

***Adventure, leisure and SMART Approaches in Tourism
for the Changing Global and Irish Demographic***

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Abstract

The following is initial primary research undertaken to assist with refining the research question for a part time PhD study. Specifically, it explores the perceptions and attitudes of both the ageing demographic and providers of outdoor adventure activity (OAA) in popular tourism locations in Ireland to engaging the older population in OAA. While research into the impact and health benefits of physical activity (PA) outdoors is available in other countries, in an Irish context there is a dearth of research on PA, perceptions of the older population, providers and attitudes to this cohort's participation in OAA. Specific research regarding OAA and its potential to enhance older adults' (OAs) participation in PA is negligible. This research proposes to close that gap. The criteria for those who participated in the research to date required them to be highly functioning, community dwelling and engaged in activities within their communities. Providers of land and water based activities were randomly chosen using a web search and personal contacts the researcher has developed through his own OAA. Perceptions and attitudes of participants and providers to OAA were investigated using a mixed method, concurrent approach of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. This approach is considered useful when addressing issues such as perceptions, understanding and statistical analysis of questionnaire responses (Driscoll *et al.*, 2007; Choy, 2014; Marshall and Rossman, 2014). Findings support the notion that older adults will engage in PA through OAA if facilitated. However, this initial research suggests that OAA providers do not target this demographic.

Key words: ageing, baby boomers, physical activity, outdoor adventure activity, tourism

Introduction

The population of over 65s is estimated to grow to one million by 2031, representing an increase of 86% since 2016, and represents the fastest growing segment of the Irish population (Hennessy, 2016; CSO, 2017). Retirement is perceived as a time when people have increased leisure time and will engage in more leisure activity and specifically PA. However, research indicates that the converse is more likely, suggesting that while the intention exists to increase leisure based PA in retirement, the population over 50 is the least physically active throughout Europe with declining participation as people age (Rechel *et al.*, 2013; McDonald *et al.*, 2015; Stenholm *et al.*, 2016). In Ireland, reports suggest that only a minority of the older population participate in appropriate levels of PA (Murtagh *et al.*, 2014). They report that only 32% of people aged between 65 and 69 participate in appropriate levels of PA, with 17% participating in appropriate levels in the North of Ireland. This is a cause for concern as it is well documented that engagement in appropriate levels of PA throughout the life course mitigates the negative effects of ageing (Taylor, 2013; Hamer, Lavoie and Bacon, 2014; Bauman *et al.*, 2016; Daskalopoulou *et al.*, 2017).

The challenge is how to encourage people in their 50s to commence and maintain engagement in PA and to normalise engagement in PA throughout the life course (Janke, Davey and Kleiber, 2006; Donoghue, O'Connell and Kenny, 2016). Reports suggest that provision of the proper infrastructure, facilitation of increased activities such as cycle tracks, walking areas, health promotion initiatives, balance exercises, and targeting people in their midlife are the most effective strategies to promote healthy ageing (Rechel *et al.*, 2013). OAA has the potential to provide for PA in natural environments, at moderate to vigorous intensities, to develop functional movement skills, to socialise, and can also be adapted to suit the abilities and skills of the participants (Boyes, 2013; Gladwell *et al.*, 2013; Kluge, 2013; Varley and Semple, 2015; Calogiuri and Elliott, 2017). In the interest of sustainable engagement and increased participation in PA, health professionals call for innovative ways to engage the ageing demographic (McDonald *et al.*, 2015). Boyes (2015) writing in the International Handbook of Outdoor Studies suggests that older adults have a connection with the outdoors and emphasises the versatility of OAA. He further argues that OAA presents an authentic, physically

challenging, socially supportive opportunity for the ageing demographic to relive their youth, improve health and to remove negative stereotypes of older people. Ultimately, the normalisation of older adults as regular participants in OAA is likely to have positive economic and health impacts.

Fáilte Ireland (2013) reported that tourists engaging in activity holidays was worth €1.2 billion to Ireland in 2011. They also describe any organisation/individual offering outdoor experiences to international or domestic tourists as adventure providers. Adventure tourism is a global growth area as is the ageing demographic and their increasing interest in active leisure time activities (Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016; Patterson *et al.*, 2017). The aim of this research is to explore Ireland's older populations' perception and interest in OAA and to see if there is a gap between how the adventure providers' perceives, provides and promotes to this cohort.

Tourism relevance

Reports indicate that tourist numbers from the United Kingdom (UK) are falling (White, 2017). Fáilte Ireland in 2017 reported that the decline in tourist numbers could be in excess of 300,000, resulting in a potential loss of approximately €100m (Kelly, 2017). Tourism experts suggest the challenge for the Irish tourism market as a result of Brexit is diversification, attracting and retaining tourists other than the UK market (Fáilte Ireland, 2017; ITIC, 2017). For tourism in general and OAA providers the global ageing population represents an evolving, growing market as a result of the changing demographic, and the increasing interest in active leisure breaks (Patterson and Pan, 2007; Patterson *et al.*, 2017). They argue that the hotel and tourism sector has not fully embraced this changing demographic and suggest that the industry needs to adapt to provide appropriate experiences and opportunities for this cohort.

