Although 'unique natural environment' and 'culture and history' are two pull factors to describe different types of tourist destinations, they are not contradictory to each other. Six interviewees expressed that they would like to visit both of these sites. One of the interviewees clarified her feelings:

Speaking of selecting a tourist destination, I usually first consider somewhere with beautiful natural landscape, second I would like to go to a place with rich history and culture. Of course, if a tourist destination just has both the beautiful natural landscape and rich history and culture; that would be the best. When I choose a tourist destination, it has to be unique and very different from where I live, in that case I can jump out of my daily routine and adjust myself a little bit. (Interviewee 7)

Ease of travel

'Ease of travel' refers to the convenience of travel and it can reflect upon many aspects. In reviewing the interviewees' responses, suitable package tour, easy preparation work and short flight time were mentioned. They prefer travel agencies to arrange the whole trip from every detail in order to save a lot of trouble. In addition, some interviewees were concerned about their physical condition and they did not want to spend much physical strength and energy on the way to the tourist destination.

Interviewee 9 stated: "When choosing where to travel, I always consider the location of the tourist destination. I prefer the short-distance places where only take a few hours flight or train to get there. Spending a long time on the road is really suffering, at least for me." Interviewee 3 indicated that:

Finding a satisfying package tour from the travel agency is another motive for me to travel. Usually I will choose a place where I want to visit then I will gather information to find a travel agency with good reputation. If their arrangement and price are all very reasonable I will definitely consider signing up for that trip.

Tourism infrastructure

‘Tourism infrastructure’ is another collective pull factor which consists of several elements.

Three interviewees stated that accommodation at the tourist destination has to be clean and tidy. One interviewee mentioned the local tourism infrastructures should be well equipped at the tourist destinations and one interviewee said local transportation facilities need to be completed. Interviewees who require local infrastructures are a group of people, who care about their physical condition, prefer a comfortable place to sleep and completed facilities at tourist destinations. Having the well-equipped facilities at tourist destinations is the external condition to ensure a good trip for them.

Local delicacy

Three interviewees claimed that unique local cuisine is an important consideration in choosing a tourist destination and they are attracted to a specific place for its special regional cuisine. These interviewees indicated that when they travel, they hope to taste authentic local food which cannot be found at home. Interviewee 11 recalled a memory of his trip to Xi’an:

Speaking of the factors that I care about when choosing where to go, I would love to go someplace has local typical flavour snacks. I remember once I went to Xi’an, besides the rich cultural heritage there the other thing which impressed me most is the local food. Stir-fried cold-skin noodles, spicy beef hand-ripped noodles, spicy & sour lamb dumplings...I can name hundreds of famous local food, and that really made a fantastic trip. So authentic local food is another factor I would care about when planning where to go.

Climate

Good weather and sunshine were mentioned by two interviewees. They preferred to go to a destination with warm weather. One interviewee noted: “Warm weather and good sunshine at the tourist destination is also important for me; beautiful sunshine always gives me more strength and good mood. So I pretty enjoy travelling in good weather. If a place is very cold or rains a lot even it has beautiful scenery, I will still not to choose to go there.” (Interviewee 2)

4.4 Identified Travel Barriers

This section presents three categories of the identified travel barriers experienced by seniors: individuals’ personal problems, limitations of travel agencies and shortcomings in government policy. In analyzing the interviewees’ responses, four themes concerning individuals’ personal problems were identified. For the other two categories of travel barriers (limitations of travel agencies and shortcomings in government policy), different themes are summarized respectively through both interviewees’ responses and analysis documents.

4.4.1 Individuals’ personal problems. When asked to identify any barriers when considering travel, there were four ‘individuals’ personal problems’ identified: physical condition concerns, lack of time, financial problems, and lack of like-minded companions to travel.

Physical condition concerns

Physical condition concerns were the most frequent personal level problems mentioned by the interviewees. Several interviewees indicated that long flights and a high-paced itinerary were the big concerns for them. They shared concerns that their physical condition may hinder their ability to endure a long distance trip. Moreover, some interviewees do not travel extensively to avoid

unexpected diseases, not wanting to take the risk of getting potential illness. One interviewee explained:

Speaking of the barrier for myself, I always try to avoid going abroad or long-distance travel because I do not want to get myself any trouble. I know my physical condition very well and I cannot afford to take any risks. (Interviewee 1)

Lack of time

For some interviewees who still work stated that their work schedule is very tight and they usually do not travel often because of the time factor. They have very limited vacation time and they are always occupied by other trifles in their free time. One interviewee, working full time for the government, expressed his view:

For me the biggest barrier to travel is the time factor. Because my job is related to management, sometimes I plan a trip in advance but unpredicted working assignment could come up. As a result, I have to cancel the trip to take care of my work first. Because of my work, I do not have much freedom even though I want to travel. (Interviewee 9)

Retired interviewees also stated they lacked time because they are needed to take care of family especially those living with their adult children; for instance, they need to cook for their adult children or take care of their grandchildren. Because of a fast paced modern society, young people are working hard and pursuing a better life while their parents are taking care of the household chores to lighten the burden for them, especially if they live in the same city. As a result, some interviewees devote their retirement life to taking care of the 'big family' and have fewer chances to travel.

