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Segmenting the senior travel market by means of travel motivation - Insights from a mature market (Switzerland)

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Abstract

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Keywords

Segmenting, senior, travel, market, means, travel, motivation, Insights, from, mature, market, Switzerland

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**SEGMENTING THE SENIOR TRAVEL MARKET
BY MEANS OF TRAVEL MOTIVATION-
INSIGHTS FROM A MATURE MARKET - SWITZERLAND**

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ABSTRACT

The paper reports on the segmentation of Swiss senior travellers on the basis of their travel motivation. Switzerland is considered a mature market which is why this country serves as a role model for future travel behaviour. In contrast to previous studies, which identified up to six clusters, the results reveal that in the case analysed there are three clusters. Two of them partially represent a life cycle concept: TIME HONOURED BON VIVANTS (phase 1; towards the end of a professional life), and GRIZZLED EXPLORERS (phase 2; from the start of a retired life). These two segments are complemented by RETRO TRAVELLERS, which incorporate many characteristics of the previous two but differentiate themselves in terms of education as well professional positions.

Key words: Senior Travel Market, Segmentation, Travel Motivation

INTRODUCTION

Most countries in the world experience the phenomenon of an aging society. Since 1950 the number of people aged 65 or older has tripled from 130 million to 419 million (about 6.9 percent of global population) in the year 2000 (Kinsella & Velkoff 2001). This demographic shift will continue. In the year 2050, the United Nations estimate that world wide, every fifth person will be over 60 years and every sixth person will be over 65 years or older (UN 2001). Long-term population projections in Switzerland - the case of this paper - demonstrate the growth numbers of seniors to be from 1.1 million of today to 1.5 - 1.9 million, thereby indicating that one fourth of the Swiss population will be 65 years or older in 2050 (SFSO 2006). This rapid growth in senior population is caused by the process of double aging of the population. On one hand, the number of seniors is increasing due to the fact that the post World War II baby boomers who have fewer children than previous generations begin to reach the age 65. On the other hand, average life expectancy has extended due to progresses in medical treatments and pharmaceuticals. Moreover, the extended life expectancy also owes its gratitude to development of economic wealth and social security. This situation will dominate societies, countries and economies throughout the next century and, therefore, the senior market has been recognised as one of the most important consumer segment in general (Schaffnit-Chatterjee 2007, Schewe 1990) and in tourism in particular (Chesworth 2006, Nickerson 2000, Reece 2004, Shoemaker 1989).

Apart from the substantial numbers, the increased financial means and time flexibility seems to make this consumer segment attractive to tourism (Jang & Wu 2006). In addition to this latent market potential other factors, specifically relevant to tourism, supports this notion of attractiveness. For instance studies on the development of tourism demand in Germany show that the net travel propensity of people between 60 and 69 years of age lies at 76% and those of over 70 years lies at 63%. The developments of the travel propensity between 1972 and 2003, within these two segments, have increased to 85% respectively 91%, above average (Lohmann et al. 2004). Moreover, findings from the Swiss Travel Market demonstrate a net travel propensity of 82% of people who are 65 years or older (Bieger & Laesser 2005). Considering the growth of the senior market together with an annual 5% increase of its travel propensity from today until the year 2050, it can be concluded that travel demand of seniors will increase more than threefold in this time period. From this evidence it is crucial for incoming and outgoing marketers to understand seniors' travel behaviour. However, as Jang and Wu (2006, 308) report "an examination of the literature reveals that most previous studies on senior travellers focused on descriptive issues". These included socio-economic variables, health status, life transitions and behavioural patterns of senior travellers analysing modes of travel, seasons of travel, length of vacation, preference of destinations and accommodations, popularity of activities as well as booking and expenditure patterns. Though, as various authors argue that travel motivations are a determining part of travel behaviour (Goossens 2000, Gnoth 1997, May et al. 2001) and, therefore, one of the most effective techniques to segment travellers (Dolnicar 2002, Middleton 1994), this paper reports on the segmentation of the senior travel market by the means of travel motivations.

