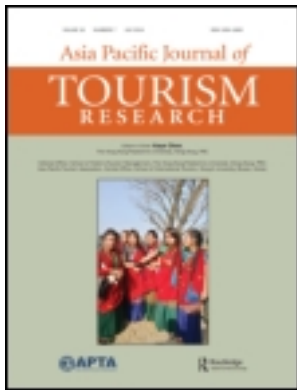


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Does a Friendly Hotel Room Increase Senior Group Package Tourists' Satisfaction? A Field Experiment

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This study uses a field experiment to investigate whether senior-friendly facilities in a hotel affect the satisfaction levels of senior tourists. This research also identifies the staff explanation effect with respect to tourists' satisfaction. A field experimental design was applied to examine the senior tourists' satisfaction with the group package tour. Senior-friendly attributes were obtained from the literature reviews, three focus groups, and in-depth interviews. Hotel rooms with senior-friendly facilities were designated as the first experimental group and senior-friendly rooms with staff explanation were designated as the second. A total of 397 valid questionnaires for senior group package tourists were retrieved. The results indicate that a room with facilities could significantly increase customers' satisfaction with respect to cleanliness, comfort, decoration, illumination, overall satisfaction, and room recommendation. However, staff explanation did not further increase or influence customers' satisfaction for a room with friendly facilities.

Key words: friendly hotel room, senior tourist, satisfaction, staff explanation

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Introduction

The senior population has been growing rapidly as life expectancy increases. In addition, the post-World War II baby boom has led to a greater number of senior citizens (Gladwell & Bedini, 2004; Pan & Jordan-Marsh, 2010). Many studies have indicated that seniors now are different from those in the past: they are healthier, spend more, travel more frequently, and stay away longer and at greater distances (Bai, Jang, Cai, & O'Leary, 2001; Gladwell & Bedini, 2004).

The tourism community has witnessed increasing attention to research on the senior market (Jang, Bai, Hu, & Wu, 2009). Senior travelers constitute a lucrative segment for the travel and leisure industry because they have more time to travel and they spend a larger portion of their discretionary income on travel and leisure activities (Marshall, 2004; Reece, 2004).

More and more senior travelers travel around the world. The trend does not only occur in the Western world, and it is becoming more and more palpable among Asian countries. Take China, for example; it has become the largest source market of outbound tourism (World Tourism Organization, 2012); until 2011 there were over 70 million outbound tourists (China National Tourism Administration, 2013) and the volume of international trips involving Chinese travelers has grown from 10 million in 2000 to 83 million in 2012 (World Tourism Organization, 2013). Moreover, as the largest source of outbound tourists in Asia, the number of Chinese tourists traveling to other countries could reach 100 million by 2020 (World Tourism Organization, 2012).

At the same time, China's population is graying rapidly. China has the largest population of senior citizens in the world, with

144 million people aged 60 or older in 2005, representing 11% of the whole population (Pan & Jordan-Marsh, 2010). Similarly, an identical phenomenon appears among Taiwan citizens. The number of Taiwanese outbound tourists reached 9.58 million in 2011; of these, 31% were those aged 50 years or older (Tourism Bureau, 2012). The percentage of outbound tourists who were seniors aged 65 years or older had increased from 6.5% of overall outbound tourists in 1999 to 9.4% by 2012 (National Immigration Agency, Ministry of the Interior, 2013). In conclusion, the numbers of outbound senior Chinese and Taiwanese tourists are escalating.

For many Asian countries, including Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and China, the group package tours (GPTs) are one of the main modes of outbound travel (Chen & Hsu, 2012; Lai & Graefe, 1999; Wang, Hsieh, Yeh, & Tsai, 2004; Wong & Kwong, 2004). Littrell, Paige, and Song (2004) and Patterson and Pegg (2009) revealed that senior tourists aged 50 and above are becoming increasingly important in the tourism arena. Simultaneously, senior tourists tend to travel via GPT (Bai et al., 2001; Javalgi, Thomas, & Rao, 1992; Wang, Ma, Jao, Hsu, & Lin, 2010). This trend is most obvious with senior Asian tourists (Mok & Armstrong, 1995; Qu & Li, 1997; Wang, Hsieh, Chou, & Lin, 2007; Wong & Lau, 2001).

Previous studies have indicated that GPTs enable tourists to efficiently visit as many places as possible within a fixed period of time, travel safely through other countries, and avoid the problems normally associated with untrustworthy transportation and cleanliness (Enoch, 1996). GPTs provide convenient plans and departure dates, affordable prices, friendly suggestions, the accompaniment of tour managers and guides, and special activities and experiences, providing

tourists with ultimately relaxing tours (Chen & Hsu, 2012; Hsieh, O'Leary, & Morrison, 1994; Middleton, 1991; Wang, Hsieh, & Huan, 2000; Wang et al., 2004, 2007).

