



Anna Dudon¹, Małgorzata Bogusz¹✉

¹University of Agriculture in Cracow, Poland

SOCIALLY ACTIVE SENIORS AS A POTENTIAL GROUP FOR DEVELOPMENT OF LOW SEASON TOURISM

Abstract. Average life expectancy becomes longer every year. This is why the seniors are a growing group of people with more and more capital available for use. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to assess their actual potential for the development of low-season tourism. The research was conducted between September and November 2018 using a questionnaire administered to the target group. The respondents were selected based on purposeful sampling, with the criteria being age (over 60 years old), place of residence (Małopolskie voivodeship) and consent to take part in the survey. Another decisive factor for inclusion or exclusion was the activity of a person (for instance as part of a Farmers' Wives Association). The research sample is not representative for the population, and therefore this study is a preliminary and reconnaissance survey. Further research may be carried out in other groups (for instance, with inactive people). The research sample included a group of 105 respondents aged 60+ living in the Małopolskie voivodeship. Empirical data was analyzed; descriptive, graphical and tabular methods were used to achieve the goal defined above. One of the findings is that the reason why people do not travel frequently is not necessarily the lack of financial resources. Determining the non-financial factors which prevent people from traveling could be the objective for a more in-depth research to be carried out in the future.

Keywords: active seniors, tourism, tourism market

INTRODUCTION

Highly developed countries are affected by demographic ageing (Zasępa, 2014), a process which may be considered both a threat and a challenge to the society. The ageing population is rarely perceived as a natural matter of course which should be accepted. The elderly are a rapidly growing group, and currently make up over 23% of the total Polish population. A similar situation is

experienced in Western Europe (Markiewicz-Patkowska et al., 2018). It is of vital importance to correctly define the population surveyed as there is a risk of inconsistency. The literature uses the term "senior" when referring to people aged 50+, 55+, 60+ or 65+. If so, who can be called a senior? Górna J. (2015) defines it as the age group of 50+ since, as she notes, "the term 50+ is used in publications of the Central Statistical Office and government documents". According to Śniadek J. (2007), it is

This research was financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Poland.

✉ PhD Małgorzata Bogusz, Department of Social Policy and Agricultural Extension, Institute of Economic and Social Science, University of Agriculture in Cracow, al. Mickiewicza 21, 31-120 Kraków, Poland, e-mail: malgorzata.bogusz@urk.edu.pl

impossible to unambiguously indicate the age of becoming a senior. While this can be based on cultural, health, economic and social criteria, the answer to this question is not obvious. The decision would need to be made on a case-by-case basis. For research purposes, authors who deal with issues related to the elderly identify a factor they believe should be taken into account, and consistently survey respondents who meet that criterion.

Average life expectancy becomes longer every year. In 2005, it was 70.8 years for men and 79.4 years for women. In 2010, it reached 72.1 years and 80.6 years, respectively. In 2015, the average life expectancy was 73.6 years for men and 81.6 years for women. In 2017, it stood at 74 years and 81.8 years, respectively (GUS, 2018). When it comes to the difference in life expectancy between men and women, the situation is similar in other countries. This results from the excess mortality rate among men which may be caused by performing more physically demanding work or not taking good care of their health. It was noticed that in the recent years more and more women have been attending preventive medical check-ups which made it possible to detect diseases and start treatments. Due to decreasing number of births and rising life expectancy, Poland can be expected to continue being an ageing country, as widespread ageing of the population will become more pronounced (Knapik and Kowalska, 2014). In 2050, the proportion of people aged over 65 will increase to approximately 33%, and the share of people aged over 80 will exceed 10% (GUS, 2015).

It should be noted that activity among seniors becomes increasingly popular and widely accepted. There are many options for an active lifestyle. The elderly have a huge capital which is not fully tapped into (Bogusz and Ostrowska, 2016). Hence, the purpose of this paper is to assess their actual potential for the development of low-season tourism.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the first part, the method of library search query was used to analyze the literature on senior policy and tourism. Also used were popular and scientific studies as well as reports by the Central Statistical Office.

