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## SENIOR CITIZENS AND THEIR LEISURE ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING LEISURE BEHAVIOUR OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN POLAND

**Key words:** ageing, tourist activity, physical activity, factors influencing leisure activities, marketing to seniors.

### ABSTRACT

Poles are still one of the youngest societies in Europe, yet considering the ever faster processes of population ageing by 2020 every fifth citizen of Poland will have been retired. Reaching a senior age and retirement opens a new period in man's life. Thanks to improvement in living conditions, progress in medicine and increasing social awareness of the role of hygiene, this stage of life may last now several dozen years. In view of all this, the question of living standards of senior citizens and factors determining these standards acquires crucial importance. Numerous studies have proven that a particularly important factor determining the so-called "successful ageing" is regular physical activity. Unfortunately, some studies have also shown that elderly Poles belong to the group of the least active EU citizens. The main reasons behind low physical and tourist activity of Polish seniors include poor financial standing, lack of active leisure habits, and – all too often – insufficient offer and promotion of sport and leisure activities targeted at this age group. The aim of this paper is to present the results of the authors' own research into the ways of spending free time by senior citizens in Poland to show selected factors motivating elderly people to engage in recreational activity as well as to recommend marketing policies which should be carried out in this particular market segment.

### INTRODUCTION

With the average age of 35 years, Poles are still one of the youngest societies in Europe, yet considering the ever faster processes of population ageing by 2020 every fifth citizen of Poland will have been retired. Reaching a senior age and retirement opens a new period in man's life. Thanks to improvement in living conditions, progress in medicine and increasing social awareness of the role of hygiene, this stage of life may last now several dozen years. In view of all this, the question of living standards of senior citizens and factors determining these standards acquires crucial

importance since a longer life in good health implies its higher standard, more independence and better physical fitness. Successful ageing is a process of optimization of opportunities for maintaining good health (physical, social and mental), a process enabling senior citizens to actively participate in social life, without being discriminated against because of their age, and thus allowing them to enjoy a good-quality, independent life. Successful ageing is determined by the satisfaction of some specific needs, among which particularly significant are the psychosocial ones. According to the American gerontologist C. Tibbitts, these include:

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- the need to perform socially useful activities;
- the need to be accepted as part of the society, community, or group, and to play a specific role in it;
- the need to satisfactorily spend the increased volume of time;
- the need to have a successful social life;
- the need to be accepted as an individual;
- the need to create opportunities for self-expression and feel a sense of self-realisation;
- the need of adequate mental and intellectual stimulation;
- the need to keep fit and have access to medical care;
- the need of a regular lifestyle and maintaining contact with one's family;
- the need of spiritual satisfaction [25].

Physical activity and tourism offer a perfect way to satisfy most of the above-mentioned needs, which determine successful ageing. Accordingly, giving elderly people opportunities to be active and encouraging them to lead an active life should not only be one of the highest priorities of the social policy of state or self-government authorities, but also a deliberate action of the society at large. E. Kozdroń even stresses that nowadays ageing and old age are no more a private matter, as in Poland they concern about 7 million people who are over sixty [12]. In the present study, the authors attempt to lay particular emphasis on such issues as identification of factors motivating individuals to engage in physical activity, pressure groups and marketing persuasion, which are crucial to effective promotion of recreation in the 60+ segment.

## METHODS

The aim of the research was to identify the ways of spending free time by senior citizens, as well as to identify some selected factors motivating elderly Poles to lead active lives. The specific objectives were as follows: (1) to identify the ways of spending free time by senior citizens on weekdays, at weekends, on public and religious holidays, and during a vacation; (2) to identify barriers limiting the participation in tourist and recreational activities; (3) to identify factors motivating elderly people to engage in physical activity (including pressure groups and marketing persuasion). The data were collected on the basis of questionnaire surveys conducted between 2006 and

2009 among 408 individuals aged over 60. Two questionnaire forms were used: one of them included questions focusing on forms of spending free time and barriers preventing the respondents from going on tourist trips and engaging in recreational activity, the other included questions concerning factors which motivate senior citizens to lead active lives. The former set of questions was answered by 225 respondents, and the latter by 183 interviewees. Information on the size of the research sample is given in the sections devoted to the results ([n = 225] or [n = 183]).

### *Profile of the respondents*

The questionnaire surveys [n = 225] were conducted between 2006 and 2009, throughout the four seasons. The respondents were both urban (61%) and rural (35%) inhabitants, mainly resident in the Wielkopolska Province. A number of the surveyed individuals (4%) did not state their place of permanent residence. The respondents represented such big cities (pop. 550,000-650,000) as Poznań (8%) and Wrocław (1%) as well as cities with pop. 350,000-400,000 including Szczecin (3%) and Lublin (1%). The largest group included inhabitants of medium-sized towns (pop. 44,000-110,000) such as Leszno (13%), Ostrów Wielkopolski (8%), Puławy, Jarocin, Głogów, Kalisz and Piła (1%). The remaining group of respondents was composed of residents of small towns and villages. Women constituted a slim majority (53%) of all the surveyed individuals. Most of the respondents were married persons (55%), a significant portion of them was widowed (41%), and only a small part of them was divorced (4%). More than one third (35%) of the surveyed individuals had a basic vocational education, followed by groups of respondents having a secondary (30%), higher postgraduate (16%), primary (14%), and higher undergraduate (1%) education. Every tenth subject was professionally active. The respondents assessed their financial standing as average (68%), good (23%), and poor (9%). The average monthly income per one family member was mostly between PLN 500 and 1,000 (50%), followed by the ranges of PLN 1,001-1,500 (23%) and below PLN 500 (17%). In the case of 6% of the respondents the average monthly income per one family member was between PLN 1,50 and 2,000, and 4% subjects stated that it was over PLN 2,000. Most seniors (56%) declared that their state of health was average, 28% of them complained

that it was bad, and the smallest portion (16%) stated that it was good.