Regarding GPTs, hotel accommodation has been regarded as the most important service (Chen & Hsu, 2012; Wang et al., 2000, 2004, 2007). The study of Wang et al. (2000) found that outbound tourists spend an average of 6.1 nights abroad, suggesting that tourists have many opportunities to experience various hotels. Mintel (1991) and Gladwell and Bedini (2004) believe that mature travelers spend more time in hotels than others. These studies demonstrate the increasing numbers of seniors participating in GPTs. Though hotel accommodation is the most important part of GPTs, literature has seldom focused on the accommodation factors leading to senior-citizen satisfaction.

Previous literature regarding the factors affecting tourist hotel selection has considered safety to be the most influential factor (Ramanathan, 2012; Ramanathan & Ramanathan, 2011). Inevitably, due to senior tourists' physical limitations (for instance, mobility, flexibility, visibility, and sense of smell), they will be more heedful of safety concerns. Hotels therefore need to consider what kinds of facilities can be provided to make them more appealing to senior travelers, and thereby directly raise their level of satisfaction.

Accordingly, past hotel facility research has focused on the relationship between customer satisfaction and repeat visitation (Chu & Choi, 2001; Skogland & Sigauw, 2004). Wuest, Tas, and Emenheiser (1996) defined perceptions of hotel attributes as the degree to which travelers find various services and facilities important in promoting their satisfaction with hotel stays. These studies verify the

positive correlation between facility attributes and tourist satisfaction. Besides, the facilities provided by hotels can also directly affect tourist satisfaction (Heide & Grønhaug, 2009; Skogland & Sigauw, 2004). Heide and Grønhaug (2009) reported that when tourists use the tangible facilities of hotels, the atmosphere established by the facilities has an important influence on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, tourist satisfaction equals greater profitability. Therefore, this study investigates the importance of friendly room facilities from the perspective of senior tourists, and the influence of senior-friendly facilities on their satisfaction. This research gap is worth investigating from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

Research Problem

Wang, Chen, and Chou (2007) stated that senior tourists and tourists in general had different needs and requirements of GPTs. The needs of senior GPT tourists for software and facilities alter with their age and physical condition. Therefore, this study assumes that tourists at different age levels emphasize different accommodation factors.

Previous studies regarding hotels have focused on business and leisure tourists and rarely investigated senior GPT tourists. Based on relative levels of compliments and complaints from hotel customers, Cadotte and Turgeon (1988) found the attitude of employees, cleanliness and neatness, quality of service, and employee knowledge of service to be the most frequent factors mentioned by travelers. It appears that certain attributes of a hotel are more likely to please guests, while others are more likely to cause dissatisfaction. In addition, Knutson (1988) stated that cleanliness and comfort, convenience of location,

promptness and courtesy of service, safety and security, and the friendliness of the employees were considered important by business and leisure travelers when selecting a hotel for the first time or for repeat patronage.

Knutson, Beck, Kim, and Cha (2009) indicated that all hotel products/services being safe to use would improve a guest's overall experience. Chu and Choi (2001) explored the 26 attributes of Hong Kong hotels preferred by tourists departing from Hong Kong international airport: of the participants, only 13.7% of them were aged 50 years or older. However, these studies did not focus on the senior market.

Moreover, it could be argued that, compared with western societies, most Chinese tourists join GPTs with their spouses, families, and friends (Wang et al., 2004). Moreover, it may be that senior GPT tourists are more easily affected by others in their decision to purchase GPT products (Wang et al., 2007). Based on these studies, we can conclude that the characteristics of senior GPT tourists are significantly different from those of business and leisure tourists.

Most literature has investigated the needs and attributes of hotel environments and facilities for senior consumers (summarized in Table 1). However, the practical differences in the experiences of the users are rarely considered. Therefore, this is the first empirical study using a field experiment to investigate how satisfaction of senior tourists is affected by adding friendly facilities to the hotel rooms themselves.

Additionally, the most important motivational enticements for senior Taiwanese travelers are cleanliness and safety (Jang & Wu, 2006). However, previous studies regarding hotel selection attributes either used tourists with different objectives as its research subjects (Chu & Choi, 2001; Yavas & Babakus,

2005) or focused on the hotel selection attributes of senior tourists (Ananth et al., 1992; Callan & Bowman, 2000; Marvel, 1999). These studies focused on essential attributes and perceptions. However, whether senior-friendly facilities can effectively promote satisfaction requires investigation. Barnett (1993) described senior-friendly hotel rooms which included: printed materials in large type, levers replacing knobs on doors, large buttons on alarm clocks, television remote controls and telephones, and grab bars in tubs. Therefore, this study defines senior-friendly operations as follows: the provision of facility is considered by hotels to promote convenience and satisfy the needs of senior tourists.

This study used literature reviews, focal groups, and in-depth interviews with experts to compile the vital facility attributes of customer perceptions and satisfaction. Then, this study conducted an investigation into the practical improvements of senior-friendly room facilities and the resultant satisfaction of senior tourists. The hypothesis is presented below.