The ageing demographic and OAA

Population ageing is likely to be one of the most significant changes to impact on all aspects of society in the 21st century (CARDI, 2011; United Nations, 2015). The growing ageing demographic across Europe and America represents a market that needs to be targeted by Irish tourism providers. This also applies to OAA providers, with adventure seeking 'baby boomers'

increasing in numbers and projected figures of two million over 60s travelling by 2050 (Patterson and Pan, 2007). OAA providers must adapt to the changing demographic and requirements of this heterogeneous and activity driven group (Cejudo, 2017). Eurostat (2016) suggests that the older population makes more trips as domestic tourists, travel for health benefits, for longer and travel out of the usual seasons. Purposely providing for and pursuing the growing ageing population makes economic and social sense. Reports suggest that the current wave of older people seek more active pursuits than their predecessors and argue that the next generation of older people will be even more active (Amadeus, 2015; Naidoo *et al.*, 2015; Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016). However, the ageing demographic is a heterogeneous group with diverse abilities and interests and this must be considered when facilitating activities (Nielsen, 2014; Cejudo and Adela, 2017).

The Baby Boomer generation, born between 1946 and 1964, are more adventurous than previous generations, seek more adventurous experiences and desire active participation in their leisure (Cochran, Rothschild and Rudick, 2009; Naidoo *et al.*, 2015; Forbes, 2017). In the UK, the 'Baby Boomer' market is now considered an expanding niche market (Patterson *et al.*, 2017). There are many benefits to the Irish adventure tourism industry targeting this cohort. For example, they travel outside of the usual holiday periods, travel with likeminded people & groups, and are loyal to brand and previous experience (TTG, 2010; Bausch, 2016).

Socioeconomic Benefits and the Role of OAA

Across Europe, Governments recognise the socioeconomic challenges associated with the ageing demographic. It is widely accepted that engagement in PA is known to mitigate the effects of ageing (Murtagh *et al.*, 2009; Bherer, Erickson & Liu-Ambrose, 2013; Taylor, 2013; Bauman *et al.*, 2016). However, indications from across the European Union suggest that the over 50s population are the least physically active of all populations. Finding innovative ways to engage the ageing population in appropriate levels of PA should be a public health priority (Stathi, 2014). Tourism and leisure activities are continuously changing based on societal demands and are increasingly reported to impact on psychological and physical wellbeing (Janke, Davey and Kleiber, 2006; Nimrod, 2007; Heo *et al.*, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2014). These

benefits are also true for OAA and facilitation of activities is vital to increasing participation. By facilitation and educating older adults as to the benefits of OAA, the outdoor adventure tourism sector will add to their business and contribute to the wellbeing of the ageing demographic. The movements required to kayak, swim, sup, cycle, trek, climb, sail or surf utilise muscle groups required for functional movements over sustained periods. The engagement in PA in natural environments and facilitation of OAA for the ageing population has the potential to improve the quality of life (QoL) of older adults (Boyes, 2013; Kluge, 2013; Bailey *et al.*, 2018). Introducing the option of these activities to previously inexperienced older adults by adapting the activities to suit the skills, experience and fitness levels is achievable (Cochran, Rothschild and Rudick, 2009). In addition, engaging in PA outdoors is reported to yield greater physical and mental health benefits, and encourage sustained participation above that of indoor PA (Calogiuri and Chroni, 2011; Gladwell *et al.*, 2013).

Methodology

This is a preliminary, exploratory study to assess the perceptions of both industry and the ageing population, a mixed methods approach, utilising qualitative and quantitative data with a focus on the qualitative data has been adopted. This approach is considered appropriate when studying the complexities of a social phenomenon (Jick, 1979; Schuh, 2009; Creswell, 2015). It is important to state that this research is exploratory in nature and no inference can be applied at this stage.

Ethical approval to conduct the research was received from Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). Stage 1 of the research was a WEB based search and review, n =10. Stage 2, data collection used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with participants, n=40 and stage 3 involved interviews and questionnaires with industry providers. Questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents after which an informal interview was held. Physical distribution of the questionnaires for participants was considered to be a pragmatic way to facilitate questions, promote further discussion and to provide the opportunity to get more information from the respondents. The face to face approach enhanced the response rate from older participants unfamiliar with completing online questionnaires. Industry participants were

offered the same option. However, to accommodate busy schedules and the time of year phone interviews were also offered.

All respondents signed an informed consent form. Questions for older adults, aged 50 – 89, focused on their attitudes and perceptions of adventure activity, risk, physical activity, outdoors and nature (Appendix 1). These themes are considered relevant to engaging the older cohort throughout the literature (Cater, 2006; Boyes, 2013). Industry questions focused on providers' attitudes and perception of older adults as participants in OAA. Providers questions included, observations of the changing demographic, facilitation, marketing to this cohort and possible training requirements (Appendix 2).

Research participants were drawn from a high functioning, community dwelling population, n = 40, all participants currently engage in physical activity at different levels within and outside their communities. Providers were chosen based on the author's personal industry network, a web-based search and a geographic spread to include the four provinces.

The primary qualitative data was analysed using a thematic approach and quantitative data used SPSS descriptive statistics.

Findings

The thesis for this exploratory research is that there currently exists in Ireland a disconnect between the interests, abilities and attitudes to OAA of the ageing demographic (aged 50-89) and how providers perceive, facilitate and specifically target this group.

Stage 1 – WEB Search

Initial desk-based web research of OAA providers in Ireland suggests that the outdoor adventure industry has not embraced this emerging market. A Google search for 'outdoor adventure activities Ireland' returned in excess of one million results. An initial review of a number of the web pages, n=10, revealed that no site, either through their text or images, indicate that their services were suitable for older adults. Failure of tourism providers to embrace this emerging market is also noted in the literature (Patterson *et al.*, 2017).