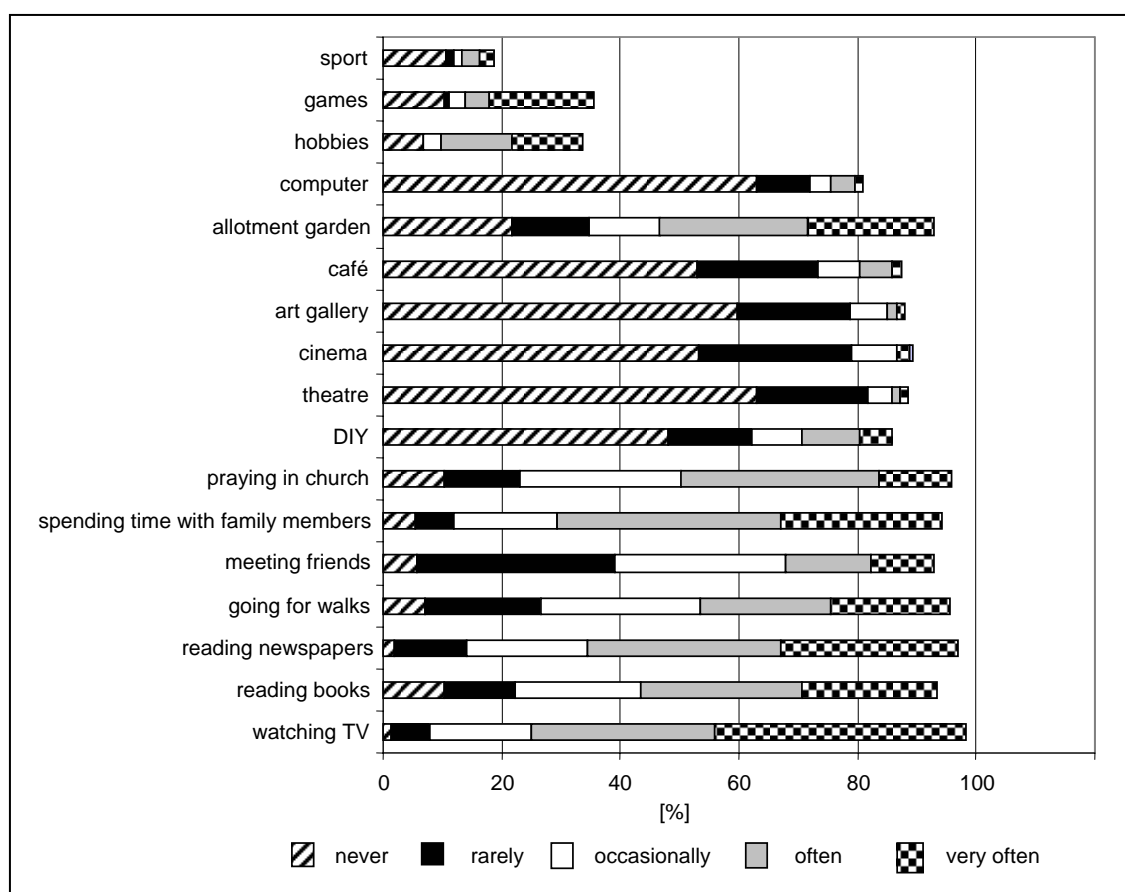
In 2009, 183 respondents aged over 60, all resident in the Wielkopolska Province, answered a set of questions about factors which motivated them to spend their free time actively. The study encompassed 113 women (62%) and 70 men (38%), which – to a certain extent – reflects the sex structure of the 60+ age group. In terms of age, the most numerous was the 60-65 bracket (38.8%), followed by the 66-70 (28.9%) and 71-80 (22.9%) age brackets. The study also included 17 subjects aged over 80 (9.4%). In the studied population the largest group included individuals with a secondary education (39.9%), 28.9% of the respondents had a basic vocational education, 23% – primary education, and 8.2% – higher education. More than half of the individuals (53.5%) were married, 38.3% were widowed, and 8.2% were either single or divorced. Almost half of the seniors assessed their financial standing as average (neither good nor bad), nearly 10% assessed it as very good, and a similar percentage of respondents assessed it as bad or very bad. Almost three-fourths of the studied

individuals received an old-age pension, and just under 15% drew a disability pension. 15.3% of the individuals are professionally active. More than 44% of the respondents (the largest group) lived in two-person households, and just over 23% ran one-person households. Every fifth individual lived in a 3-4-person household, and 13.6% – in households including 5 or more persons. About 38% and 42% of the respondents were rural and urban inhabitants, respectively.

## RESULTS

### *The ways of spending free time by senior citizens*

A noteworthy trait of the surveyed individuals [n = 225] is that they have a large amount of free time on a daily basis. In the case of 42% of the respondents it exceeded 8 hours, every fifth individual enjoyed 5-8 hours of free time, and every fourth – 3-5 hours of free time on weekdays. 12% of the respondents stated that the amount of free time they had did not exceed 3 hours.