H1: When senior GPT tourists select accommodation, the room with senior-friendly facilities will have a positive influence on overall satisfaction.

Chang and Tarn (2008) perceived that consumers pay more attention to physical representation, while physical tangibility helps improve satisfaction with hotel services. Retrospectively, Weaver and Heung (1993) indicated that friendly staff are of paramount importance for business travelers. In accordance to the aforesaid, "consumer and employee interaction is very critical to the success of service experience" (Chang & Tarn, 2008; Fortini-Campbell, 2003). Hartline, Wooldrige, and Jones (2003) stated

Table 1 Summary of the Literature Reviews: Senior Selection Attributes of the Hotels

Authors (Year)	Selection attributes	Samples
Ananth, DeMicco, Moreo, and Howey (1992)	Shower safety bars, nightlights in bathrooms, extra blankets, short hair carpets, user-friendly door handles, clear signs for medical facilities/public areas/doorways/restaurants, wide doors to accommodate wheelchairs, dietary menus, relatively early meal times, non-smoking rooms, and small portions of food	Mature tourists
Marvel (1999)	Hotel staff should avoid inappropriate words and be patient, speak slowly and clearly, easy to read TV channel guides, TV remote controls, telephones with large buttons, telephones with large buttons, lever-type door handles and water taps, handy shower sets, and shower grab bars	Senior tourists
Callan and Bowman (2000)	Shower safety bars, the availability of non-smoking rooms, cleanliness, comfort of bedrooms, interior decoration, the provision of clear signs and information, safety, space, lighting, and elevators	Senior tourists
Marshall (2004)	Sufficient hallway illumination, parking areas, cleanliness, comfort of bedrooms, and avoidance of ominous symbols in hotel room	Senior tourists

that the performance of the front desk, house-keeping, and parking personnel critically affect the perceived quality. Moreover, the performance of front desk and room service personnel also pivotally affect the perceived value. Therefore, if the hotel employees can offer more services and any required information, it may improve consumers' satisfaction level.

Based on the inferences, this research attempts to investigate the effect of staff explanation of room facilities. Therefore, this study added the explanation effect of facility information. The hypothesis is presented below:

H2: When senior GPT tourists select accommodation, staff explanation regarding room facilities will have a positive influence on overall satisfaction level.

Based on Callan and Bowman's (2000) research, it was found that mature travelers are not a homogenous group. Therefore, they further tested the differences of gender, age, retirement status, incomes, etc. Moreover, Oh, Parks, and DeMicco (2002) combined age and gender variables to explore senior and young group travel satisfaction and behavioral intentions. They found age and gender will affect travel satisfaction. Furthermore,

Niakas, Gnardellis, and Theodorou (2004) demonstrated that increased educational level of patients was negatively associated with both medical nursing and hotel service satisfaction in the Greek hospital sector. Therefore, the present research wants to test the difference in the seniors' demographic variables and their effect on overall satisfaction.

H3: When senior GPT tourists select accommodation, demographic variables will have a positive influence on overall satisfaction.

Methodology

Design and Subjects

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether the satisfaction level of senior tourists with respect to rooms is affected by different facilities. This research also identifies the explanation effect on customer satisfaction. This study adopted the post-test only control group design for field experiments (Zikmund, 1994), with one control group (original hotel room facility without any modifications or adjustments) and two experimental groups (one with friendly facilities and one with friendly facilities and an explanation effect). The experimental site was Toong Mao Hotel in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, where many group tourists and elderly tourists stay. With the aid of hotel counter desk staff, random allocations of elderly hotel customers for the experimental groups and control group were conducted in order to increase the internal and external validities. The researchers for this study were stationed in Toong Mao Hotel for one month and distributed 557 copies of the questionnaire, of which 453 were returned. A total of 397 valid samples were collected.

Developing the Stimuli Facilities

The study applied an experimental design to examine the relationship between customer satisfaction and those hotels with senior-friendly attributes. Friendly facility attributes were obtained from the literature reviews, three focus groups, and in-depth interviews with two case managers from senior housing organizations. Research results were evaluated and categorized by two doctoral students who study marketing and hotel management. After two weeks, reliability was tested. Data with reliability of over 80% were suitable for extraction and further discussion (Kassarjian, 1977). The reliability of data after categorization was over 93.5%. Thus, this study obtained a list of 55 friendly facility attributes that may be found in hotel rooms (Table 2).

