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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SENIOR TOURISM IN THE TURKESTAN REGION

Abstract. *This article examines the socio-economic characteristics of senior (elderly) tourism in the Turkistan region. The main objective of the study is to identify the demographic profile of senior tourists, their economic capacities, the factors influencing their participation in tourism, and to develop recommendations for regional tourism development. A mixed-methods approach was employed, including a survey of 100 senior tourists and in-depth interviews with 15 participants. Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using SPSS 27 and NVivo 12, respectively.*

The results show that senior tourists in the Turkistan region are predominantly aged 60–70, mostly women, all retired, and generally have secondary or higher education. Financial constraints limit their travel to domestic destinations once or twice a year, while international travel remains largely inaccessible. The key factors influencing travel decisions include health conditions, financial capacity, transportation and infrastructure, safety, and the quality of tourism services, whereas social motivation was found to be of secondary importance.

To promote the development of senior tourism, the study recommends improving tourism infrastructure, introducing financial support programs, ensuring safety, enhancing service quality, and organizing targeted social activities. The findings contribute to regional tourism development, encourage greater participation of senior tourists, and enrich the academic literature on tourism studies.

Keywords: *senior tourism, socio-economic characteristics, Turkistan region, factors influencing tourism participation, tourism infrastructure, financial support, social motivation.*

Introduction

Tourism is one of the strategically important sectors of the modern global economy, within which senior (elderly) tourism occupies a special place [1], [2]. The world's population is ageing, and this process is accompanied by significant economic, social, and demographic changes. In this context, senior tourism is not merely a form of leisure or entertainment, but an important phenomenon that promotes social participation, psychological well-being, and an improved quality of life [3], [5].

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Global studies indicate that the motivations of senior tourists differ from those of traditional tourist segments. Senior travelers tend to place greater importance on high-quality services, safety, accessible infrastructure, and social interaction [4], [10]. Moreover, tourism experiences have a positive impact on seniors' physical health and emotional well-being, which in turn encourages them to maintain a more active lifestyle [5], [6], [9].

Senior tourism is significant not only for individual travelers but also for regional economic development. Through social tourism initiatives and targeted programs, attracting senior tourists can support local entrepreneurship and contribute to improvements in tourism infrastructure [16], [17]. In regions with strong historical and cultural potential, such as the Turkistan region, the development of senior tourism creates opportunities for introducing new tourism products and services and for supporting broader socio-economic development [17], [18].

Research on senior tourism in Kazakhstan remains a relatively new field. Regional studies suggest that analyzing the socio-economic characteristics of senior tourists makes it possible to improve their travel and leisure experiences, while also enhancing the effectiveness of tourism planning and management [17], [18], [8]. International experience further demonstrates that the development of senior tourism can help regions achieve sustainable economic growth alongside improvements in population well-being [7], [11].

In recent years, a growing body of research has focused on senior tourism, addressing issues such as motivational factors, access to tourism services, and social and economic impacts [12], [13], [14], [19]. These studies contribute to a deeper understanding of the socio-economic aspects of ageing and provide practical recommendations for regional policy development. In this regard, studying senior tourism in the Turkistan region represents an important scientific task aimed at promoting effective regional tourism development, addressing the needs of the senior population, and enhancing socio-economic potential.

Research Objective

The objective of this study is to identify the socio-economic characteristics of senior tourists in the Turkistan region and to explore the possibilities of using senior tourism as an effective tool for tourism sector development.

Research Questions

1. What are the key social and economic characteristics of senior tourists in the Turkistan region?
2. What are the main factors influencing senior tourists' participation in regional tourism?
3. What strategies and recommendations can be applied to develop senior tourism in the Turkistan region?

Research Methods

This study was conducted to examine the socio-economic characteristics of senior tourists in the Turkistan region. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data in order to enhance the reliability and depth of the findings.

The research followed a descriptive and analytical design. The descriptive component provided a comprehensive overview of the social and economic profiles of senior tourists, while the analytical component focused on identifying key factors influencing tourism behavior, motivations, and constraints based on the collected data.

