

Communication Strategies for Promoting Silver Tourism on Thai Travel Agency Websites

Chin-Hui Chen, National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Taiwan
Rungrot Taikitkoson, Khon Kaen University, Thailand
Sunattra Wongsuriya, Khon Kaen University, Thailand
Sarinee Bolankun, Khon Kaen University, Thailand
Supapat Tonjan, Khon Kaen University, Thailand
Narachen Buatarach, Khon Kaen University, Thailand

The Asian Conference on Media, Communication & Film 2025
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

As the global population ages, silver tourism has emerged as a significant market segment, particularly in destinations like Thailand, which is increasingly catering to senior travelers. This study explores the communication strategies employed by Thai travel agencies in promoting silver tourism through their websites. By analyzing the visual and textual marketing messages on five Thai travel agency websites in March, 2025, the research identifies how these agencies target senior consumers, the language and imagery they use, and how they address the needs and preferences of older travelers. The study examines the balance between portraying seniors as active, independent travelers while also acknowledging the comfort and accessibility needs associated with aging. The findings suggest that while some agencies employ empowering language and age-inclusive marketing techniques, others rely on traditional representations that may unintentionally reinforce negative perceptions of aging. This research provides insights into effective communication practices that can help travel agencies better serve the silver tourism market, while also increasing awareness of ageist representations of older adults in silver tourism marketing in Thailand.

Keywords: silver tourism, marketing strategies, marketing communication, websites, Thailand

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

Ageing Population Trends and Silver Tourism in Thailand

Thailand is rapidly transitioning into an aging society. In 2021, 18.8% of its 66.7 million people were aged 60 and above, and by 2031, the country is expected to become a super-aged society, with over 20% of its population in this age group (Department of Older Persons, Thailand, 2021). This demographic shift brings both challenges and economic opportunities, particularly in tourism.

To capitalize on the growing silver tourism market, the Thai government has launched initiatives aimed at making travel more accessible for older adults. The National Tourism Development Strategy focuses on universal design principles, improved transportation, and enhanced medical support. Investments in wellness tourism, health retreats, and cultural experiences further cater to senior travelers' preferences (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2025).

Wellness and medical tourism are particularly attractive to elderly tourists seeking destinations that support their health. Though national revenue data for senior tourism is limited, case studies highlight its growing impact. For example, Khao Yai National Park saw elderly visitor numbers rise from 9,347 in 2014 to 51,081 in 2017 (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2025).

As Thailand prepares for an aging future, effective marketing strategies will be crucial in ensuring that silver tourism continues to thrive.

Distinct Characteristics of Older Tourists

Older tourists differ from general travelers by prioritizing health, well-being, and cultural enrichment in their journeys. Their travel preferences reflect a strong inclination toward health tourism, cultural heritage experiences, and festival tourism. In Thailand, elderly tourists are particularly drawn to destinations that offer both relaxation and opportunities for cultural immersion, demonstrating a preference for World Heritage Sites like Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya and wellness tourism attractions, such as traditional medicinal baths (Phuanpoh & Ketsomboon, 2023; Suphan et al., 2022).

Health tourism programs tailored to their specific needs, including wellness retreats and spa treatments, appeal to their focus on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, itineraries incorporating traditional festivals provide both entertainment and meaningful cultural engagement, as observed in regions like Loei Province. Their motivations can be categorized into push factors—such as the desire for better health, cultural exploration, and lifestyle enhancement—and pull factors, including high-quality services, authentic cultural experiences, and tranquil travel environments.

Furthermore, older tourists exhibit distinct behaviors, favoring group travel with family or peers and engaging in activities that emphasize cultural preservation. Their decision-making process is meticulous, with an emphasis on safety, service quality, and authenticity (Phuanpoh & Ketsomboon, 2023; Suphan et al., 2022).

Literature Review

Marketing Principles for Promoting Silver Tourism

Silver tourism is a rapidly expanding sector in both global and Thai travel markets, driven by the country's transition into an aging society (Veeraporn & Koontiya, 2023). Older tourists differ from other segments as they generally have greater financial stability, more leisure time, and a heightened focus on safety, comfort, and service quality (Smith & Puczkó, 2019). To effectively attract and serve this demographic, businesses can apply established marketing principles such as the 7Ps Marketing Mix and the SILVER D Model to develop tailored strategies.

The 7Ps Marketing Mix (Kotler & Keller, 2022) provides a structured framework for addressing senior travelers' needs by ensuring that tourism products offer diverse and engaging experiences, such as wellness retreats and cultural immersion. Pricing strategies should reflect the value that senior travelers seek, balancing affordability with high-quality services, including senior discounts and group packages. Accessibility plays a key role in travel planning for older tourists, making it essential to maintain both online platforms and offline consultation services. Marketing efforts should align with the behavior of elderly tourists by leveraging web marketing, wellness seminars, and promotional travel deals. In addition, well-trained staff, senior-friendly facilities, and seamless service processes contribute to a comfortable and secure travel experience.

The SILVER D Model (Phuanpoh & Ketsomboon, 2023) further enhances marketing effectiveness by emphasizing high service standards, integrated stakeholder collaboration, and lifestyle-driven travel experiences. It highlights the importance of value-based tourism, entrepreneurial adaptability, responsible tourism practices, and digital engagement to reach older travelers. Integrating these principles ensures that Thailand's silver tourism sector continues to grow sustainably while meeting the expectations of senior travelers.

Language Design in Silver Tourism Marketing

Different from marketing researchers' focus on marketing efficiency, sociolinguistic scholars instead address the social impact of language designs for silver tourism promotion. The linguistic design of silver tourism marketing plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of aging and travel. Early research by Ylänne-McEwen (2000) examined UK-based holiday brochures targeting older travelers, revealing how language and imagery constructed particular ideologies of aging. Branding strategies, such as names like Golden Years or Young at Heart, aimed to counteract negative stereotypes by associating senior tourism with vitality and activity. These marketing choices resonated with older individuals who perceived themselves as younger than their chronological age, aligning with the "Golden Ager" stereotype (Hummer et al., 1994). Additionally, the brochures emphasized communal experiences, promoting travel as an opportunity for social bonding, new friendships, and even romantic possibilities. The framing of silver tourism as an exclusive club reinforced a sense of belonging and privilege among senior travelers.

