

DOI: [10.52950/SS.2024.13.1.001](https://doi.org/10.52950/SS.2024.13.1.001)

GERONTOLOGICAL AND WELLNESS TOURISM AS EMERGING SECTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE EMERGENCE OF BUSINESS MODELS FOR THE REACTIVATION OF TOURISM IN COLIMA

JESUS OTONIEL SOSA RODRIGUEZ, ILEANA OCHOA LLAMAS, YOLANDA OCHOA LLAMAS

Abstract:

Currently, the state of Colima does not have a product that comprehensively serves the segment of older adults, considering the adaptation and special needs they demand in terms of health and tourism. This article presents results, considering that the main characteristics of this segment of the population are that they care about their health and overall well-being and enjoy learning new things, as could be observed in the documentary research and in the pilot test of the measuring instrument. Therefore, it is convenient to combine gerontological and wellness tourism in order to create a business model with tourist premises that allows strengthening and promoting two main dimensions: 1) A safe space with an infrastructure adapted under the principles of Universal Design and mainly the conscious application of a Gerontodesign, that allows us to take care of accessibility, mobility and physical health and; 2) Elements, activities and strategies necessary to provide older adults with an enrichment of their experiential background that considers emotional attributes through psychology that allow them to face and live a successful aging. The proposed model is conceived as a response to the dynamic evolution of tourism activity worldwide and the identification of an emerging segment in Mexico: the elderly, as well as to the growing demand for tourism experiences adapted to the needs of active older adults, offering an innovative approach focused on physical health.

Keywords:

Gerontological Tourism; Wellness Tourism; Business Model

JEL Classification: L83, Z00, L84

Authors:

JESUS OTONIEL SOSA RODRIGUEZ, University of Colima, Mexico, Email: otonielsosa@ucol.mx

ILEANA OCHOA LLAMAS, University of Colima, Mexico, Email: ileana8a@ucol.mx

YOLANDA OCHOA LLAMAS, University of Colima, Mexico, Email: yolanda_ochoa@ucol.mx

Citation:

JESUS OTONIEL SOSA RODRIGUEZ, ILEANA OCHOA LLAMAS, YOLANDA OCHOA LLAMAS (2024). Gerontological and Wellness Tourism as emerging sectors that contribute to the emergence of Business Models for the reactivation of tourism in Colima. International Journal of Social Sciences,

Introduction

Over the years, tourism activity has evolved at an accelerated pace worldwide, adapting to the continuous appearance of trends and even situations that alter the order, such as a health epidemic; defining how to manage destinations. This dynamic of change is also influenced by the emergence of new market segments that give rise to important trends in the demand for certain products, highlighting the rise of active older adults.

Mexico is going through a process of demographic aging; according to statistics from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, 2020) the adult population aged 65 and over increased by 9.7% compared to 5 years ago, presenting a growth trend in the Western area of 9.3% in relation to the decrease in fertility and the increase in life expectancy.

In addition to the trend of demographic ageing, it is necessary to add that "the new generations of older adults are reaching retirement age more prepared, both academically and technologically, and most of them have travelled more than their predecessors" (Riaño, 2018); This has given rise to the recent creation and conceptualization of gerontological tourism, a typology focused on older adults aged 65 and over that seeks to respect the needs of accessibility, care, safety and activities with a tourism infrastructure that is barrier-free and aimed exclusively at older adults. enabling multi- and intergenerational relationships, the development of recreation, self-identity, learning, and self-actualization, Generating a new culture to understand aging (Mazo & Cortés, 2020, Valdés & Pérez, 2016).

Gerontological tourism demands products that are appropriate to their physical, health and social needs; such is the case of food under a specific health regime, personnel with greater training, the involvement of certain human talent typical of the health sector, as well as adapted and special infrastructure; that is the case with the use of gerontodesign, "branch specialized in the elderly, universal design and ergonomics that establish the parameters of an ideal interior space for the elderly" (Venegas Muñoz, 2019). Based on the detection of these needs, the standardization of services aimed at gerontological tourism is encouraged, promoting business and employment opportunities in the populations visited, improving infrastructure and accessibility to this population group; This has given rise to programs such as the "G Distinction" promoted by the National Institute of Older Adults (INAPAM), as well as the Ministry of Tourism in Mexico (INAPAM, 2012).

