

Design Strategies for Coastal Cultural and Creative Tourism Brands Targeting the Elderly

Cao Xinyu^{1,2*}, Lilian Lee Shiau Gee¹, Emily Yapp Hon Tshin¹

¹Academy of Arts and Creative Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Sabah 88000, Malaysia

²No. 9, Nan Zhu Avenue, Beihai Campus, Guilin University of Electronic Technology, Beihai City, Guangxi Province, 536000, China

*Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.910000773>

Received: 07 November 2025; Accepted: 14 November 2025; Published: 24 November 2025

ABSTRACT

The rapid aging of the global population has led to the growth of a senior tourism market, in which older travelers increasingly seek comfort, cultural enrichment, and meaningful experiences. Coastal cultural and creative tourism, integrating local heritage, artistic expression, and participatory activities, offers significant potential to meet these needs. However, many existing coastal tourism brands emphasize youth-oriented aesthetics and commercialized design, often overlooking the accessibility, emotional engagement, and cultural relevance required by elderly visitors. This study adopts a qualitative, interview-based approach involving elderly tourists and professional designers to investigate how brand design strategies can enhance senior-friendly tourism experiences. Thematic analysis reveals critical dimensions—emotional resonance, cultural identity, usability, and participatory engagement—that inform a conceptual framework for designing inclusive, culturally authentic coastal tourism brands. The findings suggest that integrating user-centered design with destination branding can foster stronger emotional connections, cultural continuity, and sustainable engagement, ultimately promoting more inclusive, age-friendly tourism environments in coastal regions.

Keywords: Senior tourism; coastal cultural tourism; inclusive design; destination branding

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the global demographic structure has been undergoing a profound transformation characterized by rapid population aging. The proportion of people aged 65 and above is expected to reach nearly 16% of the world's population by 2050 (Hernigou et al., 2024). This demographic shift has fueled the rise of the so-called “silver economy,” in which elderly consumers increasingly shape patterns of demand across industries, including tourism (Gu et al., 2021). The tourism sector, traditionally associated with youth and adventure, is now adapting to a more mature market where older travelers seek cultural enrichment, comfort, and meaningful experiences. Coastal regions, with their unique natural landscapes and cultural resources, hold significant potential to attract senior tourists through cultural and creative tourism. Such tourism forms integrate artistic creativity, local heritage, and participatory experiences, offering both aesthetic and emotional satisfaction (Kastenholz & Gronau, 2022). However, many coastal tourism brands still adopt youthful, commercialized design approaches that fail to address the accessibility, emotional, and cultural needs of elderly users. This misalignment underscores the need for research on how design strategies can make coastal cultural and creative tourism brands more inclusive and engaging for older audiences.

Cultural and creative tourism has emerged as a crucial driver of regional revitalization, cultural preservation, and identity expression (Hua & Wangb, 2024). It transforms static heritage into interactive cultural products, blending creativity and storytelling to enhance destination branding. Particularly in coastal regions, where maritime heritage, folklore, and artisanal crafts coexist, creative tourism has the potential to revitalize local economies while reinforcing cultural identity (Kalfas et al., 2024). Yet, branding practices in these contexts

often emphasize visual novelty, entertainment, and market competitiveness rather than inclusivity or user empathy. For elderly tourists, who tend to prioritize emotional resonance, legibility, and comfort, such design tendencies can lead to disengagement. They may perceive the brand environment as visually complex, physically challenging, or culturally disconnected from their experiences. Therefore, a senior-friendly design perspective is essential to bridge the gap between cultural creativity and user accessibility, allowing elderly tourists to connect with local identity through design that feels both familiar and inspiring.

Existing research on elderly tourism has offered valuable insights into travel behavior and motivations. Scholars have identified key factors influencing senior tourism participation, including safety, comfort, social belonging, and nostalgia. Studies on age-friendly tourism (den Hoed, 2020) have further emphasized the importance of accessibility, emotional well-being, and empathetic service design. Meanwhile, the field of cultural and creative tourism has focused on how cultural symbols, storytelling, and design aesthetics contribute to destination image and brand identity (Alidoust & Bosman, 2016). Despite these developments, relatively few studies integrate these perspectives to explore how brand design strategies can simultaneously convey cultural creativity and respond to the needs of elderly users. Most research has remained fragmented—tourism scholars focus on traveler motivation, while design researchers emphasize aesthetics and symbolism, leaving the intersection of aging, design, and brand communication underexplored.