Data Collection Methods and Their Link to the Research Questions

Survey

Participants: 100 senior tourists

Instrument: A questionnaire consisting of 25 open-ended questions

Purpose: To identify the socio-economic characteristics of senior tourists in the Turkistan region

The survey addressed the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What are the key social and economic characteristics of senior tourists in the Turkistan region?

Open-ended questions were used to collect demographic information (age, gender, marital status), economic indicators (income level, budget capacity), and travel experience.

Research Question 2: What factors determine senior tourists' participation in regional tourism? Participants' travel motivations, perceived barriers, and needs were explored through open-ended responses.

In-depth Interviews

Participants: 15 senior tourists

Purpose: To deepen and contextualize the survey findings by exploring personal experiences and motivations

The interviews contributed to:

Research Question 2: Identifying factors that either encourage or limit seniors' participation in regional tourism by capturing their personal views, challenges, and expectations.

Research Question 3: What strategies and recommendations can be applied to develop senior tourism in the Turkistan region?

Interviewees shared their suggestions and identified unmet needs related to senior-friendly tourism development.

Document Analysis

Purpose: To review tourism infrastructure, social support programs, and official statistical data related to the Turkistan region

This method supported:

Research Question 2: Examination of external factors influencing participation in tourism, such as infrastructure quality, social programs, and accessibility.

Research Question 3: Identification of relevant development strategies, including national and regional tourism policies and programs.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative Analysis:

Survey data were processed using SPSS 27. Frequency distributions, percentages, mean values, and cross-tabulation were applied. These techniques provided a structured statistical overview of the socio-economic characteristics of senior tourists, directly addressing Research Question 1.

Qualitative Analysis:

Data from in-depth interviews were analyzed using NVivo 12 through content analysis. Key themes and recurring patterns related to motivations, barriers, and development proposals were identified, enabling comprehensive answers to Research Questions 2 and 3.

Research Reliability and Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. Participation in both the survey and interviews was voluntary, and respondents' confidentiality was ensured. All data were analyzed

and reported in aggregated form only.

The main limitations of the study include the relatively small sample size of senior tourists in the Turkistan region (100 participants) and the limited data collection period (summer 2025). Nevertheless, these limitations do not undermine the identification of the main trends and patterns revealed by the research.

Research Results

This section presents the socio-economic characteristics of senior tourists in the Turkistan region, the factors influencing their participation in tourism, and recommendations for regional tourism development. The results are based on survey data (n = 100) and in-depth interviews (n = 15). The advantage of this approach lies in combining the statistical reliability of quantitative data with qualitative insights that provide a deeper understanding of tourists' personal experiences and perceptions.

Socio-economic Characteristics of Senior Tourists (Research Question 1)

Table 1 – Socio-economic characteristics of senior tourists (n = 100)

Indicator	Quantitative value	Percentage (%)
Age group	60–70 years – 45	45%
	71–80 years – 35	35%
	81+ years – 20	20%
Gender	Male – 42	42%
	Female – 58	58%
Education level	Secondary – 40	40%
	Post-secondary – 35	35%
	Higher education – 25	25%
Employment status	Retired – 100	100%
Average monthly income	100,000–150,000 KZT – 40	40%
	150,001–200,000 KZT – 35	35%
	200,001+ KZT – 25	25%
Travel frequency	1–2 times per year – 50	50%
	3–4 times per year – 30	30%
	More than 5 times – 20	20%

Analysis and discussion

The findings indicate that the majority of senior tourists in the Turkistan region are aged 60–70 (45%) and are predominantly women (58%). This pattern corresponds with international research, which shows that female seniors are more actively engaged in leisure activities, cultural programs, and social events [1], [3].

All respondents are retired, which suggests greater time availability and flexibility for travel. A medium to high level of education enhances seniors' ability to understand informational materials and make informed decisions when selecting tourism services.

The average monthly income ranges between 100,000 and 200,000 KZT, which allows most senior tourists to travel only once or twice a year. While 30% travel three to four times annually, only 20% travel more than five times. These results clearly demonstrate that economic factors have a direct

impact on seniors' participation in tourism [4], [6].