Alcántara, (2015) presents information provided by the Director of the TURISSSTE Tourist Agency System, Juan Carlos Arnau, who states that 9% of the segment of older adults tends to travel; considering in the last population census generated by the INEGI (2020) out of a population of 14,103,435 older adults in Mexico, we can point out that 1,269,309 are active tourists.

On the other hand, the health contingency overstimulated the state of consciousness, placing as a trend those activities related to wellness tourism. "Estimated at \$639.4 billion in 2017, wellness tourism is a fast-growing tourism segment that has been growing 6.5% annually from 2015-2017" (GWI, 2020).

This document presents the main attributes that justify the feasibility and viability by generating a business model that encourages gerontological and wellness tourism based on the main needs and particularities of the older adult segment with the role of tourists in the state of Colima to establish it as an inclusive tourist destination.

Literature Review

1. Seniors as an emerging sector in Mexico

The demographic situation of the country has been impacted by the increase in the proportion of older adults, representing one of the most relevant changes in recent decades, a fact that is related, according to Figueroa et al. (2016), to the decrease in the birth rate and an increase in the life expectancy of the population in general; directing the commercial attention of various sectors towards this population segment.

The National Population Council (CONAPO, 2019), in its analysis of the demographic situation in Mexico, presents a statistic of 5% of older adults with respect to adolescents, which projects for 2030 about 39 adults with respect to every 100 adolescents. The studies carried out by CONAPO show the following results:

In 2020, more than half of the elderly are between 60 and 69 years old (56.7%), while more than a quarter are between 70 and 79 years old (29.2%), only 14.1 percent are 80 years old and older, a distribution that shows us that population aging is still in its early stages and that the significant concentration of the elderly population is in the seventh decade of the year. life, when the conditions and demands in terms of health are not yet relevant. (p. 32)

Figueroa et al. (2016) predict in reference to documents analyzed from various dependents that "while the general population grows by 1.7% per year, the population of older adults will grow by 2.5%" (p. 161).

2. Older Adults and Quality of Life

Older adults are susceptible to biopsychosocial changes, those that depend on their way of life, the social and family environment that surrounds them; changes that influence their physical performance, contribute to their autonomy, and lead to a positive family and social impact (Figueroa et al. 2016). Villarreal & Month (2012), expose a certain psychological condition of the human being, caused by the weakening of motor skills and abilities that occurs in this stage of old age, giving rise to certain clichés, which generates a predisposition, a fear or terror, which develops in the psyche of the human being after the arrival of this stage of life. This can have an impact on social isolation, significantly affecting the quality of life of the elderly, as well as their perception of it.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 1996) describes quality of life as "the way in which the individual perceives his or her place in the cultural environment and value system in which he or she lives, as well as in relation to his or her goals, expectations, criteria and concerns." Lemus & Parrado (2014) address the consensus made by the WHO to define the characteristics for the measurement of quality of life, highlighting subjectivity, multidimensionality, inclusion of positive and negative feelings, physical and psychological aspects, the degree of independence, social relationships, environment and the spiritual sphere, considered within a certain variability of time.

The performance of activities by older adults is conditioned to the evaluation of functionality through comprehensive geriatric follow-up, their quality of life and self-care; that is, the execution of activities initiated and carried out for a personal benefit that allows the care of life, well-being and health.

It is essential to strengthen and promote the necessary tools that allow older adults to face and live successful aging, supported by education and psychological interventions (Ortiz & Castro, 2009).

3. Older Adults and Tourism

In addition to the trend of demographic ageing, it is necessary to add that "the new generations of older adults are reaching retirement age more prepared, both academically and technologically, and most of them have travelled more than their predecessors" (Riaño, 2018); Therefore, there is a demand in the optimization of demands and their resources within the tourist offer.