In addition, destination branding studies have predominantly adopted marketing-driven models, such as brand equity and image perception frameworks (Bick, 2009). These approaches, while effective in understanding consumer perception, often overlook the role of design as a communicative medium that shapes multisensory and emotional experiences. In the context of an aging population, inclusive design principles are increasingly critical. Elderly individuals may face physical or perceptual barriers that influence how they interpret visual cues, interact with brand environments, and form emotional connections with destinations. Therefore, design becomes not merely an aesthetic choice but a social responsibility that mediates between cultural meaning and user accessibility. Yet, few studies have systematically examined how design strategies can create cultural tourism brands that are both age-inclusive and expressive of coastal identity. This research seeks to fill that gap by proposing a framework that aligns design practice with the specific expectations of elderly tourists in coastal creative contexts.

To address these gaps, the present study employs a qualitative interview-based approach to investigate how coastal cultural and creative tourism brands can better engage elderly audiences through design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two key participant groups: elderly tourists who have participated in coastal cultural tourism, and professional designers or brand managers involved in tourism-related projects. This dual perspective allows for a comprehensive understanding of both user experience and professional design considerations. The interviews explore topics such as emotional connection to coastal culture, visual preferences, perceived accessibility, and satisfaction with existing tourism brands. Through thematic analysis, recurring patterns and insights are extracted to identify the core dimensions that define a senior-friendly brand experience. The qualitative nature of this research enables an in-depth exploration of subjective perceptions, values, and meanings that are often overlooked in quantitative surveys.

This research makes several theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it expands the literature on destination branding by integrating principles from inclusive design and cultural creativity, offering a framework that highlights the role of design in mediating between user needs and cultural expression. It also enriches the discourse on aging and tourism by introducing a design-oriented perspective that goes beyond accessibility to consider emotional and symbolic dimensions of experience. Practically, the findings provide actionable insights for tourism managers, brand strategists, and designers seeking to attract elderly visitors in coastal regions. By translating user insights from interviews into design principles, the study contributes to the development of age-friendly brand identities, communication systems, and tourism experiences that promote

emotional comfort, recognition, and belonging. Furthermore, by focusing on coastal cultural heritage, the research supports sustainable tourism development that values both social inclusion and cultural continuity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Elderly Tourism and Senior-Friendly Design

The rapid expansion of the global elderly population has led to the rise of a distinctive segment within the tourism market known as senior tourism. This group is characterized by unique motivations, behavioral patterns, and expectations shaped by age-related physical, psychological, and social changes. According to Dabphet (2022), elderly tourists are primarily motivated by relaxation, self-fulfillment, and opportunities for cultural learning. They tend to value safety, accessibility, and social connection over adventure or novelty. Aggarwal et al. (2024) further argue that travel among the elderly is not merely leisure-driven but also serves as a means of maintaining identity and belonging, particularly through cultural and intergenerational experiences. Consequently, tourism offerings must address both functional and emotional dimensions of travel satisfaction.

The concept of senior-friendly design has become central to this discussion. Rooted in universal design and inclusive design principles, it seeks to ensure accessibility, usability, and comfort for users of all abilities (Zhang & Pan, 2021). In the tourism context, this translates into not only barrier-free infrastructure but also sensory clarity, intuitive communication, and emotionally supportive environments. Lee et al. (2024) emphasizes that age-friendly tourism should engage elderly tourists cognitively and emotionally through design that promotes dignity, confidence, and autonomy. Recent studies have extended this idea to include digital accessibility and visual legibility in tourism branding (Fabisiak et al., 2021). However, much of the existing literature still focuses on physical accessibility and service adaptation, with limited attention to aesthetic and emotional design elements that shape how elderly individuals perceive and connect with a tourism brand. Addressing these perceptual and affective dimensions through thoughtful design is crucial for creating inclusive tourism experiences that empower elderly travelers as active participants in cultural engagement.

