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"The Senior Tourism" in Russia: the Study of Motivation and Satisfaction Customers

Olga NIKITINA¹

Abstract

In the study, we carried out a street survey, the objective being to identify the needs of older people in cultural and recreational activities. The results, based on a convenience sample of 195 people aged 65 years and older. The survey involved older people from St. Petersburg and guests of the city. Our study showed that the majority of older people want to lead an active life, to gain additional knowledge and skills to master new technologies, to communicate, to fill life with events, get positive emotions. Surprising: when conducting a sociological survey respondents did not put deterioration in the financial position to retire in the first place among their problems. It was found that older people are easier to adapt to a worse financial situation than to constant psychological stress, loneliness. Loneliness is what worries people today. This is a powerful destabilizing factor affecting health and the psycho-emotional state. In this regard, it is possible to offer a number of promising products that use the technology of tourism and recreation for older people: educational technology, technology museum, creative educational and cultural technology; technology volunteer activities; social entrepreneurship. Development of specialized cultural and educational tours for the consumer segment "the senior tourism" on the basis of the above technologies will help an older person to engage actively in public life and to keep up with modern life, using his full potential and internal reserves. The paper gives examples of the best Russian cultural practices in the segment "the senior tourism". The paper contains proposals for the managerial implications for product development and marketing to the market "senior tourism".

Keywords: *Senior tourism; Aging population; Consumer behavior; Motivation customers; Satisfaction customers.*

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1. Introduction

Continuous changes in the worlds' community are connected with processes of a sociocultural exchange, external and internal migration. Achievements of scientific and technological progress in the sphere of medical technologies and informational service have a strong influence on society's social structure of many countries, creating new active social and demographic groups of consumers which determine the development of city infrastructure, services industries, new segments of the tourist market.

According to expert estimates there will be 9 billion people on the Earth by 2050, 2 billion of which will be at the age of 60 years and over. Over 60 population will be larger than the under-15 population. And about 80% of world's older people will live in industrially developed countries (UN, 2002). Worldwide, the share of people aged 65 or over is expected to move up to 16% by 2030 from 11% in 2010. (UNDSA, 2012). Among countries with fast-ageing societies there are European countries, especially Italy, Germany, Bulgaria, Great Britain, as well as China, India, Japan, the United States (Kevin Kinsella and David R. Phillips, 2005).

Expected demographic changes directly affect the formation of new national and international tourist markets segments, in response to requests from increasing socio-demographic groups of consumers aged 65 and over (G. Bagus Rai Utama, N. Darma Putra, M. Suradnya, 2014).

The problem of ageing population is extremely urgent for Russia. In 2014, the number of older people in Russia amounted to 33.7 million or 23.6% of the total population. Moreover, the share of the elderly population is about 28.7% in some regions of central Russia. The share of older people in Saint Petersburg is 24.4% (FSSS, 2015). It is important to note that the number of working pensioners in Russia is increasing annually (it's about 40% according to preliminary data of Federal State Statistics Service (FSSS) for 2015), that raises to some extent the purchasing power and diversifies needs of the elderly population, including fields of leisure, recreation and tourism.

Thus, the increasing socio-demographic group of population at the age of 65 and over in contemporary society, including Russia, acts as a powerful generator of new requirements and factors of the tourist market development and at the same time as a generator of new

challenges and new opportunities in today's society. So, many hotels and tourist companies, assessing the prospect of increasing number of older people, are beginning to prepare special tourist products to a new «the senior tourism» segment.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the consumers of «the senior tourism» segment, to identify sociocultural preferences and needs, to assess the capabilities and features of this segment, and to consider the best practices in Russia.

2. Research methodology

An empirical object of the study is a socio-demographic group of Russian society at the age of 65 and over. This social group was selected on the basis of age, criteria of social identity, and involvement in social life of Saint Petersburg. The groups' identification was carried out by an iterative method. The empirical sample corresponds to the socio-demographic characteristics of the parent population. In the first phase the social group was formed according to features theoretically justified above, then the groups' "social portrait" was built. The total sample is 105 people 65 to 81 years old, which is the group "65+".

The main research method was the survey in the form of questioning. Developed methodological tools have included elements of scaling (Likert scale, Guttman scale), a technique of free association, expert assessments. Content and prototypical analyses were also used. The problem of multi-level comprehensive analysis of submissions was solved through multi-stage research; by means of qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods.