Barnett (1993) proposed a list of senior-friendly hotel room facilities which included: big-type printed materials, grab bars in tubs, and large buttons on alarm clocks, remote controls, and telephones. This study also developed a complete list of hotel room friendly facility attributes for elderly tourists based on scientific procedures. After further discussion with the hotel management, hotel CEOs, managers, and researchers, friendly facility improvement items were selected based on the needs of elders in order to measure the satisfaction level. They evaluated the existing senior-friendly facilities (20 existing facilities are on the list of senior-friendly facilities in this study; see footnote "a" in Table 2), business impact, facility improvement cost, reconstruction cost and time, and listed 8 improvement items: pressed bar door knobs, room lighting, enlarged fonts on air conditioning control interfaces, large press-button telephones, enlarging the fonts on telephone instructions, bathroom lighting,

Table 2 Senior-Friendly Attributes of Rooms

Senior-friendly attributes of rooms

(1) Cozy bathroom safety rails	(30) Provision of extra blanket ^a
(2) Sufficient bathroom illumination	(31) Air conditioning remote controller for adjusting temperature ^a
(3) Movable shower head holder ^a	(32) King-sized bed
(4) Skid-proof bathroom floor (tiles)	(33) Proper height of bed ^a
(5) Friendly faucet switch (non-globular grip) ^a	(34) Firm mattress ^a
(6) Bathroom anti-slip mat	(35) Large font on bedside control panel ^a
(7) Proper length of bathtub ^a	(36) Comprehensible TV channel guide
(8) Anti-slip strips in bathtub	(37) TV remote control with large-sized keypad
(9) Anti-slip stool (for hip bath)	(38) Telephone with large-sized keypad
(10) Recessed bathtub (reduced height for entering bathtub)	(39) Room service telephone hotkey (access to information counter) ^a
(11) Soft toothbrush bristles	(40) User-friendly alarm (computer program control not required)
(12) High oil content in toiletries	(41) In-room coffee maker
(13) Separate bathing area in bathroom	(42) Lower height closet
(14) Sufficient toiletries ^a	(43) Indoor armchairs ^a
(15) Provision of skin lotion	(44) Moderate hardness of sofa and bed ^a
(16) Automatic stool	(45) The use of paper slippers is not advised
(17) Massage-effect shower nozzle	(46) Large-sized printed text information
(18) Sufficient guest room illumination	(47) Smooth indoor floor (avoidance of gaps) ^a
(19) Sufficient door light illumination for key use ^a	(48) Provision of non-smoking room ^a
(20) Easy to light ^a	(49) Rooms with acoustic insulation ^a
(21) Sufficient bed lamp illumination for reading	(50) Emergency intercom (bathroom and bedroom)
(22) Night light ^a	(51) Emergency remote control
(23) Bar-type handle	(52) Impact-proof cushioning at the corners of bathroom and walls
(24) Swing-out door	(53) Life care sensor ^b
(25) Sliding door	(54) Barrier-free balcony ^c
(26) Increased door width for wheelchair and walking aids	(55) Emergency aisle lamp ^d
(27) Use of traditional key is more preferable than that of card key ^a	
(28) Short-fiber carpet ^a	
(29) Provision of notes for listing room numbers of friends and family	

^aThe existing facilities of Toong Mao Hotel.

^bRoom sensors monitor the indoor activities of seniors without invading their privacy. When no movement by seniors is sensed within a specified time, the alarm system will ring in order to notify the management center.

^cThe design of hallways and balconies shall be barrier-free, allowing two-way passage. The barrier-free design of the balcony can ensure the life and safety of the seniors.

^dOnce an emergency button is pressed, an outdoor aisle lamp will illuminate to help managers identify the location of the emergency signal.

bathroom safety handrails, and room number lists. Facility modification was conducted in 12 rooms on the same floor. Table 3 shows the rooms' improvements and the changes that were made.

Independent Variables and Manipulation

In order to measure customer satisfaction with the hotel room facilities, the control group was composed of tourists who are 55 years old, attending a group tour, and staying in the unmodified rooms at Toong Mao Hotel in Kaohsiung. The experimental groups were under the same conditions, except that their hotel rooms had more friendly facilities.

In addition, the effect of hotel room facility explanation was included in the study to explore whether explanation effect would enhance customer satisfaction. The subjects were assigned randomly to a control and an experimental group. Manipulation of the stimulus differences between experiment groups was: (1) no explanation for experimental group 1 and (2) staff explanation of room facilities for experimental group 2.

Questionnaire Measurement

The questionnaire contains three parts. The first part measures the elderly guests' satisfaction with room facility attribute items. The eight improvement items are as follows: "convenience of room door knob", "luminance of room lighting", "convenience of room air conditioning", "press-button size of the phone in the hotel room", "font size of phone instructions", "luminance of bathroom lighting", "helpfulness of bathroom safety handrail", and "usefulness of room

number list". The questions are: "how satisfied were you with this hotel concerning the above items?" and "As a whole, how satisfied were you with this hotel?" Each item was rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied". Higher scores signify better perceived satisfaction. In addition, since some guests might not use these items, 0 denotes "did not use".

In the second part, a previous study had indicated that social desirability and acquiescence biases may occur when subjects respond to a questionnaire, threatening the reliability and validity of the other measures (Bagozzi, 1994). Therefore, five items from the Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964; Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999; Paulhus, 1984) were included in the questionnaire to assess the likely social desirability. The last part of the questionnaire is comprised of two parts: "prior tour and hotel experience" (grouped together) and "personal profile" (Callan & Bowman, 2000; Reece, 2004; Zalatan, 1998).