SEGMENTATION BY SENIOR'S TRAVEL MOTIVATION

Motives are the mental preparation for human activities and linked to an individual level of optimal arousal (Iso-Ahola 1980). And since travel motivations are the „socio-psychological motives that predispose the individual to travel“ (Yuan & McDonald 1990, 42), they are widely accepted as the significant push factors for travel behaviour (Pearce and Caltabiano 1983). The underlying push and pull concept assumes that tourists are pushed by their own needs and pulled by the destination itself (Dann 1981). First research in the field of travel motivations can be seen in the work of Lundberg (1971) where he analysed what motivates people to travel and finally developed a bundle of eighteen travel motives. Gray (1979) identified two main intrinsic motives "Wanderlust" and "Sunlust" assumed to influence travel. Crompton (1979) analysed motivation for vacation travel and identified seven push factors: Escape, Self-Exploration, Relaxation, Prestige, Regression, Kindship-Enhancement and Social Interaction. Nearly identical Krippendorf (1987) proposed eight sets of motivations to travel: Recuperation and Regeneration, Compensation and Social Integration, Escape, Communication, Freedom and Self-Determination, Self-Realisation, Happiness as well as Travel. In contrast, Yuan and McDonald (1990) found that people travel to satisfy unmet needs (twenty-nine motivational items) and that those needs could be characterised by five push factors: Escape, Novelty, Prestige, Enhancement of Kinship Relationships and Relaxation. Cha, McCleary and Uysal (1995) identified six travel motivations (Relax, Knowledge, Adventure, Travel Bragging, Family and Sports), which can be clustered into three motivation-based market segments: Sports Seekers, Novelty Seekers and Family/Relaxation Seekers. Similar to the analysis of Cha et al. (1995), Bieger and Laesser (2002) applied ten distinct motivation factors (Nightlife, Comfort, Partner, Family, Nature, Culture, Liberty, Body, Sports and Sun) to cluster the Swiss Travel Market into four motivation-based market segments: Compulsory Travel, Cultural Hedonsim, Family Travel and Me(e/a)t Marketing.

Taking lifecycle theory into account, it has to be assumed that senior's travel motivation vary significantly to other travellers. The theory postulates that as persons get older and as their needs and social roles change, so too does their travel motivation change over time (Horna 1994). For example, teenagers are eager to test their own limits and seek adventure, middle aged people focus on recreation and family, whilst seniors catch up their dreams. However, the rapid demographic shift after World War II (e.g. social prosperity, mass mobility, information and communication technology) has led to each generation making their own travel experiences under varying circumstances. It is for that reason that behavioural statements made about senior travellers today are no longer valid when considering the senior travel market in the future. Additional, latest research findings indeed indicate that the demographic aging is compensated by the feeling of rejuvenation of older people i.e., people over sixty feel, on average, 10 years younger than their actual age (Höpflinger 2005). Thus, the behavioural pattern of senior travellers has not only become inconsequent, multi-optional and unpredictable, but also shifted toward more active pursuits with a strong focus on health and fitness (Horneman et al. 2002).

Analysing senior's travel motivation Shoemaker (1989) segmented the senior market into three clusters: Family Travellers, Active Resters and Older Set. Likewise, Australian senior travellers could be profiled by the means of four travel motivations: Education and Learning, Rest and Relaxation, Physical Exercise and Fitness as well as Visiting Friend and Relatives (Hornemann et al. 2002). A study conducted by Fleischer and Pizam (2002) reported six common motives among senior travellers: Rest and relaxation, Social Interaction, Physical Exercises, Learning, Nostalgia and Excitement. Thus, it can be concluded that the senior market is not one homogenous segment as commonly proposed by marketers when talking about "65+" or "Best Agers". Indeed, specific tourism products have emerged in domestic and international destinations targeting senior's travel motivation. While the term "Snowbirds" and "Grey Nomads" describes in North America and Australia respectively, seniors who wish to escape to warmer climates, Huang and Tsai (2003) reported a trend towards cultural and eco-tourism.