Financial problems

Some of the interviewees indicated that they do not travel frequently because of financial problems. Interviewee 4 stated that: "Money is definitely a factor which prevents me from travelling more often. Since I retired, I only receive moderate pension every month. Travelling is still a luxury leisure activity for me." Several interviewees also expressed that they are accustomed to live frugally and plan the budget carefully.

Lack of like-minded companions to travel

Lack of like-minded companions to travel with was also an individual personal problem to travel mentioned by several interviewees. They claimed travelling alone was boring and embarrassing and were not willing to travel without a travel companion. This demonstrates that seniors are eager for companionship. Interviewee 6, a part time educational worker, expressed her view on this topic:

For me, the other reason I do not travel a lot is I cannot easily find a like-minded partner to travel with. Because my husband is still working, so he does not have time to accompany me to travel. So, usually I want to invite my friends to travel with me, but it is really not easy to gather everyone together at the same time. As a result, if I cannot find a companion, I would give up a trip. (Interviewee 8)

4.4.2 Limitations of travel agencies. Three main limitations of travel agencies were identified that prevented seniors from travelling extensively: 'lack of desirable senior tourism services and products', 'forced shopping component during the tour' and 'excessive expense of tourism activities and tourism attractions'.

Lack of desirable senior tourism services and products

Some interviewees do not travel because of ‘lack of desirable senior tourism products’. Many seniors prefer to travel with a package tour however, there are a very few satisfying tourism products designed for seniors in the market today. Some interviewees were not satisfied with the quality of the package tour; for instance, the pace of the trip was too fast and the tour guides gave little special care to the senior tourists. Interviewee 10 stated her perspective:

From my personal travel experience with package tours, in general, I am not quite satisfied with their services. Like once I was with a package tour to Yunnan, the travel agency told me this package tour is for seniors only, indeed there were about 30 people in this group and they are all seniors. But the itinerary was arranged very unreasonable and the pace was too fast. Sometimes we visited four tourist attractions in a day. After visiting every day, we all felt exhausted. This kind of travelling is not enjoyable and I would rather not go.

(Interviewee 10)

According to the tourism document, “The Norm of Travel Agencies’ Senior Tourism Service in Beijing” (2014), many travel agencies ignore senior tourists’ physical and mental limitations when they design tourism products and services for them. The senior package tours provided by travel agencies are mostly remained general and compact which are not demanded by senior customers. Some senior tourists who have the experience of travelling with a senior package tour reported that the pace of the whole trip was too fast. They desire a relaxing but high-quality tour, without too many tourist attractions in one day or travelling for long periods.

Forced shopping component during the tour

‘Shopping problems’ were mentioned many times by the interviewees. They said, during a package tour, either the tour guide compels tourists to do some shopping at some designated places or

shopping time is too long, making visiting time for tourists attractions become very short.

Interviewees felt resentful and did not want to travel with a package tour again. Interviewee 6 pointed out: “We pay the travel agency for letting them take us to visit instead of taking us to go shopping.”

‘Shopping problem’ was examined thoroughly in the government document “The Standardization of Senior Tourism Management in China” published in 2014. Shopping activity is indispensable in almost every package tour. However, sometimes the tour guide would bring the tourists to a certain shopping site and force them to buy something or refuse to leave to go to the next place. Often, there are too many shopping times during one trip and each time the shopping time is very long. Travel agencies want to make more profits through tourists’ expenditures at designated shopping locations. In general, seniors’ desire for shopping is not strong during a trip. They expressed that it is very unreasonable for travel agencies to arrange too many shopping activities for them.

Excessive expense of tourism activities and tourism attractions

The excessive expense of activities during a trip prevents some interviewees from travelling. A package tour is supposed to charge an inclusive fee in advance which includes tourism activities, transportation, accommodation and meals. In reality, however, travel agencies do not disclose for which tourism activities or performances there will be extra charges when they introduce the package tour to seniors. Therefore, senior tourists feel very unsatisfied when they find out the truth during the trip. One of the interviewees expressed his opinion on this issue:

I really hate that I have to pay extra money to visit some tourism attractions or watch performances. If I do not pay then I have nothing to do but wait on the tourist’s bus. The most annoying thing is that travel agencies do not tell in advance. If they notify us before the trip, at least we could have some preparations like selecting several places we want to go or using this waiting time to arrange other things to do, etc. (Interviewee 10)

The above false advertising issue was also discussed in a tourism document titled “The Norm of Travel Agencies’ Senior Tourism Service in Beijing” (2014). Because some travel agencies want to attract more customers, they offer a seemingly low price for the package tour. Then, during the trip, there are many extra and undisclosed at time of booking admission fees for tourist attractions and activities (e.g., performances). It is not compulsory to attend the activities with additional admission fees; however the tourists tend to pay because they do not want to miss the opportunity. As a result, the package tour costs are higher than they initially appear.

4.4.3 Shortcomings in government policy. Three main government policy deficiencies were identified through collecting data from interviewees’ responses and analysis documents. They are: an imbalance between supply and demand in senior tourism market, a lack of senior tourism preferential policies and a lack of support and regulation from government.

Imbalance between supply and demand in senior tourism market

According to the prediction from the tourism authority, Chinese senior tourists’ consumption is estimated to be three hundred billion RMB per year (fifty billion US dollars), while the value of senior tourism services and products provided in the market is less than fifty billion RMB (eight billion US dollars). There is still a large gap between seniors’ demands and customized tourism services and products for seniors. Many travel agencies still have not seen the great potential of the senior tourism market and neglect senior tourism market development. As a result, an imbalance between supply and demand exists due to this market being overlooked (The Standardization of Senior Tourism Management in China, 2014).