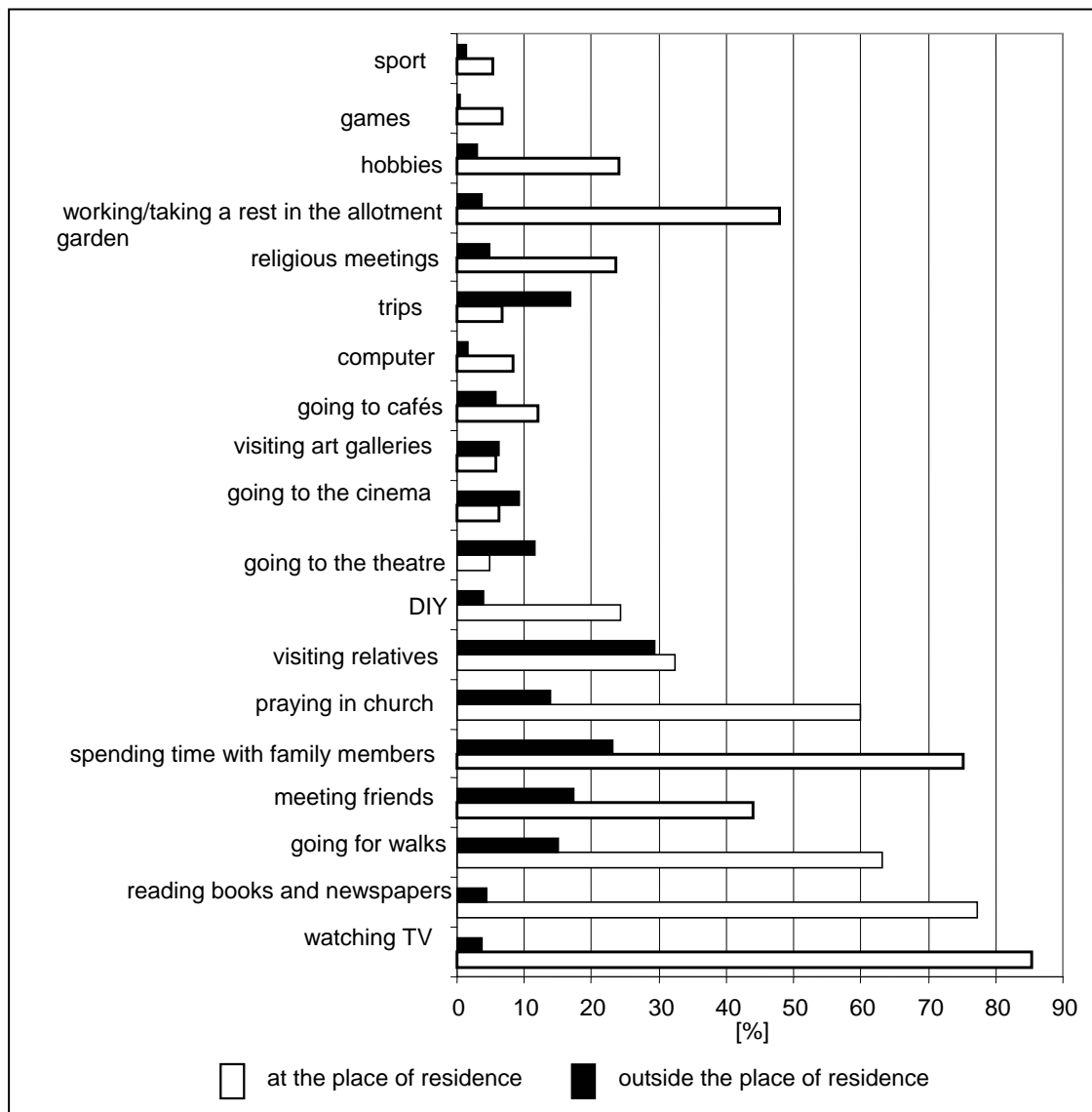


**Figure 1.** Ways of spending free time by senior citizens (on weekdays). Source: results of questionnaire surveys, n = 225

The forms of everyday leisure activity are varied (Fig. 1). Most willingly, however, the respondents spend their free time at home or in the immediate vicinity of their homes, engaging in such activities as watching TV, spending time with their family members, reading newspapers and books, or working and taking a rest in an allotment garden. Nearly one half of subjects (46%) often and very often spend their free time in church, and only a small portion of them attend cultural events. More than 80% of the surveyed individuals stated that they never or only occasionally go to the theatre, and nearly 80% of them declared that they never or rarely go to the cinema, visit art galleries or go to cafés. Only few of the senior citizens use computers; merely 5% of them state that they use a

computer on a regular basis, and 72% admit that they use it only occasionally or do not use it at all.

The ways of spending free time at the place of permanent residence at weekends and on public and religious holidays do not differ significantly from the activities in which the respondents engage on a daily basis (Fig. 2). Still the dominant forms of leisure activity are watching TV, reading newspapers, reading books, and spending time with family members. More than one half of the respondents often spend their free time in church, and nearly half of them – in their allotment gardens. However, such forms of leisure activity as going for walks, meeting friends and visiting relatives are also popular.