Since travel motivations are assumed to differ according to the degree of market maturity (Hopkins et al. 2002, Ehrenberg et al. 1997), the case in this paper (Switzerland) can be considered as a role model for a mature travel market. Given that Swiss travel shoppers are experienced and sophisticated (Hopkins et al. 2002), the share of frequent travellers (68%) is well above the proposed threshold and the growth is close to nil, it can be stated that this paper indeed uncovers insights from a mature market (Bieger & Laesser 2005, D'Souza & Rao 1995).

METHODOLOGY

Data collection and base sample: The data set was collected in Switzerland in 2004, using Swiss residents as well as foreigners having lived in Switzerland long enough to become assimilated. At the end of 2003, potential participants were informed that they would be required to deliver their responses over one year, and that one questionnaire had to be completed for each trip undertaken. Only those who indicated their willingness to participate throughout the entire year were included. Respondents received a reminder every three months asking them either to return completed questionnaires or to declare that they had not undertaken any trips during the previous three months. Only leisure travel and information about themselves (by means of a different questionnaire at the end of the year) was included in the study; business trips were excluded. Respondents were given a choice of either completing paper or online versions of the questionnaire. Thirty-one per cent completed the survey online. The actual data collection (executed by GfK, one of the leading market research companies in Europe) took place during the entire calendar year of 2004. Respondents were contacted four times (once each quarter), reminding them to turn in their completed questionnaires or complete them

online. The **survey instrument** consisted of self-administrated written interviews (one per trip), which were conducted with 3,050 households and all their members, surveying all their private trips during one year. The **sample** is representative for the entire population of the German and French speaking part of Switzerland (thus excluding the small Italian speaking part) in terms of size of household, age, gender, profession and education. It stems from a larger sample of more than 10,000 households, which make up the GfK consumer jury (for further reference with regard to data collection and sampling see Bieger & Laesser 2005).

Study/ working sample: From that base sample we selected trips and/ of persons with the age 55 and older. The size of that study sample amounts to 1,101 cases.

Analysis: The study's data analysis followed a three-step method. First, k-means cluster analysis (centroid method) was performed on the basis of 25 motivation items (scale: 4-point Likert, ranging from not important at all to very important) (analysis #1). To overcome unwanted homogeneity within a case (for example a test person would value all motivations as important or very important only), a magnitude was calculated indicating the individual relative magnitude per item in relation to the overall mean of all items of travel motivation per case (=individual trip). Because the scales were identical across all items, standardisation was not necessary. Secondly, multiple discriminant analyses were used in order to test the cluster analyses' discriminating characteristics. The optimal and final number of clusters was determined based on a dendrogram (graphical result) as well as the best discrimination result between the groups (analysis #2). Thirdly, cross tabs and contingency analyses, as well as means comparisons were performed (depending on the scale) to profile each of the groups described. A number of trip-specific variables as well as socio-demographic variables were included in this type of analysis. Chi-square statistics and contingency coefficients, as well as ANOVA and etas (in the case of mean comparisons) were utilised to determine if distribution differences were significant or due to chance variations (analysis #3). However, and given that multiple tests were computed based on the same data sets and therefore potential interaction effects would not be reflected in the p-values of the respective tests, p-values were Bonferroni corrected. This correction increases the p-value, taking into consideration the number of independent tests computed, and provides a conservative estimate of the significance of tested hypotheses.

All results presented in this paper are significant in terms of the rejection of the zero hypothesis, according to which there are no differences between groups observed. Non-significant results are mentioned in the text, but are omitted in the tables.