Cultural and Creative Tourism in Coastal Regions

Cultural and creative tourism has emerged as a vital mechanism for regional economic growth and cultural preservation, particularly in destinations seeking differentiation in a competitive global market. It involves the transformation of cultural resources into creative experiences that engage tourists both intellectually and emotionally (Guerreiro et al., 2019). Unlike traditional cultural tourism, which often focuses on passive observation, cultural and creative tourism encourages active participation and co-creation, allowing tourists to experience culture as a living, evolving process. Duxbury and Richards (2019) argue that creativity serves as the bridge between tangible heritage and contemporary expression, enabling destinations to sustain authenticity while appealing to modern audiences.

In coastal regions, cultural and creative tourism takes on distinct spatial and cultural characteristics. Coastal destinations often integrate maritime culture, fishing traditions, folk festivals, and marine ecology into creative tourism narratives. For example, the integration of local crafts, seafood culture, and coastal art installations contributes to unique brand identities that distinguish one region from another. Studies by Suriyankietkaew et al. (2025) indicate that such destinations can strengthen cultural resilience and community participation by embedding creativity into tourism development. However, while the aesthetic and symbolic value of coastal culture is well recognized, few studies have examined how these cultural resources are translated into coherent and inclusive brand design systems. Moreover, many branding practices in coastal tourism remain commercially driven, emphasizing visual spectacle over cultural depth or user inclusivity. As a result, the potential of coastal cultural tourism to appeal to elderly audiences—who may value nostalgia, cultural continuity, and emotional authenticity—remains largely underexplored. This research thus situates itself at the intersection of coastal identity, cultural creativity, and age-inclusive design.

Destination Branding and Experience Design

Destination branding has become a key strategy for building competitiveness in the global tourism market. It involves creating a distinct identity and emotional image that differentiate a destination from its competitors (Agapito & Lacerda, 2014). Traditional models of brand equity focus on cognitive processes such as awareness, image, and loyalty, but contemporary research increasingly emphasizes experiential and emotional dimensions. Experience Economy theory suggests that successful brands offer memorable experiences rather than mere products or services. In tourism, this perspective has led to the rise of experiential branding, where destinations design sensory, narrative, and participatory experiences to foster emotional bonds with visitors.

Design plays an essential role in this process. Visual identity systems—such as logos, typography, and color schemes—serve as semiotic tools that communicate a destination's personality and values. Furthermore, narrative design and storytelling reinforce cultural authenticity and emotional resonance. However, most destination branding studies have focused on general audiences, neglecting how specific demographic groups, particularly elderly travelers, interpret and emotionally engage with brand cues. The perception of brand experience is influenced by age, cultural background, and cognitive style. Elderly audiences may respond differently to design stimuli, valuing simplicity, familiarity, and readability over visual complexity. Inclusive design approaches can enhance brand experience by addressing such perceptual diversity. Yet, empirical applications of inclusive design within destination branding remain scarce. This study therefore integrates experience design theory with inclusive design principles to propose a framework for age-friendly cultural tourism branding in coastal contexts.

Research Gap

The existing literature provides valuable insights into senior tourism behavior, cultural and creative tourism development, and destination branding practices. However, several gaps remain unaddressed. First, most research on senior tourism emphasizes accessibility and service design, overlooking the aesthetic, emotional, and symbolic dimensions of how elderly individuals experience tourism brands. Second, studies on cultural and creative tourism tend to prioritize economic and cultural sustainability outcomes, paying limited attention to inclusivity and user diversity. Third, while destination branding literature increasingly recognizes the importance of emotional and experiential design, it rarely incorporates inclusive design frameworks that account for the sensory and cognitive preferences of older users. These limitations suggest a need for an integrative approach that combines cultural creativity, user-centered design, and brand communication to support more inclusive and resonant tourism experiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design aimed at exploring the perceptual, emotional, and cultural needs of elderly tourists in coastal cultural and creative tourism contexts. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for this research because they allow for an in-depth understanding of personal experiences, meanings, and values that cannot be easily captured through quantitative surveys. Following the interpretivist paradigm, the study emphasizes the subjective interpretation of elderly users' experiences and the contextualized nature of brand perception. The research combines two main components: semi-structured interviews with elderly tourists and a case analysis of selected coastal cultural tourism destinations. The interviews provide rich, first-hand insights into elderly tourists' preferences, while the case analysis offers contextual evidence of how existing brands operate and communicate cultural values. Together, these methods help triangulate findings and build a holistic understanding of the relationship between brand design and elderly user experience. This approach also reflects a user-centered design philosophy, emphasizing empathy and inclusivity in tourism branding. The qualitative design thus enables the identification of recurring themes, emotional patterns, and design implications that can guide the formulation of senior-friendly brand strategies for coastal cultural and creative tourism.