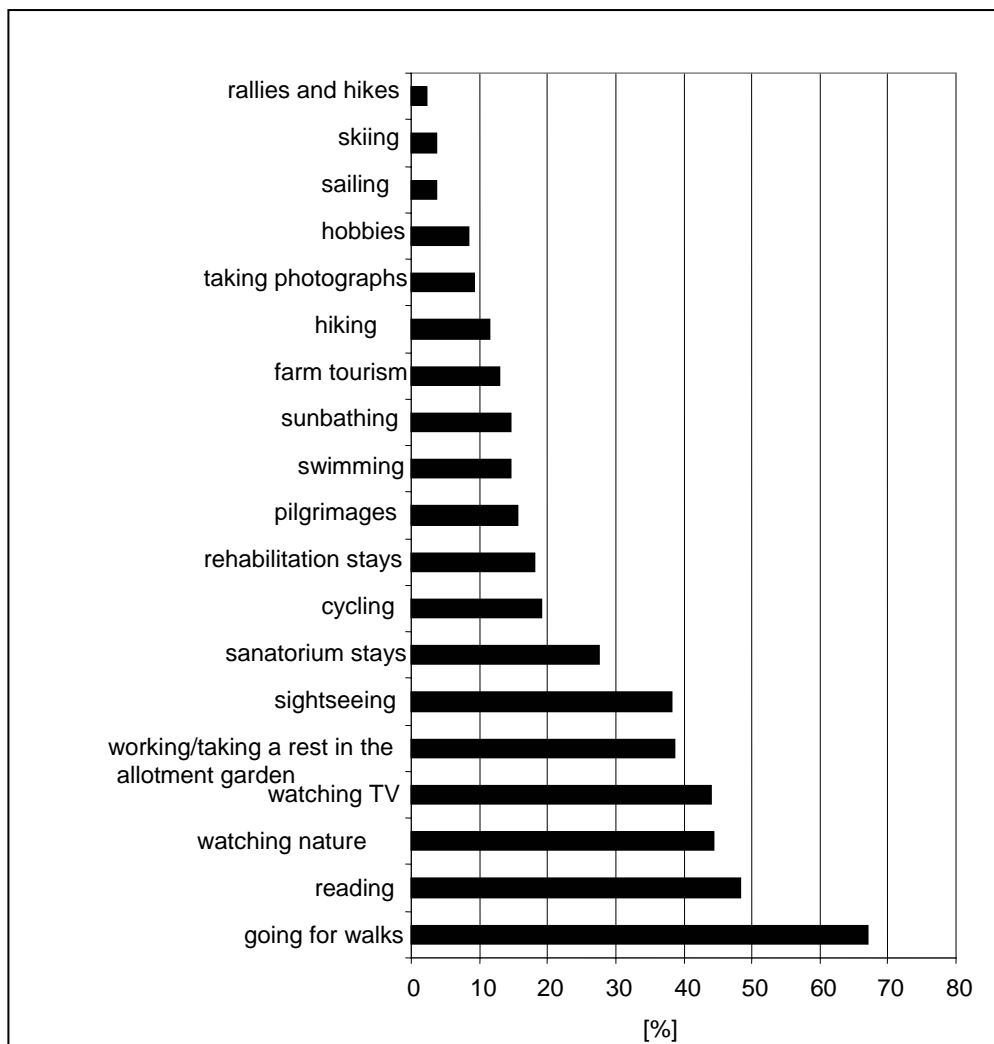
**Figure 2.** Ways of spending free time by senior citizens (at weekends and on public and religious holidays). Source: results of questionnaire surveys, n = 225

Most of the surveyed individuals (55%) declare that at weekends and on public and religious holidays they go away for recreational and tourist purposes. They usually visit their relatives or travel with other family members. Other significant motives for tourist trips are meeting friends and sightseeing. When outside the place of their permanent residence, senior citizens more willingly go to the theatre or cinema and visit art galleries, although these forms of spending free time are still far from being popular.

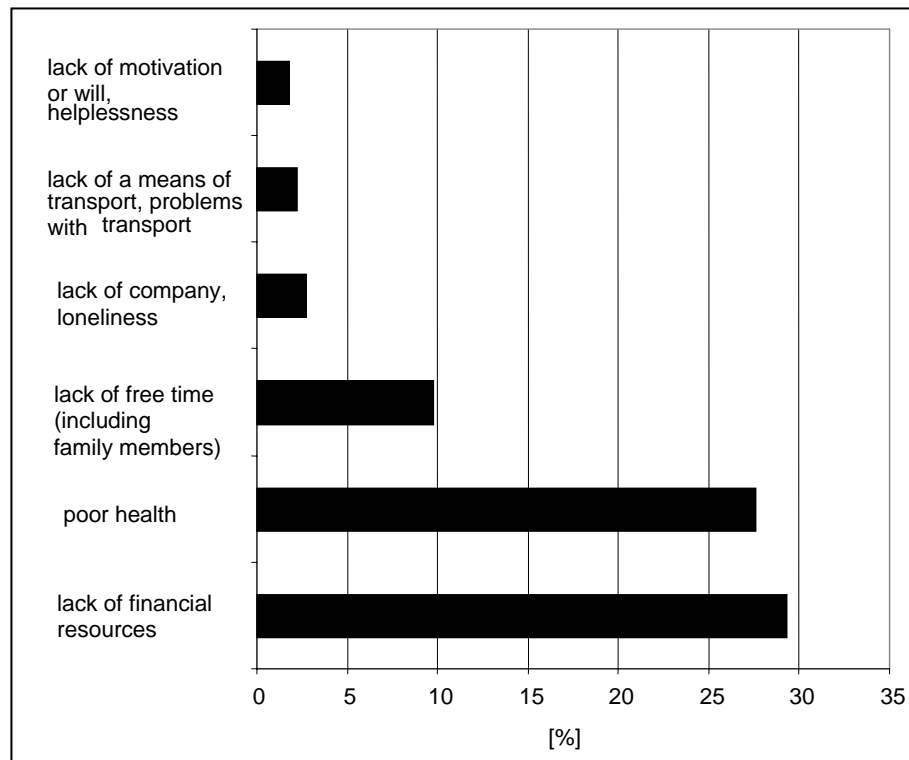
More than half of the respondents (53%) go away for tourist purposes during a vacation. The most popular forms of spending free time on such occasions are to a great extent a mere continuation of the activities in which the individuals engage on a daily basis, as well as at weekends and on public and religious holidays (Fig. 3). These include going for walks, reading newspapers and books, watching