According to Guerra (2018), in the survey conducted in 2015 by Trip Advisor to define the travel trends of older adults, it was obtained that 10% of them opt for individual trips, 11% decide to travel in a group and 15% enjoy their experience on cruises, this provides relevant information for the satisfaction of the tastes and hobbies of this type of tourists. which, according to the trend, will continue to increase year after year.

The International Organization of Social Tourism exposes determining factors within the tourism of older adults, as conclusions of the workshop held within the framework of the World Congress of Social Tourism in Sao Paulo, Brazil:

- This segment of the population demands tailor-made services, with greater comfort.
- The trip should significantly improve your quality of life, from the beginning to your return.
- It is essential to create a value chain that allows local, state and federal authorities, tour operators and tour operators to be involved in the process.
- Decision-making approach in cultural tourism.

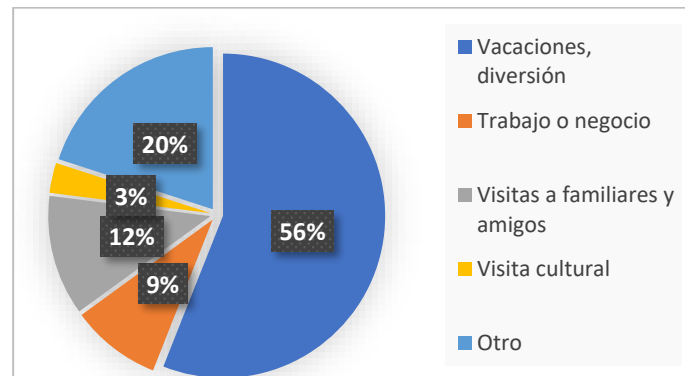
Older adults require an offer that considers innovation and change in a timely manner, based on experience in traveling, a large part of tourists of this type as they emphasize in their approaches Balcera (2016), Martínez-García (2013) and Riaño (2018), "they travel alone due to partner losses or empty nest syndrome", among others, so the offer generated must consider aspects that create added value, attending to the satisfaction of their tourist needs, as well as strategic and value attributes based on the use of emotional intelligence, therefore, psychology serves as a tool for the management of the tourist offer for this market segment; being aware that "more free time translates into endless new options for use and enjoyment that were previously conditioned by work" (Balcera, 2016).

The tourism that is generated for the attention of this sector of the population, as he explains Martínez-García, (2013) It must significantly improve their quality of life, accompanying an important and enriching experiential background, through cultural exchange, the offer of emotions and human behaviors, environmental, cultural, domestic tourism, and of course, formative or educational learning, etc.

Alcántara, (2015) presents information provided by the Director of the TURISSSTE Tourist Agency System, Juan Carlos Arnau, who states that 9% of the older adult segment tends to travel; considering in the last population census generated by the INEGI (2020) Out of a population of 14,103,435 older adults in Mexico, we can point out that 1,269,309 are active tourists.

The predominant travel motivation among older adults, as shown in Figure 1, is the intention to vacation, learn and recreate activities (Balcera, 2016).

Figure 1. Travel motivation for older adults.



Source: Balcera, 2016

Methodology

The recent pandemic generated by the COVID-19 worldwide has contributed to the generation of new changes in lifestyle, demanding greater supply in health issues, which has impacted the growth in demand for health and wellness tourism services; likewise, it is necessary to emphasize the elderly as a vulnerable segment that requires greater demands in terms of well-being.

It is essential to strengthen and promote a tourism offer that considers the special needs of the segment of older adults, which consists of two main dimensions:

- Physical dimension: A safe space with an infrastructure adapted under the basic principles of Universal Design, specifically in the branch of Gerontodesign, "adjusted to physical limitations and designed to improve the quality of life, according to the needs of Maslow's pyramid, allowing the autonomy of the elderly" (Venegas Muñoz, 2019).
 - Psychological, cognitive and emotional dimension: Elements, activities and strategies necessary to provide older adults with an enrichment of their experiential background that considers emotional attributes through psychology that allow them to face and live a successful aging, which positively impacts on the improvement of their emotional, physical and spiritual well-being and therefore optimizes their quality of life.
1. What physical and psychological needs should be considered to create a tourism product aimed at older adults?
 2. What would be the tourism offer developed for older adults that considers the needs of emotional, physical and spiritual well-being under an environment of cultural and nature enrichment?