Despite these positive representations, Ylänne-McEwen (2000) also identified underlying ageist assumptions. The discourse often implied insecurity and dependence, with brochures emphasizing the role of hosts and hostesses in assisting older travelers. This reinforced the notion of older tourists requiring reassurance and familiarity, with holidays framed as an

extension of home life—“home from home.” Similarly, travel was depicted as a means of escaping winter-induced gloom, yet this intertextual connection unintentionally evoked stereotypes of older individuals as vulnerable.

More recently, Blichfeldt and Smed (2019) examined silver tourism marketing in Denmark, focusing on representations of older adults’ sexualities. A Danish travel agency’s promotional video positioned lifelong sexual activity as part of a successful aging lifestyle, portraying older tourists as perpetually youthful and sexually active. While this reframing challenged traditional notions of aging, it also enforced an “ageless” ideal, reinforcing gendered expectations. These studies highlight how language in silver tourism marketing both challenges and perpetuates age-related stereotypes, influencing how older travelers perceive themselves and their experiences.

Given the rather lack of academic attention given to language and communication designs for silver tourism marketing, this study aims to fulfill this gap.

Methodology

Travel Agencies of Silver Tourism in Thailand

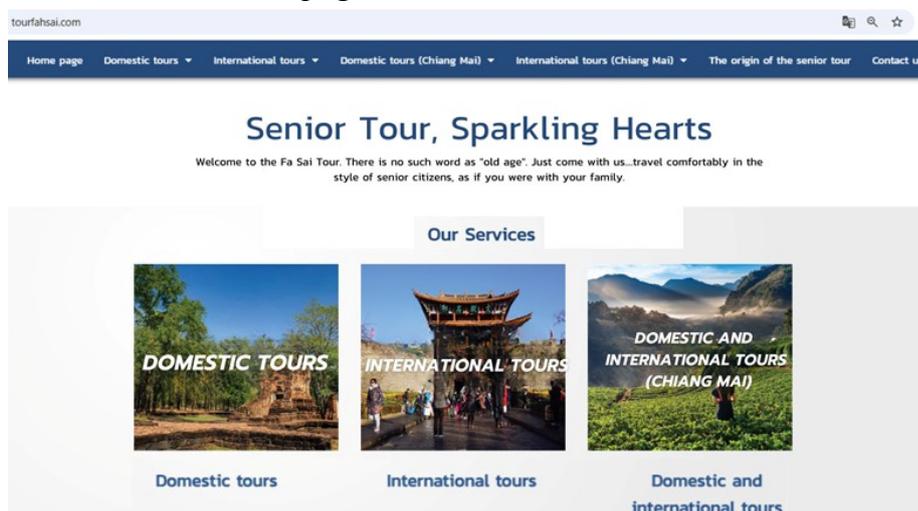
Silver tourism in Thailand is growing, driven by rich culture, hospitality, and advanced healthcare. Thai travel agencies now offer senior-friendly experiences emphasizing accessibility, comfort, and wellness, enhancing Thailand’s reputation as an age-friendly destination (Smith & Puczkó, 2018). Data from five websites—*Tour Fahsai*, *50 Plus Holiday*, *Wonderful Package*, *Phutthapratip Tour*, and *Happy Living*—were collected on 21 March 2025.

Tour Fahsai (ทัวร์ฟ้าใส)

Tour Fahsai (ทัวร์ฟ้าใส) also known as the “ทัวร์สูงวัย หัวใจฟรุ้งฟรุ้ง” or in English is “Sky clear Tour” and “Senior Tour Sparkling Heart” is a tour service designed for seniors, with the mission of “caring for every traveler as if they were family.”

Figure 1

Tour Fahsai Main Webpage

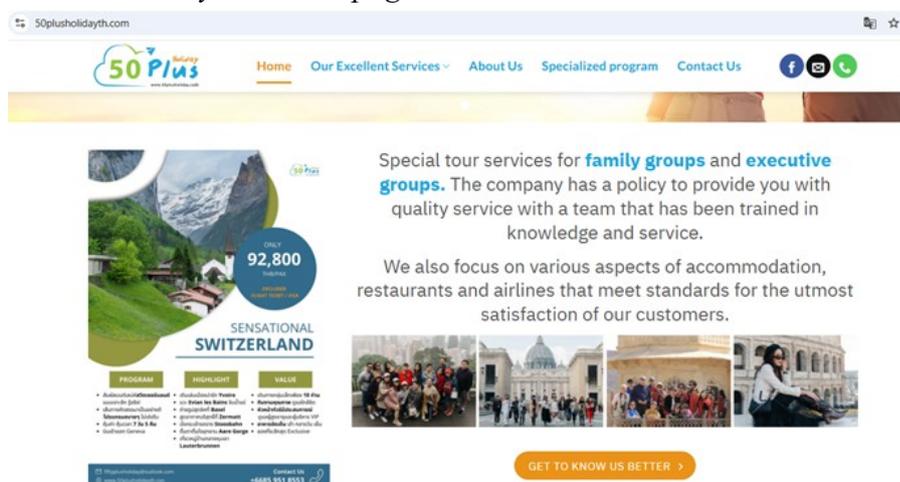


Source: <https://www.tourfahsai.com/>

50 Plus Holiday

This company is a travel agency that provides special tour services for families and executives. The services of this tour company focus on the quality of all types of services through a team that has been trained in knowledge and service. Its name justifies its possible dedication to the silver tourism market.