TV, and working or taking a rest in allotment gardens. Other popular motives for tourist trips are watching nature, sightseeing, and staying at a sanatorium. Thus, the tourist activity of senior citizens is largely determined by their desire to keep fit and improve their health. This is reflected not only by frequent sanatorium or rehabilitations stays, but also by such forms of leisure activity as cycling, swimming, walking in the mountains, sailing, and skiing (all mentioned by the respondents). Also communing with nature is of great significance.

Interestingly, attending cultural events is not listed among the most common forms of spending free time, and neither are going to the theatre, going to the cinema, visiting art galleries, and going to cafés (in which senior respondents engage, however rarely, at weekends and on public and religious holidays). This may be caused by the lack of such



**Figure 3.** The most popular ways of spending free time by senior citizens (during a vacation). Source: results of questionnaire surveys, n = 225



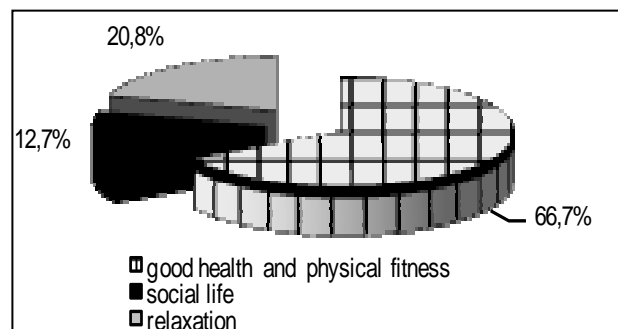
**Figure 4.** Factors preventing senior citizens from going on tourist trips. Source: results of questionnaire surveys, n = 225

habits, or it may result from the fact that the cultural offer is not adequately adapted to the needs of this particular market segment (i.e. senior citizens).

A significant portion of the respondents (46%) stated that they do not go away for tourist purposes either at weekends, or on public and religious holidays, or during a vacation. Why is it so? What factors constitute the main barriers preventing senior citizens from going on such trips? The following were pointed out: lack of financial resources and poor health (Fig. 4), every tenth individual does not go on tourist trips because of household duties (running the house, looking after grandchildren, looking after an ill spouse), or because their family and friends lack enough time (so there is no-one to accompany them, provide a means of transport, or assist them financially). Other reasons included feeling of loneliness, lack of motivation to visit new places, feeling of being lost and lack of organisational skills.

*Selected factors stimulating senior citizens to physical activity*

The results [n = 183] indicate that for 67% of the respondents the core benefit of engaging in sport or recreation is good health and physical fitness, nearly 20% of the individuals declare that first of all physical activity brings them relaxation, and for 13% of the seniors the main advantage is the opportunity to meet other people (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** Core benefits of physical activity in the eyes of elderly people Source: own research, n = 183

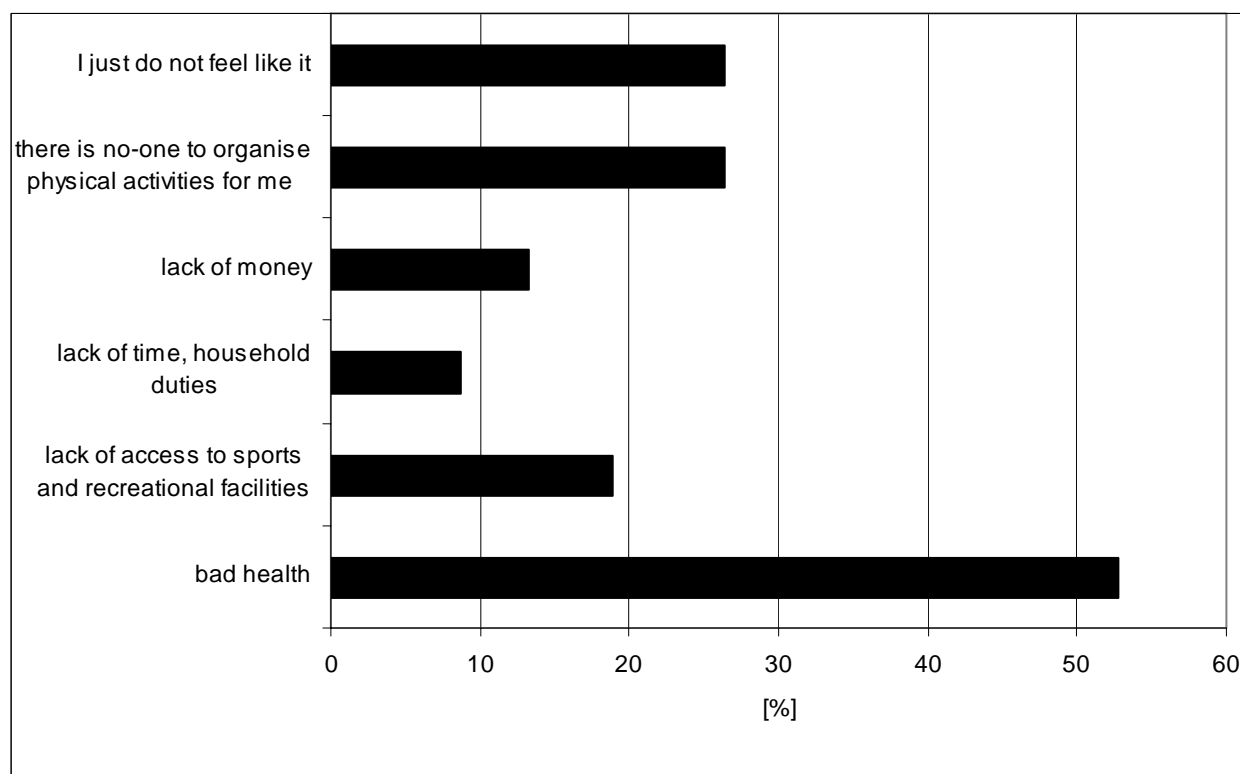
On the basis of the conducted research it is possible to state that for some 60% of the respondents the decision to lead a physically active life is a matter of personal choice, whereas nearly 40% of the individuals declare that they were influenced by others. The findings clearly indicate that the most influential decision group in this respect is physicians – 20.8% of the seniors admit that it was their doctor who motivated them to exercise or engage in some other type of physical activity. The other decision groups are children (10.3%) and friends (4.9%).