The general objective is a hybrid model of tourism theories and a business model that allows strengthening and optimizing the quality of life of older adults through the offer of a memorable

tourist experience, considering the physical and psychological needs of the segment together with the involvement of the four domains of the experience: entertainment, education, escapism and aestheticism.

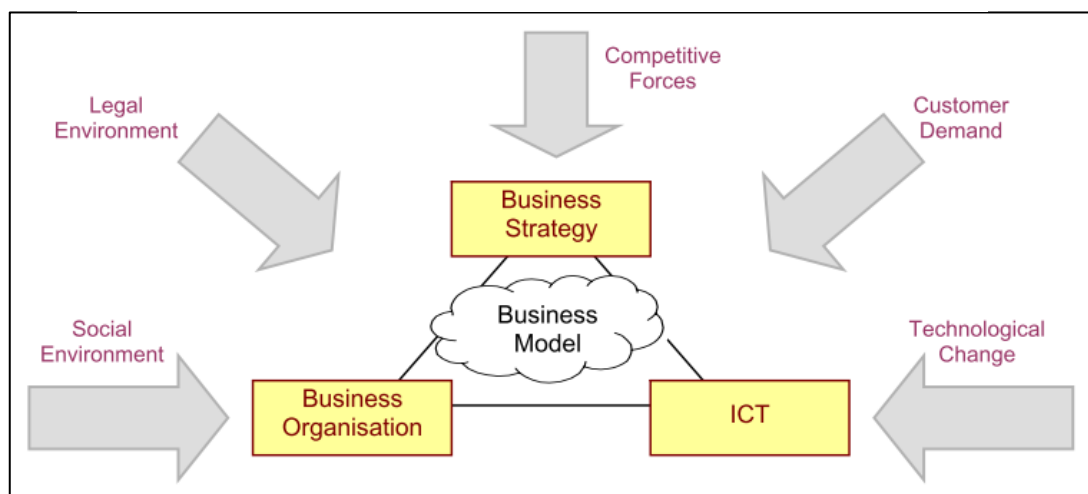
As he points out Nielsen et al. (2018), the business model is of utmost importance for entrepreneurs as it provides a greater understanding of the process of creating and disseminating value in a sustainable way, as well as identifying those elements or activities and their relationship that drive such creation.

Osterwalder et al. (2005) analyzes the composition of the business model individually in order to provide a general definition:

A business model is a conceptual tool containing a set of objects, concepts and their relationships with the objective to express the business logic of a specific firm. Therefore we must consider which concepts and relationships allow a simplified description and representation of what value is provided to customers, how this is done and with which financial consequences. (p.3).

The implementation and management of a business model includes a plan of more specific elements, such as a business structure, business processes, and infrastructure and systems. It refers to both the cognitive representations that detail the understanding of the actors of the business and the tangible material aspects that describe the configurations of the actors with their business models (Reinhold et al., 2017, p.465).

Figure 2. Business model applied in the organization.



Source: Osterwalder et al., (2005)