Figure 2
50 Plus Holiday Main Webpage



Source: <https://www.50plusholidayth.com/>

Wonderful Package

A tour company established to organize group tours and private tours, aiming to be the number one choice in customers’ hearts by offering travel packages and services that provide the best value, meet customer needs, and ensure the highest level of satisfaction. The company emphasizes its strength as a leader in excellent service, with a team of professionals dedicated to delivering the best service for the happiness of its customers.

Figure 3
Wonderful Package Main Website Page



Source: <https://www.wonderfulpackage.com/>

Phutthapratip Tour (บริษัท พุทธประทีปทัวร์ จำกัด)

Phutthapratip Tour (บริษัท พุทธประทีปทัวร์ จำกัด) is the Buddhist heritage preservation Tours: Offering guided tours and organizing group tours to India, Myanmar, Nepal, and many other countries.

Figure 4

Phutthapratip Tour Co., Ltd. Main Website Page



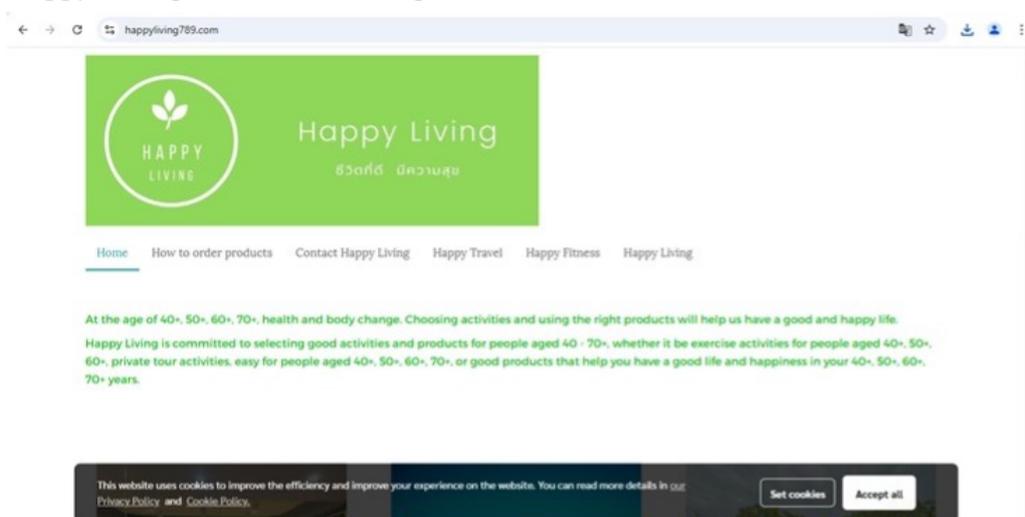
Source: ทัวร์แสวงบุญ สังเวชนียสถาน อินเดีย เนปาล พุทธประทีปทัวร์

Happy Living (ชีวิตที่ดี มีความสุข)

Happy Living (ชีวิตที่ดี มีความสุข) is another travel agency which carefully selects high-quality activities and products for individuals aged 40 to 70+. The offerings include tailored fitness programs for those in their 40s, 50s, and 60s, as well as comfortable private tours designed for travelers aged 40, 50, 60, and 70+. Additionally, it provides premium products that support a happy and fulfilling lifestyle for this age group.

Figure 5

Happy Living Main Website Page



Source: happyliving789

Data Analysis

This study examines the marketing messages used in silver tourism websites in Thailand, focusing on naming strategies, visual content, written textual messages, and references to older consumers. The analysis aims to uncover potential ageist implications, stereotypes, and cultural representations of older adults in travel marketing.

The first stage involves recording the names of the travel agencies and their tourist packages. This analysis explores whether the naming strategies explicitly reference older age and aging, and whether they contain any ageist or stereotypical implications. The study examines whether the names reinforce positive or negative perceptions of aging, contributing to broader discourses on older tourism.

The second stage documents the visual content displayed on the front pages of the websites, which are captured in digital form for analysis. The study investigates the types of images presented, including whether older people are depicted and how they are socially positioned. The analysis draws upon Hummer et al.'s (1994) stereotype framework, categorizing portrayals of older individuals as either positive (e.g., Golden Ager, Perfect Grandparent, John Wayne Conservative) or negative (e.g., Severely Impaired, Despondent, Shrew/Curmudgeon, Recluse). Additionally, the study examines background imagery to determine whether it conveys specific cultural meanings related to aging and senior tourism.

The third stage involves textual analysis of marketing messages, including slogans and descriptions of older tourists. The study assesses the presence of promotional slogans, descriptions of older people, and their alignment with visual portrayals. Particular attention is given to whether the textual content reinforces positive or negative stereotypes of aging, as identified in Hummer et al.'s (1994) framework. The study also examines how cultural meanings of aging are embedded in the marketing discourse, exploring whether textual messages emphasize active, independent lifestyles or portray older travelers as dependent and in need of special accommodations.

Finally, the study analyzes how older consumers are referenced in the examined websites. Thai terms used to refer to older tourists are translated into English, with discussions on their cultural implications. The analysis explores whether references to older adults reflect politeness, respect, or hierarchical social values in Thai culture. Additionally, it examines the variety of terms used, such as “older tourists,” “retirees,” or “golden agers,” and evaluates whether these references align with positive or negative stereotypes.

By integrating these four analytical dimensions, this study aims to reveal how silver tourism is marketed in Thailand and whether the representations of older travelers contribute to ageist ideologies or reflect evolving perceptions of aging in Thai society.

Findings

Tour Fahsai (ทัวร์ฟาใส)

“*Tour Fahsai*” (ทัวร์ฟาใส) also known as “*Senior Tour Sparkling Hearts*” (ทัวร์สูงวัย, หัวใจฟรุ้งฟรุ้ง) is a tour company designed specifically for seniors who want to travel and explore new places and have fun without worrying about anything, whether it's

accommodation, transportation, or food, because this tour provides close care and attention from a dedicated team, making tourists feel as if they are traveling with family.

