

ZACHODNIOPOMORSKI UNIWERSYTET TECHNOLOGICZNY W SZCZECINIE

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**STATYSTYCZNA ANALIZA AKTYWNOŚCI TURYSTYCZNEJ  
SENIORÓW W POLSCE**

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# **Statistical analysis of tourist activity of seniors in Poland**

## **Summary**

One of the most important social issues affecting the modern world is that of ageing; this is especially true in Europe, including Poland. Demographic ageing has become a symbol of the twenty-first century, and there is an urgent need to pay attention to the consequences of this phenomenon over both the short and longer term. Demographic changes have wide-ranging implications for different spheres of life: they affect the dynamics and structure of production and consumption, the structure of expenditure, the labour market insurance system and social services, investments, savings, social relationships, family and lifestyle. The rising number of older people could also become an important factor in the economic growth of the tourism industry, with the positive effect of tourism on the health and well-being of older people confirmed by research. Tourism is a significant factor in the satisfying of basic biological, psychological and social needs of older people, not only by occupying free time, but also extending life expectancy.

The main aim of this work is the statistical study of the tourist activity of seniors in Poland and to define the perspectives for the development of tourist services provided to older people. The current importance of these issues and an insufficient number of studies prompted the author to undertake empirical research in this area. This work tries to answer the question of which factors have a statistically significant impact on decisions made by seniors regarding the type, duration and location of leisure travel. The research included both short-term (2–4 days) and long term (5 or more days) domestic trips, and foreign travel (of 2 or more days). The study included both the objective conditions for the participation of seniors in tourism (gender, age, education, income, household size and place of residence) and the subjective opinions and feelings of the seniors related to their preferred forms of free time activity. In addition, segmentation of senior households in Poland was carried out in relation to the level of their average spending on tourism.

The work consists of seven chapters – two theoretical and five empirical - in which the human needs that define areas of activity in different areas of life including tourism, with particular emphasis on the needs of the elderly, are described. To better recognise the reasons why people become involved in tourism, the author examined the relationships between human needs and the motives that rule them. A significant part of these chapters is devoted to the consideration of issues related to the ageing of the population which is already and is set to be one of the most important factors determining demand for tourism. In particular, the importance of activity in older people as the most effective way to lead to a change in image of the senior citizen in society as a weak, passive person, withdrawn from active life, is highlighted. In addition, the health status of seniors and its impact on life expectancy was considered.

The empirical section of the work presents and analyses the results of statistical studies on the modelling of the tourist activity of seniors. The study used binomial models, multi-dimensional analysis of the correspondence and regression trees.

The empirical analysis of tourist activity among the elderly required appropriate statistical material. Two main sources of statistical data were used: the first of these was information concerning the budgets of households, including the size and structure of household income and expenditure, and the second was the results of a survey conducted by the Polish Statistical Office (CSO), "Tourism and leisure in the household" – a study on tourism, conducted on a subsample of household budgets. The collective results of these analyses are presented in synthetic form; however, they do not contain detailed information about tourist activities nor, related to this, expenditure in different groups of households, including those of seniors. For the study of the activity of this group of households, an unidentifiable collection of data on tourist activities and their budgets was used. Both sources of data were provided against payment by the CSO.

In the summary, conclusions from the research were presented in synthetic form. Full implementation of the research objectives made it possible to confirm the main hypothesis and all the detailed hypotheses.

The results of the study showed that the level of tourist activity among seniors is the result of the following impact factors: economic (income, material conditions), demographic (age, marital status, type of biological household, place of residence) and social (education).

The level of expenditure on leisure travel was dependent on the per capita income of the household, the type of travel, the place of residence and the level of education completed by the head of the household.

The research showed that financial difficulties were the main reason for the lack of participation in domestic and foreign travel, with the result that, in the overall hierarchy of needs, consumer expenditure on tourism is limited. Despite their financial difficulties, some people do not forget travel; however, they choose low-cost types of tourist activity (such as visiting relatives or friends), or reduce their spending or the duration of their trips in order to keep tourism as a permanent part of their lifestyle.

We can, however, assume that in the future, the needs and aspirations of Polish seniors with regard to tourism will be similar to those of U.S. and European consumers. Despite a predicted decline in seniors' per capita purchasing capacity and gradual extension of the retirement age to 67 years, global demand for tourist services will show an upward trend. This will be the result of the rapidly rising numbers of seniors in the population, related to the retirement of the post-war baby boom as well as to the continuance of their pre-retirement behaviour in terms of tourism. This will be the reason for a significant increase in the proportion of older people participating in tourism.