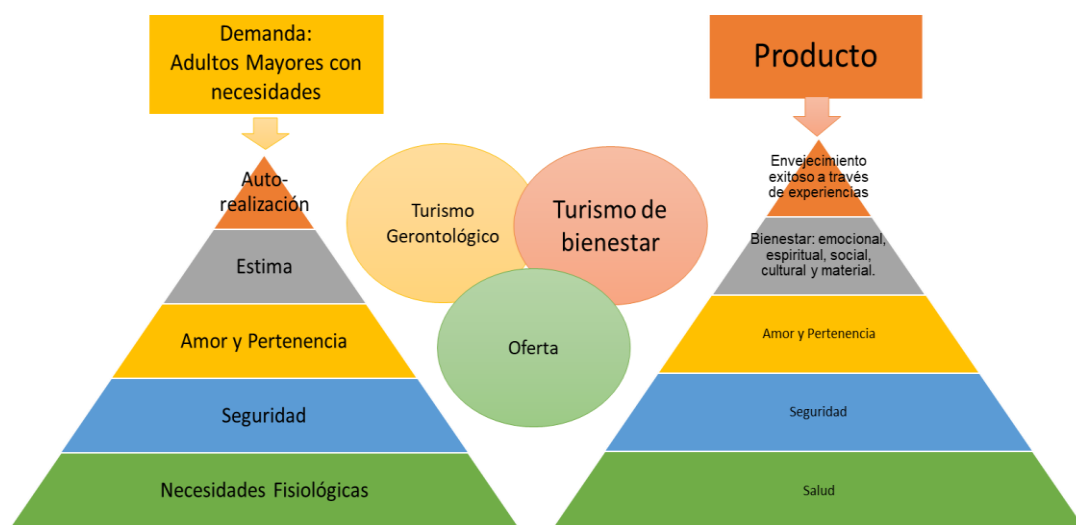
Hybrid Tourism Model

Before presenting the proposed hybrid model, it is necessary to return to the Theory of Human Motivation, proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943, in order to provide an understanding of the relationship between theories.

The "Human Motivation Theory" proposes a series of hierarchically ordered needs that inspire people; It identifies five categories and is created considering an order according to their importance for survival and motivational capacity (Maslow, 1943). The five categories of needs are: physiological, security, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow also distinguishes these needs into "deficit" (physiological, security, love and belonging, esteem) and "self-development" (self-actualization).

The use of the Human Motivation Theory is proposed to explain the correlation and the need to combine gerontological and wellness tourism (see Figure 3) in order to provide a complete tourism product to the market segment of older adults.

Figure 3. Hybrid model of tourism based on Maslow's theory of Human Motivation.



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the author Maslow, (1943).

The market study was carried out considering the following attributes for the calculation of the sample:

- Total population: 239,781 older adults in the Western Zone with a tendency to travel.
- Z: 95% confidence level (1.96)
- e: 5% estimation error
- P: 50% chance of success

Considering the size of the population and the absence of previous documented research, the following formula was taken into consideration:

$$n = \frac{N * Z_{\alpha}^2 * p * q}{e^2 * (N - 1) + Z_{\alpha}^2 * p * q}$$

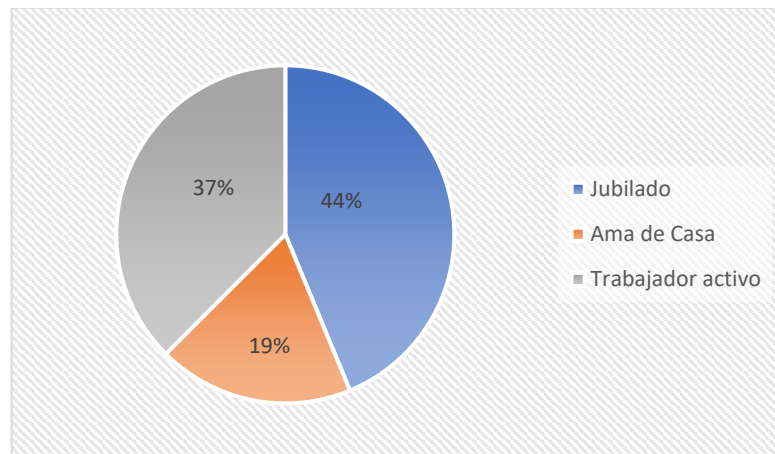
The result gives us a necessary total of 384 surveys, participants that will symbolically represent the total of our population.

Results

This article presents some of the most important results, considering that the main characteristics of this segment of the population are that they care about their health and overall well-being and enjoy learning new things, as could be observed in the documentary research and in the pilot test of the measuring instrument.

The surveys were partially applied to 87 participants, 60% of older adults under the ages of 65 to 69 years, 33% from 70 to 74, and the rest of the ages over 75; of which 64% have higher education, and the remaining 36% have basic education. In terms of occupation, 44% of those surveyed were retired or pensioned, 37% were on leave or working at home, and 19% were active workers.

Figure 4. Occupation of older adults surveyed.

