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Senior tourists' preferences in the developing countries – measuring perceptions of Serbian potential senior market

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Abstract: Senior leisure travel became a significant part of the global tourism market, and developing countries with lower GNP, such as South-East European countries, are also part of this trend. The principal aim of the paper was to explore the senior tourists' preferences (choice of destination, transport, and accommodation), their travel motivation, and travel limitations of this fast-growing market with immense potential in this country. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 320 senior tourists in the five biggest cities of Serbia. The results indicate spa and mountain centres as preferable travel destinations among the potential senior tourists in Serbia, while the major factors for choosing a destination showed to be travel costs, climate conditions, and destination proximity. The research findings also showed that the principal travel motives are rest and relaxation and health improvement, and in connection to this, the most preferable activities on the destination are engagement in spa and medical treatments and spending time in unspoiled nature. Moreover, the study indicates financial difficulties and health concerns as the major travel barriers of potential senior market in Serbia. The research findings can be used as a framework for all tourism stakeholders involved in tailoring a specific tourism product for Serbian senior travel market.

Keywords: Senior tourism, Senior travel motivation, Senior tourism preferences, Travel constraints, Serbia.

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1 Introduction

One of the relatively recent developments in the tourism industry is related to the emergence and fast growth of a potential market segment of the seniority group (Patterson, 2007). Senior leisure travel became a significant part of the global tourism market, and developing countries with lower GNP, such as South-East European countries, are also part of this trend. The lack of research dedicated to the senior tourism market in Serbia and the fact that people over 55 represent 33% of the complete Serbian population in 2011 (census of population, 2011) encouraged the authors to conduct the research on senior tourists' preferences, their travel motivations, and travel limitations of this fast-growing market with immense potential in this country.

As Sniadek (2006) stated that there are a few main characteristics of the senior tourism market. First, it is the market with unusual dynamics of growth. Second, it is the market with the greatest budget of free time, and it is a relatively affluent market. Third, seniors are not favourable targets during the tourist season as they usually go for trips in low season. All aforementioned characteristics imply that this fast-growing market has huge importance for all tourism stakeholders.

Since the Serbian senior tourism market is still unexplored and the research in this field is rather obscure, the main aim of this paper is to reveal the major travel patterns and travel behaviour of this significant tourist niche. Because of the specific characteristics of this travel market, one of the goals of the paper was to gain insights into the main motives and constraints to travel, factors that influence their choice of destination, preferable destination types, as well as their preferences about tourist activities.

2 Literature review

2.1 Senior tourism

The tourism community has witnessed increasing attention to research on the senior market. Regarding the growth of the global senior population, those who are 65 and older increased more than threefold since 1950, from approximately 130 million (about 4% of the world population) to 419 million (6.9%) (Rand Corporation, 2001). Moreover, the growth was even faster after 2010, when the majority of baby boomers started to reach 65. Many research papers emphasise that seniors now are different from those in the past: they are healthier, spend more, travel more frequently, and stay away longer at greater distances (Javalgi, Thomas, & Rao 1992; Miller, 1996; Shoemaker, 2000; Zimmer, Brayley, & Searle, 1995, Patterson, 2007; Jang et al., 2009; Chen & Shoemaker, 2014).

To analyse the potential of the senior tourism market, it is important to understand the term 'baby boomer'. Baby boomer generation is the big group of people who was born after World War II through 1964. About 450 million people were born during those mentioned years worldwide (Stark, 1996). Nowadays, the baby boomer generation is entering to senior, which will be effected to the demographic changing of the total population, and by the time when the last baby boomer turns 65, the population who is 65 years old and older will be doubled (Bayles, 2003). In 2006, almost 500 million people worldwide were 65 and older. By 2030, this total is projected to increase to 1 billion-1 in every 8 of the earth's inhabitants. Significantly, the most rapid increases in the 65-and-older population are occurring in the developing countries, which will see a jump of 140% by 2030 (National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health, 2007). The percentage of the population 65 years old and over has more than tripled from 4.1% in 1900 to 12.4% in 2000. Due to the large number of baby boomers, various research focus on different fields concerning this market segment (Bayles, 2003).

