Extended Abstract
Leisure Travel in Old Age: The Role of Socioeconomic-Demographic Factors and Disability in Indonesia

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Many countries are experiencing an ageing population. People in old age are assumed to have more free time due to withdrawal from the labour market at retirement age and being free from childbearing responsibilities compared to people at working ages. This can lead to more participation in leisure activities, including leisure travel.

According to activity theory, engaging in leisure travel can be viewed as a vital component of maintaining an active lifestyle in later life. Leisure travel, by its nature, encourages physical, social, and cognitive engagement, which aligns with the theory's principle that active participation in life leads to greater life satisfaction and well-being. For older people, leisure travel offers opportunities for physical mobility, cognitive stimulation (through exposure to new environments and cultures), and social interaction, all of which contribute to successful healthy ageing. The evidence of travel's positive impacts on health and well-being, such as cognitive preservation (Verghese et al., 2003) and adjustment to retirement (Lee et al., 2019), supports this theory's emphasis on the benefits of remaining active.

However, numerous studies have highlighted the tendency for older adults to engage in passive behaviours (Arifin et al., 2012; Chastin et al., 2012, 2015; Leask et al., 2015; Tam-Seto et al., 2016; Nicolson et al., 2019). These passive activities can significantly affect their physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being (Nimrod & Shrira, 2016). In contrast, active leisure pursuits offer substantial benefits, including the prevention of dementia (Verghese et al., 2003; Wang et al., 2020) and the preservation of cognitive function, physical health, and mental well-being (Sala et al., 2019). Additionally, engaging in leisure activities can ease the adjustment to retirement life (Lee et al., 2019), while leisure satisfaction contributes to overall happiness and inner peace (Spiers & Walker, 2008).

To the best of our knowledge, there has been no such nationwide study specifically examining leisure travel among older people in Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world, which is currently undergoing a rapidly ageing population (Arifin & Hogervorst, 2015; Arifin & Ananta, 2016). This study fills the literature gap by examining the research question of how the probability of experiencing leisure travel in old age varies with personal characteristics that might act as barriers or triggers to travelling in old age, with a focus on the role of disability.

Data and methods

Data source

This study is a cross-sectional study using the Indonesia National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS) raw data conducted in March 2020. SUSENAS is an annual survey held by Statistics Indonesia (BPS) twice a year, in March and September. This survey was collected using multi-stage sampling. The selected sample for this paper consisted of 121,961 individuals aged 60 years and older.

Variables

One key advantage of this survey is that it includes a specific question about travel. “From 01 January to 31 December 2019, have you ever travelled to a commercial tourism object, stayed in commercial accommodation or made a round trip of 100 kilometres or more, not for school or regular work purposes?” The response is dichotomous with a value of 1 for yes, and 0 otherwise. The time reference of this question is longer than the earlier one referring to 6 months prior to the survey in 2015 (Pratomo, 2017).

The explanatory variables were grouped into demographic variables (age, sex, marital status, household head status), socioeconomic (education, employment), environment (place of residence), and health (disability). Age is treated as a categorical variable: 60-64, 65-69, …, 80 and above. Sex and household status are dichotomous with the respective reference group being male and not the household head. Marital status consisted of married, divorced, widowed and single as the reference group. The highest educational level is classified into no education of incomplete primary (reference group), primary school, junior high school, senior high school, and tertiary education. Employment status is dichotomous with a value of 1 for working and 0 otherwise. Place of residence is differentiated between urban and rural (reference group). Disability status is also dichotomous, with a value of 1 for having difficulty in functioning and 0 otherwise. Furthermore, disability is delved into more specifically considering eight types of disabilities (emotion, walking, hearing, self-caring, communicating, seeing, concentrating, and hand-gripping disabilities) to follow the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning-Enhanced (Arifin 2023). All are treated as dichotomous.

Methods

The methods consist of descriptive analysis to explain the characteristics of the selected sample. Given the nature of the dependent variable, a logistic regression model (Hosmer et al., 2013) is applied to examine leisure travel, measured by the probability of travelling in the past year, in relation to a set of explanatory variables. Two models are evaluated to account for disability. The first assesses the probability of respondents engaging in leisure travel based on overall disability, while the second model focuses on the likelihood of leisure travel in relation to a specific type of disability. Both are controlled for other factors. SPSS is used to conduct this statistical analysis.