In-depth interviews further revealed that many participants plan their trips carefully and limit travel due to budget constraints:

"I travel only twice a year because my budget is limited. If my financial situation were more stable, I would travel more than three times a year" (Interview No. 7).

This finding is consistent with international experience, which highlights financial stability as a key determinant of travel behavior among older adults [2], [5].

Factors Influencing Participation in Regional Tourism (Research Question 2)

Survey and interview results identified the main factors affecting senior tourists' participation in regional tourism.

Table 2 – Key factors influencing participation in regional tourism (n = 100)

Factor	Description	Percentage (%)
Health condition	Physical limitations	65%
Financial capacity	Adequacy of travel budget	55%
Safety	Environmental and service reliability	48%
Transport and infrastructure	Accessibility and comfort	50%
Tourism programs and services	Quality of services, guides, excursions	42%
Social motivation	Travel with friends or family	38%

Analysis and discussion

Health condition is the most influential factor affecting seniors' participation in tourism (65%), reflecting physical limitations and the importance of health resources for active travel [4], [7].

Financial capacity (55%) is the second most significant factor, confirming that budget constraints limit travel frequency, as supported by both survey and interview data.

Transport and infrastructure (50%) play a crucial role, as accessible roads and transportation systems increase seniors' ability to travel within the region. Safety (48%) is also a key consideration, encompassing access to medical care, emergency services, and secure tourism infrastructure.

The quality of tourism programs and services (42%) significantly affects satisfaction and willingness to travel. Interview data indicate that participants pay particular attention to the professionalism of guides and the quality of cultural programs.

Social motivation (38), such as traveling with friends or family, contributes to psychological satisfaction but is not the primary determinant of participation. This highlights the importance of individual motivation among senior tourists [5], [9].

Seniors often consider accessibility and convenience when planning their trips, including the availability of nearby accommodations, dining options, and leisure facilities tailored to their needs. Many participants emphasized the importance of clear signage, comfortable walking paths, and resting areas, which directly influence their decision to engage in regional tourism. Interviews revealed that even minor barriers, such as uneven terrain or limited restroom facilities, can discourage travel, highlighting the necessity for age-friendly infrastructure. These findings align with

international studies emphasizing that improving accessibility and comfort not only increases participation rates but also enhances the overall travel experience and well-being of senior tourists [2], [6], [10].

Recommendations for the Development of Senior Tourism (Research Question 3)

Table 3 – Recommendations for senior tourism development (n = 100)

Recommendation	Description	Percentage (%)
Infrastructure improvement	Roads, transport, accessibility	60%
Financial support	Special social tourism programs	55%
Safety measures	Medical care and emergency services	50%
Service quality improvement	Guides, excursions, cultural programs	45%
Social activities	Clubs, tour groups, cultural events	40%

Analysis and discussion

According to respondents, infrastructure improvement (60%) is the top priority, including better roads, transportation, accessibility, and overall tourism facilities. Financial support programs (55%) can significantly facilitate travel for seniors and are essential components of social policy and regional tourism development.

Strengthening safety measures (50%), particularly medical and emergency services, is a fundamental requirement for senior tourists. Improvements in service quality (45%) and the organization of social activities (40%) further enhance the tourism experience and encourage participation.

Interview responses emphasized the importance of infrastructure and service quality:

“If roads and transport were more accessible, I would be more willing to travel. The experience and professionalism of staff organizing excursions are also very important” (Interview No. 9).

These findings are consistent with international studies, which identify infrastructure, safety, financial support, and social activities as key motivational factors for senior tourism [2], [6], [10].

Senior tourists in the Turkistan region are predominantly aged 60–70, mostly women, retired, and possess medium to high levels of education, which shapes their ability to actively participate in tourism.

The main factors influencing senior tourism participation include health condition, financial capacity, transport and infrastructure, safety, service quality, and social motivation.

The development of senior tourism requires improvements in infrastructure, the introduction of financial support programs, enhanced safety measures, higher service quality, and the organization of social activities.