For 70% of the respondents physical exercise is a true pleasure, whereas 6% of the studied individuals admit they consider it an unpleasant duty, something they engage in only for health reasons (doctor's instructions). More than 85% of the seniors engage in physical activity on their own, and just under 15% participate in organized group activities. More than one half of the respondents declare that they exercise alone, 35% – along with their spouses (partners), 24% – along with their friends, and 22% – along with their grandchildren. For two-thirds of the subjects, being physically active does not entail any additional expenses, 17.5% of them declare that they spend on physical exercise less than PLN 10 monthly, some 15% allot

for this purpose PLN 10-49 monthly, and nearly 8% – PLN 50 or more.

In the group of those respondents who refrain from physical activity altogether, or engage in it only occasionally (29%), the most common causes of this situation are bad health (52.8%) and a general aversion to physical effort (26.4%). For almost every fifth respondent the main problem is lack of access to sports and recreational facilities, and for just over 13% of the individuals – lack of money. Some 9% of the seniors state that they cannot engage in recreational activities because of their household duties (Fig. 6).

It is worth stressing that a significant percentage of the respondents do not engage in any kind of physical activity only because they do not feel like it, or they do not feel such a need. Taking into account the whole population of individuals aged 60 or more, it is possible to estimate that more than 2 million of Polish seniors lead lives deprived of any physical activity, and as many as 800,000 of them are “physically lazy”. Thus, an all-out educational and promotional campaign ought to be launched, targeted at this specific group, with special attention paid to an adequate choice of marketing tools (in particular, persuasion techniques). Physically passive respondents declare



**Figure 6.** Barriers preventing seniors from engaging in physical activity. Source: own research, n = 183.

\* respondents could give more than one reason why they do not engage in physical activity

that the following might possibly persuade them to change their lifestyle: doctor's instructions (73.3%), friends (13.3%) and family members (6.7%). Only nearly 3% of the respondents declare that they would be inclined to become more physically active, if their incomes were higher. Interestingly, none of the subjects singled out commercials or advertisements as factors motivating them to change their lifestyles. The following possible reasons for becoming more physically active were pointed out by the respondents: keeping fit and maintaining good health (63.4%), free physical activities for seniors (36.1%), opportunities for meeting new people (18%).

On the one hand, the need for promoting active lifestyles has in recent years attracted increasingly more attention, mobilisation of senior citizens is one of the highest priorities of the socio-economic policy of state and self-government authorities, more and more organisers of cultural and recreational activities for seniors are trained, new media have appeared and new web portals have been created for the elderly. On the other hand, however, senior citizens still find it difficult to obtain information about physical activity of elderly people or recreational opportunities available in their immediate vicinity. More than 40% of the respondents do not know if, at the place where they live, there are any institutions or businesses offering tourist or recreational attractions for senior citizens. Nearly 22% of the studied individuals are convinced that no such offer is available at their dwelling place. It is heartening, though, that one-third of the respondents know that such an offer is available at the local clubs for senior citizens, community centres and educational institutions. It turns out, however, that although the opinion-forming role of the mass media cannot be overestimated, only less than 30% of the respondents were able to find in it some interesting information about the benefits of engaging in physical activity at an old age. Most of the seniors learnt about them from their family members (36.6%), doctors (22.9%), or friends (6%).