Figure 6

The Name of the Travel Agency Senior Tour Sparking Hearts

ทัวร์สูงวัย หัวใจฟรุ้งฟรุ้ง

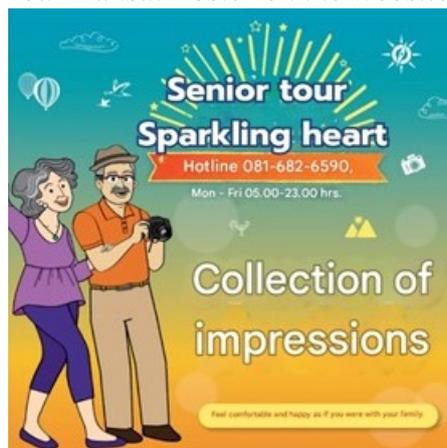
Source: <https://www.tourfahsai.com/>

The tour names clearly reflect their purpose, with “Senior Tour” (ทัวร์สูงวัย) emphasizing that it is designed specifically for seniors, while “Sparkling Hearts” (หัวใจฟรุ้งฟรุ้ง) conveys the idea that despite age, the heart remains young, cheerful and open to new experiences.

On the website’s homepage, you can find information about the company name, the tour packages the company offers, along with a slogan that reflects the company’s philosophy and identity, as well as customer reviews. There is also a promotional poster designed to attract attention and provide an overview of the company’s services.

Figure 7

Tour Fahsai Poster on the Website (English Version)



Source: <https://www.tourfahsai.com/>

From this poster, you can see that the man and woman in the picture are elderly people, dressed in modern clothes, with bright and cheerful expressions, reflecting their happiness and readiness to travel. This emphasizes that this tour is specially designed for elderly people. In addition, there are also “review photos” from real customers who have used this tour, all of whom are senior people.

Figure 8*Tour Fahsai Reviewer*

Source: <https://www.tourfahsai.com/images/content/original-1716542499683.png>

From the activity photos, it is evident that the elderly participants are happy and actively engaged in various activities, whether it be visiting tourist attractions, dining together, or taking group photos with their fellow travelers. These moments highlight the importance of social interaction and an improved quality of life for seniors through well-designed travel experiences.

The following stereotypes can be analyzed from the images:

- Golden Ager – Seniors are friendly, socially interactive, enjoy traveling, and are always ready for new adventures.
- Perfect Grandparent – Seniors are caring, warm, and embody the ideal image of a loving and supportive grandparent.

The slogan (another name for the tour) used to promote this travel experience is “*Senior Tour: Sparkling Hearts*” (ทัวร์สูงวัยหัวใจฟรุ้งฟรุ้ง), which conveys the idea of travel for seniors that is vibrant, fun, and not confined to the traditional image of elderly individuals as serious or reserved.

Additionally, there are supporting messages that reinforce this concept, such as:

Figure 9*Slogan of Fahsai Tour on Website*

ยินดีต้อนรับสู่ทัวร์ฟ้าใส ไม่มีคำว่า “แก่” แต่มาอยู่กับเรา...เที่ยวสบายๆตามสไตล์สูงวัย เหมือนไปกับคนในครอบครัวค่ะ

Source: <https://www.tourfahsai.com/images/content/original-1716542499683.png>

The messages “*Welcome to Fahsai Tour, There’s no such thing as ‘old’—just travel with us and enjoy a relaxing trip, senior style, as if you were part of the family*” (ยินดีต้อนรับสู่ทัวร์ฟ้าใส ไม่มีคำว่า “แก่” แต่มาอยู่กับเรา...เที่ยวสบายๆตามสไตล์สูงวัย เหมือนไปกับคนในครอบครัวค่ะ) highlights the company’s effort to create a warm and friendly atmosphere, fostering connections among travelers. The tour is carefully designed to cater to the needs of seniors who seek comfortable and hassle-free travel experience.

The phrase “*Senior style*” (สูงวัยสไตล์) reflects a travel style designed to suit the lifestyle and needs of retired travelers, which is different from traveling for teenagers or working people.

The program is designed to meet their needs and especially, limitations. The activities are appropriate, not too strenuous but still fun, with an emphasis on comfort and attention to every detail, including food and accommodation. It is a warm, safe trip, and full of meaningful experiences, even though negative stereotype of older age, realizing impaired image, must be assumed to be true and reinforced in the process of marketing.

The phrase “*as if you were part of the family*” (เสมือนไปกับคนในครอบครัว) gives the seniors a feeling of warmth, friendliness, and safety, which is suitable for the elderly who may be anxious about traveling. Using this phrase helps create a relaxed atmosphere, feeling like having children or grandchildren to take care of you, or like traveling with familiar people, not a stressful or too formal tour. However, the triggered ideology about older age is that older people seem to have fear towards leaving their comfort zone, namely, home and therefore reinforce the stereotype of recluse.

It is also noticeable that the company strategically uses the words “*senior*” (ผู้สูงอายุ) and “*old*” (แก่) to clearly emphasize that this tour is specifically designed for elderly travelers. The marketing messages successfully categorize target marketing segment in terms of the two words.

50 Plus Holiday

Figure 10

50 Plus Holiday Logo



Source: <https://www.50plusholidayth.com/>

The original branding of “*50 Plus Holiday*” was aimed at older adults, focusing on comfort, relaxation, and high-quality services. The name itself targeted people aged 50 and above, breaking the idea that older people aren’t as interested in travel. However, the marketing messages on the websites do not reflect its naming strategy to target older customers.

Exclusion of older age salient messages seems to be the marketing strategy in the case of *50 Plus Holiday* given that the visual image as highlighted on the front page of the website include a young couple with their children, reinforcing a family image, rather than anything related to older age. Other pictures only illustrate travel destinations.