Interviewees pointed out that package tours exclusively designed for seniors are not very prevalent in the tourism market. Although seniors have the desire to sign up for a package tour to

travel, they are afraid they could not keep up with fast pace or adjust to other activities, accommodation and meal if they travel with a general package tour. Accordingly, they will end up with giving up travelling.

Lack of senior tourism preferential policies

Lack of senior tourism preferential policies was mentioned by interviewees; for instance, interviewees barely receive any benefit for travelling from the government. Some interviewees pointed out that admission fees for tourist attractions are too high. The problem is that admission fees increase each year but government does not respond by giving seniors more discounts on tourist attractions admission fee. This has a negative effect on senior tourists' emotions. One of the interviewees expressed his dissatisfaction on this issue in this way:

From the aspect of government travel policy, the hardest thing for people to accept is the expensive admission fee for tourist attractions. Sometimes I go to a place where maybe thousands miles from my home but I cannot fully enjoy visiting because the high admission fee would make me think carefully whether it is worth visiting or not, so mostly I just visit one or two tourist attractions in one place. This is really a disturbing factor that prevents me from travelling too often and I do hope government could take some actions to solve this problem. (Interviewee 11)

Lack of support and regulation from government

Interviewees are unwilling to travel to avoid encountering incomplete tourism infrastructures at tourist destinations. Some cities have beautiful scenery and distinctive tourist attractions, but proper governmental management and planning are missing. As a result, tourism infrastructures inside and around tourist attractions are not completed. For instance, interviewees reported a lack of information

signs, public resting areas and sub-standard restaurants and hotels. If the infrastructures in local are lacking, interviewees will re-consider their travel decisions, as their travel experience will be compromised.

In the Chinese government report titled “The Observation of Chinese Senior Tourism Market and Future Trend” (2011), indicated that in this early development stage of senior tourism, governments should supply needed support. This support can be employed in many ways, such as, governments can build more infrastructures in and around tourist attractions, secondly, governments can give more discounts on admission fees to seniors, and, thirdly, governments can fund travel agencies to develop senior tourism so that more travel agencies will have specialized senior tour packages at a lower cost to seniors. At the same time, governments need to supervise the quality of the senior package tours, solicit customer feedback and rank the travel agencies. Only in this way, can the quality of tourism service and products provided by travel companies be ensured and the operation a good market environment be maintained.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of Chinese seniors regarding leisure travel. A qualitative research was conducted by interviewing twelve seniors from two senior activity centers in Beijing and reviewing related online official documents. In this discussion and conclusion chapter, the findings of this study are re-summarized and then used to compare with findings of previous studies to illustrate the similarities, differences and reasons behind them by integrating the researcher's personal observations and insights. In the following section, theoretical implications and practical implications are thoroughly outlined to show how the findings of this research can be applied to both academic influence and the tourism industry. In the last part, study limitations, contribution and recommendations for the future research are discussed.

5.1 Discussion

The primary purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of Chinese seniors regarding leisure travel. The present study encompass two specific research questions: What are the travel motivations of seniors in this case? and What are the travel barriers of seniors in this case? A discussion of how the findings of this study relates to previous research is fully examined in the following sections.

5.1.1 Seniors' travel motivations. The results from a) interviewees' responses in regard to their specific travel mode motivations and their last travel destinations, and b) interviewees' responses for travel motivation-related questions, have been synthesized into a summary of seniors' travel motivations in this case, based on the 'push and pull' model, in *Table 4*.

Table 4. Seniors' travel motivations

Push factors	Pull factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxation • Knowledge and Education • Enhancement of Kinship • Novelty • Social Interaction • Escape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived Safety • Natural Experience • Cultural Appreciation • Ease of Travel • Cost • Tourism Infrastructures • Local Delicacy • Climate

According to the literature on seniors' travel motivations (summarized in *table 3* in Chapter 3), 'relaxation', 'knowledge and education', 'enhancement of kinship', 'novelty' and 'social interaction' are the same push factors identified both in this study and in the seniors' travel motivation framework. 'Escape' is the exclusive push factor explored in this case. Though 'evaluation of self' and 'prestige' are two additional push factors in the seniors' travel motivation literature, interviewees mentioned none of them. For pull factors, the five pull factors in the literature are all identified as the interviewees' travel motivation - pull factors: 'perceived safety', 'natural experience', 'cultural appreciation', 'cost', and 'tourism infrastructures'. However, 'ease of travel', 'local delicacy' and 'climate' are the distinct pull factors examined through interviewees' responses in this study.