Throughout Ireland the opportunity for OAA in idyllic natural environments, with a gentle

topography and a temperate climate exists. The outdoor adventure market is a growing one with increasing activities being offered and facilitated (Pomfret and Bramwell, 2016). The ageing population is also growing and at present it appears that promotion of these activities does not specifically include this cohort.

Stage 2 – Older population perceptions

International research into OAA and ageing emphasises the interest, benefits and potential of OAA to this cohort (Calogiuri and Chroni, 2011; Boyes, 2013; Kluge, 2013; Varley and Semple, 2015; Orr *et al.*, 2016). It would be incorrect to suggest that OAA will suit all older adults and it is important to recognise the heterogeneity of this cohort (Nielsen, 2014; Cejudo and Adela, 2017). However, this initial research demonstrates that this population understand OAA and are not averse to adventure. They value the physical, social, and mental benefits to be gained through participation in OAA. Although risk is anticipated, in fact it is perceived as a barrier to participation. Participants emphasise the importance of facilitation, leadership and provision of opportunities for them to engage in OAA. Facilitated group activities are deemed important by the participants to encourage their involvement in OAA. The concept of group activities, social support and engaging in activities with likeminded, supportive teams is recognised throughout the literature (Boyes, 2015; Bausch, 2016; Cejudo and Adela, 2017; Lindsay Smith *et al.*, 2017).

As one 89-year-old, female respondent suggested:

“I walk every day, cycle most days and it is always an adventure, I know there are risks, but I love it and don’t want to stop. I get great encouragement from my friends at the club.” (89-year-old female)

The theme of group activity as a motivational strategy to encourage participation and leisure time physical activity (LTPA) is supported in the literature (Lindsay Smith *et al.*, 2017) and was evident in the comments from a number of respondents:

“The club is really important, I am a member of a walking club and we walk every Tuesday and Sunday. Organisation, leadership and access to graded walks is really important.” (71-year-old, female)

“The club here is really great, lots of activity and people exercising together.” (Female, 60 – 69)

While the second comment above is based on participation in indoor PA at an activity club located in South County Dublin, it emphasises the relevance of group activities. One 71-year-old, scuba diving enthusiast corroborates the importance of group, and graded activities:

“Engaging in adventure activities with a group your own age is great, you compete and engage at this level and are under no pressure. It is about building relationships and meeting new people.” (71-year-old, Scuba Diver, male)

It is important to note that the above respondent has a lifetime of boating and scuba diving experience as an amateur sport and professional diver. Throughout the conversation the importance of social support, experienced facilitation, “going at your own pace,” proper equipment and facilities was explicit. The concept of pace, engaging in OAA that is not necessarily adrenaline-fueled is referred to in the literature as ‘slow adventure’ (Cater, 2006; Gladwell *et al.*, 2013; Varley and Semple, 2015). In general, respondents were in favour of group adventure with a strong emphasis on facilitation. The comments below display some views on risk, facilitation and how respondents perceive the current state of the art:

“I really believe that OAA is not adequately provided for older people. I would engage if there was a group activity and a bit of fun. I do not mind adventure but not risk.” (59-year-old, female)

“I think that OAA clubs see age as a barrier to people participating in their activities.” (60-69-year-old, female)

“I engage in organised group outdoor activities a couple of times a year at the Bealtaine Festival and outdoor fitness activities organised by St. James hospital. I would do more if it was more readily available.” (60-69-year-old, male).

“I love nature, I would do more OAA and outdoor activities if they were encouraged and there was a leader. I know there are risks, there are risks attached with everything. Risk does not put me off. It is just not seen as normal for us to be doing adventure activities, people that run things are afraid we will get hurt.” (86-year-old female)

“I love adventure; risk or age will not stop me. I got a knee replacement in early 2017, and went to Austria climbing that summer. I also love to be out on my motorbike.” (70-79-year-old female)

Thus far, this exploratory research indicates that older adults are interested in facilitated, group OAA that minimises risk. Being outdoors and active in nature came up frequently in discussions and was rated as an extremely important factor for participation. Quantitatively, participants were asked to rate the importance of outdoors and nature in encouraging participation in OAA with 95% rating outdoors and nature as important. The same question was asked regarding adventure and risk, with 83% suggesting that adventure was important on some level and conversely 23% rating risk as somewhat important. Older adults’ affiliation for nature is also reported in the literature, Kim *et al.* (2014) and Szanton *et al.* (2015) suggest that there is a preference among older adults to engage in PA outdoors. Throughout the interviews even the most ardent of adventurers were explicit about minimising of risk and the importance of fun, positive experience and social connections through adventure. The notion of minimising risk through managed fun, educational positive experiences with OAA is also supported in the literature (Cater, 2006; Boyes, 2015). When asked to rate the importance of OAA, 75% rated OAA as important (see Tables 1 & 2 below).

Table 1 – what would encourage you to participate in outdoor adventure activity rated 1= not important to 7 most important?

Summary percentages - what would encourage you to participate in outdoor adv activity?							
	N=40	Adventure	Risk	PA	Outdoors	Recreation	Nature
Ireland	SI-MI	83	23	93	95	88	95
	Low imp	15	73	3	0	3	3
	Neutral	3	5	5	5	10	3
Sum check		100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2 – how important to you is outdoor adventure activity?