Data Analysis and Results

Analysis of Respondents and Questionnaires

Descriptive statistics analysis on 397 valid returned questionnaires revealed that the male to female ratio was 4.5:5.4. Most were 55–59 years old (41.8%), with the second highest proportion being 60–64 years old (23.9%). Most were married (96.5%) and had elementary school education or no education at all (42.1%). Most worked as housekeepers (21.9%), followed by in business (20.2%), or as laborers (15.6%). Nearly

Table 3 Comparison Photos of Friendly Facility Improvement


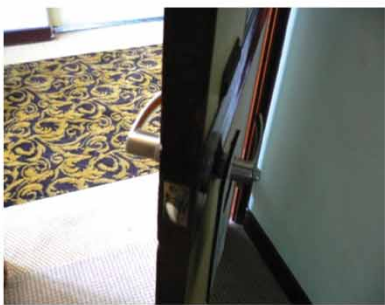




	Before	After
Item 1 (door knob)		
	Cylindrical lock	Pressed bar door knob
Item 2 (room lighting of bedside)		
	Yellow light 40 W light bulb	White light 100 W energy-saving light bulb
Item 2 (room lighting of dresser)		
	Yellow light 40 W light bulb	White light 100 W energy-saving light bulb

Table 3 Continued.












	Before	After
Item 3 (interface font)		
	Small font	Large font
Item 4 (telephone)		
	Small buttons	Large buttons
Item 5 (dialing instruction)		
	Small font	Large font

Table 3 Continued.

	Before	3 After
Item 6 (bathroom lighting)		
	Yellow light 40 W light bulb	White light 100 W energy-saving light bulb
Item 7 (safety handrail)		
	N/A	Three foot long stainless steel vertical handrail
Item 8 (room number list)	N/A	
	N/A	Room number list

half of the respondents were retired (50.6%). Most of them had a monthly allowance of less than NT\$10,000 (49.6%), followed by NT\$10,000–25,000 (37.3%). Regarding residence, 92.7% lived in their own residence. A majority of 66.8% regarded themselves as healthy for their age. Just over half (51.1%) primarily spoke Taiwanese, with 26.0% responding that they primarily spoke mandarin. Regarding the participants' frequency of stay in hotels over the past two years, one to three times was the highest (36%). Most of them stayed in Toong Mao Hotel for one night (90.9%), arrived at Toong Mao Hotel at 17:31–18:30 (43.3%), and left the hotel at 06:31–07:30 (44.1%). The majority traveled with friends (43.9%), with the second largest proportion traveling with families or relatives (40.7%). As to the number of people in the same travel group, 41 people (and above) was the largest category (64.5%). Regarding the acquisition of information concerning the hotel, the sightseeing bus company provided the most (71.5%), followed by the travel agency (20.9%). As to average travel expense, NT\$3,001–6,000 was the highest (54.4%), followed by NT\$0–3,000 (45.3%) with 68.1% paying for travel expenses by themselves (Table 4).

In addition, a chi-square test was used to examine the resemblance of characteristics (gender, age, educational level, marital status, retirement, current or previous occupation, monthly expenses, health conditions, main language, and type of residence) within the experiment cells. With the exception of gender and number of times stayed in hotels over the past two years, the results showed that the degree of similarity was relatively high ($p > 0.05$) among the respondents' characteristics. Thus, the random assignment of subjects to treatment cells had the acceptable

result of equalizing the subjects in terms of their measured characteristics. Furthermore, as Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Customer Satisfaction Scale was 0.86, this result indicated an acceptable level of reliability.

This study also investigated the influence of social desirability on the degree of overall satisfaction in regard to room facilities. Pearson's correlation analysis found that there was no significant correlation between social desirability and overall satisfaction. It indicates that social desirability had no significant influence on overall satisfaction with room facilities.

Influence of Rooms with Senior-Friendly Facilities on Customer Satisfaction

H1 predicted that customer satisfaction with a room with friendly facilities would be better than with a regular room. This hypothesis was tested by using an independent *t*-test with room facilities as the independent variable, and customers' satisfaction as the dependent variable. Significant satisfaction differences between rooms with regular facilities and rooms with friendly facilities were found on items of cleanliness (3.78 vs. 4.04, $p < 0.01$), comfort (3.81 vs. 4.10, $p < 0.001$), decoration (3.56 vs. 3.79, $p < 0.01$), illumination (4.02 vs. 4.27, $p < 0.01$), overall satisfaction (3.90 vs. 4.14, $p < 0.01$), and recommendation (3.95 vs. 4.14, $p < 0.01$) (Table 5). Therefore, these research results partially supported H1. In other words, customers prefer a room with friendly facilities to one with regular facilities with respect to cleanliness, comfort, decoration, illumination, overall satisfaction, and recommendation intention.