Identified push factors

First, travel motivation – push factors reflect individuals' internal desires for travelling. In this exploratory study, seniors are motivated to travel for a variety of reasons: to relax physically and psychologically, to increase knowledge and expand their horizons, to bring family members closer, to experience something different from what they are familiar with, to improve their social life and make new friends, and lastly, to temporarily get away from the daily routines and chores. The findings of this research are consistent with previous studies regarding seniors' travel motivations. In the context of Western countries, Pleischer and Pizam's (2002) concluded that 'health and relaxation',

‘socializing’, ‘seeing new places’ and ‘partaking in new experiences’ were the most common push factors chosen by the respondents. ‘Education and learning’ ‘relaxation’ ‘physical exercise’ and ‘visiting friends and relatives’ were the most frequently identified push factors by Australian seniors (Horneman et al., 2002). Prayag’s (2012) study results showed ‘relaxation’ ‘socialization’ ‘escape’ and ‘spending time with family’ were the important push factors for senior tourists. The findings of this study also support the results from other studies conducted in Asian countries. Huang and Tsai (2003) investigated senior travellers’ travel motivations in Taiwan and found the most important travel motivation push factors were ‘getting rest and relaxation’, ‘socialization’ and ‘spending time with family’. ‘Novelty’ ‘knowledge-seeking’ ‘evaluation of oneself’ and ‘relaxation’ were the Japanese seniors’ travel motivation push factors (Sangpikul, 2008).

‘Evaluation of self’ and ‘prestige’ were push factors frequently referenced by studies conducted in Western countries and Asian countries (Crompton, 1979; Jang & Wu, 2006; Sangpikul, 2008; Sellick, 2004; Yuan & McDonald, 1990); however, this study did not identify these two push factors as interviewees’ internal desires which motivate them to travel. This difference in results can be explained by the influence of traditional Chinese cultural values in personal and social relationships. The ‘collectivist culture value’ is highly promoted by Chinese traditional culture, focusing on the importance of the group over the individual (Triandis, 1995). Harmonious relationships with others are more encouraged than individuals’ interests. ‘Evaluation of self’ and ‘prestige’ epitomise fulfillment and enhancement of individuals’ personal values, and Chinese people, especially seniors, do not value those factors as their defining goals of travelling.

Among the identified push factors of this study, ‘enhancement of kinship’ and ‘social interaction’ reflect seniors’ characteristics in the context of China. Confucianism highly values the importance of

family and harmonious family relationships (Tan & McCullough, 1985). Traditional Confucian Chinese culture has had a great impact on people's values, especially for Chinese seniors; the majority of these seniors have grown up under the influence of this deeply-rooted traditional culture. With the impact of these cultural values, affection between family members is one of the reasons motivating seniors to travel. The 'social interaction' push factor was identified by four retired interviewees. Hutcheon and Kleiber (2005) concluded seniors normally feel a decrease in their social identity throughout the aging process.

Chinese seniors attach much importance to the 'collectivist culture value' which emphasizes the acquisition of people's social identity and a sense of belonging through tight social networks (Kagitcibasi, 1997). It is common for retired seniors to feel lonely and empty as they have less social networks, and they seek to enhance their social lives through travelling.

Identified pull factors

As noted previously, travel motivation - pull factors are the external factors that influence people's decision as to where to travel. In this exploratory study, eight pull factors are identified through analyzing the interviewees' responses. 'Perceived safety' is one of seniors' concerns when they choose a destination; this travel motivation pull factor has been identified by numerous previous studies conducted in both Western countries and Asian countries (Horneman et al., 2002; Huang & Tsai, 2003; Jang & Wu, 2006; You & O'Leary, 1999). Boksberger and Laesser (2009) pointed out that safety is the priority and critical factor when seniors are choosing trips. Seniors would like to go somewhere with unique natural landscapes and somewhere is full of culture and history. 'Natural experience' and 'cultural appreciation' are two pull factors to describe the type of tourist destination, which have been identified as seniors' travel motivations in previous studies (Boksberger & Laesser,

2009; Horneman et al., 2002; Huang & Tsai, 2003). Ensuring the completed tourism infrastructure at tourist destinations is a collective pull factor in seniors destination choices; accommodation, tourism facilities and transportation facilities are all mentioned by the interviewees. Seniors also pay attention to the cost when they travel. These findings are consistent with previous research. 'Facilities' was the significant pull factor that attracted Japanese seniors to Thailand (Sangpikul, 2008). Taiwanese seniors identified 'facilities' 'safety' and 'cost' as pull factors when they plan a trip (Huang & Tsai, 2003).

However, 'ease of travel' 'local delicacy' and 'climate' are the three identified pull factors which were not in the seniors' travel motivation framework. These three pull factors are seldom found in previous studies, especially when the study focused on investigating general seniors' motivations instead of exploring seniors' motivation - pull factors to a specific tourist destination. The idea that seniors consider 'local delicacy' as one of their travel motivations to visit a place is supported by the idea of seniors in this modern society are not conservative as seniors in the past, and they are more open-minded and willing to accept new things (Jang & Wu, 2006). Seniors enjoy travelling to destinations with unique nature scenery and good weather. This phenomenon can date back to Confucian philosophy on lifestyle, which pursues harmony with nature (Liu et al., 2008). Seniors favour appreciation of nature and good weather with the influence of Confucianism. 'Ease of travel', a collective pull factor, can be understood as the convenience to travel, including a suitable package tour, easy preparation work and short flight time as noted by interviewees.

5.1.2 Seniors' travel barriers. When seniors have the desire to travel, there are always some barriers that prevent them from doing so, or from participating in tourism activities extensively. In order to illustrate this issue comprehensively, three categories of barriers were clarified: individuals' personal problems, limitations of travel agencies and shortcomings in government policy. *Table 5*

shows the summary of the seniors' travel barriers from the study results.