RESULTS

Analysis #1

The clustering by travel motivations was conducted by a k-means cluster analysis (that is, cluster centre analysis) of SPSS 12.0. Trials with two to five clusters were executed. Based on the results of the cluster formation, as well as preliminary discriminant analyses assessing the discriminating power of each item, a final three cluster structure proved to be the most meaningful in both groups (cf. to table 1).

Table 1: Cluster analysis results

	Cluster 1 GRIZZLED EXPLORERS 35.3%	Cluster 2 TIME- HONOURED BON VIVANTS 35.1%	Cluster 3 RETRO TRAVELLERS 29.6%
Travel Motivation			
Diversion; see and experience something new	1.00	0.86	1.02
Get away from it all (daily routine)	1.35	1.42	1.29
Liberation from obligations	0.90	0.93	0.91
Visit and experience sights and culture	1.51	0.90	1.45
Conclusion of a phase of life by means of a trip	0.78	0.67	0.87
Rest and relaxation	0.90	2.33	0.92
Do something for my beauty	0.75	0.70	0.86
Experience of exotic	0.83	0.72	0.86
Ability to make flexible, spontaneous decisions	0.83	0.78	0.90
Enjoyment of comfort and pampering	1.06	1.15	0.98
Experience landscapes and nature	2.15	1.75	0.95
Enjoy nightlife	0.75	0.70	0.85
Make contact with new people	1.09	0.81	1.01
Prestigious character of trip	0.73	0.67	0.84
Regeneration from daily home routine and job	0.94	1.30	1.02
Challenge and stimulate oneself	0.81	0.69	0.89
Sun and beach	0.83	1.04	0.87
Sports (active)	0.93	1.00	1.04
Search for esteem	0.74	0.67	0.83
Experience of nativeness	0.88	0.76	0.87
Experience of adventure and perhaps even risk	0.76	0.68	0.84
Time for partner	1.09	1.48	1.02
Time for the family	1.31	0.86	0.92
Time for oneself	1.01	1.28	0.97
other	0.74	0.69	1.65

bold: denotes values higher than median per cluster

grey: denotes highest value across clusters

Members of cluster one, incorporating 35.3% of the senior traveller trips, are predominantly motivated by *visit and experience sights and culture*, *experience landscapes and nature*, *make contact with new people*, and *time for the family*. In contrast, members of cluster 2, incorporating 35.1% of the senior traveller trips, are predominantly motivated by *get away from it all (daily routine)*, *liberation from obligations*, *enjoyment of comfort and pampering*, *regeneration from daily home routine and job*, *sun and beach*, *time for partner*, and *time for oneself*. Finally, members of cluster three, incorporating 29.6% of the senior traveller trips, are driven by a broad panoply of motivations, with *diversion; see and experience something new*, *sports (active)*, and *other* as the predominant ones.

Based on the above profiles, and for the remainder of this paper, the clusters are named as follows: GRIZZLED EXPLORERS (cluster 1), TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS (cluster 2), and RETRO TRAVELLERS (cluster 3).

Analysis #2

Two discriminant functions were generated, where function 1 explained 77.1 per cent (eigenvalue: 4.375) and function 2 explained the remaining 22.9 per cent of the variation (eigenvalue: 1.303). The test of equality of group means and the standardised canonical discriminant function coefficients revealed that the travel motivations *rest and relaxation*, *experience landscapes and nature*, and *other* have comparably great discriminating power between all clusters (in descending order). The classification matrix revealed that 93.5 per cent of all trip cases could be classified correctly.

Analysis #3

Analysis #3, consisting of a socio-demographic as well as trip profile of the cluster members reveals a number of cluster-specific peculiarities as well as differences between clusters.

Socio-demographic profile (cf. to table 2): First of all, no significant differences were revealed with regard to the gender of the cluster members. However, there are some noteworthy distinctions with regard to age ($X^2=19.182$; $p<.001$), education ($X^2=34.041$; $p<.001$), and professional education ($X^2=80.883$; $p<.001$). Members of the GRIZZLED EXPLORERS cluster are comparably old and thus retired, whereas members of the TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS cluster are comparably young and mostly still occupied in a wide range of professional positions. In contrast, the age of the members of the RETRO TRAVELLERS cluster is somewhat situated between the age groups of the other two clusters; however, they incorporate high shares of very well educated persons with very good or top professional positions.