Figure 11
50 Plus Holiday Homepage



Source: <https://www.50plusholidayth.com/>

Looking at the marketing of *50 Plus Holiday* shows how the company has changed its approach. The homepage no longer focuses on older adults but uses images of mixed-age groups, families, and luxurious destinations. This sends the message that their tours are for a wider audience, not just seniors. The focus on Switzerland and high-end travel suggests the company still values exclusivity and premium services, appealing to wealthy travelers, perhaps also including older adults who prefer comfort and have more disposable income.

The slogans and promotional texts on the website of *50 Plus Holiday* show how 50 Plus Holiday has adjusted. For example, phrases like “full-service luxury tour for elderly people but for all ages” keep their senior focus while appealing to a wider audience.

Figure 12
50 Plus Holiday Slogan and Description



Source: <https://www.50plusholidayth.com/>

The Thai text highlights relaxed schedules, premium stays, and customizable meals, catering to older travelers but also welcoming younger ones. For example, the above Thai slogans and descriptions seem to suggest an intentional balance between exclusivity and inclusivity. Terms like “โปรแกรมสบายๆ ไม่เร่งรีบ” (relaxed programs, no rush) and “เน้นโปรแกรมที่คุ้มค่า” (programs that maximize value) subtly cater to senior needs without explicitly labeling them as such. By doing so, *50 Plus Holiday* avoids the risk of making older travelers feel singled out or different from other tourists.

Wonderful Package

Figure 13

Wonderful Package Logo

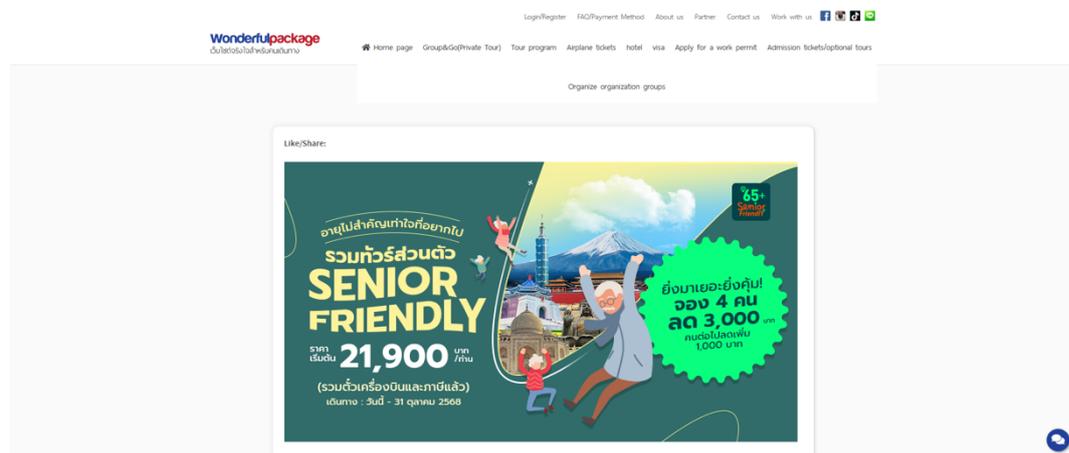


Source: <https://www.wonderfulpackage.com>

Travel agency's name, *Wonderful Package*, immediately conveys a positive, and uplifting feeling. This choice helps build a cheerful, inclusive brand image that does not single out any specific age group. Because the name itself does not mention seniors or any demographic, it is neutral and avoids any age-based stereotypes, thereby remaining appealing to a broad audience.

Figure 14

Senior Friendly Logo (Thai Version)



Source: <https://www.wonderfulpackage.com/p/รวมแพ็คเกจ%20SENIOR%20FRIENDLY/>

This poster promotes a “Private Tour Senior Friendly” package starting at 23,900 Baht per person (including airfare and taxes), valid until December 2024. It offers a group discount: “ยิ่งมาเยอะยิ่งคุ้ม! จอง 4 คน ลด 3,000 บาท คนต่อไป ลดเพิ่ม 1,000 บาท” (The more people, the cheaper it gets: book 4 people and get 3,000 Baht off, plus an additional 1,000 Baht discount per extra traveler). This suggests that seniors not only have the time and resources to travel but also value shared experiences with family or friends. By positioning the package as senior-friendly, the ad promotes the idea of active aging and portrays retirement as a time for new adventures, emphasizing social connection, affordability, and comfortable travel.

While the starting price of 23,900 Baht is appealing, it may imply that older adults have tighter budgets or need financial incentives, potentially reinforcing a stereotype of limited spending power. The focus on group travel implies that seniors prefer companionship, while the discount structure targets retirees with disposable income but who remain budget-conscious. The visual of active, social retirees supports this image, yet the emphasis on pricing and group deals could subtly suggest that seniors need financial assistance to afford full price, despite their energetic portrayal as golden ager.

In marketing contexts, the use of English terms such as “65 plus” or “senior” instead of direct Thai words for older adults reflects an effort to avoid potentially negative or stigmatizing connotations. By adopting more neutral or universally recognizable language, brands can position their offerings in a way that appeals to older consumers without triggering age-related sensitivities. This approach underscores the importance of linguistic choices in effectively targeting and engaging an aging demographic.

Phutthapratip Tour (พุทธประทีปทัวร์)

Figure 15

Phutthapratip Tour Logo



Source: <https://www.phutthapratiptour.com>

The name *Phutthapratip Tour* is a transliteration of the Thai term *พุทธประทีป* (*Phutthapratip*), which combines “พุทธ, พุทธะ” (Buddha) and “ประทีป” (lamp or light), translating to “Lamp of the Buddha” or “Buddha’s Lamp” (The Royal Society of Thailand, 2011). This term is commonly associated with Thai Buddhist temples, such as Wat Buddhapadipa in London (Cate, 2003).