By analysing the previous studies on senior travel, the authors encountered different definitions of a senior traveller proposed by different authors: (1) 50 years old and above (Hawes, 1988; Blazey, 1992; Milman, 1998), (2) 55 years old and over (Lieux, Weaver, & McCleary, 1994; Shoemaker 2000), and (3) 60 years and older (Capella & Greco, 1987). For the purpose of this study, the authors investigated people aged 55 and older, who are labelled in the scientific literature as the senior market (Shoemaker,

1989), the mature market (Lazer, 1985), or the silver market (Branchik, 2010).

The senior tourism has been recognised as a significant part of the tourism industry in many developed economies, but has only begun to gain attention in the developing countries. The US Bureau of the Census (1999) estimates that by 2025 over two-third of those 65 years and over will be living in the developing world, and the growth rate of the elderly population in the developing countries will range between 106% and 174% compared with the developed countries where the increase will be just over 50%. This indicates a great potential of this travel market in the developed countries. This growth trend in the developing countries has not been matched by a corresponding increase in research on senior tourism (Tsu, Cai, & Wong, 2007). In the developing countries, while there is an emerging body of literature on the psychology of seniors, knowledge about their motivation for leisure travel and their travel behaviour is obscure.

2.2 Characteristics of the senior tourism market

2.2.1 Travel motivation and behaviour of the senior tourists

In order to develop senior tourism, it is important to understand the travel motivation and behaviour of senior travellers. The senior traveller may also be considered a new tourist that is more experienced, flexible, and independent, who would be harder to please than the more traditional tourist (Poon, 1994). This might be reflected by their experiences and knowledge collected since they were young until becoming a seniority. Many scholars (e.g., Long, 1998; Moschis, 1996; Ahmad, 2002, 2003; Kazaminia, Del Chiappa, & Jafari, 2015; Datillo et al., 2015) in the general consumer behaviour literature have reported that the older consumer market has become more heterogeneous than the younger consumers in terms of preferences, motives, and spending power. They also tend to be more discerning and will demand higher quality service during travelling, as well as a greater degree of choice and flexibility in their travel and tourism consumption. According to the American Association of Retired Persons, seniors travel more frequently and stay away longer than non-seniors (Miller, 1996). Seniors travel more, travel greater distances, stay away longer, and are more mobile as reported by Badinelli, Davis, and Gustin (1991).

There is an extensive body of literature concerning the different aspects of the senior travellers, such as the motivation (Stuart, 1992, Sellick, 2004; Prayag 2012; Iso-Ahola & Crowley, 1991, Lieux, Weaver, & McCleary, 1994; Hsu, Cai, & Wong, 2007; Chen & Shoemaker, 2014), the behaviour (Lohmann & Danielson, 2001; Scott et al., 2009; Datillo et al., 2015), potential (Shoemaker, 1989), finance (Turner, 2007), and limitation (Gladwell & Bedini, 2004; Kazaminia, Del Chiappa, & Jafari, 2015) as well as the activities during travelling (Littrell, 2004).

In terms of travel motivation of a senior tourist, by reviewing the literature in this field, it seems that the most common motives of senior tourists are related to gaining new experience, nostalgia, socialisation, rest and relaxation, engaging in physical activity, esteem from others, and so on.

The Centre for Tourism Research and Development (1999) conducted a study on the travel motives of senior tourists and their preferences for holiday destination types, favourite mode of travel, and personal values, which aimed to discover how the underlying travel motives and values could identify unique senior tourism markets for the purpose of new product development. The results led to the identification of seven travel-motive segments labelled in order of relative size, such as Nostalgias, Friendliness, Learners, Escapists, Thinkers, Status-Seekers, and Physicals.

Moreover, Stuart (1992) stated that older people are mainly looking for experiences and personal growth, while other age travellers may seek pleasure and escape from stresses.