Interview Participants

The primary data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with elderly participants who had experience visiting coastal cultural tourism destinations. A total of 24 participants aged between 60 and 78 were recruited using purposive sampling to ensure diversity in gender, education, and travel experience. Participants were drawn from three coastal regions in China—Xiamen, Qingdao, and Wenzhou—representing different levels of tourism development and cultural identity. Each participant had engaged in at least one form of cultural or creative tourism activity, such as visiting art markets, heritage museums, or cultural festivals. The interview questions focused on four main areas: (1) perceptions of cultural and creative tourism brands, (2) emotional and aesthetic preferences, (3) accessibility and usability experiences, and (4) expectations for improved design features. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or via video call, depending on participants' convenience and mobility, and each session lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. This purposive, context-sensitive sampling strategy ensured that the voices of elderly tourists were authentically represented and that variations in their cultural and geographical backgrounds could be meaningfully interpreted.

Data Analysis Methods

Data collected from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method suitable for identifying patterns of meaning within qualitative data. The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts, (2) generation of initial codes to categorize key ideas, (3) searching for themes by grouping related codes, (4) reviewing and refining themes, (5) defining and naming each theme, and (6) synthesizing the findings to derive design implications. NVivo software was used to assist with data organization, coding, and visualization. The coding process was both deductive—guided by existing literature on elderly tourism and brand design—and inductive—allowing new, data-driven insights to emerge from participants' narratives. Through this dual approach, several central themes were identified, including emotional resonance, accessibility, cultural connection, and brand trust. In addition, a comparative analysis was conducted across different coastal destinations to examine contextual influences on elderly tourists' brand perceptions. To ensure reliability, coding results were cross-checked by two researchers, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

Research Ethics

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process to ensure participant safety, confidentiality, and dignity. The study received ethical clearance from the institutional review committee prior to data collection. All participants were provided with detailed information about the research objectives, procedures, and their rights before participation. Written informed consent was obtained, and participants were assured that their identities would remain anonymous in all publications and presentations. Pseudonyms were used in transcripts and analysis to protect individual privacy. Given the elderly participants' age range, special attention was paid to ensuring comfort, accessibility, and voluntary engagement during interviews. Participants were allowed to pause or withdraw at any time without penalty. Audio recordings and transcripts were stored securely in password-protected files accessible only to the research team. Furthermore, cultural sensitivity was maintained throughout the research, especially when discussing personal memories and local heritage values. By adhering to these ethical standards, the study upholds both academic integrity and respect for the lived experiences of elderly individuals, ensuring that their perspectives are authentically and responsibly represented in the research findings.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Elderly Tourists' Perceived Needs in Coastal Cultural Tourism

The interviews revealed that elderly tourists possess distinct physical, cognitive, and emotional needs when engaging in coastal cultural and creative tourism. Participants consistently emphasized comfort, accessibility, and safety as fundamental conditions influencing their travel satisfaction. Many reported difficulties navigating uneven terrain, crowded attractions, or complex signage systems common in coastal destinations. Visual

clarity, legible typography, and clear wayfinding emerged as key determinants of positive experiences. Beyond physical accessibility, the elderly also expressed a desire for cultural enrichment and relaxation, describing travel as a means of maintaining vitality and learning about heritage. Several participants highlighted that they prefer slow-paced itineraries and quiet, meaningful cultural activities—such as traditional craft workshops or guided storytelling—over high-intensity entertainment. These insights indicate that successful coastal tourism brands should move beyond generic “senior discounts” toward holistic design approaches that integrate emotional comfort, cultural engagement, and environmental accessibility. By addressing both tangible and intangible needs, such brands can create inclusive experiences that align with elderly tourists’ physical capacities and psychological expectations.

