Top stories :

NEW STRAITS TIMES BT

Trending: Heard the News? Kimi Antonelli CSA Pakistan scam centre Nazir Hussin Melaka polls

UUM/AA88/NST/14.10.2026/P:1-4(1)

Ad

Creating a senior-friendly tourism ecosystem

October 14, 2026 @ 8:52am



Malaysia's national policy defines an older person as someone aged 60 and above but the tourism and leisure businesses do not apply the same threshold consistently. NSTP/ AHMAD UKASYAH

Get the quick story here
Summarise for me

LETTER: At what age is someone officially considered as a senior citizen - 55, 60, 62 or 65? The answer depends on where you are and what you are paying for.

Malaysia's National Policy for Older Persons defines an older person as someone aged 60 and above. Yet the tourism and leisure businesses do not apply the same threshold consistently.

Ad served by Goc
Ad options
Send feedback

Golden Screen Cinemas, for example, offers senior citizen rates to patrons aged 55 years old and above. Penang Hill and Sunway Lagoon use 60, while Petrosains places senior admission at 61 and above.

The differences are not unique to Malaysia. In the United States, the National Park Service offers its Senior Pass from 62 years old, while English Heritage in Britain provides senior concession tickets from 65.

So there is clearly no universal age at which a tourist suddenly becomes "senior".

Chronological age alone does not tell us about whether a person is healthy, active, financially independent or physically restricted.

This matters as Malaysia's population ages. People in their late 55s or early 60s today may be very different from someone of the same age several decades ago.

Many continue working, travelling and participating actively in leisure. Others may experience mobility, health or financial constraints earlier.

Should Malaysia therefore lower all senior discounts to 55? Not necessarily.

A blanket rule could increase costs for attractions and reduce ticket revenue, particularly for operators already providing substantial concessions. Age alone also does not indicate financial need.

But, the current situation deserves another look. Instead of requiring every attraction to adopt the same age, the tourism industry could distinguish between an official senior citizen entitlement and a senior tourism market.

The official threshold of 60 could remain for government related concessions.

Tourism businesses, however, could have the flexibility to recognise the broader 55 plus market through off peak discounts, weekday promotions, loyalty programmes or special packages.

This could benefit both sides. Senior tourists may be encouraged to travel more frequently, while attractions could attract visitors during quieter periods.

More importantly, senior friendly tourism should not end with a cheaper ticket.

Accessible toilets, seating areas, safe walkways, clear information, simple digital booking and helpful staff may matter far more than saving a few ringgit.

Malaysia therefore does not necessarily need one compulsory age for every senior discount but greater clarity over what "senior" means, why a concession is being offered and whom it is intended to help.

LIEW SIEN LEONG

Lecturer

School of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management

Universiti Utara Malaysia

Ads by

Ad options

Send feedback

Why this ad?

Keywords: Tourism, Malaysia, Senior Citizen, Discounts, Age Threshold, Leisure Business

LATEST

3 min **F1 return feasibility study to go to cabinet this month, says SIC chief**
Nation

3 min **#SHOWBIZ: Double triumph: Siti Nurhaliza nets 2 records after drawing 145,000 fans**
Groove

8 min **MAG secures top sukuk ratings to fund fleet, network expansion**