Table 5. Seniors' travel barriers

Individuals' Personal Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical condition concerns; • Lack of time; • Financial limitation; • Lack of like-minded companions
Limitations of Travel Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of desirable senior tourism service and products; • Forced shopping component during the tour; • Excessive expense of tourism activities and tourism attractions
Shortcomings in Government Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imbalance between supply and demand in senior tourism market; • Lack of senior tourism preferential policies; • Lack of support and regulation

Individuals' Personal Problems

Numerous previous studies have revealed that health-related issues are a major barrier for seniors to travel (Blazey, 1987; Fleischer & Pizam, 2002; McGuire, 1984; Shoemaker, 2000). The decline of physical ability is inevitable as a universally shared result of aging (Hsu, Cai & Wong, 2007). The findings of the present study reveal that most interviewees are concerned with their physical condition when considering travelling. Some interviewees indicated a concern about a risk of injury during the trip because of a physical limitation and they did not want to take that risk.

Lack of time is a barrier for both working and retired seniors. Working seniors experience a lack of time to travel because they are busy with work and retired seniors reported a lack of time to travel because they need to take care of family chores. As discussed earlier in this study, Chinese seniors are influenced intensely by Confucianism. The core value of Confucianism advocates family as the center of an individual's life and everyday existence (Tan & McCullough, 1985). The

relationship between parents and children is one of the most emphasized relationships in Confucianism (Yan & Sorenson, 2004). This finding supports the fact that seniors have deeply-rooted, intergenerational relationships with their children, even when they are independent adults, with seniors still caring for them.

Financial limitations affect seniors travel decisions. In this study, some seniors indicated they receive less income after they have retired and they considered travelling as a luxury. This is due to the traditional concept, Chinese seniors still have, of living frugally. Previous studies also revealed financial consideration as one of the main travel barriers of seniors (Blazey, 1987; Fleischer & Pizam, 2002; Shoemaker, 2000).

Supported by many previous studies, lack of like-minded companions was also considered a personal level barrier for seniors to travel in this exploratory study (McGuire, 1984; Shoemaker, 2000). With the impact of the 'collectivist culture value', seniors prefer to participate in tourism activities with having companions instead of acting alone. However, interviewees did not mention feeling guilty or concern about perceptions from family and friends concerning their travelling, although these were travel barriers for seniors found in other studies (McGuire, 1984; Lee & Tideswell, 2005).

Limitations of Travel Agencies

Study findings from interviews and analysis documents showed there were three limitations of travel agencies that prevented seniors from travelling more extensively: travel agencies' lack of desirable senior tourism services and products discourage seniors from travel; long length of shopping time during a packaged tour is another barrier for seniors to travel; and a seemingly low package tour price but actually there are many tourism activities and tourism attractions need to be paid extra fees

during the trip made seniors reluctant to travel. The study findings of limitations of travel agencies illustrated that, at present, travel agencies have not completely seen the great potential of this market segment and they have not launched many suitable tourism services and products that can meet seniors' needs. Additionally, this market is sub-standard due to the lack of regulation. As a result, the unsatisfactory travel market becomes a travel barrier of seniors. These findings support Zhang and Li's (2009) conclusion, that tourism products and services for seniors cannot meet the increasing senior tourist market demand, service quality management is not thorough and are the challenges in the senior tourism market in China.

Shortcomings in Government Policy

Although little is known concerning government policy deficiencies towards senior tourism in the specific context of Beijing, China, the findings of the present study identified three shortcomings of government policy through the analysis of interviewees' responses and official documents. Travel barriers at the government level that prevent seniors from travelling were: there exists a gap between seniors' demands and customized tourism service and products for seniors in the market; there exists a lack of senior tourism preferential policies and there exists a lack of support and regulation in terms of senior tourism from government.

5.2 Implications of the Findings

5.2.1 Theoretical implications. Theoretical implications of the study's findings can be applied to two aspects. First, the travel motivation 'push and pull factors' model in the study was used to examine its application in the context of China. The 'push and pull' model was created and developed in Western countries. The West and East have very different cultural values which largely affect people's travel motivations. In this study, several push factors and pull factors were identified as a

result of the influence of traditional Chinese culture. These push factors and pull factors were under-explored or not at all the focus in much of the previous research. However, the frequently identified push factors in Western culture studies were not mentioned by the interviewees in this study. Therefore, the findings of this study increase our theoretical knowledge regarding travel motivations and the use of the 'push and pull' model in a Chinese setting.

In addition, the findings of identified seniors' travel barriers in the aspect of travel agencies and government policy adds theoretical knowledge to the limited body of research in this field in the context of Chinese senior tourism market. Hence, the present study serves as the theoretical background for future studies regarding Chinese senior tourists.

5.2.2 Practical implications. The practical implications for this study concern the advancement of senior tourism development in China. The examination of seniors' travel motivations and barriers shed light on Chinese seniors' personal perceptions towards travelling and their psychological needs. An understanding of push and pull factors is essential for private travel sectors and public institutions to develop appropriate senior tourism products and promotion strategies (Zhang & Peng, 2014). Travel barriers are another important study area for private travel sectors and government. They can make relevant changes to better accommodate senior tourists' demands. In the following section, four implications for the development of senior tourism in China are presented.