A quantitative method was used in the empirical part. The research was conducted between September and November 2018 using a questionnaire administered to the target group. The questions about the tourist

activity of seniors had closed answers. The respondents were selected based on purposeful sampling, with the criteria being age (over 60 years old), place of residence (Małopolskie voivodeship) and consent to take part in the survey. Another decisive factor for inclusion or exclusion was the activity of a person (for instance as part of a Farmers' Wives Association). The research sample included a group of 105 respondents aged 60+ living in the Małopolskie voivodeship. Most respondents were members of Farmers' Wives Associations or attended a University of the Third Age or other activating classes. The research sample is not representative for the population, and therefore this study is a preliminary and reconnaissance survey. Further research may be carried out in other groups (for instance, with inactive people). It would be interesting to compare them. Empirical data was analyzed; descriptive, graphical and tabular methods were used to achieve the goal defined above.

According to a division suggested by Babbie E. (2004), the purpose of research may be to "exploration, description and explanation" (Babbie, 2004). The research goal of this paper can be defined as exploration and searching for information about the seniors' views on tourist trips. New questions, topics and issues emerge that were not addressed in this survey, and therefore there is room for future research. Preliminary examinations were used to explore the issues related to seniors' activity, which provide a basis for further, extended research among both socially active and inactive seniors.

SENIOR TOURISM IN POLAND

In 2016, "nearly every second household in Poland had at least one elderly person aged 60 or more, and every fourth household consisted exclusively of elderly people" (GUS, 2017).

Having the above in mind, actions should be planned right now to avoid discussing the adverse effects of these developments and to tap into the potential of the elderly. All the more so since, as noted by Śniadek J. (2007), "in most analyses and commentaries referring to this phenomenon the negative aspects of growing old and related expenses are emphasised". The seniors' active influence on economic development is underestimated. They have healthy bodies and money which they can use to access services that suit their needs. It is important to recognize and address their expectations and preferences by offering tailored goods and services. Elderly

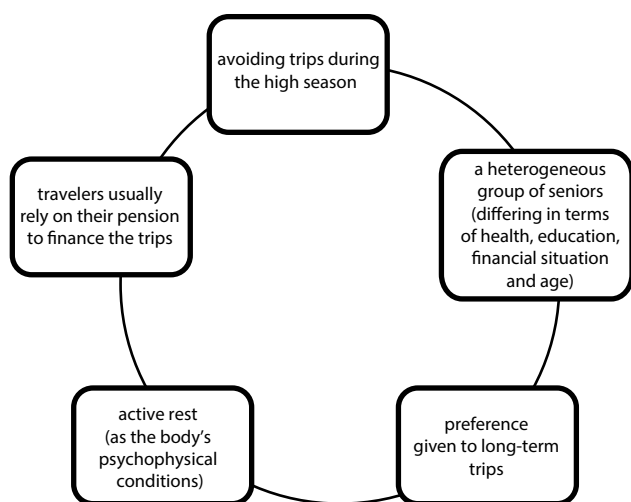


Fig. 1. Factors specific to senior tourism
Source: based on Januszewska (2017).

people are observed to be increasingly active in the tourist market. Persons described as seniors are usually not professionally active anymore, but they do have regular income and time to access services adapted to their requirements (Górna, 2015). In order to develop an interesting offer for seniors, the operator should first explore

the preferences of this group of customers. Selected aspects of this issue are presented in Figure 1.

It can be noted that the decision about engaging in tourist activity depends on the health condition and physical abilities of the individual. Nevertheless, the offering should also be adjusted to those seniors who describe their condition as not fully physically fit. They feel the need to travel but require a dedicated service offering. For the operators, this is an opportunity to fill a gap in the tourism activity of seniors and to earn incomes by extending their offering and make it more accessible to a larger group of interested customers. Januszewska M. (2017) notes that seniors demonstrate the lowest levels of tourist activity of the entire Polish population. However, she also believes that demographic changes will drive the seniors' interest in tourism (particularly in low season), high-quality services and health-promoting trips.

Grzelak-Kostulska et al. (2011, after: Mokras-Grabowska, 2010 and Górka, 2010) believe that seniors can help reduce the seasonality of tourism. They seek low-season offerings which contribute to extending the season for tourist operators.