## DISCUSSION

Changes accompanying the process of ageing, occurring both in the internal (psychophysical) and social sphere, greatly determine the needs and motivations related to

various aspects of senior life – also with regard to physically active leisure. Professional literature presents detailed results of numerous studies focusing on these issues. Among factors determining leisure behaviour of senior citizens, the most frequently studied ones include demographic factors (age, sex, health condition), psychological factors (personality, emotions, motivations, perception), cultural factors (attitudes, values), social factors (education, phase of the family life cycle), economic factors (income, prices), and geographical factors (place of residence). However, there is a scarcity of marketing-oriented studies, intended to precisely identify both the diverse needs of this vast market segment, and the opportunities for effective promotion of an active lifestyle. That such studies are truly necessary is proved by the mere fact that more than 50% of senior citizens declare that they are aware of the need to exercise, but only half of them (and 25% of the total population of individuals aged over 60) engage in physical activity on a regular basis. The causes of low activity (physical and social) of Polish seniors (in particular when compared with seniors living in Western Europe) are often sought in low pensions and the failure of leisure organisers to make adequate offers. This argument is particularly sound as regards tourist activity, which is largely determined by the financial standing of consumers-seniors. With regard to physical activity (sport, recreation) pursued at one's place of residence, this argument is often misused; it is put forward to justify "the physical laziness", which results mainly from the lack of appropriate habits, values and patterns relating to active leisure [9, 10, 17, 18]. Numerous studies indicate that the age factor significantly determines the hierarchy of life values of Poles, and – sadly – with age such values as culture, art, entertainment and travel lose their meaning (Table 1).

On the basis of the analysis of the opinions expressed by the respondents, and taking into account their age, it is possible to assume that a positive tendency has been observed in Poland among retired persons to lead active lives. This is testified by the fact that in the group of the youngest seniors (60-65 years) the number of individuals who admit that they do not engage in any form of physical activity is the lowest. This is so because the generation of the so-called "baby-boomers" (people born between 1946 and 1955) are reaching their senior age; their system of values,



**Table 1.** Life values of Poles (by age)

What are the most important things in your life? What determines the meaning of your life?	Answers given by respondents (by age)					
	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65 years and more
family, marriage, children	61	75	73	70	69	70
health (my own and of my family members)	55	66	68	67	66	76
love, friendship	69	56	57	45	50	48
work – employment	50	52	55	56	34	12
belief in God and living according to faith	29	29	37	34	50	61
peaceful life without any problems	22	27	29	33	33	43
personal security at home and in public places	21	24	31	31	33	31
professional success	39	30	22	22	18	7
financial security	18	23	23	26	14	22
education, professional development	42	24	18	17	15	9
being helpful to others	15	20	17	15	22	17
job satisfaction, interesting job	19	18	14	14	10	5
making a fortune, earning a lot of money	14	12	7	9	8	2
travel, getting to know one's own country and new countries	7	7	8	12	13	7
contact with art, literature and music	14	8	7	6	11	5
communing with nature	2	2	6	8	9	12
exciting life, a lot of entertainment	7	5	1	3	1	3
a share in power	4	1	2	0	1	1

Source: Wartości życiowe. Komunikat z badań, CBOS, Warszawa 2004.

attitudes and beliefs differs markedly from that of the previous generation. For the “baby-boomers”, retirement is the time for pursuing their interests and hobbies, the time when they can lead a busy social life, engage in recreational activities, and travel extensively – things they could not do before, mainly because of lack of time. Although their past experiences are quite different from those of the “baby-boomers”, Polish fifty- and sixty-year-olds are in many respects similar to their West European peers. Yet the most numerous group of seniors is the WWII cohort (people born between 1925 and 1940) – a generation whose system of values, attitudes and beliefs was shaped during the war and in the early years of the Polish People’s Republic. In their system of values, entertainment, fun, recreation and enjoyment rank almost at the very bottom [19].

As it has been mentioned before, in professional literature (and in practice) there is a scarcity of marketing-oriented studies and analyses, intended to comprehensively survey this extremely diversified market segment. The seniors’ market virtually includes a number of submarkets, with

distinct profiles and, consequently, various needs (desires), and thus it is a wrong policy to offer it the same product. Of crucial importance is precise segmentation of the seniors’ market, based not only on the criterion of chronological age, sex, health condition or phase of the family life cycle, but also including generation profiles, systems of values, and subjective (cognitive) age [8]. The concept of cognitive age assumes that to understand the purchasing behaviour of senior citizens one must identify their subjective sense of age, which may differ from the chronological or biological age. Cognitive age can be expressed in statements like: “I am 80, but I feel as if I were 65”, or “I am 60, and I am already a very old man”. The mean difference between chronological age and subjective age is about 20% [15].

Another aspect which should be taken into account when designing fitness and tourist programmes for senior citizens is the so-called “rhythm of life”. When an individual retires, his/her rhythm of life changes radically since it is no more determined by professional work and its specific regularity. Also the significance of leisure time is

different when one has retired. Weekends, public and religious holidays, and vacations are now much less “attractive” than they used to be when the person was professionally active. Retired seniors are rather more interested in finding new opportunities for managing their free time on weekdays, and they also have different expectations concerning their leisure. The findings presented in this paper show that seniors spend their free time mainly watching TV, meeting their family members, or reading newspapers. However, this is most likely so because they cannot actively manage their time. This was confirmed by studies conducted by TNS OBOP (Public Opinion Research Company), in which 72% of the senior citizens declared that if given such an opportunity they would be all too willing to engage in voluntary service, consultancy work, or social work (health and personal/family situation permitting) [11].

A possible factor hindering social mobilisation of senior citizens (including their engagement in physical activity) is the negative public image of elderly people created (maybe unintentionally) by the mass media, which show them in a bad light in the context of economic problems and increasing budget expenditure. The “cult of youth”, so deeply rooted in today’s mass culture, all too often arouses in elderly people a feeling of shame, caused by their appearance (wrinkles, obesity, disability), thus preventing them from engaging in recreational activities, in particular group and outdoor activities. Consequently, seniors often work out alone, which is confirmed by our findings. This situation may also be aggravated by some advertising campaigns of various products, which exploit stereotypes of old age and elderly people. It is in the interest of the society at large to prevent these practices<sup>1</sup>.