5.2.2.1 The development of senior tourism products. Travel agencies have an opportunity to design suitable senior tourism products based on seniors' travel motivations. Travel agencies can create different themes to appeal to senior tourists' demands; for example, based on seniors' attention to health, travel agencies could design medical fitness tours and wellness tours; based on seniors' family values, travel agencies could design family togetherness tours and gold/silver tours; based on

seniors' personal interests, travel agencies could design natural landscape tours, culture and history themed tours and socially-focused tours.

In addition to senior tourism products can be designed by themes; items like accommodation, itinerary and shopping can be developed according to seniors' travel motivations and travel barriers.

Accommodation: Travel agencies could choose high quality, relatively low priced hotels with comfortable and quiet rooms as much as possible so that seniors can have a good rest.

Itinerary: Tourism attractions should be refined and arrangement of the visiting should not be so intense. At the same time, an effective medical security system and medical staff are needed with the group in the event of unpredicted illness or disease, and the tour guide should have the appropriate professional skills in guiding a senior tour group.

Shopping: Travel agencies should not arrange shopping activity during the trip unless senior tourists request this in advance. If travel agencies have to do so, they should give very limited shopping time and never force senior tourists to purchase anything.

5.2.2.2 The development of price and promotion strategies. Chinese seniors often carefully plan their budget living on a decreased income and influenced by the traditional value of living frugally. 'Financial problems' is one of seniors' travel barriers that prevent them from travelling extensively. Therefore, the most important principle of price strategy for travel companies should be relatively low price with the assurance of the quality of the package tour. Travel companies should have an all-inclusive price for package tours which includes transportation, accommodation, catering, tour activities and many other tourism activities as is seniors prefer to buy a complete set of tourism products. If there are additional fees for some activities and tourist attractions during the trip, travel companies have to clearly inform senior tourists prior to purchasing the product.

For the development of promotion strategies, in addition to the traditional way of “advertising and sales promotion”, many other creative promotion channels could be used based, such as activity marketing, experience marketing and public relations marketing. Travel companies can establish connections with communities or seniors’ organizations (such as senior photography association, senior chess association, etc.) to promote their tourism products. Travel companies can also build a customer-demand information system to carry out door-to-door service and hotline service; and travel companies could advance telephone and online ordering to expand their influence. Meanwhile, travel companies can organize public welfare activities to attract more senior customers.

5.2.2.3 The development of supporting senior tourism. Based on seniors’ travel motivation - pull factors, safety and tourism infrastructures can be improved under the control of the government. In addition, there are some identified travel barriers from the aspect of government policy deficiencies towards senior travel. The government could take some actions to support senior tourism to become more prosperous.

Improve seniors’ travel environment. In order to encourage seniors to travel more, government needs to provide suitable conditions for them. The government should subsidize the admission fee for urban leisure parks, tourist attractions, scenic areas, etc. and discount seniors’ admissions. Moreover, local government should promote and upgrade tourism and leisure infrastructures for seniors. Infrastructures such as local transportation systems, standard hotels and restaurants and medical institutions around scenic areas need to be developed. Local public security also needs to be ensured under the supervision of local government. Seniors will be more willing to travel with suitable conditions and travel environment.

Intensify financial support for senior tourism market development. The government should intensify financial support for senior tourism market development by financial supporting more travel companies to design suitable senior tourism products. Gradually, more funds should be put into the study of senior tourism on the theoretical level and advanced technology content application in tourism infrastructures and senior tourism products. Obtaining the highly attention and concrete improvements from government is the precondition of well developing senior tourism market.

5.2.2.4 The development of senior tourism market regulation. According to the study results of seniors' travel barriers, in terms of limitations of travel agencies and shortcomings in government policy, and, because there is a lack of regulation from the relevant authorities, there are some unsatisfying phenomena existing in the present senior tourism market. In order to eliminate these barriers, government should formulate rigorous criteria for operating senior tourism services for travel companies so that they provide qualified tourism products to seniors in accordance with standards, and with senior tourists' right and interests.

Regulation and feedback systems should be established by the government in order to maintain a standard of fairness in the senior tourism market. Appropriate authorities should visit travel companies periodically to inspect their services and collect feedbacks from their senior customers. Then, criteria should be revised periodically, according to market research and feedback and the criteria adapted in order to serve the tourism market with assurance of applicability and feasibility. The government could also design a reward system to encourage travel companies to provide high-quality senior tourism products, by giving incentives, and, conversely, by punishing travel companies which receive complaints by public revealing their information.

5.3 Study Limitations, Contribution, and Future Research

5.3.1 Study limitations. One limitation of this study is that the results from this study on seniors' travel motivations and travel barriers apply only to this specific exploratory study within this specific context; the results cannot be generalized to the entire senior population in China. Another limitation is that this study did not investigate how gender and employment status impact on seniors' travel motivations and travel barriers. However, these two demographic characteristics play an important role in the findings. Some travel motivation push factors and personal level travel barriers occupy a predominant position among seniors of a specific gender or employment status.

5.3.2 Contribution. This qualitative exploratory study provides findings on seniors' travel motivations and travel barriers in Beijing. Currently, most of the research on examining seniors' travel motivation by using 'push and pull' model was conducted in Western countries and some certain Asian countries through adopting quantitative research method (questionnaire). However, simply using the questionnaire with frequently identified push and pull factors to examine Chinese seniors' travel motivations is limiting given the significant role that culture plays in people's travel motivations. This study used in-depth interviews to identify Chinese seniors' travel motivations. The research on senior travel barriers in the setting of China is also scarce. Using document analysis and interviews, three aspects of travel barriers for Chinese seniors were identified and examined. In summary, this qualitative exploratory research contributes to the body of knowledge using the cultural context of mainland China. This study also contributes to the limited qualitative research on Chinese seniors and their travel motivations and travel barriers.