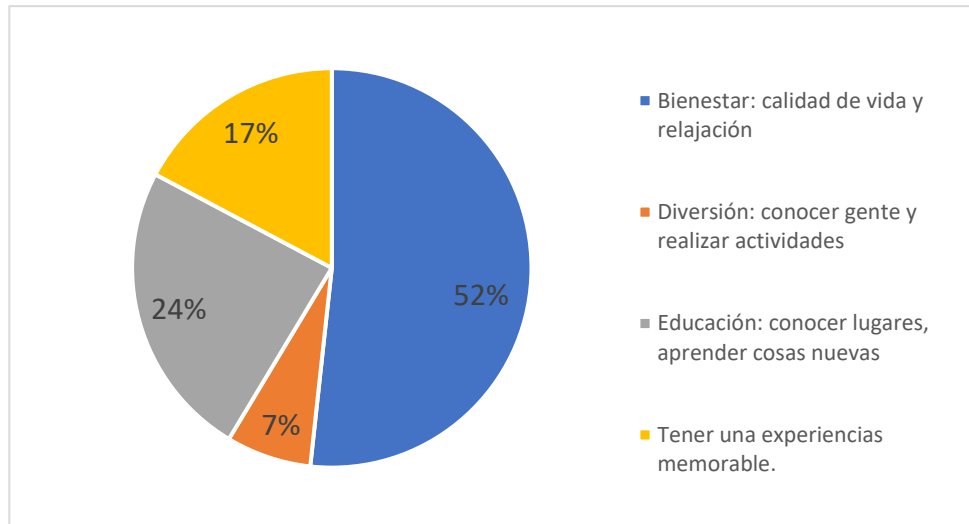


Source: Authors' own creation

With the intention of reaffirming the demographic structure by which the homes of the elderly are formed, the marital status was questioned, 57% have single-parent households and the rest single-person.

The pilot testing was also carried out considering those older adults with a chronic or terminal illness, with the intention of knowing those special needs for this segment, according to the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS) and INEGI in their 2020 mortality rate report, 17% of deaths are attributable to causes related to terminal diseases, and 6.3% of those belonged to the segment of older adults, which triggers an excessive need for emotional well-being, accumulating the grief of the loss of health in consideration. 60% of those interviewed are in good health, while the rest suffer from heart and/or terminal diseases.

Figure 5. Travel motivation for older adults.



Source: Authors' own creation

The average salary is mostly \$7,000 to \$13,999 pesos, and those with higher incomes travel more than 3 times a year. 25% of the older adults interviewed do not usually travel.

Finally, two important factors predominate in family trips (53%), and the motivator for travel, according to Figure 5, is mostly Well-being: optimization of quality of life and relaxation (52%), followed by Educational motivation and the search for a memorable experience (24%).

Conclusions

Currently, the state of Colima does not have a product that comprehensively serves the segment of older adults, considering the adaptation and special needs they demand in terms of health and tourism. Therefore, it is convenient to combine gerontological and wellness tourism in order to create a business model with tourist premises that allows strengthening and promoting two main dimensions: 1) A safe space with an infrastructure adapted under the principles of Universal Design and mainly the conscious application of a Gerontodesign, that allows us to take care of accessibility, mobility and physical health and; 2) Elements, activities and strategies necessary to provide older adults with an enrichment of their experiential background that considers emotional attributes through psychology that allow them to face and live a successful aging, which positively impacts the improvement of their emotional, physical and spiritual well-being and therefore optimizes their quality of life.

The proposed model is conceived as a response to the dynamic evolution of tourism activity worldwide and the identification of an emerging segment in Mexico: the elderly, as well as to the growing demand for tourism experiences adapted to the needs of active older adults, offering an innovative approach focused on physical health. emotional and spiritual, which seeks not only to offer a lodging service, but also a memorable and enriching experience.

The success of this hybrid design in the model will depend on the effective execution of the proposed strategies and the adaptability to future changes in the tourism and demographic environment, however, the differentiation, adaptability and innovation, as well as deep understanding of the specific needs and desires of the segment of older adults proposed in the project support the viability and relevance of the project, establishing it as a unique and valuable proposition in the current tourism landscape.

