



Enlightening Tourism.

A Pathmaking Journal



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BOOK REVIEW:

Patterson, I. (2017). Tourism and Leisure Behaviour in an Ageing World. Boston: CABI.

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Keith Dewar

University of New Brunswick – Saint John (Canada)

kdewar@unbsj.ca

The arrival of the aging "Baby Boomer" generation in the west has, and will continue to have a profound effect on the travel/tourism market over the next few decades. "Tourism and Leisure Behaviour in an Ageing World" is a second edition of the 2006, "Growing Older: Tourism and Leisure Behaviour of Older Adults". Two of the original nine chapters have been updated, and three new ones added; Cruise, Culture and Heritage, and Health and Wellness tourism. As well, case studies that are included in each chapter have been revised. The new edition provides a good historical introduction to the "senior" market, which as the author points out can be defined in any number of ways but refers generally to individuals over the age of 55.

The format of the chapters is a bit different than the usual textbook. Periodic "discussion" sections are provided throughout each chapter to punctuate and summarize important sections. The case examples are interwoven into the fabric of the chapter.

The first four chapters provide general background, including: needs of older travellers; demographics, motivation, and technological trends related to seniors. This is followed by two chapters that summarise specific types of travel common

among seniors. The next five chapters examine the different types of travel markets, and discuss how these markets differ for older travellers. Topics include: package tours, educational, health and wellness, heritage, and cruise tourism. The last chapter gives a summary and recommendations.

The book has value as an introduction to tourism and the senior market, however much of the research is dated. A review of the references shows most of the material used predates 2010, with 85% being before that date; this includes tables and graphs used as evidence for the difference between senior, and other demographics. This historic perspective is useful in understanding the background to the present fast-changing market. The new chapters provide some additional information; but are short and lack the detail that is provided in the original chapters. More detail and comparative research particularly including countries other than Australia and the US might provide interesting and important additions to the book. Also, the reader could be reminded with greater clarity about the rapid change in demographics, technology, and management of senior travel.

This reviewer also found that much of the research was somewhat superficial, and lacked depth that would be useful to senior undergraduates and graduate students. A greater focus on the target market would have been helpful. It is not as clear as it could be what separates the older traveller from other demographics.

As well, longer life span and increasing mobility of individuals also means increasing degrees of infirmity both mental and physical when travelling. A discussion of this and how the tourism industry is responding would have helped clarify the "differences" that are discussed in chapters 7 thru 11. Other issues not mentioned include the fact that many older travellers are very sophisticated. Reviewer's observations have noted a number of "corrections" given to tour guides that really don't have the correct facts. This can be a challenge for the industry, as can the fact that older travellers are often very experienced and are less tolerant of poor or misleading tourism services. It is also puzzling that the author refers to the senior market as a "niche" market ... when approximately 20% of the market in North American and Europe fits this category.

In summary, the book has value for students in introductory level courses, and those interested in the history and background to the present expanding market for senior travel.