How important to you is outdoor adventure activity?	
N = 40	Percentage
SI-MI	75
Low imp	23
Neutral	3
Sum check	100

NOTES:

The figures represent the participant ratings of each heading on a scale of 1-7 in order of importance 1= least important; 2 = most important
Slightly important to most important
Low importance = not important to low importance
Neutral = not relevant

Stage 3 - Perceptions of OAA providers

One of the providers only offers hillwalking, n=2 offer both wet and dry activities and n=1 offers only wet activities. With the exception of one of the providers, none specifically target the older population. It is noteworthy that the organisation engaging most with the older population suggested that this happened by accident:

“I do not think it was the intention of the founder member that the group would be catering for as many older people as it is. It probably happened because the images that were posted had older people in them and it just progressed that way.” (71-year-old group chairman of South Dublin walking group)

This is a very active, not for profit, South Dublin community-based group with 77 members ranging in age from mid-40s to mid-70s. The membership is deliberately kept low as it is about the activity and the group are non-commercial. Treks take place at minimum twice a week, Wednesdays and Sundays, and they travel as a group 5 to 6 times a year throughout Ireland to trekking locations. These trips may be for weekends or midweek as a lot of the members are retired. In addition, the group travels internationally. The group has two trips planned for Croatia and the Camino for the summer of 2018.

When asked a direct question relating to hotels providing for their needs as an older group of adventurers the following was the response:

“No, we do our own thing. If we need local guides, we will get them through Mountaineering Ireland or another trekking group. It would be great if hotels had links with local adventure companies, this tends to be random in the form of leaflets and not particularly well organised. It would be much better if we had access to local adventure companies through the hotels.”

While this group is not servicing a tourism or broad ranging OAA business, including them in this research supports the importance of social, group-based adventure activities within communities. Also supported is the notion that this cohort travels

outside the usual holiday times, and as a likeminded group (Bausch, 2016). They are consumers of accommodation, transport, food and of adventure activity internationally and throughout Ireland. From a health perspective the group is facilitating older people to engage in moderate to vigorous intensity PA on a regular basis, easily achieving the WHO (2015) PA guidelines of 150 minutes per week.

The club is four years in existence, most members joined in their 50s and are still with the group according to the Chairman, “fitness has increased and they are now doing more severe and challenging activities.” He felt strongly that people will stay with the club and continue to engage in activities within their individual capabilities.

“People will stay with the club, they are a great group, social activities are important. Most people know their limits. However, we have one guy in his 80s and he is like a Gazelle on the mountains.”

The above supports the notion of brand and group loyalty suggested in the literature (TTG, 2010; Bausch, 2016). This Club does not market to the older cohort, this evolved naturally and as a result of the images of older adults engaged in fun, outdoor, adventure activity within their community posted to the Club’s Facebook page.

All of the OAA providers interviewed (n=4) recognise the value and importance of OAA to the health of older adults. However, with the exception of the Club above, no providers (n=3) market to or specifically target this group. Three of the providers concurred that nationally the demographic was getting older. However, one provider suggested that his particular market was getting younger than when he started. It was evident throughout the interview that when the business commenced there was an older cohort and that a conscious decision was made to target schools and youth groups:

“The active retired is a small market and the risks are high. They would have to be treated as a special needs group in relation to water-based activities. Programme management would be challenging.”

“I will work with any group. However, I am not really chasing that cohort. Risk and reward has to be balanced, is it worth the risk for a small amount of money or to have to get somebody air lifted?”

These comments support what a number of older participant respondents suggested throughout this research, that OAA is not provided for them and that there is a fear of providing these activities for older adults.

This provider also suggested that older adults have a fear of water, are not educated in relation to the benefits of and possibilities regarding water-based activities on the East coast, suggesting:

“I lived on the North West coast for several years and the culture is based around the pub. Older Irish people are not conditioned to do PA outdoors as part of their leisure activities.” (48-year-old owner manager of a multi OAA business on the east coast).

Evident throughout this interview was awareness of the importance of the social element, aversion to risk, health benefits, and leadership for this group. This provider felt that training should be provided through the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport and added that:

“Age is not really an issue. A good instructor should be able to recognise the abilities of a group and keep them safe.”

The importance of effective leadership, purposely designed relevant OAA programmes and facilitation is a common theme both in the literature and participant semi-structured interviews (Priest and Gass, 2018). In addition, while the term leadership was not specifically used by all providers’ it was implicit throughout the interviews.

The 3rd provider offers a broad range of water based activities from an expansive beach area in West Kerry, including B&B accommodation, restaurant and bar. The activities range from supping, kayaking, surfing, body boarding, swimming, fun water park and scuba diving. The owner/manager was explicit that the target market was the younger school, and youth group market. The facility does not market to the

older population, but would welcome any age group and suggested that the client base for scuba diving had aged since approximately 2008, suggesting:

“The economic crash contributed to this change and the fact that the older client has available spending power.” (50-year-old owner/manager of aquatics based facility)

This provider suggested that one of their concerns in marketing to the older population was:

“The perceptions of the older population to water based adventure activities, we would be concerned that if we invested in marketing or targeting this group we would not get a return on our investment.”

It is noteworthy that while the interview was taking place a group of divers returned from a morning dive with the youngest being 46 and the oldest 58. The provider commented that at some stage soon the OAA industry would have to recognise that the demographic is ageing, older people are increasingly active and providers’ perceptions of the older population needs to change, suggesting that:

“Growing old is evolving, an 80-year-old today is very different than an 80-year-old 20 years ago.”

This provider suggested challenges in programming and supervision associated with working with a group of older people. However, she also stated that the industry needs to change its perception of working with older client groups. The importance of the social, physical, safe facilitation and leader led training was explicit:

“NGBs need to take a driving role and providers and participants need to be educated regarding the potential benefits and possibilities of OAA.”