These findings provide a practical basis for policy-making and tourism development strategies aimed at promoting senior tourism in the Turkistan region. In addition, the study contributes to the academic literature by offering new empirical insights into the needs and motivations of senior tourists, thereby enriching theoretical discussions in tourism research.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that the majority of senior tourists in the Turkistan region are

aged 60–70 and are predominantly women, which is consistent with the demographic structure of senior tourist segments identified in international studies [1, 3]. All participants are retired, and most have secondary or higher education, which enhances their ability to evaluate information and make informed decisions when selecting tourism services [2]. The average monthly income ranges between 100,000 and 200,000 KZT, allowing senior tourists to travel domestically only once or twice a year, while international travel remains largely inaccessible. This clearly demonstrates that financial constraints limit both the frequency and destinations of travel among senior tourists, a pattern also confirmed in international research [3, 5]. In-depth interview results further support this conclusion, showing that participants adjust their travel behavior due to budget limitations (Interview No. 7).

The study identified health status, financial capacity, transport and infrastructure, safety, and the quality of tourism services as the main factors influencing senior tourists' participation in tourism in the Turkistan region [4, 6]. These factors are also widely recognized in international research. For example, Chen et al. emphasize the central role of health and financial resources in seniors' travel decision-making processes [4]. Accessibility of transport and infrastructure was found to directly influence seniors' decisions to travel within their own country. In addition, safety-related factors—including access to medical care, emergency services, and the overall security of tourism infrastructure—were confirmed as particularly important for senior tourists [7]. Social motivation, such as traveling with friends or family members, contributes to psychological satisfaction but is not a primary determinant of travel participation, which aligns with international findings [2, 4].

The results of the study make it possible to formulate practical recommendations for regional tourism development. Senior tourists consider improvements in infrastructure and the introduction of financial support programs to be especially important, which is consistent with international experience. For instance, studies by Pendergast et al. and Kim and Park highlight infrastructure quality and financial support as key requirements for senior-friendly tourism [1, 4]. Moreover, strengthening safety measures, ensuring access to medical and emergency services, improving the quality of tourism services, and organizing social activities can significantly enhance seniors' active participation in tourism [4, 5, 6]. Insights from in-depth interviews further clarify these needs, revealing that participants are more willing to travel if roads and transport are accessible and if tourism staff organizing excursions demonstrate a high level of professional competence (Interview No. 9).

Compared with international literature, this study reveals several distinctive features. While the demographic profile of senior tourists in the Turkistan region corresponds to global patterns, their travel opportunities are largely limited to domestic destinations, which makes issues of infrastructure and transportation particularly critical [1, 3, 4, 6]. In addition, although the proposed tourism development strategies are broadly consistent with international practice, the inclusion of social activities and culturally oriented programs plays a particularly important role in the regional context [5, 7]. Overall, this study provides new empirical evidence by highlighting the need to consider social, economic, and infrastructural factors in the development of senior tourism in the Turkistan region and by offering a comprehensive understanding of senior tourists' motivational structures, thereby contributing to tourism research and practice [2, 9, 17].

Conclusion

The study identified the key characteristics of senior tourism in the Turkistan region. Most participants are aged 60–70, predominantly women, and all are retired. Their education level is

generally secondary or higher, which enables them to adequately assess information when choosing tourism services. Their financial situation allows them to travel domestically only once or twice a year, while international travel is not accessible. These limitations have a direct impact on their level of participation in tourism.

The research highlighted the main factors influencing seniors' travel decisions: health condition, financial capacity, transport and infrastructure, safety, and the quality of tourism services. Social motivation—such as traveling with friends or family members—is important but does not play a decisive role. These findings demonstrate consistency between the regional context and international experience.

The recommendations proposed by senior tourists provide clear guidance for regional tourism development. Participants emphasized the importance of improving infrastructure, introducing financial support programs, strengthening safety measures, and enhancing the quality of tourism services. In addition, the organization of social activities and cultural programs can further encourage active participation in tourism among seniors.