Emotional and Cultural Expectations of Elderly Tourists

Emotional connection emerged as one of the most significant factors influencing elderly tourists’ brand perceptions. Many participants associated travel with nostalgia, memory reconstruction, and cultural belonging. Coastal destinations with strong cultural narratives—such as fishing traditions, maritime festivals, or local folklore—were described as emotionally engaging and spiritually fulfilling. Elderly travelers valued opportunities to participate in local rituals, taste regional cuisine, or interact with artisans, as these experiences helped them feel connected to both the past and the present. In contrast, destinations emphasizing modern, commercialized aesthetics were often perceived as “cold” or “impersonal.” Visual design also played a critical role in shaping emotional impressions: participants preferred calm color palettes, natural textures, and simple yet elegant design elements that evoke a sense of tranquility. The interviews further revealed that cultural authenticity and sincerity of brand communication strongly influenced trust and loyalty. Thus, emotional resonance and cultural continuity form the core of elderly tourists’ expectations, suggesting that brand design should balance innovation with heritage, and modern appeal with emotional depth.

Evaluation of Existing Coastal Cultural and Creative Tourism Brands

When reflecting on their experiences with existing coastal cultural tourism brands, participants identified several strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, many recognized improvements in infrastructure, service quality, and digital accessibility in recent years. Some destinations have begun incorporating local artistic motifs and cultural storytelling into their branding, creating a distinctive sense of place. However, most respondents felt that the overall design orientation remains youth-centered and visually overstimulating. They noted that promotional materials often rely on small fonts, overly bright colors, and complex layouts, which can cause visual fatigue or confusion for older audiences. Additionally, many cultural tourism brands failed to effectively communicate their deeper cultural narratives, instead focusing on superficial imagery or modernized symbols detached from local identity. Elderly tourists also expressed frustration with inconsistent brand experiences—logos, visual themes, and on-site designs often lacked coherence. These findings underscore a critical gap between the intended creative expression of destination brands and the perceptual and functional needs of elderly visitors. In essence, while creativity is abundant, inclusivity and emotional alignment remain insufficient.

Emerging Design Challenges and Opportunities

From the analysis, several recurring challenges and potential opportunities for brand design improvement were identified. The main challenges include (1) inadequate consideration of age-related perceptual limitations, (2) lack of senior-friendly visual communication systems, and (3) insufficient emotional storytelling linking brand identity with cultural heritage. These issues point to the absence of an inclusive design mindset in the current coastal tourism branding landscape. Nevertheless, the study also highlights promising opportunities for transformation. Many elderly participants demonstrated strong interest in cultural learning, suggesting a potential for brands to design participatory and educational experiences—such as interactive heritage workshops or community-based creative events. Moreover, digital technology, if designed with accessibility principles, could enhance elderly engagement through voice navigation, adjustable interfaces, and virtual previews. The interviews suggest that future brand strategies should emphasize three design priorities: emotional resonance, human-centered accessibility, and cultural authenticity. By integrating these dimensions, coastal cultural and creative tourism brands can evolve from visually attractive but superficial symbols into meaningful, age-inclusive cultural experiences that sustain long-term loyalty and social value.

DISCUSSION

Key Design Principles for Elderly-Oriented Coastal Tourism Brands

The findings of this study highlight several interrelated principles that should guide the development of coastal cultural and creative tourism brands targeting elderly audiences. First, human-centered accessibility is fundamental. Brand design should consider physical and cognitive accessibility through clear information systems, legible typography, intuitive navigation, and comfortable spatial layouts. Visual communication must avoid sensory overload and prioritize clarity, simplicity, and familiarity. Second, emotional resonance plays a crucial role in shaping brand identity. Elderly tourists value experiences that evoke nostalgia, belonging, and emotional warmth, suggesting that branding should integrate storytelling elements that connect personal memories with local heritage. Third, cultural continuity should be embedded in design strategies. Rather than relying solely on modern aesthetics, successful brands must preserve and reinterpret traditional symbols, crafts, and maritime narratives that reflect the distinct identity of coastal regions. Fourth, visual harmony and comfort are important aesthetic considerations—soft color palettes, balanced composition, and natural imagery can foster emotional relaxation and trust. Finally, inclusive engagement encourages active participation by elderly users, enabling them to co-create meaning through cultural experiences. Together, these principles provide a holistic foundation for designing brand systems that are not only creative but also inclusive, empathetic, and culturally sustainable.