Comparing the results of the research conducted among seniors aged over 65 with the results of the nationwide studies “What do Poles do in their free time?” [3] and “Participation in cultural life and other forms of leisure activity in 2003” [22] the following conclusions can be formulated:

- Seniors have a greater amount of free time (every eighth (13%) Pole claims that he/she has

no free time at all, and almost one fourth (23%) of Poles admit that they do not have any free time on weekdays);

- Seniors spend their free time in a similar way on weekdays, at weekends and on public and religious holidays (the results of the nationwide research show that in their free time 54% of Poles watch TV and/or DVD films, 37% read newspapers and books, and 24% go for walks);
- Unlike younger individuals, senior citizens spend more time with their family members and in church;
- Leisure activities pursued by seniors on weekdays, at weekends and on public and religious holidays are more monotonous;
- Senior citizens are less interested in attending cultural events.

Thus, the regularity demonstrated in the nationwide report (interest in cultural events declines with age) was proven [22]. The research also corroborated findings from the study of leisure activity of Poles (in general, older people are more likely to pursue “softer” forms of leisure activity, e.g. reading magazines, watching TV, or going to church) [1]. Besides, among seniors the percentage of individuals who spend Saturdays and Sundays in the same way as they spend weekdays is double the national average.

As has been shown by numerous studies, the level of physical activity of Poles is one of the lowest in the EU [4] and findings from the international project *Bridging East-West Health Gap* indicate that only 3-10% of Polish adults demonstrate a satisfactory level of physical activity [13]. Sedentary lifestyle is particularly typical of Polish seniors, who are unwilling to or cannot use the existing offer or demand it. To persuade seniors to engage more eagerly in physical activity entails using well-designed marketing tools (as is the case with other areas of consumption and other consumer groups). To encourage a senior citizen to use the cultural, recreational or tourist offer, he/she should be treated as a client – in the fully marketing sense of this word. Thus, it is necessary to precisely identify his/her desires (the specific way in which he/she meets his/her needs), design and deliver (to an appropriate place, at a suitable time and at an acceptable price) the right product along with an adequate promotional message. To successfully reach this segment, businesses, cultural institutions, health care establishments and social organisations should redefine their strategies, taking into account

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<sup>1</sup> Over recent years, the Ethical Committee for Advertising of the “Advertising Council” Union of Associations has called on a number of advertisers to stop broadcasting commercials presenting senior citizens in a bad light, [www.radareklamy.org](http://www.radareklamy.org) (20.07.2009)

the multidimensional aspect of ageing and the heterogeneity of the seniors' market. It is also necessary to support all activities intended to create a positive (or just "normal") image of senior citizens in every dimension of the ageing process (appearance, behaviour, expectations). An important role is to be played here by the mass media, educational institutions (e.g. Universities of the Third Age), various authorities and public opinion leaders.

The results of the research confirm that the market behaviour of consumers is to a large extent influenced by other members of the society, who in the marketing theory are referred to as "decision groups". When making decisions with regard to managing their leisure time, consumers-seniors can also be influenced by various individuals and groups the most important of them being:

- family members – children and grandchildren, as well as other relatives, who mainly have influence on decisions with regard to purchasing such items as: furnishings, clothes, and food, as well as on the ways of spending free time;
- neighbours and friends – in most cases individuals who are the same age; they can exert a powerful influence on decisions with regard to shopping, in particular when the children live in a remote place; they also have a profound influence on decisions relating to leisure activity (joint leisure activities, joint trips, shared hobbies);
- physicians, in particular when making decisions with regard to using medical services, purchasing medicines and rehabilitation equipment; they also have a considerable influence on the type of physical activity in which seniors engage [19, 23].

When preparing their offer, providers of tourist and leisure services ought to take into account the specific features of the target group, and be conscious that seniors:

- are demanding buyers and expect that their consumer experience will be respected;
- seek high-quality products and services;
- seek what is healthy and natural; they want to know the origin of the product they wish to buy; they are not attached to any particular brands;
- want to fully utilise their time;
- appreciate all that helps them save their time;

- want to feel confident about their health, appearance, clothes and contacts with other people;
- fear being laughed at and they are sometimes ashamed of their appearance;
- need solid arguments when deciding whether to buy a product or engage in some activity;
- are not very sensitive to mass media advertising; to reach them, other communication channels should be used (mainly the so-called personal channels: doctors, nurses, family members, friends, moral authorities belonging to the same generation);
- may have problems using modern technologies (mobile phone, computer, Internet), or understanding instruction manuals and marketing materials; they should be treated with all due understanding and patience;
- seek authenticity and genuineness, they look for their "roots", and they are interested in cultural heritage and tradition;
- manage their time in a different way than professionally active individuals; they prefer to engage in various activities in the mornings and on weekdays;
- expect that service providers will adapt their products to the limitations caused by poor health, failing eyesight, or lower mobility (e.g. larger font in advertising brochures, leaflets and catalogues; comfortable means of transport; elimination of architectural barriers).

Respecting the specific features and expectations of the clients (seniors) in a leisure offer will undoubtedly result in the situation that this particular social group will find more satisfaction in leisure services, which in turn can motivate them to engage more actively in recreation in the physical, cultural and social dimension.

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