The fourth provider delivers both wet and dry OAA based in four-star accommodation with a restaurant and bar on Ireland’s rugged Wild Atlantic Way also suggested that they do not specifically target the ageing demographic. While recognising the potential benefits for the cohort and the business, the manager, in his early 40s, felt that the adventure activities at this facility are “adrenaline fueled, which is probably not ideal for older people.” Somewhat contradictory to this a later

comment suggested that the majority of the center's adventure business was the "softer adventure" activities.

As reported in the literature (Varley and Semple, 2015; Orr *et al.*, 2016; Calogiuri and Elliott, 2017), this provider also recognised the health benefits, importance of nature, the groups' aversion to risk and the potential that providing 'softer adventure' activities could have:

"The activities requiring technical skills and the more physically demanding activities attract a younger clientele. However, kayaking, cycling and hiking are possible activities."

The perceptions of the provider and the older population was raised again and discussed in the context of older adults' perceptions of adventure and the provider's perception of the interests, physical and technical abilities of the older adult, "age is not the issue, technical and physical ability are."

This provider was explicit that his cohort was the younger market, that they did not target the older cohort and that the general perception of adventure is with the younger groups. While unsure of the technical, skill and physical ability requirements, he would facilitate older groups and was sure that activities could be tailored to meet their abilities and needs. In the context of sustainable participation for the older cohort, the importance of regular engagement in OAA within their communities was suggested:

"For sustainable participation, activities need to be accessible, affordable and properly facilitated. People cannot afford to travel here on a weekly basis, so follow on within communities is really important to maintain interest and fitness."

Discussion

Findings from this preliminary, exploratory research indicate that this cohort want adventure, and value the physical, social, and mental health benefits associated with

OAA. In addition, adventure is desirable and although risk is anticipated it is seen as a barrier to participation.

Engagement with nature, PA, and socialising featured strongly in the results. Risk, challenge and competition were less important, suggesting that this cohort are interested in 'soft adventure' that provides the opportunity to engage in PA, in natural environments, with friends, and minimal risk. This is also supported in the literature, which suggests that older populations enjoy activities where they achieve something, is educational, social and fun (Varley & Semple, 2015; Liechty, Genoe & Marston, 2017). Participants emphasise the importance of facilitation, leadership and suggest that OAA is not provided for by the industry to this group. Other barriers suggested were ill health, extreme weather, and lack of facilities.

From a providers' perspective there is recognition of the potential benefits, and in most cases the necessity to embrace the changing demographic at some future point. However, with the exception of the South Dublin based trekking group there are concerns regarding the investment in marketing and return, the need to adapt activities, skills and physical capabilities and the perceptions of the older population to OAA.

While this research has been undertaken to refine a PhD research question and no final inference can be attributed to the industry, indications are that the perception of providers in Ireland to engaging this cohort needs to change to meet the demographic shift and the interest in OAA. The providers interviewed recognise the negative impact of their perceptions and also commented on the negative impact of the perceptions of the older population to OAA, in particular water based OAA. Information, education and the development of participant centred, softer adventure activities targeting the older cohort, supported and promoted by NGBs was mentioned throughout the interviews.

Industry and the ageing population agree on the benefits to be had from participation in outdoor physical activity. Based on providers' perceptions of skill

levels, physical capacity and interest amongst the older population in OAA, there is a disconnect between the interests of the older cohort and provision of suitable activities. The exception to this is the community based group that has a membership base of 77 aged 45 to 80, with up to 20 participating in bi-weekly adventure activities within their community, trekking weekends throughout Ireland and trips overseas. Given the clear benefits to be achieved through engagement in PA outdoors the absence of this South Dublin volunteer group would curtail access for this cohort to this level of adventure activity. Further research about the perceptions and motivations of older adults in Ireland to OAA needs to be conducted in an effort to bridge the gap between the cohorts and providers' perceptions of the desires and abilities of this expanding and increasingly active group.

Conclusion

The older adults responding to this study have a desire to be more active outdoors through facilitated OAA. However, they do not feel that this is offered by the industry. Participants, particularly from the older segment, 70 to 89, indicate that there is a fear they will get hurt. There is clear evidence that this cohort desire active leisure trips, travel outside the usual holiday periods, travel in groups and are interested in adventure, albeit 'soft adventure'. To date, this research indicates that providers are not proactively engaging with the ageing population, in spite of the acceptance that the population is ageing and that at some point providers of OAA will need to proactively engage with this cohort. Conversely, this preliminary, exploratory research indicates that the industry continues to target and cater for younger populations. There is a gap between demand and provision in the OAA industry for the exponentially ageing demographic. The older cohort considers the mitigation of risk, group activities and facilitation as important elements to encourage participation. Providers are concerned about risk management, lack of knowledge, skills and motivation in terms of provision to this cohort. Further research into the perceptions of a greater number of OAA providers would need to be completed to definitively establish if there is disconnect between providers and older participants which may be negatively impacting on the latter's engagement with OAA.