Table 4 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographics	Frequency (N)	Percent	Demographics	Frequency (N)	Percent
<i>Gender</i>			<i>The number of times of hotel stay in the past 24 months (domestic and abroad, not including this one)</i>		
Male	180	45.3	1–3 times	143	36.0
Female	217	54.7	4–6 times	113	28.5
<i>Age</i>			7–9 times	64	16.1
55–59 years	166	41.8	10 times and over	77	19.4
60–64 years	95	23.9	<i>Duration of stay in this hotel</i>		
65–69 years	68	17.1	1 night	361	90.9
70–74 years	40	10.1	2 nights	28	7.1
75–79 years	17	4.3	3 nights	3	0.8
80 years and over	11	2.8	4 nights and over	4	1.1
<i>Marital status</i>			<i>The arrival time of GPT</i>		
Married	383	96.5	15:31–16:30	9	2.3
Single	9	2.3	16:31–17:30	80	20.2
Others	4	1.0	17:31–18:30	172	43.3
<i>Education</i>			18:31–19:30	88	22.2
Elementary school and below	167	42.1	19:31–20:30	36	9.1
Junior high school and below	85	21.4	Other	12	3.0
Senior high school	100	25.2	<i>Scheduled time to leave</i>		
Vocational college	26	6.5	05:31–06:30	20	5.0
University	16	4.0	06:31–07:30	175	44.1
Graduate school	3	0.8	07:31–08:30	154	38.8
<i>Current/previous occupation</i>			08:31–09:30	29	7.3
Labor	62	15.6	09:31–10:30	11	2.8
Business	80	20.2	Other	16	4.0
Government employees	33	8.3	<i>The companions of this trip</i>		
Housekeeper	87	21.9	Family or relative	161	40.7
Freelancer	47	11.8	Friend	174	43.9

Agriculture	19	4.8	Coworker	30	7.6
Service industry	53	13.4	Classmate or teacher	3	0.8
Others	16	4.0	Other	29	7.3
<i>Retirement</i>			<i>Number of people in the group</i>		
Retired	201	50.6	1–5 people	15	3.8
Semi-retired	55	13.9	6–10 people	10	2.5
Still working	98	24.7	11–20 people	31	7.8
No profession	43	10.8	21–30 people	11	2.8
<i>Monthly free expenses</i>			31–40 people	74	18.6
NT\$10,000 and below	197	49.6	More than 40 people	256	64.5
NT\$10,001- 25,000	148	37.3	<i>Source of information about this hotel</i>		
NT\$25,001- 40,000	32	8.1	Travel agent	83	20.9
NT\$40,001- 55,000	13	3.3	Sightseeing bus company	284	71.5
NT\$55,001- 70,000	3	0.8	Relative	15	3.8
More than NT\$70,000	4	1.0	Internet	4	1.0
<i>Residence status</i>			Magazine	0	
Own house	368	92.7	Other	11	2.8
Tenant	16	4.0	<i>The average travel expense (including room, board and transportation) per person</i>		
Dormitory	1	0.3	NT\$0–3,000	180	45.3
Friend's/relative's house	12	3.1	NT\$3,001–6,000	216	54.4
<i>Health conditions</i>			NT\$6,001–9,000	1	0.3
Well	265	66.8	<i>Who paid for the trip</i>		
Slight problem	103	25.9	Myself	270	68.1
Have chronic disease	29	7.3	Spouse	31	7.8
<i>Main language</i>			Children	43	10.8
Mandarin	103	26.0	Relative	4	1.0
Taiwanese	203	51.1	Friend	2	0.5
Hakka	74	18.6	Other	47	11.8
Other	17	4.3			

Table 5 Influence of Rooms with Senior-Friendly Facilities on Overall Customer Satisfaction

Items of overall customer satisfaction	Room facilities		<i>t</i>
	Regular facilities (<i>n</i> = 129)	Friendly facilities (<i>n</i> = 135)	
Cleanliness	3.78 (.68) ^a	4.04 (.57)	11.40**
Comfort	3.81 (.65)	4.10 (.52)	15.43***
Decoration	3.56 (.66)	3.79 (.65)	8.48**
Security	3.84 (.60)	3.87 (.63)	0.16
Space size	3.57 (.85)	3.72 (.74)	2.44
Illumination	4.02 (.71)	4.27 (.60)	9.70**
Overall satisfaction	3.90 (.60)	4.14 (.55)	11.72**
Return intention	4.02 (.51)	4.08 (.52)	0.85
Recommendation	3.95 (.58)	4.14 (.44)	9.53**

^aEach score represents the average of the overall customer satisfaction, as measured on a scale where 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = very satisfied. Number in parentheses is standard deviation.

***t*-Value significant at $p < .01$.

****t*-Value significant at $p < .001$.

Influence of the Explanation Effect on the Customer Satisfaction of Rooms with Friendly Facilities

H2 predicted that customer satisfaction with a room with friendly facilities and a staff explainer would be better than a room with only friendly facilities. This hypothesis was tested by using an independent *t*-test with the explanation effect as the independent variable and customers' satisfaction as the dependent variable. No significant satisfaction differences between rooms with both friendly facilities and a staff explainer and rooms with only friendly facilities were found (Table 6). Therefore, H2 was not supported. A staff explainer would not increase a customer's satisfaction with a room which has friendly facilities.

Demographic Effect on Customer Satisfaction

H3 predicted that customer satisfaction with a room will differ with demographic variables. The hypothesis was tested by using an independent *t*-test with demographics as the independent variable and customers' satisfaction as the dependent variable. Significant satisfaction differences were found with respect to education, arrival time, and companions on the trip. In regard to the education aspect, compared to respondents with either a vocational college, university, or graduate school degree, respondents with either an elementary school, junior high school or a senior high school education expressed a higher degree of satisfaction with respect to illumination (4.24 vs. 3.96, $t = 2.80^{**}$) and overall

Table 6 The Explanation Effect on Overall Customer Satisfaction with Friendly Facility Rooms

Items of overall customer satisfaction	Explanation effect		<i>t</i>
	No explanation (<i>n</i> = 135)	Staff explanation (<i>n</i> = 133)	
Cleanliness	4.04 (.57) ^a	3.97 (.60)	1.04
Comfort	4.10 (.52)	4.03 (.59)	0.98
Decoration	3.79 (.65)	3.79 (.63)	0.04
Security	3.87 (.63)	3.91 (.74)	-0.51
Space size	3.72 (.74)	3.82 (.67)	-1.17
Illumination	4.27 (.60)	4.34 (.60)	-0.98
Overall satisfaction	4.14 (.55)	4.03 (.60)	1.57
Return intention	4.08 (.52)	4.11 (.46)	-0.53
Recommendation	4.14 (.44)	4.05 (.52)	1.62

^aEach score represents the average of the overall customer satisfaction, as measured on a scale where 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = very satisfied. Number in parentheses is standard deviation.

satisfaction (4.05 vs. 3.84, $t = 2.19^*$). In regard to the arrival time aspect, respondents who arrived after 17:30, when compared with those who arrived before 17:31, had a higher degree of satisfaction with respect to both comfort (4.03 vs. 3.83, $t = -2.73^{**}$) and illumination (4.26 vs. 4.04, $t = -2.72^{**}$). However, respondents who arrived before 17:31, when compared with those who arrived after 17:30, had higher recommendation intentions (4.19 vs. 3.99, $t = 2.04^*$) with regard to the room with both friendly facilities and a staff explainer. Furthermore, with regard to the companions of this trip, respondents who traveled with family or relatives had a higher degree of satisfaction than respondents traveling with friends with respect to cleanliness (4.06 vs. 3.81, $t = 3.51^{**}$), decoration (3.79 vs. 3.61, $t = 2.60^*$), overall satisfaction (4.08 vs. 3.94, $t = 2.29^*$), and recommendation intentions (4.14 vs. 3.95, $t = 3.38^{**}$). Therefore, H3 was partially supported. That is, education, arrival

time, and the companions on the trip would influence the degree of satisfaction with regard to room facilities.

Discussion and Conclusions

The study obtained the list of senior-friendly facility attributes from the literature reviews, focus groups, and in-depth interviews with the managers of several senior housing organizations, serving as representatives for the hotel industry. Upon comparison with other studies (Ananth et al., 1992; Callan & Bowman, 2000; Marvel, 1999), this study found the pertinent senior-friendly attributes for senior group package tourists to be identical to those of individual senior tourists. In addition, this study is the first to adopt 12 renovated rooms in a medium-sized hotel to investigate whether satisfaction level would be affected by friendly facilities and staff explanation effect. The results indicate that a

room with friendly facilities does significantly increase customers' satisfaction. However, the staff explainer had no additional effect on customer satisfaction. These results provide useful marketing information for those hotels interested in senior GPTs.

Atkinson (1988) suggested that, in order of importance, cleanliness, security, value for money, courtesy, and the helpfulness of the staff are the key attributes for travelers in making hotel selections. Cadotte and Turgeon (1988), Chu and Choi (2001), and Knutson's study (1988) also found that a hotel room's cleanliness, comfort, safety and security, as well as the friendliness of the employees were considered important by travelers for a first visit or for repeat patronage. For senior tourists, Wei, Ruys, and Muller (1999) found that, according to a study on seniors and hotel marketing managers, hotel room facilities and the efficiency of the hotel desk are relatively important service attributes. Marshall (2004) highlighted that senior tourists' special needs for hotel services include sufficient hallway illumination, and the most important motivational enticements for senior Taiwanese travelers are cleanliness and safety (Jang & Wu, 2006). For people with poor vision who need higher levels of light, well-designed lighting is one of the essential design elements supporting an individual's ability to perform daily tasks and decrease the disability level experienced by the elderly (Brawley, 2009). The existing facilities of the study's hotel lacked rooms with enhanced lighting. This research evidenced that specially designed rooms with brighter-than-usual lights, easy-to-read words, and other friendly facilities for senior customers could significantly enhance satisfaction with cleanliness, comfort, decoration, illumination, overall satisfaction, and the recommendation of hotels. However, satisfaction with security, space