The conclusion from the analysis of Table 1 is that – contrary to what the authors cited above claim – the tourist activity of old-age and disability pensioners followed

Table 1. Tourist activity of old-age and disability pensioners' households

Year	Retirees/ Pensioners	Total households		Total leaving		Country				Abroad			
		thou- sand house- holds	per- cent of house- holds in a data group	thou- sand house- holds	per- cent of house- holds in a data group	2–4 days	5 days or more	1 day	2 days or more	thou- sand house- holds	per- cent of house- holds in a data group	thou- sand house- holds	per- cent of house- holds in a data group
2005	Retirees	3 559	100%	1 584	44.5%	843	23.7%	917	25.8%	27	0.8%	231	6.5%
	Pensioners	1 697	100%	597	35.2%	320	18.9%	345	20.3%	13	0.8%	68	4.0%
2009	Retirees	3 796	100%	1 608	42.4%	829	21.8%	941	24.8%	52	1.4%	291	7.7%
	Pensioners	1 026	100%	413	40.3%	201	19.6%	247	24.0%	0	0.0%	66	6.4%
2013	Retirees	3 666	100%	1 387	37.8%	674	18.4%	842	23%	4	0.1%	233	6.4%
	Pensioners	927	100%	333	35.9%	156	16.9%	211	22.7%	4	0.4%	54	5.9%

Source: based on GUS (2010a), pp. 108–109; GUS (2010b), pp. 103–104; GUS (2014), pp. 97–98.

a downward trend in 2005–2013. In both groups, the most frequent tourist activity was a 5-day (or longer) domestic trip, whereas a one-day international trip was the least frequent activity. In 2009, the percentage of pensioners who went on a one-day trip was 0%.

According to Central Statistical Office data (GUS, 2014), the lack of financial resources to cover travel expenses, insufficient physical fitness and health problems were the most frequently cited reasons why old-age and disability pensioners do not engage in tourist activity.

The Central Statistical Office conducted a research with the population aged 60 and older, asking them whether they went on a tourist trip in the last 12 months. According to 2015 figures, on a nationwide basis, 38.6% of respondents aged 15 or more went on a tourist trip, including 20.8% of women and 17.8% of men. They went on a domestic or international trip with at least one overnight stay for private purposes. In 2016, the percentage of women aged 60 and older who went on a tourist trip was 6.9% of the country's population aged 15 or more. The percentage of men who went on a tourist trip was 5.1%. In 2017, women and men aged 60 and older who went on a tourist trip made up 6.9% and 5.4% of the Polish population, respectively. City dwellers are the most frequent travelers (Ministerstwo..., 2016; 2017; 2018). The above information suggests that the percentage of elderly travelers in the Polish population aged 15 or more decreased between 2015 and 2016 (a 3-fold decrease for women and an almost 3.5-fold decrease for men). Between 2016 and 2017, no change was observed for women whereas the proportion of male travelers grew by 0.3 percentage points.

Parzych K. and Gotowski R. (2016) performed an analysis of Eurostat and Central Statistical Office data on differences between Poland and other European countries in tourism activity of people aged 65+. As noted by the

authors, Polish seniors travel less than their peers from other European countries. For example, the elderly population in Norway and Greece is less inclined to travel. In turn, Swedish and Swiss seniors are the most frequent travelers. As noticed by the authors, German and French citizens, for instance, are characterized by a great tendency to travel. According to the "Analysis of the spatial distribution of tourist activity", the seniors "indicates a significantly higher level of tourist attendance of this group in the affluent countries of Western and Scandinavian Europe, which is the effect of the longer average life expectancy in these countries, and on the other is determined by the much higher level of affluence of these societies. In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, analogical indicators are much lower" (Parzych and Gotowski, 2016).

FINDINGS

The research was conducted between September and November 2018 using a hardcopy questionnaire administered to the target group. The respondents were selected based on purposeful sampling, with the criteria being age (over 60 years old), place of residence (Małopolskie voivodeship), any kind of social activity, and consent to take part in the survey. The research sample included a group of 105 respondents aged 60+ living in the Małopolskie voivodeship. The research sample is not representative for the population, and therefore this study is a preliminary and reconnaissance survey. The results cover a group of 105 respondents aged 60+ living in the Małopolskie voivodeship.

The largest group of respondents were people who declared to be professionally inactive (Table 2). Both in this group and in the group of old-age pensioners with an additional income, most respondents declared not to

Table 2. Professional activity vs. frequency of traveling

Professional activity	Declaration of tourist activity							
	often		rarely		does not travel		total	
Professionally active	7	7%	4	4%	0	0%	11	11%
Retiree with additional income	9	9%	13	12%	6	5%	28	27%
Professionally inactive (a retiree/a pensioner)	27	26%	32	30%	7	7%	66	62%
Total	43	42%	49	46%	13	12%	105	100%

Source: based on own research.