3. Results and discussion

Within the sociological research we conducted a written survey of the target socio-demographic group "65+". The aim of the first phase of our study was to identify needs of older people in social and cultural activities. The sample consisted of 105 people aged 65 and older. Respondents were residents and guests of St. Petersburg.

The analysis of questionnaires allowed us to structure the types of sociocultural activities of the elderly in a large city, such as St. Petersburg. Among the most popular activities are watching TV (72%),

reading books (58%), communicating with friends (46%) and gardening (37%).

The detailed analysis of older Russians preferences in sociocultural activities is presented in figure 1 (see figure 1).

Answering the question about the interest in additional knowledge and skills acquiring, 71% of respondents noted that they would like:

- to learn how to use the computer, computer software and Internet;
- to learn economic, financial and legal sciences;
- to learn the basics of entrepreneurship;
- to develop vocal skills and creative abilities,
- to get medical and psychological knowledge (to help themselves and their friends);
- to learn landscape design;
- to attend open lectures on modern directions of the society development for improving the mental outlook and erudition.

Thus, becoming retirees the older people have enough leisure time, and want to use it with benefits for themselves and their relatives.

35% of respondents were planning a trip in the survey period, 20% of them planned to visit relatives, 15% decided to travel alone.

The survey allowed identifying the next reasons that prevent respondents to obtain additional knowledge and skills:

- physical limits and age (34 %);
- lack of awareness (18 %);
- lack of money (12 %);
- lack of free time (18 %);
- difficulties in acquiring knowledge (9 %).

Only 18 % of the respondents said that they had no problems in obtaining new knowledge.

Fig. 1. The analysis of older Russians' preferences in sociocultural activities

Answering the question about activities should be offered to people aged "65+", the respondents suggested the following:

- to organize more concerts in the daytime;
- to develop the one-day tourism for older people;
- to offer short term (2-3 days) city tours for seniors;
- to involve older people in all sorts of events (they want to share their knowledge (in cooking, knitting, sewing, etc.);
- to organize the chess, checkers, backgammon, bingo, dominoes tournaments;
- to create more clubs;
- to develop thematic tours for older people;
- to increase the number of small exhibitions in convenient places, for example, neighbouring districts (almost all older people negatively reacted to visiting large exhibition centres);
- to establish schools and leisure centres for the elderly;
- to organize open lectures, scientific seminars and excursions;
- to create mixed age clubs for the best continuity of generations.

Respondents noted that they would like to receive current information about the planned or already organized sociocultural activities in the city.

It is important that 58% of respondents indicated that special programs for older people should be more accessible in financial terms. It was argued, first of all, by the availability of sufficient free time and the wish to consume more sociocultural services in St. Petersburg.

The respondents were also asked to answer the question: if they participate actively in specialized events for the older people held by the city administration – 60 % responded - «Yes», 40 % - «No». On the specifying question: “What does stop you to participate in these activities?” - many of the respondents wrote the passivity, lack of suitable company, age and poor health.

The survey investigated opinions of older people about the impact of traveling on their emotional comfort. 100% of respondents believed that a travel planning gives hope, improves emotional state, increases vitality and interest in life. However, only 35% of respondents were willing to travel long distance.

The question, "What difficulties do you fear when planning a travel and during the travel?", was answered: own passivity, don't know where to go (the fear of being cheated) (60%), transportation problems (40 %); think that there are age limits for travel (60%); financial difficulties (25%); the state of health does not allow to leave for a long time or to change the climate zone (20 %) (Figure 2.).

Thus, our survey showed that the majority of older Russians want to lead an active life, to gain additional knowledge and skills, to master new technologies, to communicate, to fill the life with events and to get positive emotions.

Surprisingly, the respondents of the sociological survey did not put deterioration of financial position during retirement in the first place among their problems. It was found that older people are easier to adapt to a worse financial situation than to constant psychological stress, loneliness. The majority of respondents indicated loneliness as a major destabilizing factor, which affect on the health and the emotional state.

A number of international studies investigate the possibility of using online communities as a factor of virtual compensation for the lonely older people's communication to involve them in active social and cultural life (G. Nimrod, 2012). The review authors showed that tourism is the subject of wide discussion in online communities for the elderly. The main topics in online communities the researchers structured into three main categories: 'Practical information exchange',

'Search for contacts', and 'Travel stories'. The authors of the review suppose that online communities are an effective resource for the "senior tourism" development, because "they provide a sphere for expressing age-related issues, which are probably less discussed in other online forums" (G. Nimrod, 2012).