size, and return intentions could not be enhanced by a room with friendly facilities. The results indicated the phenomenon of tourists' lack of intention to revisit the same tourist attractions. A possibility is that customers need to be delighted in order to gain their loyalty and they need more than mere satisfaction (Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2008). However, since GPT tourists are usually unable to choose hotels by themselves, friendly room facilities could increase their overall satisfaction but not their intentions to revisit. Furthermore, friendly room facilities could not increase senior GPT tourists' perceptions of security and space size, suggesting that senior GPT tourists seem to set higher standards for security and space size.

Although Juwaheer (2004) indicated that a hotel with friendly and personable staff may enhance visitors' perceptions of service quality, this study found that hotel explainers could not increase customer satisfaction, as most senior GPT tourists in this study stayed only one night at the hotel, and an explanation might delay their check-in procedures, resulting in reduced time for dining and rest. Therefore, they would prefer not to be disturbed. As indicated by a comparison between respondents who arrived before 17:31 and those who arrived after 17:30, the former had higher recommendation intentions toward hotel rooms with both friendly facilities and an explainer. However, interestingly, those arriving after 17:30 actually reported a higher level of satisfaction with respect to both comfort and illumination. This phenomenon may simply be due to their being more tired upon arrival and therefore more appreciative of the facilities' comfort and illumination. Moreover, because experiencing hotels' facilities did not involve high complexity, and most GPT tourists were familiar with room facilities, most GPT tourists regarded

facility explanation as an unnecessary procedure. Prayag (2012) indicated that rest and relaxation, spending time with family, and being together as a family were the three most important motives for senior travelers to visit cities. Therefore, employing hotel explainers would not further increase customer satisfaction.

This study also found that GPT tourists with lower levels of education, and those traveling with their family or friends, are more satisfied with room facilities. The findings confirmed those studies done by Niakas et al. (2004), van Raaij and Francken (1984), Anderson and Langmeyer (1982), and Huang and Tsai (2003). Niakas et al. (2004) which indicated that an increased educational level in patients was negatively associated with both medical nursing and hotel service satisfaction. van Raaij and Francken (1984) reported that tourists with lower levels of education are likely to also have lower expectations (they may consider a vacation abroad to be a great luxury) and they are therefore more likely to be easily satisfied. Anderson and Langmeyer (1982) indicated that the over-50 group is more likely to go along with what others want to do on vacations than the under-50 group. Huang and Tsai (2003) showed the strongest travel motivations of senior travelers in Taiwan are to achieve rest and relaxation, to meet people and socialize, and to spend time with their immediate family.

With the global trend of a growing aged population, medical, insurance, food, and health industries have attracted great interest. Moreover, as seniors are relatively wealthy and have more free time, their contribution to the tourism industry deserves more attention from industry operators. Although the results indicated that GPT tourists' overall satisfaction with accommodation would be significantly increased with increased friendly

facilities in hotel rooms, hotel explanation is unable to further increase customer satisfaction, especially for those checking in late. Therefore, tourism operators are advised to increase the speed of check-in procedures for senior GPT tourists in order to give them sufficient time to rest. Improved room facilities in this study were chosen by tourism operators and the researcher based on the existing list of senior-friendly facilities, after consideration of the overall operational factors. Therefore, some friendly facilities, which are important to the improvement of overall satisfaction with hotel rooms, might not be chosen by tourism operators, leading to a failure to further increase customer satisfaction with security, space size, and intention to revisit. It is advised that the operators evaluate their own operational status to further increase and improve room facilities for seniors.

In terms of research samples, past tourism-related studies suggested that mature tourists and senior tourists should not be regarded as a group with the same attributes. The age distribution of the research samples in this study is mainly 55–60. However, senior GPT tourists over the age of 80 are also included in the samples. Therefore, future studies might increase the sample size to meet the requirement of clustering analysis, in order that the differences in overall satisfaction with hotel rooms between senior GPT tourists and other clusters be further analyzed. In addition, as only the absence or presence of an explainer was used to investigate senior GPT tourists' satisfaction with hotel room friendly facilities during their hotel stay, future studies could also investigate the influence of printed explanation leaflets. Moreover, as the research subjects are senior GPT tourists, individual senior tourist's satisfaction with these facilities could not be measured in this study, and the hotel

types may affect tourists' perceptions of satisfaction. Thus, future studies can compare the differences between senior GPT tourists and individual senior tourists and include types of hotels as research variables in order to increase the completeness of the study.

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