Phutthapratip Tour is a travel agency specializing in pilgrimage tours. While its name does not carry any age-related implications, its reference to Buddhist travelers suggests a focus on religious or pilgrimage tourism. As Collins-Kreiner (2010) describes, pilgrimage is a religious and cultural phenomenon unique to human society, driven by spiritual needs and often involving visits to sacred sites. It also fulfills an internal desire for spiritual growth and self-discovery, which is particularly common among senior travelers.

Given its name, *Phutthapratip Tour* is likely to attract Thai senior travelers seeking meaningful spiritual journeys. From a cultural and theoretical perspective, and based on Hummer et al. (1994), the name could be classified within the *John Wayne Conservative* category, reflecting a positive religious connotation.

Figure 16

Visual Content Displayed on the Main Page of Phutthapratip Tour (English Version)



Source: <https://www.phutthapratiptour.com>

Senior tourists sitting in a meditative position with their hands in prayer can be seen in Figures 15 and 16, which are part of *Phutthapratip Tour*'s main website page. Buddhist monks are also present, serving as Buddhist ambassadors. The website portrays a social connection in which elder travelers engage in the journey with dedication and learning, while monks are revered as spiritual leaders who guide and instruct them. According to the website, this interaction blends cultural exchange and religious reverence seamlessly.

Additionally, following Hummer et al. (1994), we classify the visual content as a positive stereotype, using appropriate adjectives to identify it within the *John Wayne Conservative* category, where Buddhism serves as a religious reference. The background also features the Golden Rock Pagoda, Mahabodhi Temple, and Dhamek Stupa (from right to left)—all revered sites symbolizing tranquility, spiritual practice, and the tour itinerary. This layout helps elderly travelers easily envision and anticipate the locations they will visit. More importantly, the visual content conveys themes of spiritual devotion and religious pilgrimage as a significant journey for older adults. Consistent with Buddhist beliefs on karma and rebirth, the imagery aligns with Thai societal views on aging as a life stage dedicated to religious practice and merit accumulation (Ratanakul, 2013).

The slogans “Pilgrimage Tour India Tour (ทัวร์แสวงบุญ ทัวร์อินเดีย) Organized & Managed by Us – No Third Parties Involved (จัดเอง ดูแลเอง ไม่ส่งต่อ)” promote silver vacation packages on the homepage, emphasizing exclusivity, trust, and direct management—qualities that appeal to senior travelers who value authenticity and reliability. The term *Pilgrimage Tour* implies a spiritual or religious journey, aligning with the John Wayne Conservative stereotype, as described by Hummer et al. (1994). While reassuring potential travelers of direct service and eliminating concerns about middlemen or hidden fees, the emphasis on *No Third Parties Involved* may also subtly reinforce the perception of senior travelers as reclusive or overly cautious, suggesting a lack of trust in intermediaries. Despite the positive portrayal of direct service, the underlying subtext implies that seniors may be susceptible to deception. This dual representation, while intended to emphasize reliability, unintentionally reinforces perceptions of vulnerability, leading to more subtle, negative assumptions about senior travelers.

Additional slogans can be found on the website, including the phrases: “Spiritual journeys with ease & comfort” (เน้นการปฏิบัติธรรม เดินทางสะดวกสบาย) and “Senior travel—no exhaustion, no disappointment” (ผู้สูงอายุไม่เหนื่อย ไม่ผิดหวัง). These messages carry both positive and

negative implications. While they emphasize convenience and well-being, they also portray older travelers as requiring ease, comfort, and a lack of exertion. This reinforces the Recluse stereotype (Hummert et al., 1994) by suggesting frailty and limited energy, implying that aging inherently leads to exhaustion and dissatisfaction—an assumption that does not reflect the diverse realities of senior travelers.

Thai advertising strategies often present senior citizens as valued tourists deserving of high-quality care. This aligns with cultural principles that respect elders and acknowledge their strong purchasing power (Travel and Tour World, 2023). Studies indicate that senior travelers prioritize safety and premium services, leading to offerings tailored to their preferences (Eurasians Journal, 2022).

However, the emphasis on spiritual journeys aligns with the John Wayne Conservative stereotype (Hummert et al., 1994), suggesting sentimentality and a religious inclination. This is consistent with images of travelers sitting in a meditative posture with their hands in prayer, accompanied by Buddhist monks acting as religious ambassadors. Yet, the individuals in these images contrast with the intended theme of senior travel, as they depict a form of travel that does not necessarily align with the broader concept of silver tourism.

Happy Living

Figure 17

Happy Living Logo in Thai and English



Source: <https://www.happyliving789.com/>

The travel agency name *Happy Living*, as seen in Figure 17, was chosen to reflect positivity, inclusivity, and well-being, aligning with the slogan “*Good Life, Happy Living.*” *Happy Living* presents aging as a stage of life filled with joy, activity, and new experiences, avoiding any ageist connotations.

By emphasizing happiness and quality of life rather than age itself, the brand sends a strong message that travel is for everyone, regardless of age. This approach encourages older adults to view themselves as active participants in life and travel, rather than as individuals constrained by age. The absence of age-specific language also helps prevent stereotypes that suggest older travelers require specialized experiences due to frailty or dependency.

The homepage of *Happy Living* (Figure 18) depicts older adults as active, healthy, and socially engaged, reinforcing travel as a means of adventure, connection, and self-improvement. The dominant theme in its visual marketing challenges traditional aging narratives by portraying older adults as happy, independent, and adventurous.

Many images showcase nature, reflecting Thai older adults' preference for natural tourism. Research by Naksanee (2018) highlights their strong interest in health and nature-based travel, while Watcharatorn, et al. (2017) emphasizes the benefits of engaging with natural environments for well-being and personal growth. These visuals support the idea that travel enhances quality of life and align with *Happy Living's* commitment to a fulfilling lifestyle.