Trip profiles (cf. to table 3): With regard to the trip profiles, there are a number of notable differences between the clusters. We discuss them/ highlight some peculiarities along the cluster membership.

Members of the **GRIZZLED EXPLORERS cluster** often stem from single households and wish to travel in groups. They prefer - more than others - long haul destinations in general and the Americas as well as Asia and Oceania in particular. The large majority is not familiar with the destination and rather than others books a group travel with a guide. The leading type of trip within this cluster is a sightseeing tour which either lasts one or three weeks. As means of transport they either use the plane or bus; they preferably stay in hotels as well as with friends and relatives. Members of the **TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS cluster** prefer - more than others - domestic destinations (Switzerland) as well as Spain and Greece. The large majority is familiar with the destination and rather organises the trip individually. The leading types of trips within this cluster are *beach vacations*, *vacations in the mountains*, *health oriented vacations* as well as *winter vacation in the snow* which last one to two weeks. As means of transport they either use the car or charter flight; they preferably stay in holiday residences.

Table 2: Socio-demographic profiles of the cluster members

Cluster number	CL 1	CL 2	CL 3
Cluster name	GRIZZLED EXPLORERS	TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS	RETRO TRAVELLERS
Shares of cluster	35.3%	35.1%	29.6%

Age (multinomial scale)**X²=19.182; CC=.090; Sig=.000**

55-64 years	50.0%	60.6%	54.7%
65 years and older	50.0%	39.4%	45.3%

Education (multinomial scale)**X²=34.041; CC=.119; Sig=.012**

Cumpulsory Schooling/ very basic training	12.6%	15.5%	12.4%
Apprenticeship/ Vocational school	37.9%	39.6%	38.3%
Vocational Graduation	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%
Middle/ High school, Gymnasium, Comm. school	13.2%	9.5%	8.0%
Vocational master diploma	3.8%	4.3%	5.6%
Technical school	9.2%	7.1%	8.5%
Higher technical school	7.1%	7.7%	6.3%
University of applied sciences	8.6%	7.3%	10.4%
University	6.5%	6.3%	8.1%
other	0.8%	2.3%	1.7%

Professional position (multinomial scale)**X²=80.883; CC=.182; Sig=.000**

CEO/ Top Management/ Chief Public Servant	2.5%	2.6%	5.1%
SME director/ owner	3.0%	4.3%	3.6%
Farmer	0.5%	0.8%	1.0%
Free Profession (Doctor, Lawyer, Consultant, etc.)	2.3%	1.8%	2.4%
Middle Management	8.6%	8.9%	6.1%
Commercial/ technical Employee, Public Servant	11.8%	16.4%	12.5%
Worker	2.6%	4.0%	3.4%
Pensioner	50.7%	36.8%	43.9%
Housework	16.5%	19.0%	18.5%
Unemployed, looking for a Job	0.7%	1.0%	0.9%
In Training/ School: Apprenticeship	0.1%	0.6%	0.0%
None of the above mentionned Professions	0.2%	0.5%	0.0%
In Military Service	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%
other	0.2%	3.2%	2.3%

bold: denotes values higher than median within cluster**grey:** denotes highest values across clusters

Table 3: Trip profiles of the cluster members (1)

Cluster number	CL 1	CL 2	CL 3
Cluster name	GRIZZLED EXPLORERS	TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS	RETRO TRAVELLERS
Shares of cluster	35.3%	35.1%	29.6%