Table 3. Impact of the lack of financial resources on the declaration of participating in tourism

Declaration of participating in tourism	Lack of financial resources					
	I do not suffer from the lack		I suffer from the lack		total	
I travel frequently	34	32%	9	9%	43	41%
I do not travel frequently	35	33%	14	13%	49	46%
I do not travel at all	9	9%	4	4%	13	13%
Total	78	74%	27	26%	105	100%

Source: based on own research.

be frequent travelers. The group of professionally active respondents aged 60+ made up more than 10% of the sample and had the largest number of features characteristic of frequent travelers. This could be caused by the same reasons as those revealed by Central Statistical Office data referred to above, which show that the most frequent barriers preventing seniors from traveling are insufficient financial resources or poor health.

Most people who declared not to be frequent travelers were respondents who stated that they do not lack financial resources (Table 3). Possibly, the reason for not being frequent travelers is their poor health or unwillingness to travel. The second most frequent combination was traveling frequently while not suffering from the lack of financial resources. It may be assumed that people with sufficient financial resources may use some of their funds for traveling.

After counting all the replies, it was found that the respondents were divided into two nearly equal groups of those willing and unwilling to leave their place of residence (Table 4). Slightly more than 50% of the re-

spondents willingly leave their place of residence, and 30.5% of them declare to travel frequently. On the other hand, slightly less than half of respondents reluctantly leave their place of residence, and 30% of them do not consider themselves frequent travelers. It seems obvious that the willingness to leave one's place of residence, apart from the financial needs and health status, has an impact on the decision about traveling.

The group of frequent travelers includes respondents with a net income of between PLN 1201 and PLN 1400 (Fig. 2). In the group of people who do not travel often, most replies fell within the intervals of up to PLN 800 and PLN 801 to PLN 1000. As shown in the figure above, most respondents with incomes varying in the range of PLN 1201 to PLN 1400 travel often or rarely.

Nearly 50% of respondents aged 60+ declared not to be frequent travelers (Table 5). The declarations of being a frequent traveler were mostly made by respondents aged 66–70. One possible explanation for the above is that those people have just ended their professional career and wish to actively spend their free time.

Table 4. Declaration of the willingness to leave one's place of residence vs. frequency of traveling

Declaration of tourist activity	Desire to leave one's place of residence					
	no		yes		total	
I travel frequently	11	10.5%	32	30.5%	43	41%
I do not travel frequently	32	30%	17	16%	49	46%
I do not travel at all	9	9%	4	4%	13	13%
Total	52	49.5%	53	50.5%	105	100%

Source: based on own research.

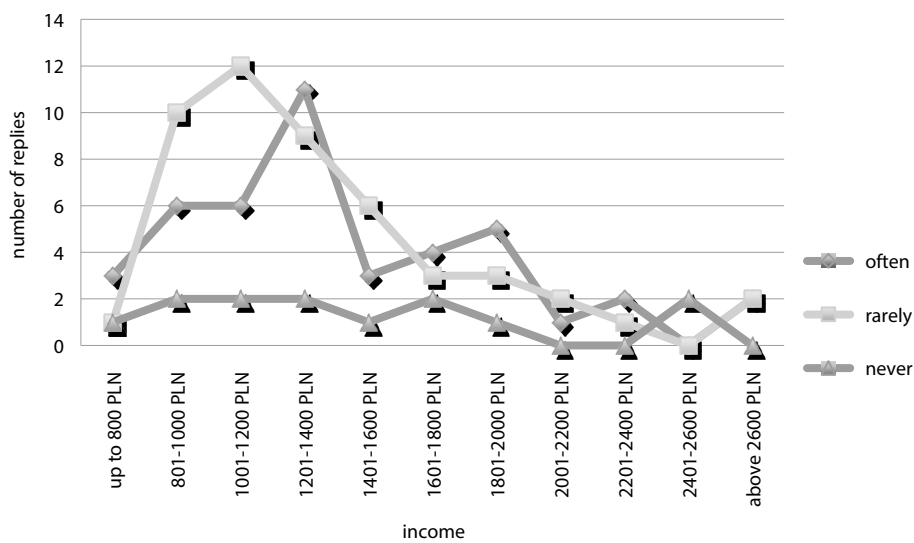


Fig. 2. Impact of income on participating in tourism
Source: based on own research.