Findings

A description of the selected sample is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Total	121,961	100.0			
Age group			**Education**		
60-64	47,740	39.1	No education or incomplete primary	56,137	46.0
65-69	32,493	26.6	Primary school	38,483	31.6
70-74	19,691	16.1	Junior high school	10,445	8.6
75-79	12,112	9.9	Senior high school	10,846	8.9
80+	9,925	8.1	Tertiary education	6,050	5.0
Sex			**Employment**		

Male	58,397	47.9	Not working	58,507	48.0
Female	63,564	52.1	Working	63,454	52.0
Marital status			**Place of residence**		
Single	1,886	1.5	Urban	50,105	41.1
Married	74,605	61.2	Rural	71,856	58.9
Divorced	2,735	2.2	**Disability**		
Widowed	42,735	35.0	Yes	16,610	13.6
Household head status			No	105,351	86.4
Household head	75,776	62.1	**Leisure travel**		
Not head	46,185	37.9	Not travel	98348	80.6
			Travel	23613	19.4

The logistics regression models presented in Table 2 show that females are more likely to engage in leisure travel than males (Exp(B) = 1.587 in Model 1 and 1.575 in Model 2). Age demonstrates a strong influence on travel likelihood. Younger age groups (60-64) show the highest odds of travelling and gradually decrease as age increases, with the oldest group (80+) being the least likely to travel. This trend suggests that mobility, health, and interest in travel may diminish with age. Married individuals are most likely to travel, followed by those divorced and widowed. This indicates that social support and companionship likely enhance the travel experience, whereas singles may have fewer opportunities or motivations to travel. Being a household head is positively associated with travel likelihood, suggesting that individuals in leadership roles within their families may have more resources or responsibilities that facilitate travel.

Education level is a powerful predictor of leisure travel. This strong educational gradient indicates that higher education may lead to better access to resources, information, and opportunities for leisure travel and a greater appreciation for travel experiences. Employment status also plays a role, with working older people more likely to travel.

Living in urban areas is positively associated with travel likelihood, indicating that older urban people may have more access to travel opportunities, services, and resources than those in rural areas.

The presence of a disability significantly reduces the likelihood of leisure travel, indicating that older people with disabilities face barriers that hinder their travel opportunities. This highlights the need for accessible travel options and support systems to enable participation in leisure activities.

Model 2 further examines specific types of disabilities on travel likelihood, with older people having emotional disabilities being the least likely to engage in leisure travel, highlighting the significant impact of mental and emotional health on travel behaviours. Older people with concentration disabilities are the most likely to travel. These findings emphasise the need for designed support and accommodations for individuals with varying disabilities to enhance their travel experiences.

Table 2. Odds Ratios for Leisure Travel Likelihood Among Older People

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
		95% C.I.for EXP(B)			95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Sex						
Female (ref: male)	1.587***	1.514	1.664	1.575***	1.502	1.651
Age group (ref: 80+)						
60-64	2.186***	2.013	2.374	2.138***	1.968	2.322
65-69	1.960***	1.804	2.130	1.914***	1.761	2.081
70-74	1.690***	1.550	1.842	1.649***	1.512	1.798

75-79	1.321***	1.201	1.452	1.292***	1.175	1.421
Marital status (ref: single)						
Married	2.355***	2.027	2.735	2.356***	2.028	2.737
Divorced	1.808***	1.510	2.166	1.813***	1.514	2.172
Widowed	1.882***	1.617	2.190	1.887***	1.621	2.196
Household head						
Yes (ref: not head)	1.367***	1.307	1.431	1.356***	1.296	1.420
Education (ref: no education)						
Primary school	1.395***	1.344	1.448	1.394***	1.343	1.447
Junior high school	2.327***	2.210	2.450	2.327***	2.211	2.450
Senior high school	3.422***	3.256	3.597	3.419***	3.253	3.594
Tertiary education	5.740***	5.405	6.095	5.738***	5.403	6.093
Employment status						
Working (ref: not)	1.209***	1.168	1.251	1.202***	1.161	1.244
Place of residence						
Urban (ref: rural)	1.536***	1.489	1.585	1.538***	1.491	1.588
Disability status						
Disability (ref: not)	0.548***	0.517	0.580	-	-	-
Type of disability						
Emotion	-	-	-	0.650**	0.501	0.843
Walking	-	-	-	0.666***	0.604	0.734
Hearing	-	-	-	0.693***	0.614	0.782
Self-caring	-	-	-	0.709***	0.593	0.848
Communicating	-	-	-	0.722**	0.583	0.894
Seeing	-	-	-	0.786***	0.716	0.862
Concentrating	-	-	-	0.869*	0.761	0.991
Hand-gripping	-	-	-	0.881	0.746	1.041
Constant	0.019***	-	-	0.020***	-	-

Note: *** significant at p-value < 0.001, ** p-value <0.01, * p-value <0.05.

Conclusion

The logistic regression models reveal that demographic and socioeconomic factors are significantly associated with leisure travel among older people. Younger, female, married, urban, educated, and working individuals are more likely to travel for leisure, while those facing disabilities encounter barriers that limit their opportunities. These insights underscore the importance of tourism strategies that consider the diverse needs of older people.