Modern travellers tend to experience something different, to explore, to have a change, to have fun, to increase enjoyment, to play and be active, to be with others, to relax without stress, and to be close to nature. Poon (1994) estimated that the aforementioned motives apply from 45% to 60% of the population in the developed world, including a large proportion of senior traveller segments. Another research (Badinelli, 2000) stated that other elements important to older travellers are interesting venues that provide learning and/or culture experiences, good architecture, pleasant countryside, peace and quiet, participation, opportunity to develop and support friendship, and good weather experiences in a comfortable, but simple environment. The analysis of these important findings can be a good framework for tailoring a specific tourist offer for the senior tourism market, which significantly differs from that created for the younger travellers.

2.2.2 Travel barriers for the senior tourists

Focussing on the tourism industry, we can say that the senior market is one of the very interesting markets due to the fact that seniors have available time as well as purchasing power for travelling after their hard working time. However, it should be remembered that this claim mainly refers to the seniors in the developed countries, as a significant percentage of older persons in the developing countries still do not, and will not have sufficient resources to travel. Besides financial barrier, as a very significant travel barrier for seniors, there are many other constraints to travel that are characteristic for the senior tourism market. This aspect of senior tourism was in focus of many studies, such as Rose and Graesser (1981); Mcguire's (1984); Mcguire, Dottavio, and O'Leary (1986); Blazey (1987); Huang and Tsai (2003); Gladwell and Bedini (2004); Lee and Tideswell (2005); Pederson (1994); Chen and Shoemaker (2014). There is a wide array of factors, which influences the decision to travel, such as health limitation, lack of information about the tourist destination and itinerary, lack of companionship, security, and safety concerns. For instance, Pederson (1994) states that health limitations and concerns mostly have an effect on the older traveller aged 80 years old and over as a barrier to travel. However, for younger seniors, the recuperation from illness or recovery after a major surgery is often a stimulus to travel. A research by Blazey (1987) revealed that 25.6% of the travel constraints for seniors were related to health issues and 9% to a lack of energy for travel, while only 3% felt that they were too old to travel. This information confirms that health condition would not be a big constraint for seniors travelling; they sometimes indulge in travel experiences to refresh and improve their health. Pederson (1994) also mentioned that most of the seniors are more concerned with comfort than younger travellers, by being comfortable in both, psychological as well as physical aspects. This research also stated that the concern for security and safety would be central to the purchasing demand in the senior group. Moreover, Rose and Graesser (1981) found that the most frequently cited constraints were lack of time, cost considerations, health, age, and family responsibilities. Mcguire's (1984) study showed that the external resources, time, approval, abilities/social, and physical well-being were the five constraints to travel. Blazey (1987) indicates security concerns, financial limitations, lack of time, lack of information, poor health, and age perception as important constraints. Huang and Tsai (2003) indicate travellers' capability dimensions (physical ability, fear of leaving their home unattended, financial considerations, and no one to travel with), travel

direct suppliers dimensions (dietary considerations, lack of information on where to go, and fear of not having a good time and wasting money), and indirect travel motivation dimensions (fear of hassles, finding the time, and age problems). The study of Chen and Shoemaker (2014) indicated three major factors: fear of hassles, physical limits, and time and financial concerns. Understanding of the travel constraints should help the travel industry to shape specific products and services to encourage senior travellers to overcome their travel barriers.

The interesting research question is: Does all of these characteristics of the senior tourism market, including motivation, behaviour, and barriers, can be applied to seniors in the developing countries, such as Serbia, or there are some major differences in their travel preferences and behaviour? Thus, this paper tends to analyse and identify the major characteristics of the senior tourism market (travel behaviour, motives, constraints) on the example of one developing country (Serbia) as well as to make comparison with the research findings regarding the seniors in the developed countries.

2.2.3 Research hypothesis

H1: Spa, mountain, and administrative centres are the most favourable travel destinations for the Serbian senior tourists.