Fig.2. Difficulties in travel planning perceived by older people

In the second phase of our survey the following questions were included in the questionnaire: "Do you have your own computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone or other means of Internet communication?" 80% of respondents answered that they didn't not have their own communicators, however, 63% of respondents noted that they had the means of connecting to the Internet in the family (living with children and grandchildren). 15% wrote in questionnaire that they had their own means of connecting to the Internet, other respondents answered that they did not use Internet.

The questionnaire also included questions regarding sources of information on cultural, leisure and tourist activities. So, the sources of information, which were indicated by older people as the preferred sources to obtain information about planned sociocultural activities in the city were television (69 %), local newspapers, primarily-free (64 %) and radio (45%). Such contemporary information resources as e-mail,

social networks and Internet advertising were actual only for 5,5 % of respondents.

The question about the social networks for communication put the majority of respondents in difficulty, as they didn't use Internet often and didn't feel any needs for virtual communication. Almost all respondents answered that they felt the necessity for real companionship and participation in interesting leisure activities.

4. Review of sociocultural activities, organized for older people in cities of Russia

We have analysed the composition of services, provided by social and recreational centres for older people in major Russian centres (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Vologda, Perm, Cheboksary, Novosibirsk, and others.) Among the most commonly used technologies and activities, we have identified the following:

1. Sport and health technology. It is used for physiotherapy exercises, breathing exercises, yoga for seniors section, table tennis, chess, Nordic walking.

2. Recreational and health technology provides the activity of clubs «The Ecological Path», «The Path of Health», excursions along ecological paths in national parks and natural reserves, one-day tours to suburban woodlands "With backpack" (for picking berries, mushrooms, nuts, medicinal herbs etc.), photo hunting tours, excursions for nature lovers with elements of yoga and bioenergy, which are popular among elder people.

3. Religious technology is the basis of religious meetings, specially organized religious holidays, Sunday schools, pilgrimage tours. Sunday schools for older and disabled people were set up in some Russian cities. The purpose of such schools is to unite believers who need communication, psychological and moral support, emotional balance restoring.

Pilgrimage two- or three-days tours (usually to Orthodox shrines), organized at a relatively low cost, are in demand among the elderly.

The most popular destinations in the European part of Russia are Diveyevo (Nizhny Novgorod Region), Vologda, Murom, Vladimir-Suzdal, Kostroma, Sergiyev Posad, Valdai, Novgorod, Pskov. Longer pilgrimage tours to Crimea last up to 7 days. Senior tourists visit such

sacred places as Tauric Chersonese - where the baptism of Rus was begun in 988, Tauris - where Andrew the Apostle and Slavic educators Cyril and Methodius preached.

4. Social technology aimed at providing the disabled and all needy elder people with necessary assistance.

As a popular activity we can note "mini clubs at home ". They are meetings, organized for older and disabled citizens (who use home-based care services), compactly living in the same microdistrict, for the purpose of recreation and social interaction. Events "My age is my wealth" are often held. These are evenings of memories, where everyone has an opportunity to tell about his life, to listen to songs of his youth.

5. Information and communication technology is used by activity clubs "grandmother online", "grandfather online", and dating clubs for the elderly. Such clubs relate to teaching older people of how to use PC, tablets, smartphones, Internet, social networks to increase the socialization of the older generation.

Moreover, the "virtual tourism" clubs with video screenings of tourist destinations and their attractions are created to promote domestic tourism. Organizers of such clubs make comments on the accommodation possibility for senior tourists, instruct the club members to book a hotel and air or rail tickets, explain the legal basis of a tour purchase and travel insurance.

6. Creative development technology contributes mainly the development of traditional crafts and folklore in the city, that allows supporting its authenticity as a tourist destination (O. Nikitina, O.Akimova, 2013).

This kind of technology is used in the next activities:

- handicrafts and fine art. Along with usual kinds of crafts like knitting and crocheting knitting, embroidery, some modern trends as decoupage, origami, felting, patchwork are presented. Organization of creative meetings and exhibitions where older participants exhibit their works of art;

- cookery – cooking clubs, food lovers clubs, master classes on cooking, culinary competitions.

- dance and music – vocal and dance clubs, on the base of which sometimes the ensembles are formed;

- poetry, theatre, cinema – workshops related to literature, poetry and theatre; theatre lovers clubs, which allow their members to visit

theatres at discounted prices. Cinema clubs – clubs united older fans of retro cinema;

7. Game technology is developed in board games, socializing games for elderly, computer games (after special courses), folk games, dedicated to the celebration of Maslenitsa (Cheesefare Week), Easter, Ivan Kupala Day;

8. Educational technology – lectures on legal and economic issues, medicine, healthy lifestyle, language courses, courses of floral design, etc. In Vologda, for example, there is a University of the third age, where retired students attend lectures on jurisprudence, gardening and computer technologies.