Figure 18

Visual Content Displayed on the Website of Happy Living in English

The image shows a collage of promotional banners for Happy Living travel services. The main banner is for the Songkran Festival, featuring a 'Senior Citizens' Day & Family Day' promotion. It lists special discounts for seniors aged 50+ (555 THB per person) and offers private group tours to Bali, Hanoi, Hoi An - Bana Hills, and Taipei. The banners also include slogans like 'TIME TO TRAVEL' and 'Because we want everyone to be happy'.

Destination	Duration	Price per person
Bali	4 days 3 nights	15,500 THB
Hanoi	3 days 2 nights	13,900 THB
Hoi An - Bana Hills	4 days 3 nights	17,500 THB
Taipei	4 days 3 nights	23,500 THB

Source: <https://www.happyliving789.com/>

The visual content (Figure 18) features older adults engaging in light exercise, yoga, wellness retreats, and exploring cultural and historical sites, emphasizing curiosity and adventure. Many images depict social engagement, showing older adults traveling in small groups, fostering friendship and shared experiences. These representations align with stereotypes such as the *Golden Ager*, where older adults are portrayed as adventurous, well-traveled, sociable, and independent, as well as the *Perfect Grandparent*, highlighting their roles as family-oriented, kind, and wise individuals (Hummer et al., 1994). These visuals promote a dynamic and positive image of aging, shifting the focus from decline to continued growth and engagement through travel.

The website also features slogans that shape perceptions of older customers. For example, the slogan “ชีวิตที่ดี มีความสุข” (*Good Life, Happy Living*) conveys a holistic sense of well-being, suggesting that older adults can continue to lead full and meaningful lives through travel and leisure. This phrase reinforces the idea that happiness is not solely defined by youth but can be cultivated at any stage of life. It encourages seniors to embrace travel as a way to enhance their physical, emotional, and mental well-being, supporting *Happy Living's* philosophy of promoting an active and fulfilling lifestyle for older travelers.

Another slogan, “เที่ยวสบายๆ ไปได้ทุกคน” (*Easy Travel for All*), emphasizes inclusivity, particularly for travelers with mobility challenges, reassuring them that *Happy Living's* services are designed to be accessible and stress-free. The imagery reinforces this message, such as depictions of older adults in wheelchairs appearing joyful and engaged, conveying that physical limitations do not have to be barriers to travel.

However, these images present an idealized version of aging, contrasting with the reality that physical decline is an inevitable part of growing older. Research by Gillett & Higgs (2011) on the *Third Age* suggests that contemporary marketing often portrays seniors as perpetually

active and youthful, masking the physical challenges they may face. The marketing strategy avoids directly mentioning disabilities or impairments, instead highlighting the positive aspects of travel experiences. This approach serves as a mitigating strategy, reducing the negative impact of stereotypes surrounding severe mobility impairments by integrating the positive *Golden Ager* stereotype. While this strategy fosters an empowering image, it also creates a paradox in which aging is celebrated while its more challenging aspects are subtly erased from the narrative, reinforcing an unrealistic expectation of aging.

The language used in the marketing materials aligns with the imagery, reinforcing the brand's portrayal of active and happy older adults. The written content avoids words that suggest frailty or limitations, ensuring that the messaging remains positive and empowering. The focus is on adventure, exploration, and well-being, rather than the need for assistance or special accommodations due to aging.

Figure 19

Description of Happy Living in Thai and English

ในวัย 40+ 50+ 60+ 70+ สุขภาพและร่างกายมีการเปลี่ยนแปลง การเลือกทำกิจกรรมและใช้ผลิตภัณฑ์ที่เหมาะสมจะช่วยให้เรามีชีวิตที่ดี มีความสุข

Happy Living ตั้งใจคัดสรรกิจกรรมและผลิตภัณฑ์ที่ดี สำหรับผู้ที่อยู่ในวัย 40 - 70+ ไม่ว่าจะเป็น กิจกรรมออกกำลังกาย สำหรับวัย 40+ 50+ 60+ กิจกรรมท่องเที่ยวแบบทัวร์ส่วนตัว สบาย ๆ สำหรับวัย 40+ 50+ 60+ 70+ หรือ ผลิตภัณฑ์ดีๆ ที่ช่วยให้มีชีวิตที่ดี มีความสุข ในวัย 40+ 50+ 60+ 70+

At the age of 40+, 50+, 60+, 70+ health and body change. Choosing activities and using the right products will help us have a good and happy life.

Happy Living is committed to selecting the best activities and products for people aged 40 - 70+, whether it be exercise activities for people aged 40+, 50+, 60+, private tour activities for people aged 40+, 50+, 60+, 70+, or good products that help you have a good and happy life at the age of 40+, 50+, 60+, 70+.

Source: <https://www.happyliving789.com/>

The target tourists are categorized as “วัย 40+ 50+ 60+ 70+” (ages 40+, 50+, 60+, 70+). Labeling individuals in their 40s as “older adults” reflects an expanded definition of aging that may not align with societal norms. Many people in their 40s and 50s do not yet identify as seniors, making this categorization somewhat controversial. While this broad age segmentation extends the marketing reach, it also raises questions about how aging is framed in promotional messaging. By using these age groups, *Happy Living* reinforces the idea that travel and adventure are lifelong pursuits. However, this approach also blurs traditional boundaries of what is considered “old” across different cultural contexts.

Discussion and Conclusion

The representations of older people and aging in the promotional messages of Thailand's silver tourism industry reflect a blend of progressive and traditional narratives, strategically balancing inclusivity with age-specific marketing.

A key inference is that while agencies increasingly portray older travelers as active, adventurous, and independent, they simultaneously reinforce subtle stereotypes about aging. For instance, *Tour Fah Sai* and *Wonderful Package* encourage active aging but maintain familiar tropes—such as the need for comfort, family-like support, and budget-consciousness—which may unintentionally limit perceptions of older travelers. Similarly, *Phutthapratip Tour* reinforces the view of aging as a time for spiritual devotion, aligning with conservative cultural expectations of later life in Thailand.