If we consider the fact that the Serbian senior tourists are mainly travelling on the territory of Serbia, it is expected that they will prefer the most popular travel offers in domestic travel, which can satisfy their requirements. Domestic tourist offers are mainly directed to destinations such as spas, the mountains, and the administrative centres, which are among the main tourist products of the Republic of Serbia (Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, 2006–2015). Some new research conducted on the senior tourists in Serbia (Tomka et al., 2015) suggest that the senior tourists in Serbia travel to natural and spa resorts in Serbia, and that they seem less interested in cultural and historical sites, but look for them in other countries, which could suggest further direction of the Serbian tourism development.

Many studies have found that financial considerations are the major constraints that prevent people from travelling (Rose & Graesser, 1981; Blazey, 1987; Huang & Tsai, 2003; Chen & Shoemaker, 2014). It is expected that this constraint is especially present in the developing countries such as Serbia. According to the data of Central Register for Social Insurance, the average pension in Serbia is below 190e and the average salary is about 400e

(<http://www.croso.gov.rs>); it is evident that majority of people in Serbia, especially senior travellers who are in pension, have lack of resources they can use for travelling. Based on this, we consider that seniors will choose those destinations that cost less or they won't travel as they don't have enough money. According to this, we derived Hypotheses 2 and 3:

H2: Travel costs are one of the major factors influencing the destination choice among the Serbian senior tourists.

H3: Lack of money is a major constrain for travelling for the Serbian senior tourists.

It is expected that the major motives of travel of a senior tourist in Serbia will be connected to their health improvement. Tomka et al. (2015) explored the role of quality of life as a motivating factor of the senior tourists in Serbia, and health improvement as it is an essential part, and concluded that it plays an immense role in their travelling. This is also in connection with their most preferable travel destinations spas and mountains. Based on this, we expect that health improvement is a major motivating factor and that preferable activities will be connected to this motive:

H4: Health improvement is one of the major motives of travel among the Serbian senior tourists.

H5: Serbian senior tourists prefer activities related to health improvement.

3 Methodology

3.1 Sample characteristics

The total number of respondents (N) included in the survey was 320 persons. There were a slightly higher number of female respondents (56.6%) with the average age of 62 years, while the average age of the male respondents was 64 years. The average age of the entire sample was 63 years with standard deviation of 6.882. Majority of them are retired, while a significant number of respondents are still fully employed. They define their financial status mostly as sufficient, while their self-perceived health state is mainly good. In terms of frequency of travelling, the study showed that majority of them travel once a year, or less than once a year. Table 1 presents the distribution of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, employment, financial status, and health state) as well as their travel behaviour (frequency of travelling).

Table 1: Sample characteristics (N = 320)

Gender		Self-perceived health state	
Male	43.4%	Excellent	15.6%
Female	56.6%	Good	42.8%
		Fair	23.8%
		Poor	17.5%
		Bad	0.3%
Age		Frequency of travelling	
55-64	61.9%	Several times per month	1.9%
65≤	38.1%	Once per month	1.3%
		Several times per year	22.5%
		Once a year	30.9%
		Once in a few years	43.4%
Employment status			
Employed	39.1%		
Unemployed	18.4%		
Retired	42.5%		
Self-perceived financial status			
Very abundant	8.1%		
Abundant	7.8%		
Sufficient	43.4%		
A little difficult	26.9%		
Very difficult	13.8%		

3.2 Instruments

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part involved items related to the socio-demographic profile of the respondents (gender, age, employment, self-perceived financial status, and self-perceived health condition). The self-perceived financial status and self-perceived health condition were measured by using five categories (see Table 1) inspired by the work of Jang and Wu (2007). The second part of the questionnaire included questions related to the respondent's travel behaviour (frequency of traveling, travel motivation, travel barriers, preferable type of destination, and tourist activities). Moreover, the respondents were also asked about the factors influencing their choice of destination. The second part of the questionnaire was designed by consulting and overviewing a large body of literature concerning a senior's travel behaviour, including travel motivation (Yang & Wu, 2006; Jang et al., 2009; Chen & Shoemaker, 2014; Hsu et al., 2007; Lieux, Weaver & McCleary, 1994), destination selection criteria and tourist activities (Blenman, 1989; Litrell, 2004; Chen & Shoemaker, 2014), and travel barriers (Rose & Graesser, 1981; Mcguire's, 1984; Mcguire, Dottavio, & O'Leary, 1986; Blazey 1987; Huang & Tsai, 2003; Gladwell & Bedini, 2004; Lee & Tideswell, 2005; Chen & Shoemaker, 2014). In this part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to choose a maximum of three answers from the list.