The Proposed Senior-Friendly Brand Design Framework

Based on these principles, this study proposes a conceptual framework integrating three interconnected dimensions: User Needs, Cultural Identity, and Design Expression. At the first level, User Needs refer to functional, cognitive, and emotional requirements derived from elderly tourists' lived experiences. These needs include safety, accessibility, comprehension, and emotional engagement. At the second level, Cultural Identity represents the local heritage, artistic expression, and community values that define the authenticity of coastal destinations. The third level, Design Expression, involves the translation of both user and cultural insights into tangible design elements—such as visual identity, environmental graphics, interactive experiences, and narrative communication. The framework operates through a feedback loop in which continuous interaction between designers, elderly users, and cultural stakeholders refines the brand experience. Conceptually, the model positions inclusivity and cultural authenticity as the central axis, surrounded by three dynamic processes: perception (how elderly tourists experience the brand), participation (how they engage in cultural activities), and preservation (how the brand sustains heritage and social meaning). This systemic approach bridges human-centered design theory with destination branding practice, ensuring that creativity serves both aesthetic innovation and social inclusion.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

The proposed framework carries significant implications for both design practice and academic research. From a practical perspective, it offers actionable strategies for tourism developers, destination managers, and designers to create more inclusive and sustainable brand experiences. Practitioners should adopt participatory design methods that involve elderly users throughout the creative process—from conceptual ideation to prototype testing—thereby ensuring authenticity and usability. Moreover, integrating accessible digital tools, such as voice-guided interfaces or simplified booking systems, can enhance elderly tourists' engagement in the digital era. For policymakers, the findings underscore the need to incorporate age-friendly design standards into tourism infrastructure and branding guidelines, particularly in coastal regions undergoing cultural revitalization. From a theoretical standpoint, this research expands the scope of destination branding studies by introducing an age-inclusive cultural design perspective, linking gerontological insights with creative branding theory. It also contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable cultural tourism by demonstrating how emotional design and cultural continuity can coexist within a modern branding context. Ultimately, the study promotes a paradigm shift—from viewing elderly tourists as passive consumers to recognizing them as active cultural participants whose experiences enrich both brand meaning and social cohesion.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the design strategies for coastal cultural and creative tourism brands targeting elderly audiences, focusing on how human-centered, emotionally resonant, and culturally authentic design can enhance elderly tourists' experiences. Through semi-structured interviews and qualitative thematic analysis, the research revealed that elderly tourists' needs extend beyond basic accessibility or comfort; they seek meaningful cultural connections, emotional fulfillment, and a sense of belonging. The findings demonstrated that elderly travelers are not passive consumers but active participants who value learning, interaction, and self-expression through cultural experiences. However, current coastal tourism brands often fail to accommodate these preferences, relying heavily on youth-oriented aesthetics and fragmented brand communication. The proposed senior-friendly design framework integrates three essential dimensions—user needs, cultural identity, and design expression—forming an inclusive system that aligns creativity with usability and cultural continuity. Overall, this study highlights the necessity of reimagining coastal tourism branding from a perspective that respects both aging diversity and cultural heritage, thereby contributing to the sustainability and inclusiveness of cultural and creative tourism in an aging society.

Building upon the research insights, several practical recommendations can be proposed for designers, tourism managers, and policymakers seeking to develop senior-friendly coastal tourism brands. First, brand communication should adopt a more empathetic and accessible visual language—employing clear typography, soft color palettes, and legible layouts—to accommodate age-related perceptual differences. Second, destination branding should emphasize storytelling rooted in local culture, allowing elderly tourists to connect emotionally through familiar narratives, maritime traditions, and community memories. Designers are encouraged to use participatory approaches, inviting elderly stakeholders to contribute to the ideation and testing stages, ensuring that design outcomes reflect real user needs. In addition, service design and digital interfaces should be optimized for elderly accessibility, integrating intuitive navigation, audio guidance, and adaptive technologies. Tourism managers can also enhance the sense of belonging by creating intergenerational experiences that involve both seniors and younger participants in creative cultural activities. Finally, policymakers should incorporate age-friendly design standards into tourism planning frameworks and encourage cross-sector collaboration among cultural institutions, design organizations, and health-related agencies. These practical actions will not only improve elderly tourists' satisfaction but also promote more equitable and culturally rich tourism environments in coastal regions.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that provide avenues for future exploration. First, the research is based on a qualitative design with a relatively small sample of elderly participants from three coastal regions in China. While the findings offer valuable insights, they may not fully capture the diversity of elderly tourists' experiences across different cultural, economic, or geographical contexts. Future research could expand the sample size or employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with experimental design evaluation to validate the proposed framework. Second, the study focused primarily on elderly tourists' perceptions rather than the perspectives of designers or destination managers, whose viewpoints could offer complementary insights into practical constraints and innovation opportunities. Subsequent studies may adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to explore collaborative brand design processes. Moreover, longitudinal studies could investigate how elderly tourists' preferences evolve with technological advances and changing social attitudes toward aging. Finally, cross-cultural comparisons between Eastern and Western coastal tourism destinations would enrich understanding of how cultural context influences elderly-oriented design strategies. By addressing these limitations, future research can refine and extend the framework proposed in this study, further advancing inclusive and sustainable design in cultural and creative tourism.