This study also provides practical insights for the advancement of senior tourism development in China, so that both private travel sectors and public departments can use practical implications section in this study for reference, to improve the senior tourism market and better serve senior tourists. A well-developed senior tourism market means a win-win solution for both travel agencies and seniors. Travel agencies can create sustainable economic benefits by targeting this segment market. Seniors' quality of life, physical and mental health in their later years can be improved through travel. In turn, travel opportunities can contribute to social progress and benefit social-cultural sustainability.

5.3.3 Future research. Future research using a different research design would produce different kinds of useful findings. Given that the senior tourism market is not a single homogeneous group, an alternative approach could design a study that examines the different sub-segments of seniors based on their gender, age range, income level, marital status, for instance.

More diverse research methods could be used in future studies, such as questionnaires and focus group interviews. Questionnaires are able get access a large sample size and make the results become more visualized and objective. Focus groups can trigger more information as the discussion happens between group members.

Future research could also involve travel agencies' employees and analyze their perspectives on senior tourism. Moreover, expanding the geographic area to other cities in China would support a comparative examination of seniors' perceptions on travel.

Finally, culture is an important element that influences seniors' travel motivations and travel barriers. Future research could consider a more in-depth study that specifically explores the way Chinese culture influences seniors' perceptions towards travelling: What kind of role does Chinese culture play in seniors' travel motivation? Which 'push' and 'pull' factors of seniors' motivations are

influenced by Chinese culture? How does cultural difference impact seniors' travel motivations and travel barriers in the West and in the East. These all could be interesting topics for future research and contribute to our understanding of Chinese seniors and how seniors' tourism development can best respond to their travel needs.

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APPENDIX A: Identifying Interviewees

E-mail or Phone Script for Communication with Senior Center Managers

Hello/Dear (Person who is the manager of LiZe Senior Activity Center and Huixin Community Center),

My name is Yandi Pan and I am a graduate student in the Sustainable Leisure Management Program at Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo, Canada. This program requires that I gain applied experience in field research with the aim of writing a thesis. The purpose of my small sample study is to identify the motivations and barriers that seniors who live in Beijing face when they travel.

I would like to invite some seniors in your Senior Activity Center to participate in an interview with me for my study. The interview will involve them sharing their experience, perspectives, and thoughts on their travel experience. I am hoping you might assist me to identify an appropriate recruitment process with seniors who use your center.

For instance, would it be appropriate for me to go to your center and provide seniors with a presentation on my research? Or set up a table in a public place and provide an information handout to them? Once identified, I will choose some seniors who are interested in my research and ask for their willingness to participate in an interview with me.

For your information, the interview consists of a few simple open-ended questions and will last approximately 30-50 minutes. Their participation is entirely voluntary; they may skip any questions that they don't want to answer or quit the interview anytime. Their real name will not be shown in the study report. The whole process needs to be voice recorded and I will only use the information for my research study report.

If you have questions about the process, please feel free to email me at yandipan@gmail.com or call me at 250-797-1665 (Canada) or 18600721150 (China).

Please contact me by ___date___. Thank you.

I'm looking forward to your response. Thank you in advance for your time, sincerely.

APPENDIX B: Information Handout for Potential Interviewees

To Travel or not to Travel? That is the question!

Hello,

My name is Yandi Pan, I am a student studying in the Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management program at Vancouver Island University in Canada.

In order to complete my course successfully I need to collect data for a study and write a thesis. The study needs to be related to leisure and recreation. I have designed a research project that explores the motivations and barriers of Beijing seniors face when they travel. My research purpose is to offer practical insights for the advancement of senior tourism development so that seniors could be better served when they travel.



Travel can bring people lots of benefits, both psychological and physical. In this modern society, travelling has become a well received and widespread leisure activity among people. If you have experienced a travel experience in the past few years, in relation to my study, I would like to know what kind of motivation led you to go on your trip. I would also like to know what kind of tourism you enjoy, participate in, or would like to participate in? Were you satisfied with the agenda, accommodation and service that travel agency offered?

If you are interested in this topic, I would love for you to participate in my interview! Your perspectives and opinions are important for my research, and for the future of the senior tourism market.

Do you have any questions for me so far? If you have please do not hesitate to ask me.

Now I am going to hand out the information form for those who are interested in this topic and want to participate in the interview please provide your contact information on it.

If you want to think about participating and contact me, please use my contact information below and let me know by the date. Please pass along my contact information to any Beijing seniors who you think might be interested to participate in my study.