Conversely, *50 Plus Holiday* and *Happy Living* demonstrate a shift toward age inclusive marketing by downplaying explicit references to older age. Their strategies suggest an

awareness of potential stigma associated with “senior” labels, using subtle linguistic choices and imagery to attract older tourists without making them feel categorized by age. This reflects a broader trend in silver tourism marketing, where older travelers are positioned as experience-seekers rather than a distinct consumer group with special needs.

However, a critical issue emerges: the tension between age-conscious and age-neutral marketing. While removing explicit age references helps combat stigma, it may also overlook the diverse needs of older travelers, particularly those requiring specific accommodations during the process of travel. The success of these strategies depends on whether older tourists prefer subtle messaging or appreciate clear recognition of their needs.

Ultimately, these findings suggest that Thailand’s silver tourism marketing is evolving toward a more empowered, aspirational representation of aging. However, traces of traditional age-related stereotypes persist, indicating an ongoing negotiation between cultural expectations and modern consumer trends.

The research limitation is that the findings can only be applied in Thailand, a specifically cultural context. Future research can extend similar research inquiries in other cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the identified communication messages may not be appreciated by the addressed target customers. Future research can focus on how the identified marketing messages are perceived by older tourists.

References

- Blichfeldt, B. S., & Smed, K. M. (2019). 'Do it Forever': Discursive representations of older adults and sexualities in vacation marketing. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 25(2), 264–276. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766718771421>
- Cate, S. (2003). *Making merit, making art: A Thai temple in Wimbledon*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Department of Older Persons, Thailand. (2021). Thailand's ageing population statistics 2021. Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. https://www.dop.go.th/download/statistics/th1663828576-1747_0.pdf
- Euraseans Journal. (2022). Senior tourists' preferences and behavior in Thailand's tourism industry. The Euraseans: *Journal of Globalization and Social Sciences*. <https://euraseans.com/index.php/journal/article/view/226>
- Glover, T. D., & Prideaux, B. (2019). Understanding Silver Tourism: The Dynamics of Elderly Travelers in Contemporary Tourism Markets. *Journal of Tourism and Leisure*, 31(4), 123–145.
- Happy Living. (2020). Happy Living 789. <https://www.happyliving789.com/>
- Hummer, R. W., Boles, J., & Duran, M. (1994). Sociology of Aging: A Critical Perspective on the Role of the Elderly in Society. *Sociological Perspectives*, 37(2), 233–251.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2022). *Marketing Management* (15th ed.). Pearson.
- Naksanee, W. (2018). Nature-Based Tourism Preferences Among Thai Elderly. *Asian Journal of Tourism Studies*, 12(2), 58–72.
- Phuanpoh, Y., & Ketsomboon, N. (2023). Development of Integrated Marketing Communication Model for Health Tourism Entrepreneurs to Accommodate Elderly Tourists in the World Heritage City for Elderly Tourists (Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya District). *WSEAS Transactions on Business and Economics*, 20, 1320–1335.
- Phutthapratip Tour Co., Ltd. (2025). ทัวร์แสวงบุญ สังฆเวชนียสถาน อินเดีย เนปาล พุทธประทีปทัวร์ [Pilgrimage Tour to Buddhist Holy Sites in India and Nepal, Phutthapratip Tour]. <https://www.phutthapratiptour.com>
- Rajapark Institute. (n.d.). Tourist behavior of elderly people in Thailand. *Thai Journal of Environmental Management*. <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/rpu/article/download/125751/95216/328506>
- Ratanakul, P. (2013). Reflections on aging in Buddhist Thailand. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*, 25(1), 12–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15528030.2012.738582>
- The Royal Society of Thailand. (2011). Royal Institute Dictionary (พจนานุกรมฉบับราชบัณฑิตยสถาน). <https://dictionary.orst.go.th/>

- Singthong, E. (2020). *Digital Marketing Communication Strategy in the Tourism Industry, Silver Market Segmentation*.
- Smith, M., & Puczko, L. (2018). *Health, tourism and hospitality: Spas, wellness and medical travel*. Routledge.
- Smith, M., & Puczko, L. (2019). *The Impact of Silver Tourism on Destination Marketing. International Journal of Tourism Research*, 22(1), 102–115.
- Suphan, K., Patumporn, J., & Esichaikul, R. (2022). Elderly tourists influence on festival tourism evidence in Thailand. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 2746–2759.
- Tour Fah Sai. (2014). *Tour Fah Sai*. <https://www.tourfahsai.com/>
- Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). (2025). Silver tourism and the ageing population in Thailand. *Siam University Tourism Journal*.
<https://tourismtaat.siam.edu/images/152/42.pdf>
- Travel and Tour World. (2023). Thailand's tourism future: Why senior travelers are the key to long-term economic growth. Travel and Tour World.
<https://www.travelandtourtworld.com/news/article/thailands-tourism-future-why-senior-travelers-are-the-key-to-long-term-economic-growth/>
- Veeraporn, S., & Koontiya, K. (2023). Marketing Strategies for Silver Tourism in Thailand. *Thai Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 25(3), 34–50.
- Watcharatorn, T., Pengphan, W., & Kosaiyawat, S. (2017). แนวทางการส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวเชิงสุขภาพสำหรับผู้สูงอายุในเขตอำเภอเมือง จังหวัดชลบุรี [Promotion approaches for elderly health tourism in Muang District, Chonburi Province]. *วารสารการศึกษาและการพัฒนาสังคม [Journal of Education and Social Development]*, 13(1), 260–275.
- World Health Organization. (2021). World report on ageing and health.
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565042>
- Ylänne-McEwen, V. (2000). Golden times for golden agers: Selling holidays as lifestyle for the over 50s. *Journal of Communication*, 50(3), 83–99.