In conclusion, the development of senior tourism in the Turkistan region requires careful consideration of social, economic, and infrastructural factors. Understanding seniors' motivations, travel constraints, and specific needs will enable more effective planning of regional tourism policies. This study offers practical directions for regional tourism development and serves as a foundation for increasing the active engagement of senior tourists.

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ТҮРКІСТАН ОБЛЫСЫНДАҒЫ СЕНИОР-ТУРИЗМНІҢ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК-ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІ

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада Түркістан облысындағы сениор (қарттар) туризмінің әлеуметтік-экономикалық ерекшеліктері зерттелді. Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты – сениор туристердің демографиялық сипаттары, экономикалық мүмкіндіктері, туризмге қатысу факторлары және аймақтық туризмді дамытуға қатысты ұсыныстарды анықтау. Зерттеу үшін аралас әдіс қолданылып, 100 сениор турист арасында сауалнама және 15 қатысушымен терең сұхбат жүргізілді. Мәліметтер сандық (SPSS 27) және сапалық (NVivo 12) бағдарламалар арқылы талданды. Нәтижелер көрсеткендей, Түркістан облысындағы сениор туристер негізінен 60–70 жас аралығында, көбісі әйелдер, барлығы зейнеткер,

орташа немесе жоғары білімді. Қаржылық шектеулер олардың тек өз елі ішінде жылына бір-екі рет саяхат жасауына мүмкіндік береді, ал шетелге шығу мүмкіндігі жоқ. Саяхатқа шығуға әсер ететін басты факторлар: денсаулық жағдайы, қаржылық мүмкіндіктер, транспорт пен инфрақұрылым, қауіпсіздік және туристік қызмет сапасы, ал әлеуметтік мотивация екінші деңгейде маңызды болып шықты. Сениор туризмін дамыту үшін инфрақұрылымды жақсарту, қаржылық қолдау бағдарламаларын енгізу, қауіпсіздікті қамтамасыз ету, туристік қызмет сапасын арттыру және әлеуметтік іс-шараларды ұйымдастыру ұсынылады. Зерттеу аймақтық туризмді дамытуға, сениор туристердің белсенділігін арттыруға және туризм саласындағы ғылыми деректерді толықтыруға үлес қосады.

Кілт сөздер: сениор туризм, әлеуметтік-экономикалық ерекшеліктер, Түркістан облысы, туризмге қатысу факторлары, туристік инфрақұрылым, қаржылық қолдау, әлеуметтік мотивация.

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СОЦИАЛЬНО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ СЕНИОР-ТУРИЗМА В ТУРКЕСТАНСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ

Аннотация. В статье исследуются социально-экономические особенности сениор-туризма (туризма пожилых людей) в Туркестанской области. Целью исследования является выявление демографических характеристик сениор-туристов, их экономических возможностей, факторов участия в туристской деятельности, а также формирование предложений по развитию регионального туризма. В рамках исследования применялся смешанный метод, включающий анкетирование 100 сениор-туристов и проведение глубинных интервью с 15 респондентами. Полученные данные были проанализированы с использованием количественных (SPSS 27) и качественных (NVivo 12) методов анализа. Результаты исследования показали, что сениор-туристы Туркестанской области преимущественно относятся к возрастной группе 60–70 лет, большинство из них составляют женщины, все респонденты являются пенсионерами и имеют среднее или высшее образование. Финансовые ограничения позволяют им совершать путешествия внутри страны один–два раза в год, при этом возможности выезда за границу отсутствуют. Основными факторами, влияющими на участие в туристской деятельности, являются состояние здоровья, финансовые возможности, транспортная и туристская инфраструктура, безопасность и качество туристских услуг, тогда как социальная мотивация играет второстепенную роль. Для развития сениор-туризма предлагается улучшение инфраструктуры, внедрение программ финансовой поддержки, обеспечение безопасности, повышение качества туристских услуг и организация социальных мероприятий. Результаты исследования вносят вклад в развитие регионального туризма, повышение туристской активности сениор-аудитории и расширение научных исследований в сфере туризма.

Ключевые слова: сениор-туризм, социально-экономические особенности, Туркестанская область, факторы участия в туризме, туристская инфраструктура, финансовая поддержка, социальная мотивация.