Solitary travel (stemming from: / travelling:) (multinomial scale) $\chi^2=59.806$; $CC=.157$; $Sig=.000$

all other (control group)	92.5%	97.7%	89.9%
1-person households/ alone	0.2%	0.6%	1.1%
multiple persons households/ alone	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%
1-person households/ groupwise	4.4%	0.5%	3.6%
multiple persons households groupwise	2.9%	0.8%	5.0%

Choice of destination (multinomial scale) $\chi^2=228.099$; $CC=.229$; $Sig=.000$

Switzerland	32.9%	47.3%	35.4%
Austria	9.4%	8.9%	6.0%
Germany	8.4%	6.1%	15.5%
France	11.6%	8.2%	10.7%
Italy	11.0%	7.4%	10.8%
Spain	3.5%	11.6%	4.5%
Portugal	0.9%	0.2%	0.7%
Greece	1.6%	2.3%	1.0%
Former Yugoslavia	1.4%	0.5%	0.6%
Benelux	1.0%	0.1%	1.0%
UK and Eire	2.1%	0.6%	2.3%
Scandinavia	2.0%	1.2%	1.2%
Eastern Euope	2.8%	0.4%	4.2%
Americas	3.6%	0.7%	1.6%
Africa	2.3%	3.2%	1.9%
Asia	4.9%	1.3%	2.3%
Oceania	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%

Number of previous trips (multinomial scale) $\chi^2=96.147$; $CC=.197$; $Sig=.000$

none	31.7%	16.6%	31.8%
1-2	21.7%	9.0%	22.9%
3-5	13.8%	15.3%	12.0%
5-10	11.2%	14.2%	13.1%
> 10	21.7%	34.9%	20.2%

Type of organisation of trip (multinomial scale) $\chi^2=206.379$; $CC=.283$; $Sig=.000$

No package at all	49.8%	64.7%	55.3%
Individual package (no fixed date)	8.6%	16.7%	10.1%
Group package w/ travel guide	25.2%	2.9%	15.1%
Group package wo/ travel guide	6.1%	2.5%	5.6%
Other type of package	3.1%	4.6%	5.3%
no information	7.2%	8.5%	8.7%

bold: denotes values higher than median within cluster**grey:** denotes highest values across clusters

Table 3: Trip profiles of the cluster members (2)

Cluster number	CL 1	CL 2	CL 3
Cluster name	GRIZZLED EXPLORERS	TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS	RETRO TRAVELLERS
Shares of cluster	35.3%	35.1%	29.6%

Duration of trip (multinomial scale) $\chi^2=59.806$; $CC=.157$; $Sig=.000$

1 night	11.8%	1.9%	13.7%
2-3 nights	16.2%	14.9%	32.9%
4-7 nights	37.9%	35.5%	33.9%
8-14 nights	21.7%	35.9%	14.1%
15-21 nights	7.4%	5.6%	3.2%
more than 21 nights	4.9%	6.3%	2.3%

Means of transportation (multinomial scale) $\chi^2=197.617$; $CC=.277$; $Sig=.000$

car (own/ rental), motor home (own/ rental)	40.1%	62.7%	41.9%
railway/ train	18.5%	14.2%	22.6%
scheduled flight departing from Swiss airport	10.5%	7.3%	12.5%
scheduled flight departing from non-Swiss airport	2.0%	0.5%	0.6%
charter flight departing from Swiss airport	5.9%	9.3%	6.4%
charter flight departing from non-Swiss airport	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
ship/ cruise	1.2%	1.2%	0.7%
bus	20.5%	4.1%	13.1%
motor bike, motor cycle	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
bicycle	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
other	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%
n/a	0.7%	0.2%	1.1%

Type of accommodation (multinomial scale) $\chi^2=172.011$; $CC=.274$; $Sig=.000$

Hotel, resort, motel	66.0%	53.0%	66.0%
Friends and relatives	16.2%	10.1%	18.5%
B&B, private room (residential stay)	3.2%	4.3%	2.2%
Holiday residence	7.7%	24.7%	8.8%
Camping, tent, RV, camper	2.9%	3.8%	1.1%
cruise	1.6%	1.6%	1.1%
other	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%

bold: denotes values higher than median within cluster
grey: denotes highest values across clusters