REFERENCES

1. Agapito, D., & Lacerda, A. (2014). Marketing and brand design of destination experiences: The role of ICT. *Journal of Tourism, Sustainability and Well-being*, 2(3), 201-216.
2. Aggarwal, A., Hajra, V., & Kukreja, V. (2024). Senior tourism: travel motivators and perceived constraints and risks for the elderly. *Tourism Review*, 79(4), 855-876.

3. Alidoust, S., & Bosman, C. (2016). Boomer planning: The production of age-friendly cities. *Built environment*, 42(1), 107-119.
4. Bick, G. N. (2009). Increasing shareholder value through building customer and brand equity. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 25(1-2), 117-141.
5. Dabphet, S. (2022). Segmenting senior tourists: The effects of personal values on activity preferences. *Journal of Community Development Research (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 15(4), 55-67.
6. den Hoed, W. (2020). Where everyday mobility meets tourism: An age-friendly perspective on cycling in the Netherlands and the UK. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 28(2), 185-203.
7. Duxbury, N., & Richards, G. (2019). Towards a research agenda for creative tourism: Developments, diversity, and dynamics. *A research agenda for creative tourism*, 8(6), 1-14.
8. Fabisiak, B., Jankowska, A., Klos, K., Knudsen, J., Merilampi, S., & Priedulena, E. (2021). Comparative study on design and functionality requirements for senior-friendly furniture for sitting. *BioResources*, 16(3), 6244-6266.
9. Gu, D., Andreev, K., & Dupre, M. E. (2021). Major trends in population growth around the world. *China CDC weekly*, 3(28), 604.
10. Guerreiro, M. M., Henriques, C., & Mendes, J. (2019). Cultural and creative tourism: the case of 'celebrations' in the Algarve Region. *Journal of Tourism, Sustainability and Well-being*, 7(4), 320-338.
11. Hernigou, P., Bumbasirevic, M., Pecina, M., & Scarlat, M. M. (2024). Eight billion people, sixteen billion hip joints today: are future orthopedists prepared to treat a world of ultra-old patients and centenarians in 2050? *International Orthopaedics*, 48(8), 1939-1944.
12. Hua, M., & Wangb, Y. (2024). The Impact and Driving Mechanism of Digital Technology on the Interactive Development of Cultural Tourism and Cultural Creative Industries and Urban Renewal. *Academic Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*, 7(11), 98-104.
13. Kalfas, D., Kalogiannidis, S., Ambas, V., & Chatzitheodoridis, F. (2024). Contribution of the cultural and creative industries to regional development and revitalization: A European perspective. *Urban science*, 8(2), 39.
14. Kastenholz, E., & Gronau, W. (2022). Enhancing competences for co-creating appealing and meaningful cultural heritage experiences in tourism. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 46(8), 1519-1544.
15. Lee, J. L. C., Lee, K. L., Wong, A. Y. L., Lee, K., Ho, R. T. H., Kong, W., & Mo, S. (2024). Participatory model-making design by engaging stakeholders of a senior-friendly city to be contributors in designing future outdoor exercise space for seniors: a pilot study. *Asian Journal of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 19(1), 33-34.
16. Suriyankietkaw, S., Krittayarungroj, K., Thinthan, S., & Lumlongrut, S. (2025). Creative tourism as a driver for sustainable development: A model for advancing SDGs through community-based tourism and environmental stewardship. *Environmental and Sustainability Indicators*, 6(3), 100828.
17. Zhang, M., & Pan, Y. (2021). Design of sustainable senior-friendly community transportation services. *Sustainability*, 13(23), 13078.