

## **Perceived Risk Influencing Ageing Tourists Travel Intention: Moderating Effect of Gender**

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The ageing population will be growing rapidly. Over the next three decades, the global number of older persons is projected to be more than double, reaching over 1.5 billion persons in 2050 (United Nations, 2019). As a result of this population surge it is anticipated that the elderly has great market potential and economic significance for the hospitality and tourism industry. The market segment of ageing tourists can be considered as an ideal target market not only because of the size and purchasing power but also because of demographic and social forecasts that it will continue to grow in numbers. Recognising this market potential, the tourism industry has tended to focus on developing competitive business and marketing strategies to target this group particularly the baby boomers. Although travel is an exciting affair and its prospect for growth in ageing population is very promising, the influence of perceived risk on senior tourist behaviour should not be ignored. For this segment, making travel decisions is not an easy task as there are many factors to be considered, amongst others, health and well-being, physical condition, time, and financial status. Additionally, due to the intangible nature of tourism service where customers find unfeasible to evaluate confidently even after consumption makes travelling a risky affair. When analysing the behaviour of senior travelers, many scholars have looked at the impact of perceived risk to determine their behavioural patterns. Furthermore, while several other studies have discussed gender differences in tourism, however, it is observed that there is a lack of research on gender-specific concerns in examining the relationship between perceived risk and travel intention of ageing tourists. Hence, this study attempts to investigate the effect of gender on perceived risk and travel intention. Survey was administered through both self-administered (face-to-face) and an online survey. A total of 402 Malaysians participated in this study of which 47.3% were males and 52.7% were females. Majority of the respondents were older seniors (60 years and above) whereas only 48% of them were young seniors (55 to 59 years old). Based on path analysis, result of this study contributes to the existing body of tourism knowledge in two ways. First, this research confirmed the relationship of perceived risk and travel intention of ageing tourists. The second major finding is the unveiling of gender differences having a moderating effect on perceived risk and travel intention. Interestingly, the result of this study indicated that females' travel intention is higher than male when perceived risk is high. Hence, in explaining the ageing tourists travel intention, this study demonstrated the benefits of analysing travel propensity for men and women separately given the noticeably different

patterns of travel intention between them. Learning about the interests and activities of potential visitors from a gendered perspective is vital to the planning and marketing of tourism products or services.

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