Table 3: Trip profiles of the cluster members (3)

Cluster Number	Mean difference (Cluster - Total)			F-Value	Eta ²
	CL 1	CL 2	CL 3		
	GRIZZLED EXPLORERS	TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS	RETRO TRAVELLERS		
Cluster name					
Share of cluster	35.3%	35.1%	29.6%		

Type of trip (4 point likert; 1= not applicable at all - 4=fully applicable)

Type of trip	CL 1	CL 2	CL 3	F-Value	Eta ²
Beach vacation	-0.10	0.20	-0.12	39.561*	0.032
City trip	0.16	-0.31	0.17	56.400*	0.046
Sightseeing tour	0.40	-0.31	-0.11	103.553*	0.080
Cruise	0.03	0.00	-0.04	3.272*	0.003
Vacation in the countryside	-0.01	0.11	-0.13	22.892*	0.019
Vacation in the mountains	-0.08	0.33	-0.29	74.617*	0.059
Health oriented vacation	-0.13	0.27	-0.17	74.914*	0.060
Regimen break	-0.04	0.06	-0.03	14.156*	0.012
Winter vacation in the snow	-0.09	0.18	-0.11	29.167*	0.024
Winter vacation in warm areas	-0.02	0.07	-0.06	11.439*	0.010
Sports vacation	-0.01	0.06	-0.06	5.056*	0.004
Events trip	-0.01	-0.09	0.11	18.830*	0.016
Theme park vacation/ trip	0.01	0.00	-0.01	0.822	0.001
Study tour	0.06	-0.09	0.03	14.986*	0.013
Language trip	-0.01	-0.01	0.02	1.846	0.002
Shopping trip	0.01	-0.06	0.05	9.015*	0.008
Visit friends and relatives	0.11	-0.13	0.02	10.237*	0.009
Family event/ reason	0.04	-0.09	0.06	9.538*	0.008
other	-0.13	-0.05	0.21	20.740*	0.017

bold: denotes highest positive differential values within cluster

grey: denotes highest positive difference across clusters

*: significant on .99 level

Finally, members of the **RETRO TRAVELLERS cluster** prefer - more than others - Germany and Eastern Europe as their choice of destination. The large majority is rather not familiar with the destination. In terms of trip organisation, they make use of a wide range of possibilities, likely depending upon the concrete travel situation. The leading type of trip within this cluster is the *events trip* as well as *other types of trips*, which last either very short or very long. As means of transport they make use of either train or bus and preferably stay in hotels.

DISCUSSION

The analyses reveal that there are two quite distinctive clusters (GRIZZLED EXPLORERS and TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS) as well as a third cluster (RETRO TRAVELLERS) incorporating some of the characteristics which occur in the other clusters as well. Interpreting the results, one could assume that there is a change process of time allocation and travel behaviour, differentiated according to someone's original education and professional position. There is a string of arguments leading to that interpretation.

Where the Bloody Hell Are We?

Members both of the TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS as well as GRIZZLED EXPLORERS group have a similar level of education as well as professional position, with one exception: GRIZZLED EXPLORERS incorporate large shares of retired people, whose professional life has been terminated, also indicated by comparably low shares of housework. In contrast, members of the RETRO TRAVELLERS cluster differentiate themselves not only in terms of education (high to very high education) but also in terms of professional positions (CEOs, top management, as well as free professions, etc., i.e. jobs which often include business travel). Hence, the initial position for each cluster is quite different; this seems to influence also the travel choices. It can be assumed that the major triage, i.e. differentiation, is to be found between the first two clusters and the third. Thus, the three clusters are briefly described subsequently:

- Members of the TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS group are driven by their initial need for relaxation. They rely on what they know, i.e. domestic destinations as well as some popular places such as Spain, Greece, and when it comes to overseas, destinations in northern Africa (such as Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt). They either take the car (and then often stay in a holiday residence, especially domestically) or a charter flight when they stay at hotels in the Mediterranean. Where possible they organise their domestic trip themselves.
- In contrast, members of the GRIZZLED EXPLORERS group (which might have belonged to the TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS group in an earlier stage) venture into new territory (cf. high share of previous trip to a given destination). For that reasons, they heavily rely on professional organisation of their trip. This presumption is supported by the facts that (1) the bus is a key means of travel and (2) the share of self-organised trip is comparably low. Overall, and in contrast to the TIME-HONOURED BON VIVANTS group, the variety of destinations rather increases which additionally fuels the need for professional support.
- Contrasting the previous two groups, members of the RETRO TRAVELLERS cluster also and often choose destinations they are not familiar with. However, and in contrast to the other two groups, the degree of self organisation is comparably higher, which might be associated with the fact that their preferred types of trip (city, shopping, and events as well as sports strips) might not need that high degree of professional support. Nevertheless, one can assume that due to their degree of education as well as professional standing they are more travel savvy than members of the other two groups.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper reported on the segmentation on the basis of motivation of Swiss senior travellers. The results revealed that there are three clusters overall: TIME HONOURED BON VIVANTS, GRIZZLED EXPLORERS, and RETRO TRAVELLERS. The results also indicated that there might be a life cycle structure behind those segments as in a first phase seniors are rather TIME HONOURED BON VIVANTS to become GRIZZLED EXPLORERS in a later stage. In contrast, members of a third segment (RETRO TRAVELLERS) are somewhat similar to both previous clusters but differentiate themselves in terms of education (high to very high education) as well professional positions (also high to very high).

From those results, we can derive a number of conclusions.

First, while the majority of previous studies identified multiple (up to half a dozen) of clusters, the present study results reveal that there are only three distinctive senior travel seg-

ments. However, the core motivations of travel as discussed in many previous studies can also be found with our segments: exploration and relaxation. Hence, one could claim that senior travel is more focused than non-senior one, maybe because at a later life stage there is no desire or need for experiments.

Secondly, and referring to the prominent market shares of the GRIZZLED EXPLORERS, we conclude that after a life working and perhaps raising a family there might be a regression back to pre-family times when exploration was integral part of a young life. Having time again and sufficient funding, this type of senior traveller ventures to new destinations unknown to them, often with other like-minded travellers, and well organised.

Thirdly, the age-driven delimitation of seniors (55+) might be shortcoming in terms that there is a break in travel behaviour before/ past retirement. We conclude that seniors may be subdivided according to (1) the annual mean degree of professional work (less than 50% vs. more than 50%) as well as (2) their final professional position they had in their working life (high vs. low). Those two dimensions actually very much delimit cluster membership.

Finally, the present study leaves a number of potential research questions for the future. First of all, the life cycle model stipulated by the results and discussed in this paper needs further investigation. Secondly, an a-priori segmentation study analysing the three groups of senior travellers discussed above might create further insight into this market. Thirdly, and important for the tour operator and retailing industry, the explorer type of senior traveller needs to be compared to the non best-agers travellers, as they might have different needs and requirements when inquiring about and booking organised tours.

There is a major limitation to that study. Although the sample is representative of the Swiss population, comparisons with federal census data based on gross travel intensity reveal that in the survey Travel Market Switzerland 2004 approximately 20 per cent of all trips taken are not recorded. Among those are trips to people's own holiday homes. Many tourists consider their second homes to be part of their usual residential environment, and therefore do not perceive visits there to be leisure trips. As a majority of holiday homes is in possession of the seniors, and as trips to those homes are not likely of the GRIZZELED EXPLORERS type, it is possible that the size of this segment is overestimated by about five to ten percentage points. However, this does not hamper the structural information relating to the clusters.

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