

The demand for ecotourism based on age group

M-H. YU, W-S. CHANG, L-S. LU. **The demand for ecotourism based on age group with the changes of social structure for age groups and the importance of tourism.** *Gerontechnology* 2014; 13(2):316; doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.02.339.00 **Purpose** The market for tourism by aging adults is increasing. In recent years, ecotourism experiences and activities have become a favored outdoor activity by aging adults. People from 55 to 74 years of age are a relatively more active group in activities that encourage social relationships than has been true in the past¹. Nevertheless, as the physical and mental abilities of older adults decline with age, they may have greater difficulty in using technologically advanced products. Thus, this study focused on understanding the use of technological products in ecotourism by an older adult group. The fundamental purposes of the study are: (i) to analyze the proportion of older adults using technological products in ecotourism; and (ii) to explore the aging group's demands for technological products during their ecotourism activities. **Method** Based on the above goals, this study is divided into two stages. In the first stage, 46 elderly people were randomly chosen from Taiwan's intermediate elevation 'Sun Link Sea Resort' and eastern Taiwan's special ecological 'Taitung Forest Park' as well as 'Jhihben National Forest Recreation Area' to participate in a voluntary questionnaire and in-depth interviews, which focused on mobile devices and analyzed the classification of common mobile devices. The study attempted to determine which digital mobile products aging adults preferred. In the second stage, results of the first stage will be analyzed, and four elderly persons and two experts were invited for a return visit to participate as part of a focus group that will receive monetary compensation. Service design theory was used to organize the results. **Results & Discussion** The first stage of research results showed how many of the 46 aging adults carried different mobile technological products with them during ecotourism are as follows: 25%, 7%, 29% and 3% carried only a smart phone, more traditional cell phone, a digital camera, or only a tablet PC, respectively; moreover, about 6% took both smart phones and digital cameras and 3% took both smart phones and tablet PCs. The second stage research results showed that the reason older adults used technological products during ecotourism included: (i) Recording: The aging group took photos either in the form of single person or in groups to record the current situation in order to recall emotions. (ii) Safety: Devices were needed to deal with emergencies such as getting lost; (iii) Knowledge: The aging group would like to know the name, age, habit and habitat, daily life and related everyday knowledge of various species of flora and fauna; (iv) Convenience: The technological products are multifunctional and convenient for the aging group to take; (v) Sharing: Older adults wanted to share the experiences of ecotourism in order to make stronger emotional connections to the current group and also to upload information on social networks and to use overseas SNS to share their experiences. The results of this study provide information related to the goals of older ecotourists and can guide the development and design of technological products in a way that enhances their usability for older adults and encourages them to engage in future ecotourism.

Reference

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