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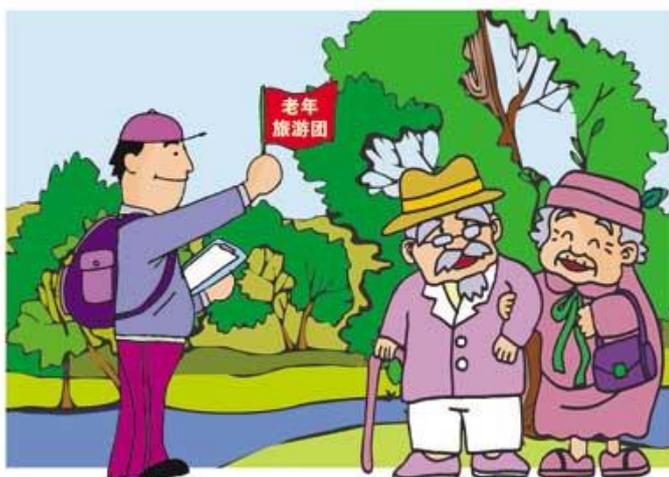


宣传资料
旅游还是不旅游，这是一个问题！

老年朋友们，大家好：

我叫潘燕笛，在读于温哥华岛大学，我的专业是可持续休闲管理。

为了能够顺利完成学业，本专业要求我们单独完成一项有关于可持续、休闲的研究。我的选题是探索老年人旅游的动机和障碍并且提出一些实际可行的建议和策略给北京旅行社以便更好发展老年人旅游市场。



旅游能给人带来很多益处，无论是心理上的还是身体上的。在现如今，旅游已经成为一项收到十分好评和欢迎的休闲活动。如果你在过去的几年中有过旅游经历，我想知道什么样的动机促使你参加一次旅游活动？你一般倾向于去什么样的景点或者哪种旅游吸引你？对于旅行社安排的行程是否满意？

如果您对于这个话题感兴趣，我希望您参与到我此次的访问中来。您的观点和意见对于我的研究和未来老年人旅游市场的发展尤为关键。

目前，您还有什么问题或者疑惑么？请不要犹豫提出。

现在我下发一张联系表，希望那些对此话题感兴趣并且想参与访问的老年朋友能够在表上填上您的联系信息。

如果您还在考虑参与访问请联系我，以下是我的联系信息。同时请您将我的联系信息传达给您知道的任何对于此话题感兴趣的北京老年人朋友。

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感谢您的关注!

APPENDIX C: Interview Protocol

<p>Theme I: Interviewee General Background</p>	<p>1. How long have you lived in Beijing? 2. Do you live with any of your children? 3. Are you still working? If the answer is yes, what is your occupation? Is it a part time or full time? If the answer is no, what is your former occupation? 4. What do you usually do in your spare time? 5. Do you travel? If the answer is yes, how many trips a year? If the answer is no, ask question No. 13 directly.</p>
<p>Theme II: Travel History</p>	<p>6. What form of travel have you participated in? (Package tour, self-organized tour, semi self-organized tour) Why did you choose that type of travel? 7. What did you like/dislike about that (if one type) those (if more than one) types of travel? 8. Where did you go and who did you travel with?</p>
<p>Theme III: Travel Motivations</p>	<p>9. Why do you travel? In order words, what is you travel motivation? (From personal perspective-push factors) 10. What do you expect to gain from a trip? 11. What kind of destination attracts you most? What factors do you care about most when choose a tourist destination? (Pull factors)</p>
<p>Theme IV: Travel Barriers</p>	<p>12. Are there any barriers for you when you consider a trip? If the answer is yes, what are they? (From personal reasons, travel companies' responsibilities, government tourism policies) If the answer is no, is there any inconvenience? 13. <i>For those whose answer is "No" for question No.5</i> <i>What keeps you from travelling?</i></p>
<p>Theme V: Open-ended Questions</p>	<p>14. Do you have any comments on the present senior tourism market in Beijing? 15. What would you suggest to the travel sectors? 16. Do you have any other comments to offer, or do you have any questions for me?</p>

APPENDIX D: Research Consent Form for Semi-Structured Interviews

“Identifying Seniors’ Travel Motivations and Travel Barriers in China:

An exploratory study in Beijing”

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(Purpose) I am a student studying in the program of Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management. This course requires us to do a thesis research associated with sustainability, leisure, tourism and/or innovation. So I have designed a research project to explore the motivations and barriers for senior citizens to travel in Beijing, China and offer practical insights for the advancement of senior tourism development..

(Description) In each semi-structured interview, you will be asked to answer a number of questions about your opinions on senior tourism in different aspects. I will ask open-ended questions to let you share your experience, perspectives and thoughts on senior tourism in Beijing. This interview will last around for 30-50 minutes.

(Potential harm) There are no known harms or benefits associated with your participation in this research.

(Confidentiality) Information about your participation will not be made public and you will not be identified in the research results. Information will be kept confidential, and only my supervisor and I will have access to the data collected during the study. Your information will be securely stored and password protected in my computer and on a backup external hard drive. The data will be destroyed after 2 years after submitting my thesis to the department of Recreation and Tourism Management. All the electronic files and paper files will be also destroyed at that time. The results from this study will be reported in a written research thesis in English only and an oral report during thesis defense. Information about the research will not be made public in any way that identifies individual participants.

(Participation) Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time for any reason without explanation. The interview is voluntary and you may choose to not answer any of the questions for any reason and without having to explain these reasons to me.

(Concerns About your Treatment in the Research) If at any time you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Office, by the toll-free number at 1(888)-920-2221 (ext. 2665) or by email at reb@viu.ca

If you have any questions about this research project, or would like more information, please feel free to contact me at the contact information below:

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18600721150 (China)

(Consent) I have read the above form, understand the information read, understand that I can ask questions or withdraw at any time. I consent to participate in today's research study and to having my interview audio-recorded.

Participant's Signature

Date