References

- Balcerá, J. M. (2016). NUEVAS TRIBUS VIAJERAS: El auge de adultos mayores activos en el turismo Iberoamericano. *Boletín Periódico Del Programa Iberoamericano de Cooperación Sobre La Situación de Los Adultos Mayores En La Región*, 17, 5. http://www.oiss.org/IMG/pdf/BOLETIN_12-OISS-2.pdf
- Global Wellness Institute (GWI). (2020). Global Wellness Tourism Economy. *Global Wellness Tourism Economy*, November, 102. https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GWI_GlobalWellnessTourismEconomyReport.pdf
- Figueroa, L., Torres, G., Morales, X., Vega, P., & Lira, J. (2016). Nivel de dependencia, autocuidado y calidad de vida del adulto mayor. *Enfermería Universitaria*, 13(3), 159-165. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.reu.2016.05.002>.
- Lemus, N., & Parrado, R. (2014). Lemus, N., & Parrado, R. (2014). Calidad de vida en el sistema de salud. *Revista Colombiana de Reumatología*, 1-3. doi:DOI: 10.1016/S0121-8123(14)70140-9
- INAPAM. (November 17, 2012). Instituto Nacional de las Personas Adultas Mayores. Obtenido de <https://www.gob.mx/inapam>
- INEGI. (2020). *Censo de Población y Vivienda 2020*. https://www.inegi.org.mx/app/tabulados/interactivos/?pxq=Poblacion_Poblacion_01_e60cd8cf-927f-4b94-823e-972457a12d4b&idrt=123&opc=t
- Mazo, M. L., & Cortés, T. (2020). Turismo gerontológico: una aproximación conceptual. *El Periplo Sustentable*(39), 31-63. doi:<https://doi.org/10.36677/elperiplo.v0i39.10241>
- Nielsen, C., Lund, M., Montemari, M., Paolone, F., Massaro, M., & Dumay, J. (2018). *Business Models*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351232272>
- Osterwalder, A., Pigneur, Y., Tucci, C. L., Osterwalder, A. ;, & Pigneur, Y. ; (2005). Clarifying Business Models: Origins, Present, and Future of the Concept. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 16, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.17705/1CAIS.01601>
- Ortiz, J. B., & Castro, M. (2009). Bienestar psicológico de los adultos mayores, su relación con la autoestima y la autoeficacia. Contribución de enfermería. *Ciencia y enfermería*, 15(1), 25-31. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0717-95532009000100004>
- Reinhold, S., Zach, F. J., & Krizaj, D. (2017). Business models in tourism: a review and research agenda. *Tourism Review*, 72(4), 462–482. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-05-2017-0094>
- Riaño, G. M. (2018). TURISMO Y PERSONAS ADULTAS MAYORES EN IBEROAMÉRICA. Boletín Periódico Del Programa Iberoamericano de Cooperación Sobre La Situación de Los Adultos Mayores En La Región, 17, 4. www.iberovicamayores.org/
- UNWTO. (2019, September 13). *World Tourism Organization*. Retrieved from High Level forum on Medical

and Health Tourism: <https://www.unwto.org/high-level-forum-medical-and-health-tourism>

- Valdés, S. S., & Pérez, A. (2016). LAS PERSONAS ADULTAS MAYORES Y SU OPORTUNIDAD EN EL TURISMO. *Boletín periódico del Programa Iberoamericano de Cooperación sobre la situación del los Adultos Mayores en la región*, 4.
- Venegas Muñoz, K. P. (2019). Condición sociofamiliar, asistencial y de funcionalidad del adulto mayor de 65 años en dos coumnas de Sincelejo (Colombia). *Salud Uninorte*, 28(1), 75-87.
- Villarreal, G. A., & Month, E. (2012). Socio-familial, care and functional condition of adults over 65 years of age in two schools in Sincelejo (Colombia). *Salud Uninorte*, 28(1), 75-87.
- WHO Quality of Life Assessment Group. (1996). Que calidad de vida? / Grupo de la OMS sobre la calidad de vida. *Foro Mundial de la Salud 1996*, 17(4), 385-387. Obtenido de <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/55264>