3.3 Procedure

The research was carried out during the period between January and June 2014. The respondents were chosen from the major emissive centres of Serbia (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Subotica, Nis, and Kragujevac), and they were approached by the standard pen and paper method. The respondents were surveyed at the major places for gathering of seniors, such as parks and retirement homes, but one part of the sample was collected by the snowball technique (people suggested their friends, relatives, or colleagues who could participate in the survey). The respondents were informed of the general purpose of the study and that participation was voluntary and anonymous. About 400 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, but finally, the authors obtained 320 completed questionnaires.

The statistical data analyses applied in the research were frequency analysis, descriptive statistical analysis, and one-way ANOVA tests (the analysis of variance test). The sample meets the basic requirements for the application of the parametric tests (Clark et al., 1998).

4 Results

As it was mentioned before, one of the main goals of the study was to discover the main travel behaviour of the

Table 2: Respondents' travel behaviour

Major factors for choosing a travel destination		Main travel barriers	
Prices, travel costs	74.06%	Financial difficulties	54.06%
Climatic conditions	59.69%	Health difficulties	43.13%
Destination proximity	41.25%	Family obligations	41.56%
Attractions, amenities	35%	Lack of friends for travelling	28.13%
Destination safety	20.63%	Lack of free time	22.5%
Available activities	18.75%	Lack of information for senior tourism destinations	12.81%
		Fear of crowd	11.25%
Main travel motives		Main travel activities	
Rest and relaxation	74.69%	Spending time in unspoiled nature	62.5%
Health improvement	50.63%	Medical and spa treatments	37.19%
Visit of attractions	33.13%	Enjoying food more than usual	34.38%
Escape from the daily routine	29.38%	Walking	31.25%
Visiting friends and family	23.44%	Sightseeing	28.44%
Meeting new people	10.94%	Sleeping more than usual	26.88%
Escape from bad climatic conditions	6.56%	Shopping	24.38%
New knowledge	6.56%	Physical activities	10.31%
Participation in activities	6.25%		
Most visited destinations			
Spas	44.69%		
Mountains	43.44%		
Cities	40.63%	38.44%	
Sea destinations	36.25%		
Rural destinations			

potential Serbian senior market. The obtained results are presented in Table 2.

The results show that travel costs (74.06%), climatic conditions (59.69%), and destination proximity (41.25%) proved to be the major factors when choosing a tourist destination. Two main motives for travelling among the senior tourists are rest and relaxation (74.69%) and health improvement (50.63%). Among the most visited destinations, spa and mountain centres slightly prevail among others with 44.69% and 43.44% of answers, respectively. In connection with the main travel motives, the most preferred travel activities are spending time in unspoiled nature (62.5%) and medical and spa treatments (37.19%). As it was quite expected in case of one developing country, the main travel barrier for 54.06% of respondents represents financial difficulties. Besides that, health difficulties (43.13%) and family obligations (41.56%) are also high-rated barriers among the Serbian seniors.

In order to test the relationships between several categorical variables, the authors conducted an additional analysis, by applying chi-square test of independence. Firstly, the aim was to check whether there is a gender differences in the frequency of travelling. The chi-square test showed no statistically significant difference between the travel frequency between male and female groups $p > 0.05$ (Sig.2-sided = 0.607). Also, it was explored if there is a difference between people of the different employment status and their frequency of travel. The chi-square test of independence showed statistically significant difference between these two variables ($N = 320$) = 69.887, $p = 0.00$. The contingency coefficient ($CC > 0.3$, $CC = 0.423$) also showed the connection between the employment status and the frequency of travel. The highest frequency of travelling can be seen in the group of employed respondents, where 4% respondents travel few times per month, 31.2% travel few times per year and 45.6% travel once per year. As it was expected, the unemployed respondents

mostly travel once in a few years 78%. The most interesting group of retired respondents also mostly travels once in a few years (52.2%) and once per year (24.3%). The chi-square test of independence showed statistically significant difference between these two variables ($N = 320$) = 273.526, $p = 0.00$. The contingency coefficient ($CC > 0.3$, $CC = 0.679$) also showed that the financial status is very much connected with the travel frequency. The respondents with excellent financial status travel more than one per year (65.4%) and few times per month (15.4%), while none of these respondents travels once in a few years. On the other hand, the respondents with poor financial status stated that travel once in a few years (97.7%). The respondents with a good financial status mostly travel once per year (56.1%) and few times per year (23.7%). The research also indicates that the respondents with good health conditions travel more frequently. The chi-square test of independence showed statistically significant difference between these two variables ($N = 320$) = 109.117, $p = 0.00$. The contingency coefficient ($CC > 0.3$, $CC = 0.504$). The respondents with excellent health condition mostly travel few times per year (46%), while those with very bad health condition travel once in a few years (100%). The highest frequency of travel could be seen among the respondents with good health conditions (48.9%).

Senior travellers of different ages can have different travel behaviour. An one-way ANOVA test was conducted in order to indicate if the travellers' age is connected with the frequency of travel. The one-way ANOVA test indicated statistically significant difference in the level $p = 0.00$. Besides that, eta square $\eta^2 = 0.22$ showed huge connection of age and travel frequency (according to Cohen, 1988, $\eta^2 > 0.14$ indicates strong influence). From Figure 1, we can see that the increase in the respondent's age is, in most cases, followed by an increase in the frequency of travelling.

5 Discussion and conclusion

The principal aim of this research was to analyse the senior tourists' behaviour and travel patterns on the example of one developing country. Serbia, as one of developing countries with post-socialism community problems, was a very interesting research area. Moreover, the research intended to analyse the main travel motives, main factors for choosing a travel destination as well as the main travel barriers among the potential Serbian senior tourism market.

The study results showed that the most visited destinations among Serbian senior tourists are spa and mountain centres (44.69% and 43.44%, respectively), which means that Hypothesis 1 can be accepted. A large number of spa centres in Serbia and spa treatments covered by health insurance could be seen as the main reasons for such a huge popularity of spa centres in Serbia. Mountain centres are probably seen as favourable destinations for rest and relaxation (a major travel motive of Serbian senior tourists) during whole year.

Furthermore, the research indicated that the main factors for choosing a travel destination among the respondents are travel costs (74.06%), climatic conditions (59.69%), and destination proximity (41.25%), which indicates that Hypothesis 2 is confirmed. The Serbian potential senior tourism market indicates travel costs as the most important travel factor, while this factor is much lower rated among the senior tourist from the well-developed countries (Chen & Shoemaker, 2014). In connection to this, the results also indicated that the financial difficulties are one of the major barriers for travel of the senior tourists in Serbia. According to Central Register for Social Insurance (2015), the average pension in Serbia in 2015 is 23.196 Serbian dinars (approximately 188€), which explains the prevalence of travel costs among other factors when choosing a destination. Rest and relaxation (74.69%) and health improvement (50.63%) are the two main travel motives, as the study showed. This indicated that our Hypothesis 4 can be just partly accepted, as rest and relaxation is more dominant than health improvement, which is, however, also very important motive for travel. Other motives are less popular among the Serbian senior tourists, which are in contrast with the senior tourists from developed countries, as in their case, socialisation and visiting casino represent the main travel push factors (Chen & Shoemaker, 2014). In connection with the main travel motives (rest and relaxation, health improvement), the most preferred

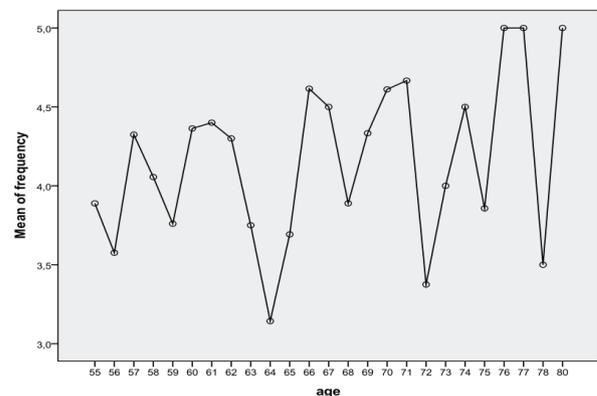


Figure 1: Mean plots of travel frequency and age of travellers

travel activities are spending time in unspoiled nature (62.5%) and medical and spa treatments (37.19%). The research results obtained by Chen and Shoemaker (2014) showed that among the American senior tourists, the most preferred activities are casino gambling, visiting local attractions, and shopping. A huge difference in the financial status and interest area between the respondents in the developed and developing countries is present in all aspects of travel motivation and behaviour. Nevertheless, senior tourists from both the developed and developing countries are faced with the same travel barriers – financial difficulties and health concerns.

Furthermore, the additional analyses also intended to show whether female senior tourists travel more frequently than male senior tourists. However, the results of the chi-square test did not show statistically significant difference between genders. Further, we also explored whether there is a difference between people of the different employment status and their frequency of travel, and the results showed that the employed respondents travel more frequently than the unemployed and retired ones, which can be connected to their income and the amount of money they are ready to spend on travelling. This is also confirmed by additional tests, which showed that the respondents with better financial status travel more frequently – the respondents with excellent financial status travel few times per year, while those with poor financial status travel once in a few years. The financial status of the potential market showed to be connected with a frequency of travelling. The majority of the respondents, who perceived their financial status as enough, mostly travel once per year. These travels are mostly spa, mountain, and city vacations, which should be a good indicator for all travel agencies in the Serbian market, which should offer these destinations to the senior tourists. The results also indicate that the respondents with good health conditions travel more frequently, which is in accordance with the opinion of many authors that health condition is one of the most important factors for senior tourism. The respondents with excellent health condition mostly travel few times per year, while those with very bad health condition travel once in a few years. Nevertheless, a higher number of good-health respondents represent the most frequent travellers.

The one-way ANOVA test indicated that the increase in the respondent's age is followed by a constant increase in the frequency of travelling. This result could be explained by more free time for travelling among the retired respondents. Even though the employed and younger respondents are likely to travel more frequently, a lack of their free time makes the retired respondents the most frequent

travellers. Travel frequency is the least among the unemployed respondents, which could be explained by their poor financial status, which the study research also showed.

From all the aforementioned observations, we can draw significant conclusions on which we can base our suggestions for the future senior tourism development in Serbia. First of all, spa and mountain centres, as preferable destinations among Serbian seniors, should shape their offer to satisfy the major requirements of this emerging travel market niche. This especially refers to their promotional activities, which should put an emphasis on the offer for seniors, including specific activities that are affordable as well as very beneficial for improving their health and well-being. In this way, by offering a calm, relaxed vacation in an unspoiled nature and vacation with an opportunity of participation in spa and medical treatments as an offer, specially tailored for the senior tourism market, seniors could surpass their constraints for travelling, including financial barriers, and the poor health condition could become an important motive for travel rather than a barrier. Moreover, these results provide important information for other destinations around the world, which should bear in mind the characteristics of this specific travel market as well as the differences among the mentioned tourism market in the developed and developing countries, which obviously have different preferences and requirements.

However, the paper has certain limitations. The finding of the study cannot be completely generalised to other developing countries; thus, future research could include a comparative analysis with similar research in other developing countries (for instance, in the region of south-east Europe).

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