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Appendix 1 – Older participants questionnaire

Completion guidelines

- Participants will not be identified in any publications
- Please answer all questions
- The following scale applies to a number of questions;

1 – Not important; 2 – Low importance; 3 – Slightly important; 4 – Neutral (not relevant)

5 – Moderately important; 6 – Very important; 7 – Most important

Confidential Data

Form Identity number (researcher only)

Name: _____ Phone no: _____

Address: - _____ Email: _____

Age Range

50 - 59

60 – 69

70 – 79

80 – 89

Defining Nature Sport

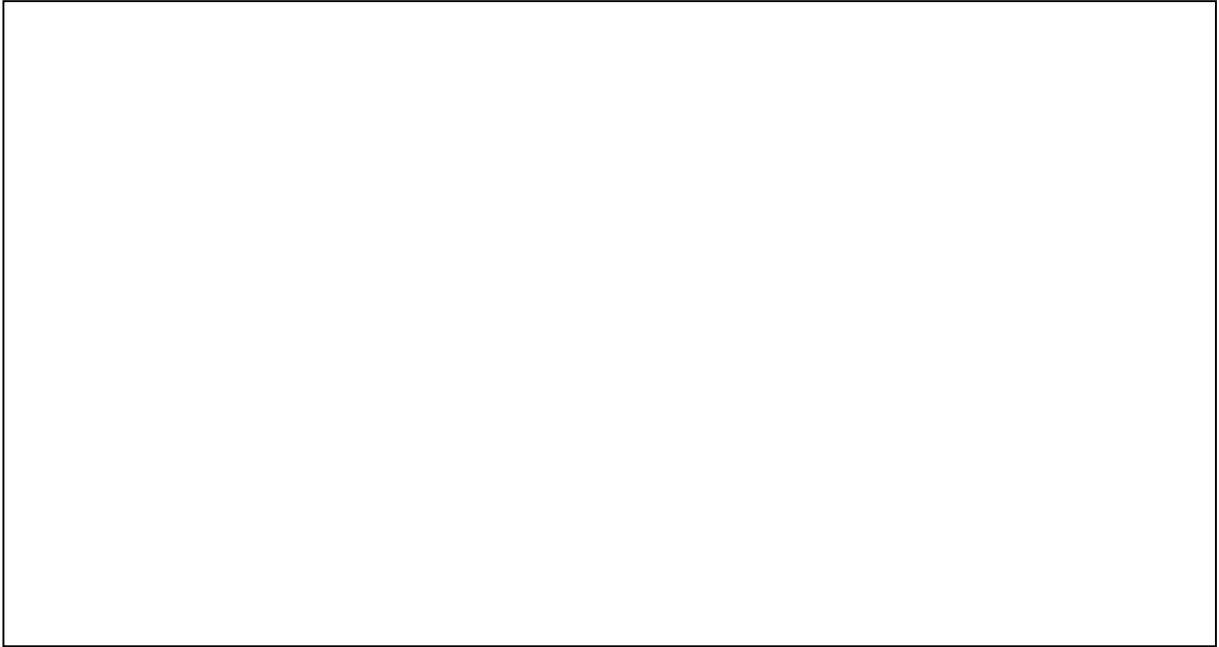
1. In order of importance which words best describe **outdoor activities** to you. (please circle a number for each word in order of importance – **1, least important (LI) and 7, most important (MI)**)

Adventure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Risk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Physical Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Outdoors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI

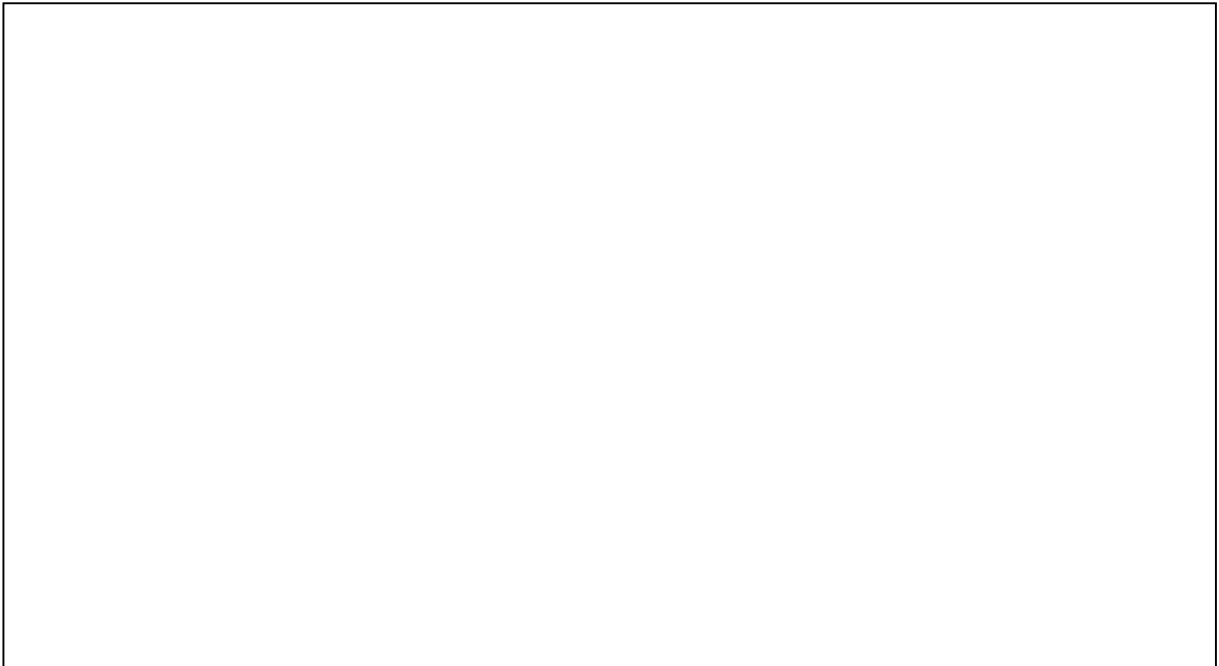
2. In order of importance which word best describes **outdoor adventure** activities to you (please circle a number for each word in order of importance – **1, least important (LI) and 7, most important (MI)**)