9. Sociocultural, exhibition and tourism technologies. It's held a lot of exhibitions, fairs of interest, such as "Healthy Life", "Active Ageing" and others for the category of "65+" in St. Petersburg. Fairs "The Russian World" and "The Orthodoxy" present products of monastic printing houses and workshops, products of Russian life, icons, bee products, etc.

Also, it's offered many thematic excursions related to historical royal personages (Peter I, Catherine the Great, Elizabeth, Paul I), renowned architects, poets and writers (F. Dostoyevsky, A. Pushkin, N. Gogol, A. Akhmatova, A. Blok et al.) who lived and worked in St. Petersburg; excursions to places of military glory "The City of Naval Glory", "Siege of Leningrad"; excursions to holy places "Visiting St. Xenia of St. Petersburg", "Temples of St. Petersburg", "Orthodox shrines."

In many cities of Russia sociocultural activities for senior segment are organized not only by Centers of Social Protection, but also by some museums, theatres, national parks, sanatoria, tourist agencies, volunteer organizations.

As the most interesting and creative practices we identify the following:

1. The older people involving in entrepreneurial activities. One of the most popular Internet-portal among older artistic persons in St. Petersburg is livemaster.ru "The Craft Masters' Fair ". Creative people, artists, craftsmen have an opportunity to create their personal presentation pages on this portal, display their unique handmade products (paintings, lace, scarves, mittens, clay toys and utensils, Russian

dolls, felt boots, etc.) for online sales, participate in relevant trade fairs organized with the support of this project.

Similar projects have been developed in other cities of Russia, for example, in Vologda, Kirov, Tula, Orenburg.

2. Organization of gastronomic festivals, exhibitions and fairs. A new pilot project "St. Petersburg's Cuisine" was launched in St. Petersburg in 2014.

The objective of the project was to collect recipes for favourite dishes of citizens in different historical periods. So a special section where citizens asked to send recipes worthy, in their opinion, to participate in the project was created on the official site of The Committee for Entrepreneurship and Consumer Market Development. Anyone have an opportunity to cook himself according to these recipes, evaluate the taste, and vote for his favourite one. It is planned to involve actively older people in this activity. Today some project recipes have already received the author's name such as "Cutlets from Petrovna", "Salted Vegetables Assortment from Granny Agatha". Many restaurants of St. Petersburg plans to present new dishes of the project "St. Petersburg's cuisine" within the traditional spring gastronomic festival, and to invite the authors of these recipes for degustation.

3. Creating of co-working centers (free of charge or for a nominal fee) for the elderly. This direction of a social activity is supported by city libraries. They engage artists-volunteers to realize this project. For example, the project "Open Studios - a co-working course "Garden in the City" for lovers of gardening and landscape design" was launched in St. Petersburg. This course includes lectures on ornamental plants and plant health care technologies, master classes on landscape design, trips to the plant nursery for studying and selection of plants, mini landscape competitions, such as "Garden in Miniature" (in terrarium, on the window-sill, balcony, etc.).

5. Conclusion

Due to the annual growth of the older population in Russia, there is a need to consider this category of citizens as an original specific consumer segment of sociocultural and tourist services in a big city.

The sociological study of the socio-demographic segment "65+", conducted by the authors in Saint Petersburg, allowed to reveal a high social activity among the majority of respondents, their interest in

acquiring new knowledge and skills, especially in IT-technologies, law, medicine and art. The passivity of the other survey participants is mainly determined by a sense of loneliness, the lack of company, the deterioration of mental health.

The analysis of activities preferred by older Russians and their proposals on social, cultural and tourist events has allowed the authors to generate a list of technologies that can later be used in the development of tourism potential of a city or region, and the organization of services for “the senior tourism” segment. The development of specialized programs of leisure, creative cultural practices, city tours for «the senior tourism» segment on the basis of these technologies should help an older person to be actively involved in the public life and to keep up with the flow of modern life, using all his potential and inner reserves.

The «senior tourism» segment is still in the stage of modernization in our country. However, creative practices of sociocultural services for older people in various cities of Russia, which were considered in the article, show a great potential for the domestic «senior tourism» development.

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The sphere of interest is gender studies in tourism, the senior tourism, medical tourism, accessible tourism for disabled people, new technologies in tourism