Table 5. Impact of the respondents' age on their declaration of tourist activity

Declaration of participating in tourism	Age of the respondent										total	
	60–65 years		66–70 years		71–75 years		76–80 years		over 80 years			
often	16	15%	18	17%	9	8%	0	0	0	0	40%	43
rarely	18	17%	14	13%	4	4%	8	8%	5	5%	47%	49
does not travel	3	3%	6	6%	2	2%	2	2%	0	0	13%	13
Total	37	35%	38	36%	15	14%	10	10%	5	5%	100%	105

Source: based on own research.

SUMMARY

The seniors are a growing group which may help reduce the seasonality of tourism in Poland. However, as suggested by a literature review and the authors' own research, the elderly are not a strongly active group of tourists at the moment. This may be caused by both the lack of a dedicated tourist offering and their financial and health status.

However, this research found that the reason why elderly people do not travel frequently is not necessarily the lack of financial resources. Therefore, consideration should be given to the analysis of the tourist services market with particular focus on offerings targeted at seniors.

REFERENCES

- Babbie, E. (2004). *Badania społeczne w praktyce*. Warszawa: Wyd. Nauk. PWN.
- Bogusz, M., Ostrowska, S. (2016). Wybrane problemy polityki społecznej i zdrowotnej wobec osób starszych na poziomie lokalnym – sztuka partycypacji. *Prace Naukowe Uniw. Ekon. Wroc.*, 450, 82–90.
- Górna, J. (2015). Preferencje i aktywność turystyczna Polaków w wieku 50+. *Prace Nauk. Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Kultura Fizyczna*, t. XIV, 1, 153–166.
- Górska, E. (2010). Turystyka społeczna jako forma aktywizacji rynków turystycznych na przykładzie programów turystyki społecznej w Hiszpanii. *Acta Sci. Pol. Oeconomia*, 9(4), 133–142.

- Grzelak-Kostulska, E., Hołowiecka, B., Kwiatkowski, G. (2011). Problemy aktywności turystycznej seniorów. In: A. Stasiak (Ed.), *Perspektywy i kierunki rozwoju turystyki społecznej w Polsce* (pp. 265–279). Łódź: Wyd. WSTH.
- GUS (2010a). Turystyka i wypoczynek w gospodarstwach domowych w 2005 r. Retrieved 05.11.2018 from: https://stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/kts_turystyka_wypoczynek_w_gosp_dom_2005.pdf
- GUS (2010b). Turystyka i wypoczynek w gospodarstwach domowych w 2009 r. Retrieved 05.11.2018 from: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/kultura-turystyka-sport/turystyka/turystyka-i-wypoczynek-w-gospodarstwach-domowych-w-2009-r-,3,2.html>.
- GUS (2014). Turystyka i wypoczynek w gospodarstwach domowych w 2013 r. Retrieved from: <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/kultura-turystyka-sport/turystyka/turystyka-i-wypoczynek-w-gospodarstwach-domowych-w-2013-r-,3,3.html>.
- GUS (2015). Podstawowe informacje o rozwoju demograficznym Polski do 2014. Retrieved 02.11.2018 from: https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5468/12/5/1/podstawowe_informacje_o_rozwoju_demograficznym_polski_do_2014.pdf.
- GUS (2017). Sytuacja materialna i dochodowa gospodarstw domowych emerytów i rencistów oraz gospodarstw domowych mających w swoim składzie osoby starsze w wieku 60 lat lub więcej w 2016 r. (w świetle wyników badania budżetów gospodarstw domowych). Retrieved 05.11.2018 from: https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5486/27/1/1/sytuacja_materialna_i_dochodowa_gospodarstw_domowych_emerytow_i_rencistow_w_2016.pdf.
- GUS (2018). Przeciętne dalsze trwania życia w latach 1950–2017. Retrieved 04.11.2018 from: <http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/trwanie-zycia/trwanie-zycia-tablice,1,1.html>.
- Januszewska, M. (2017). Rozwój turystyki seniorów jako konsekwencja zmian starości demograficznej. *Prace Nauk. Uniw. Ekon. Wroc.*, 473, 257–264. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15611/pn.2017.473.23>
- Knapik, W., Kowalska, M. (2014). Zróżnicowanie obszarów wiejskich w Polsce na tle procesów społeczno-ekonomicznych i demograficznych. *Problemy Drobnych Gospodarstw Rolnych*, 1, 37–54.
- Markiewicz-Patkowska, J., Pytel S., Widawski, K., Oleśnicz, P. (2018). Turystyka senioralna w kontekście sytuacji materialnej polskich emerytów. *Ekonomiczne Problemy Turystyki*, 2(42), 99–106.
- Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (2016). Informacja o sytuacji osób starszych w Polsce za rok 2015. Retrieved 05.11.2018 from: <https://das.mpips.gov.pl/source/Informacja.pdf>
- Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (2017). Informacja o sytuacji osób starszych w Polsce za rok 2016. Retrieved 05.11.2018 from: <https://das.mpips.gov.pl/source/Informacja%20o%20sytuacji%20osb%20starszych%20w%20Polsce%20za%20rok%202016.pdf>
- Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (2018). Informacja o sytuacji osób starszych w Polsce za rok 2017. Retrieved 02.11.2018 from: https://www.gov.pl/documents/1048151/1060973/Projekt_Informacji.pdf/6fc68c39-77e8-ea20-13ee-c5508e0e67fd
- Mokras-Grabowska, J. (2010). Program „Europe Senior Tourism” – założenia, realizacja, efekty ekonomiczne. In: A. Stasiak (Ed.), *Turystyka społeczna w regionie łódzkim* (pp. 71–88). Łódź: WSTH.
- Parzych, K., Gotowski, R. (2016). Determinanty aktywności turystycznej osób starszych w Polsce na tle innych krajów europejskich. *J. Educ. Health Sport*, 6(10), 680–698. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.222763>
- Śniadek, J. (2007). Konsumpcja turystyczna polskich seniorów na tle globalnych tendencji w turystyce. In: *Gerontologia Polska*, 15, 1–2, pp. 21–30.
- Zasępa, B. (2014). Identyfikacja wyzwań w obszarze polityki społeczno-gospodarczej w Polsce w kontekście procesu starzenia się populacji. In: *Osoby starsze w przestrzeni życia społecznego*, pp. 16–31. Retrieved 16.04.2019 from: <https://rops-katowice.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Osoby-starsze-w-przestrzeni-zycia-spol.-2014>

SENIORZY JAKO POTENCJAŁ ROZWOJU TURYSTYKI POZASEZONOWEJ

Abstrakt. Z roku na rok wydłuża się średnia długość trwania życia. Dlatego też seniorzy stanowią coraz większą grupę osób, mającą coraz większy kapitał do wykorzystania. Celem opracowania była ocena seniorów jako faktycznego potencjału rozwoju turystyki pozasezonowej. Badanie przeprowadzone zostało w okresie wrzesień–listopad 2018. Narzędzie badawcze stanowił kwestionariusz ankiety, z którym badacz docierał do grupy docelowej. Dobór respondentów był celowy: decydował wiek powyżej 60 lat, województwo małopolskie jako miejsce zamieszkania oraz zgoda na udzielenie odpowiedzi w ankiecie. Jednym z czynników wyboru danej osoby do badania był fakt, że jest ona aktywna (np. jest członkiem Koła Gospodyń Wiejskich lub podobnych). Próba badawcza nie jest reprezentatywna dla całej populacji seniorów, dlatego badania te można uznać za badania wstępne i rozpoznawcze. W przyszłości mogą one zostać poszerzone o inne grupy (np. osoby, które nie są aktywne). Próba obejmowała grupę 105 respondentów w wieku 60+ zamieszkujących na obszarze województwa małopolskiego. Materiał empiryczny został poddany analizie, a do realizacji założonego celu wykorzystano metodę opisową, graficzną oraz tabelaryczną. Przeprowadzone badania wykazały, że brak udziału seniorów w podróżach nie jest zawsze spowodowany brakiem środków finansowych. Określenie powodu innego niż finansowy, dla którego seniorzy nie uczestniczą w turystyce, może być pomysłem na rozwinięcie badań w przyszłości.

Słowa kluczowe: aktywni seniorzy, turystyka, rynek usług turystycznych