Adventure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Risk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Physical Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Outdoors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI

3. Describe/provide an example of what you consider to be an **outdoor activity**?



4. Describe/provide an example of what you consider to be an **outdoor adventure activity**?



5. In order of importance which word would stop you participating in **outdoor activity** – (1, least important (LI) and 7, most important (MI))

Adventure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Risk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Physical Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Outdoors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI

6. In order of importance which word would stop you participating in **outdoor adventure activity** – (1, least important (LI) and 7, most important (MI))

Adventure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Risk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Physical Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Outdoors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI

7. In order of importance which word would encourage you to participate in **outdoor activity** – (1, least important (LI) and 7, most important (MI))

Adventure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Risk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Physical Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Outdoors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI

8. In order of importance which word would encourage you to participate in **outdoor adventure activities** – (1, least important (LI) and 7, most important (MI))

Adventure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Risk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Physical Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Outdoors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI
Nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	LI						MI

Relevance of, and access to outdoor activity and/or outdoor adventure activity

1. How important is **outdoor activity** to you (1, not important (NI) and 7 extremely important (EI))

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NI						EI

Please answer Q2 if you scored this question at anywhere over 3

2. If **outdoor activity** is important, why?

3. How important is **outdoor adventure activity** to you? (1, not important and 7 extremely important?)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NI						EI

Please answer Q4 if you scored this question at anywhere over 3

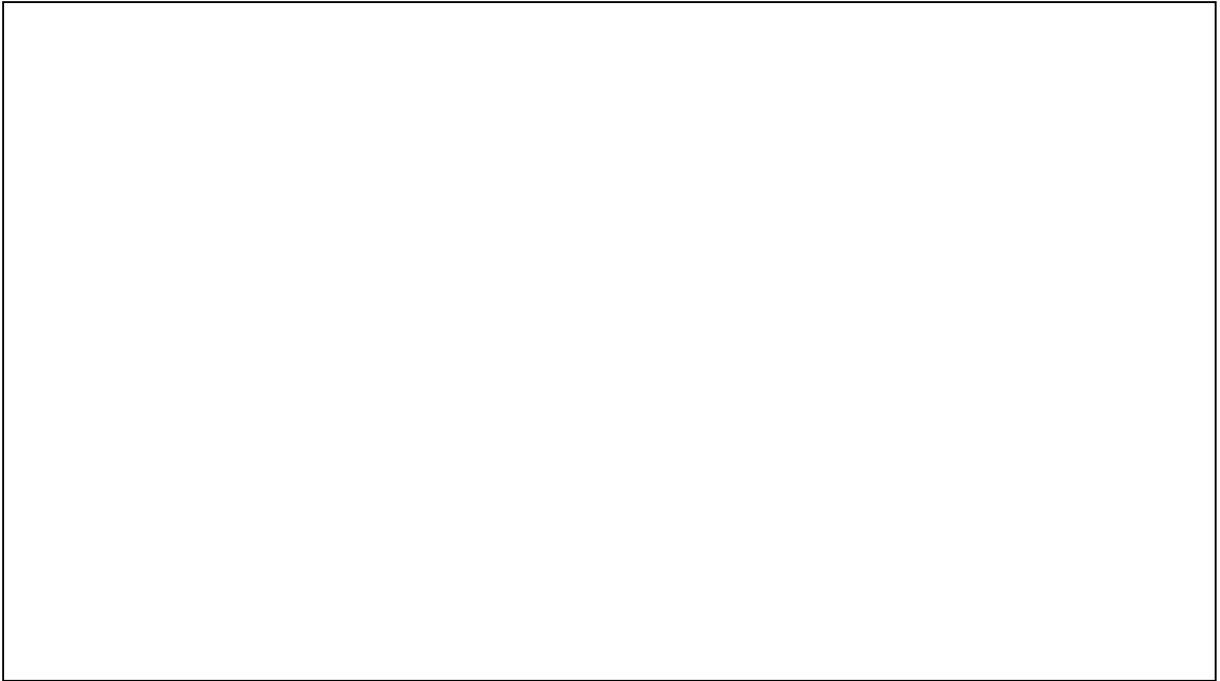
4. If outdoor ***adventure activity*** is important, why?



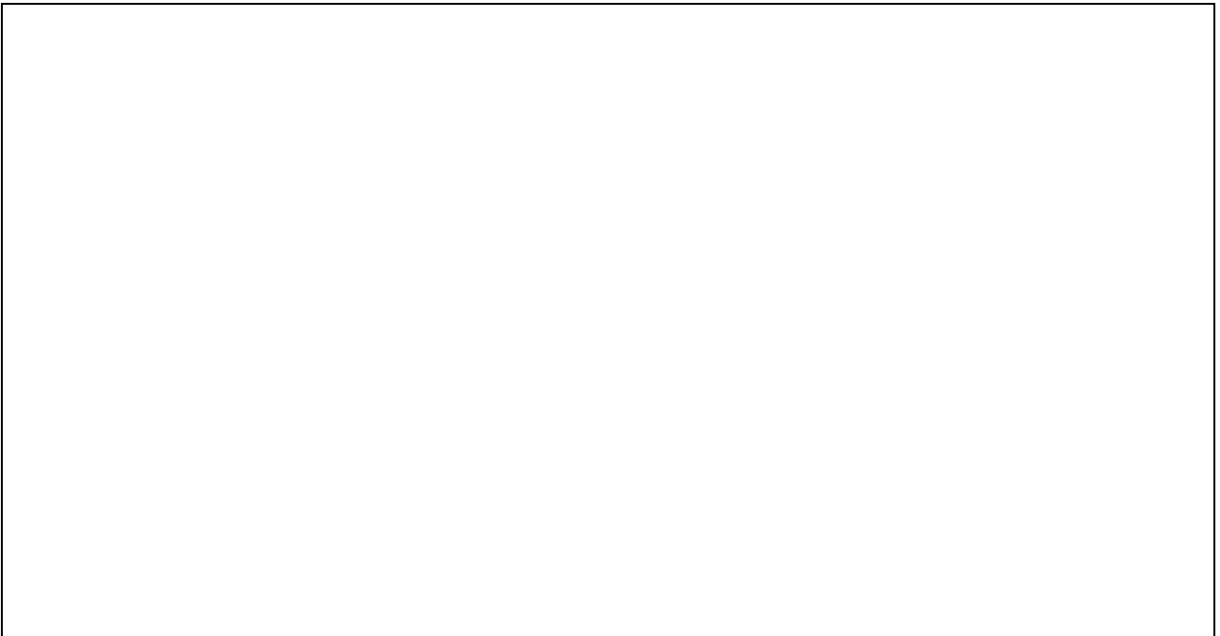
5. Are there opportunities for you to engage in ***outdoor activities***? If there are please provide a brief description?



6. Are there opportunities for you to engage in ***outdoor adventure activities***? If there are please provide a brief description?



7. What are the barriers for you to participating in ***outdoor activities***?



8. What are the barriers for you to participating in **outdoor adventure activities**?

9. How often do you engage in **outdoor activities**? (*please circle correct answer*)

1 time per week

2 times per week

3 times per week

Other, please state how often: _____

10. How often do you engage in **outdoor adventure activities**?

1 time per week

2 times per week

3 times per week

Other, please state how often: _____

11. Provide examples of the type of physical activity you engage in outdoors.

9. In order of importance (**1 being not important (NI) and 7 extremely important (EI)**) please indicate why you participate in **outdoor activities?**

Challenge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI
Health benefits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI
Risk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI
Engagement with nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI
Social reasons	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI
Competition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI

10. In order of importance (**1 being not important and 7 extremely important**) please indicate why you participate in **outdoor adventure activities?**

Challenge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI
Health benefits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI
Risk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI
Engagement with nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI
Social reasons	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI
Competition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NI						EI

Appendix 2 – OAA industry participants questionnaire

Completion guidelines

- Participants will not be identified in any publications
- The designated identity number will be assigned by the researcher
- Data will only be used for the purpose of research for this study and will subsequently be destroyed
- For the duration of the research, data will be stored on the lead researcher’s password protected personal computer
- Participants can withdraw from the research at any stage
- Please answer all questions

NOTE:

For the purposes of this research an older adult is defined as being between the ages of 50 – 89.

Confidential Data

Form Identity number (researcher only)

Name: _____

Phone no: _____

Address: - _____

Email: _____

Changing demographic

1. Currently, approximately what percentage of your users are in the following age ranges?

50 - 59 60 - 69 70 - 79 80 - 89 Don't know

2. Have you noticed a change in the age profile of users of the adventure activities you provide?

Yes No

(if you answered no to question 2, please proceed to question 6)

3. If you have noticed a change in the age profile of users, please describe this change below.

4. If you have noticed a change in user age profile, since when have you noticed this change take place?

5. If your user demographic changed, previous to the change in demographic, approximately what percentage of your users were in the following age ranges?

50 - 59 60 - 69 70 - 79 80 - 89 Don't know

Provision

6. Provide a list of the outdoor adventure activities you provide.

7. Do you believe that older adults (50+) are attracted to the adventure activities that you provide?

Yes No

8. Do you believe there is an age cut off for participation in the activities you provide?

Yes No

9. If you answered yes to Q 8 above, please suggest an age cut off

50 - 59 60 - 69 70 - 79 80 - 89 Don't know

10. Describe the type of outdoor adventure activity an older population is attracted to?

11. List the activities currently provided by you that you believe are suitable for the age groups below.

<u>Age Range</u>	<u>Suitable Activities</u>
50 – 59 -----	
60 – 69 -----	
70 – 79 -----	
80 – 89 -----	

Marketing

12. Do you promote your adventure activities specifically to the older population?

Yes

No

13. If you answered **YES** to question 12 above, describe the methods you use to specifically promote to the older population?

14. Please outline any possible benefits you believe there could be to your business from specifically marketing to the older population.

Challenges and Training

15. Are there challenges associated with delivering adventure activities to the older cohort?

Yes No

16. If yes, please describe these challenges.

17. Do you believe that specialised training for staff working with older populations would be beneficial?

Yes No

18. If you answered **YES** to question 17 above, please state why you think this training is required.

19. If you answered **NO** to question 17 above please state why?

--

20. Describe the type of training that might be beneficial to providing adventure activities for the older population.

Type of Training	Why it is required

21. Do you believe that you or your organisation is equipped to deliver this training?

Yes

No

22. If you answered yes to question 21 above, please describe the type of training you can provide

23. If you answered **NO** to question 21 above, please list the type of training required that would be beneficial to providing adventure activities for the older population and list the agencies that you believe could provide the training you believe is required.

Type of training:

Agencies that could provide training: