



“What is senior marketing from the perspective of gerontology?”

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Yuko Horiuchi

President of Senior Life Design

Executive Director of Society for Applied Gerontology – Japan

Collaborative Researcher of Institute for Gerontology,

J.F. Oberlin University

Self-introduction

Public work

- Surveyor, the Tokyo Metropolitan Long-Term Care Service Information Disclosure System
- Evaluator, the Tokyo Metropolitan Welfare Service Third Party Evaluation

Research work

- Cooperative Research Fellow, Tokyo Metropolitan Geriatric Hospital & Institute of Gerontology
- Collaborative Researcher, Institute for Gerontology, J.F. Oberlin University
- Executive Director, Society for Applied Gerontology - Japan
- Executive Director, Japanese Association of Community Based Civil Safety Sciences

General work

- Consulting (Development of products and services for seniors)
- Research (mainly qualitative research)
- Corporate advisor
- Lecturers, lecture activities, and writing

Professional societies

- Society for Applied Gerontology – Japan
- Japan Socio-Gerontological Society
- The Association for the Study of Security Science
- Japanese Association of Community Based Civil Safety Sciences
- Japanese Society of Safety Promotion



1. Gerontology

What is Gerontology?



Have you ever heard of
“gerontology”?



Background of today's topic

Where does the name “Gerontology” come from?

The term “Gerontology” is a combination
of the following two Greek words:

geronto (old person)
logy (study)



**In Japan, it was translated in 1950 as the study of
old people.**

What is gerontology?

1. Scientific study of age-related changes
2. Scientific study on problems middle-aged/elderly people have
3. Study from the standpoint of humanities (history, philosophy, religion, literature, etc.)
4. Application of knowledge useful for adults and the elderly

(Maddox et al eds: The Encyclopedia of Aging, 1991)

5. Study of intergenerational problems

Introduction to gerontology (interdisciplinary content)

Structure of faculties of each
university and graduate school
(example)

Faculty of Medicine

Faculty of Nursing

Faculty of Psychology

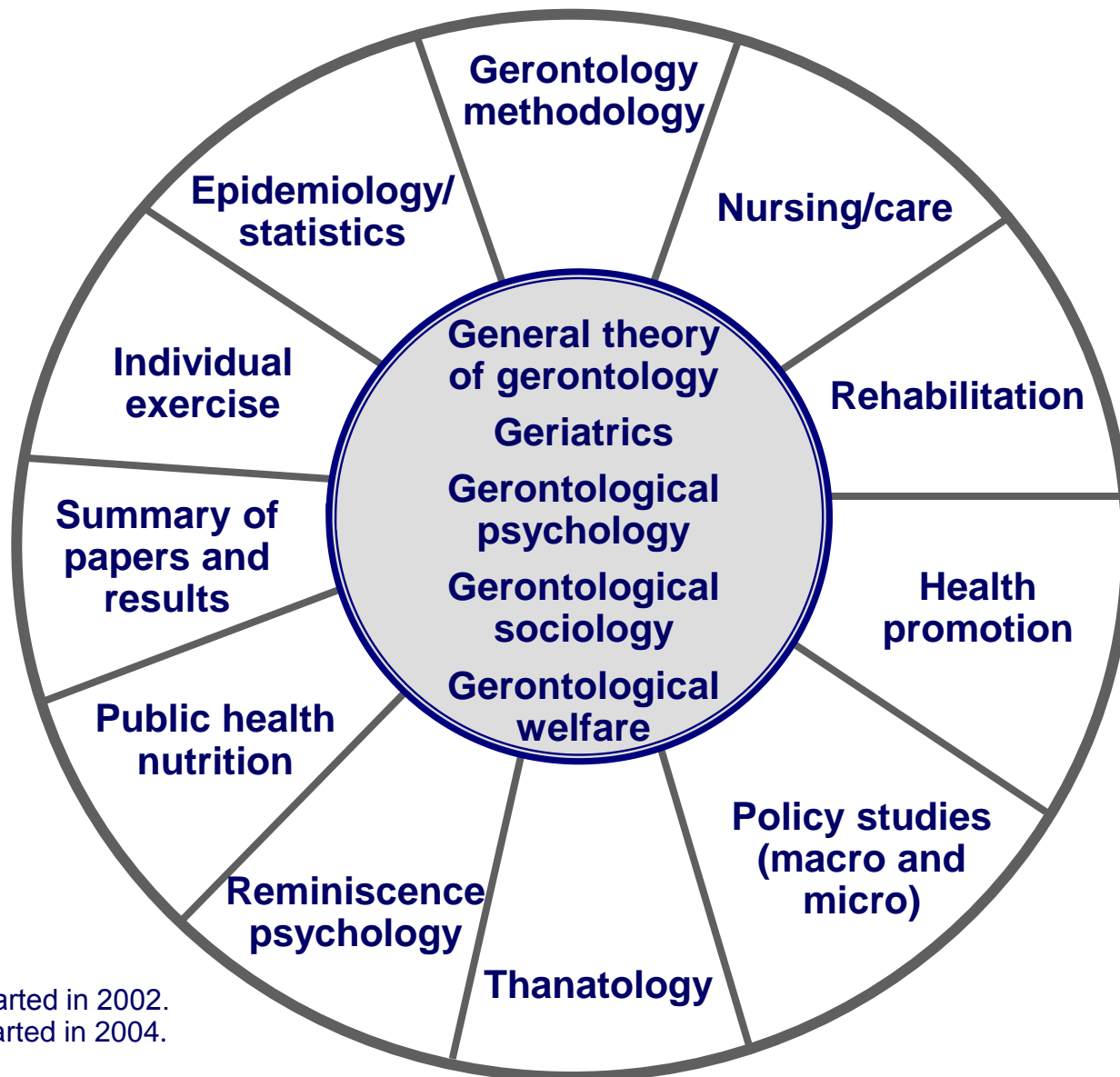
Faculty of Sociology

Faculty of Law

Faculty of Liberal Arts



Gerontology

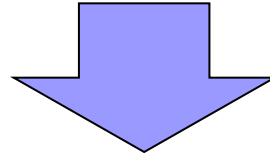


Master's Program started in 2002.
 Doctoral Program started in 2004.

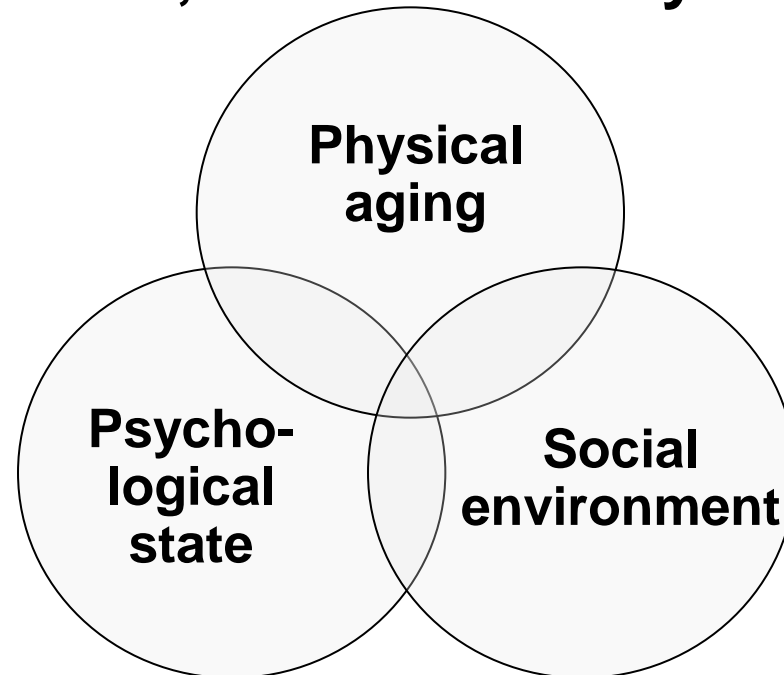
Figure 1: Structure of Master's course of Graduate School of Gerontology, Oberlin University

Source: Hiroshi Shibata, Mission of Society for Applied Gerontology - Japan, Japan's Applied Gerontology 2007

Why is the concept of gerontology needed in the senior market?



It's because “gerontology” as an interdisciplinary study is a holistic study of the elderly, including their body and mind, and the society they belong to.



These factors affect their spending habits.

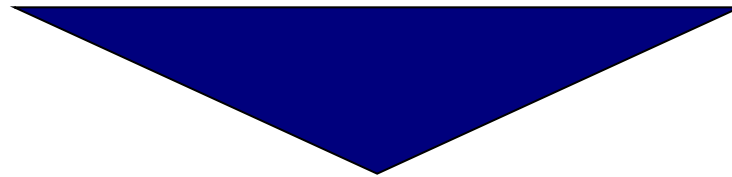


2. “Normal Aging” and Seniors These Days

Understand the Elderly. (normal aging)

Physical changes: normal aging

Everyone ages. (normal aging)



- **Aging** = the process of growing old
- **Aging senescence** = mental and physical decline as a result of aging

About Normal Aging

- **Normal aging** → **Physiological aging**
- **Pathological aging** → **Significant decline in mental and physical functioning compared with normal persons of the same age**

Aging in Terms of Biology

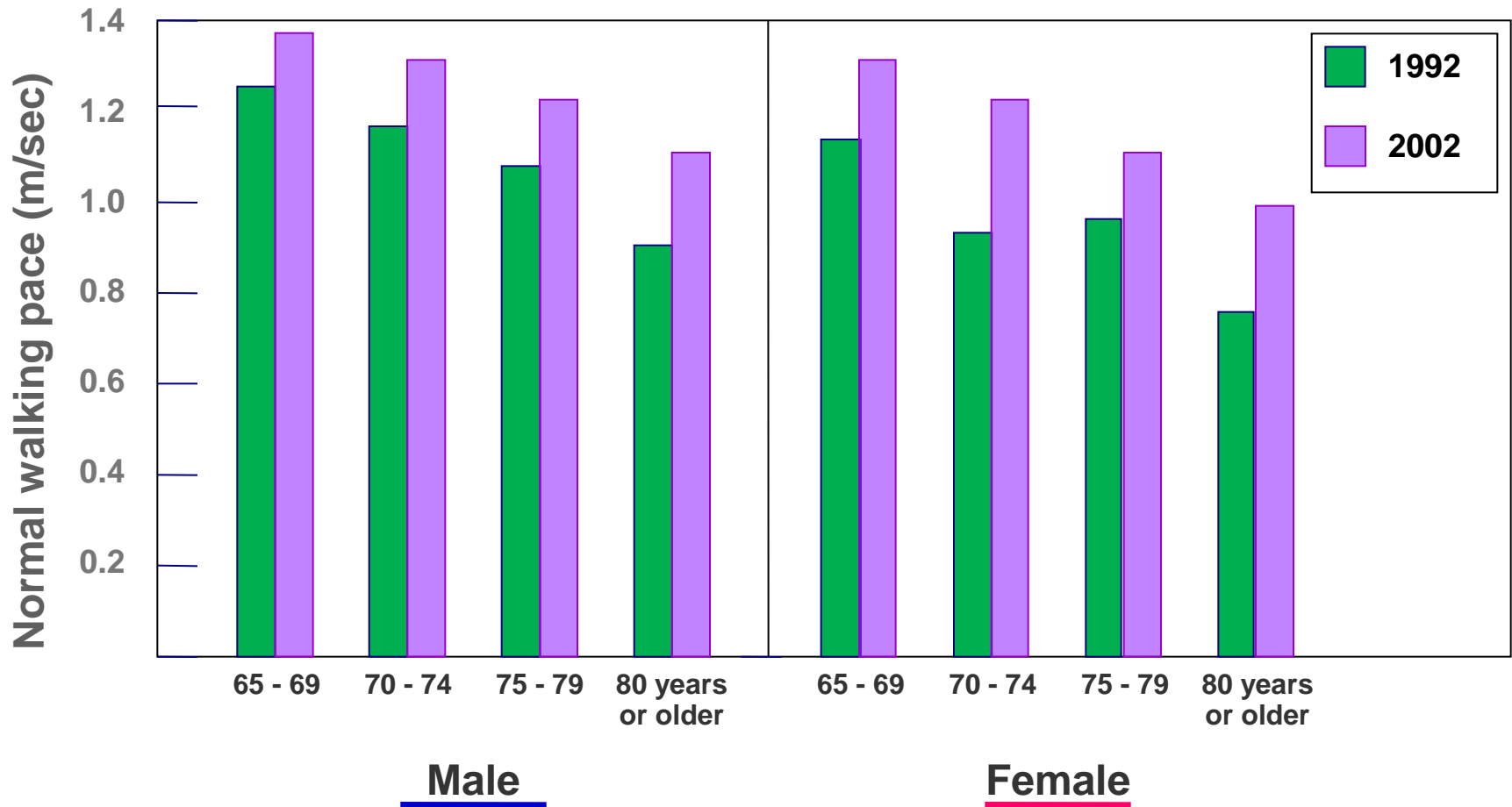
- **Aging of the motor functions**
 - Characterized by a mild decline in motor functions such as walking, but a marked decline in running and other exercises that require instantaneous force.
- **Aging of the sensory function**
 - Generally, sensory functions such as vision, hearing, sense of taste, skin sensation, and balance will decline. These are caused mainly by diminished neurologic function.
- **Aging of the autonomic functions**
 - Circulatory function, respiratory function, digestive function, urination control function, body temperature regulation, body fluid regulation, blood sugar regulation, endocrine function
- **Aging of sleep-wake function**
 - It is reported that 25% to 40% of the elderly suffer from sleep disturbances. Declining activity due to aging of the biological clock located in the brain together with aging of sensory functions
- **Aging of the higher nervous system**
 - Fluid intelligence

2019 Respect-for-the-Aged Day Topics (September 16)

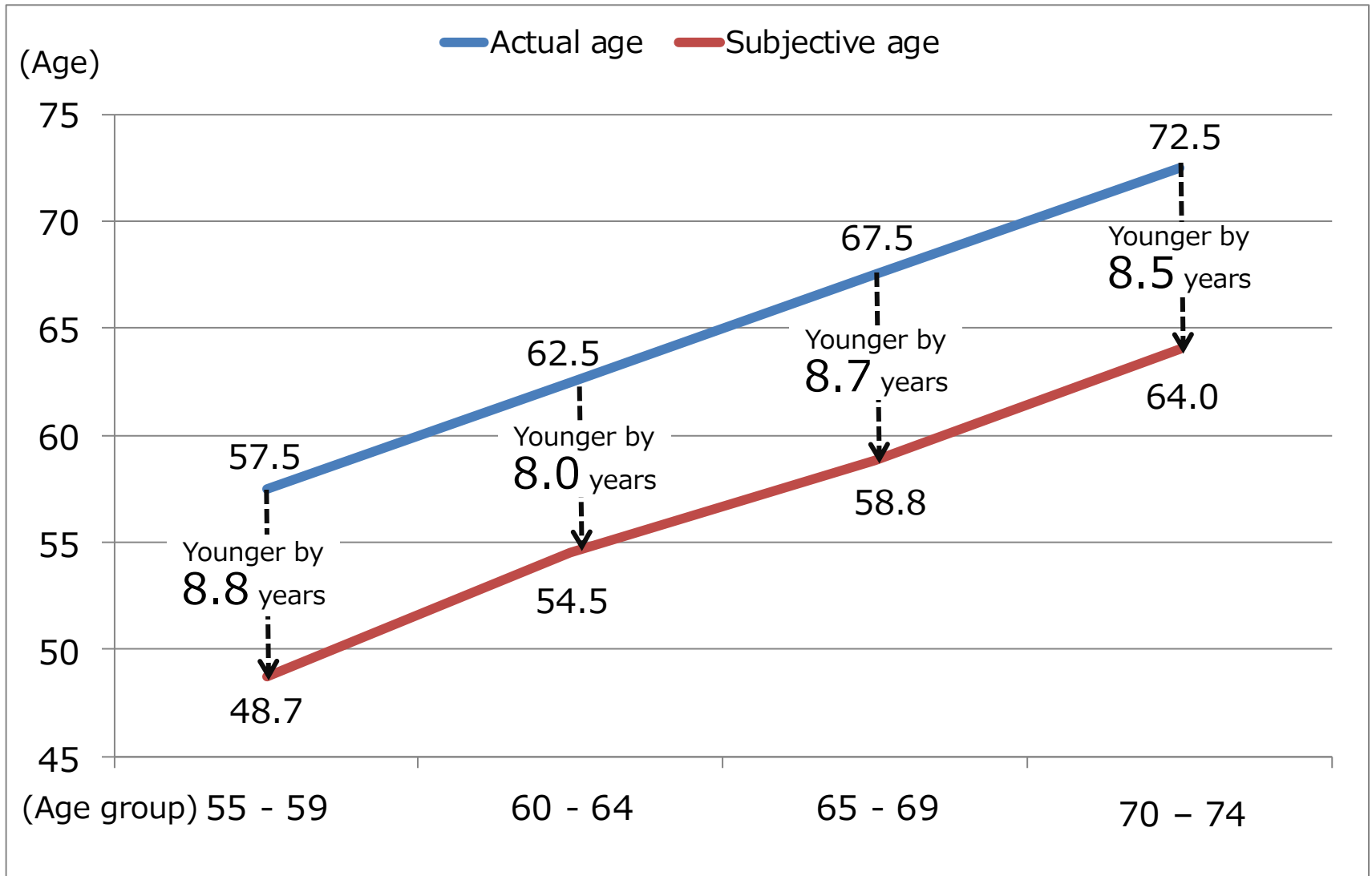
- **Japan's aging rate was the highest in the world at 28.4 percent; the number of the elderly is estimated to be 35.88 million.**
- **As many as 28.4% of the population is aged 65 or over, which is the highest in the world, and one out of seven people is aged 75 or over.**
- **Japan's elderly population hit record high; in 2040, the number will exceed 1/3 of the Japan's population.**
- **The population of people aged 70 or older exceeded 27 million, and the ratio of elderly people is the highest in the world.**
- **The number of people aged 100 or older exceeded 70,000.**
- **The share of those aged 65 or older is the highest among 201 countries and regions.**
The share remains well above that of Italy (23.0%), the second most aged country. It is estimated that the share will be 30.0% and 35.3% in 2025 and 2040 respectively.
- **The number of employed elderly people reached a record high of 8.62 million; the number of those over 65 years of age is estimated to account for 28.4% of the total population.**

Change in Normal Walking Speed (the usual pace of walking)

“10 years younger in terms of data!”



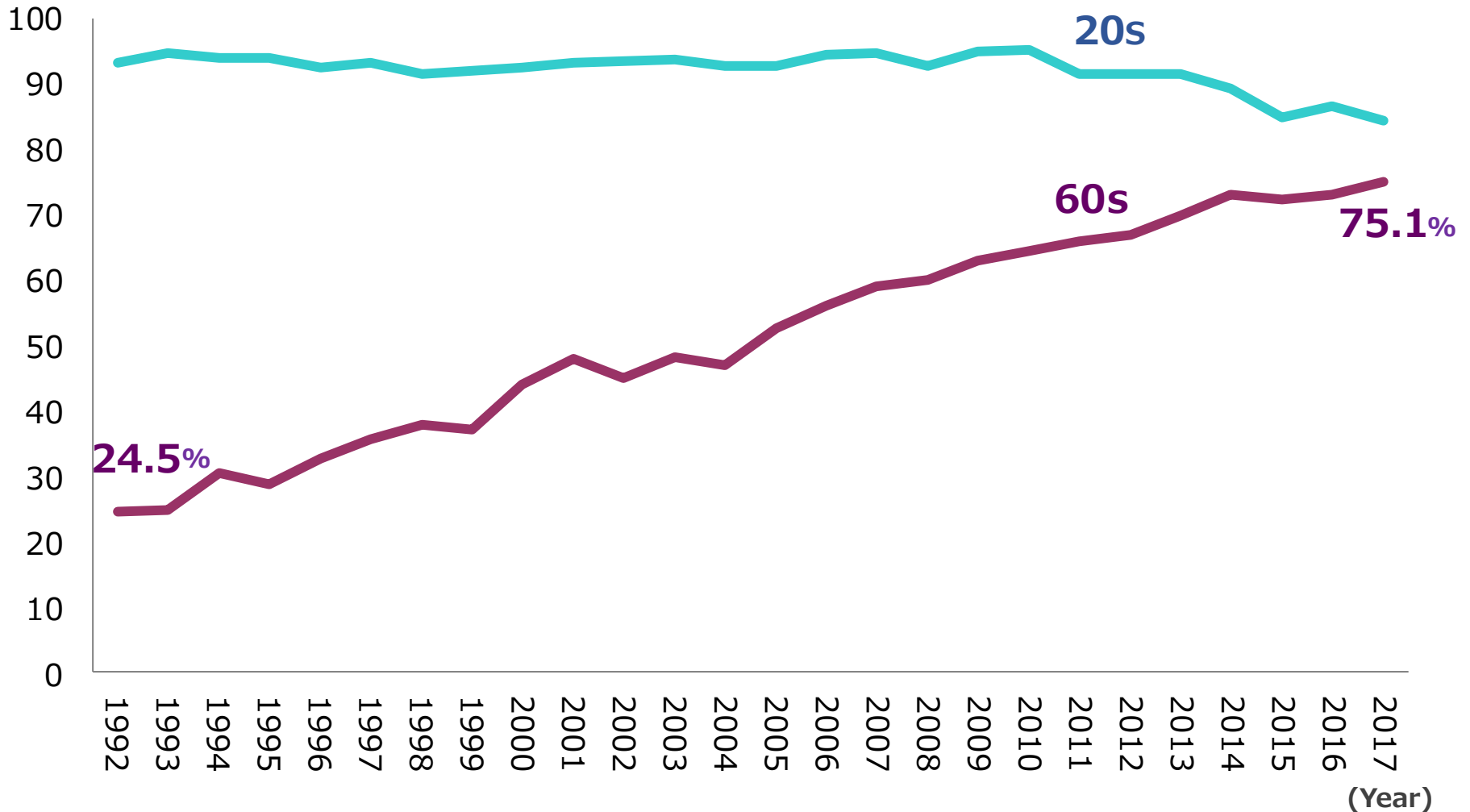
- “Subjective age” of today’s seniors is 8 years younger than the real age on the average.



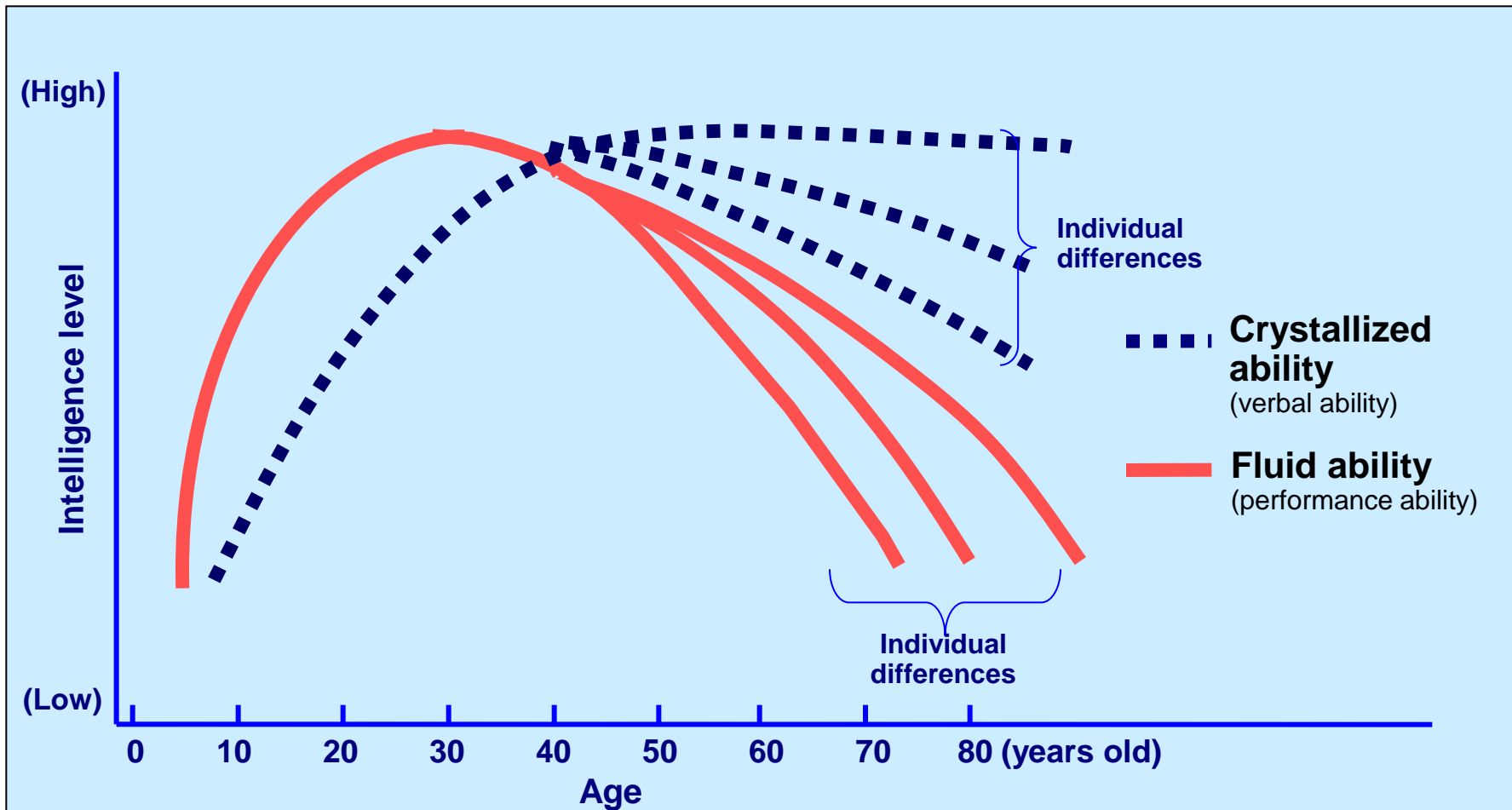
Data based on “VR’s 1,000 Senior People Survey”; the target is males and females in the metropolitan area whose age is 55 to 74 years old (N = 1,120)

- Today's seniors are different from those of the past; more than 70% of those in their 60s wear jeans.

(%) [Percentage of seniors who have jeans]

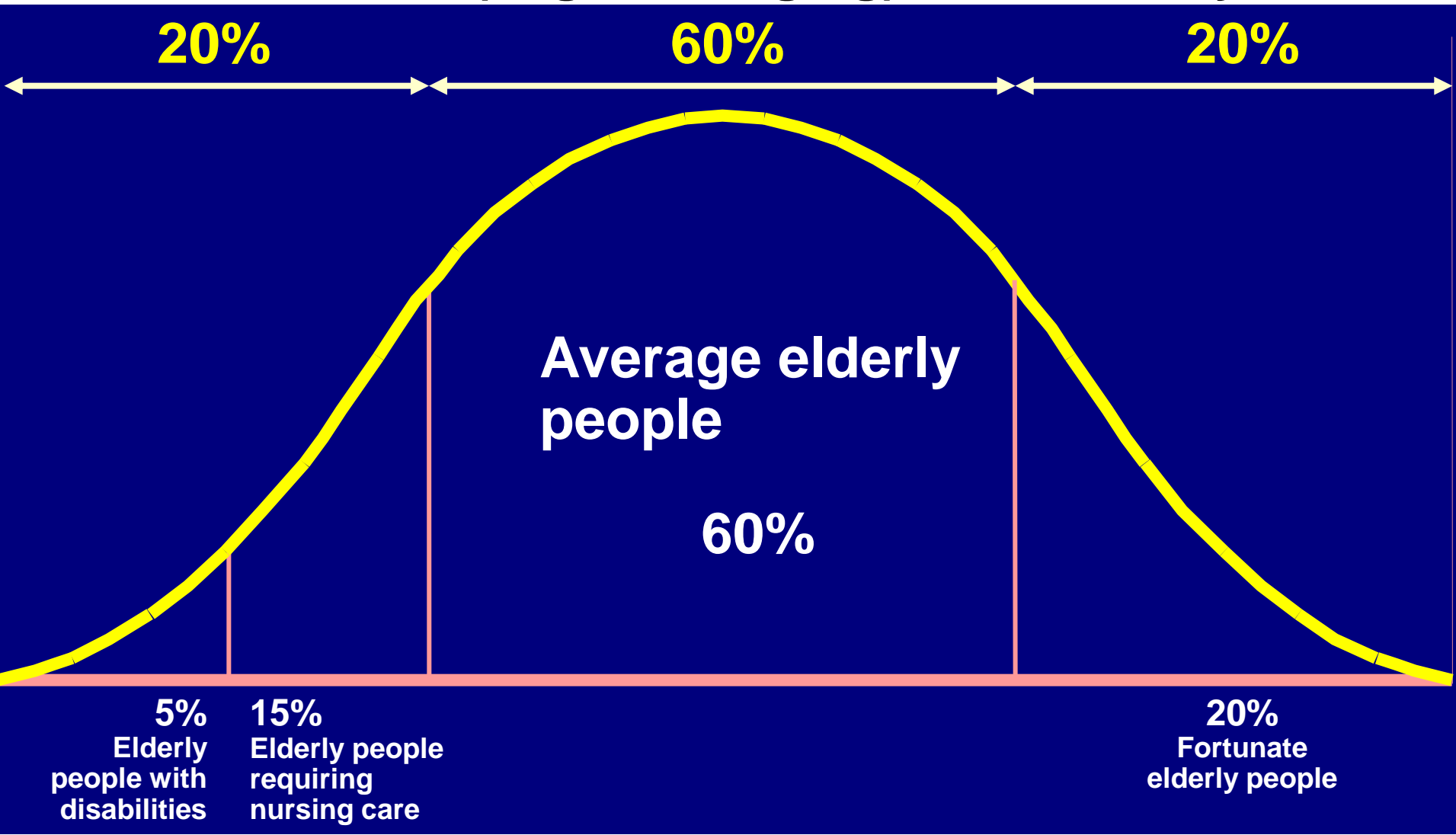


Age-related Changes in Intelligence



**Figure 2: Age-related changes in intelligence
(lifetime changes in fluid ability and crystallized ability)**

Model of deviation value concerning vital life functions (degree of aging) of the elderly

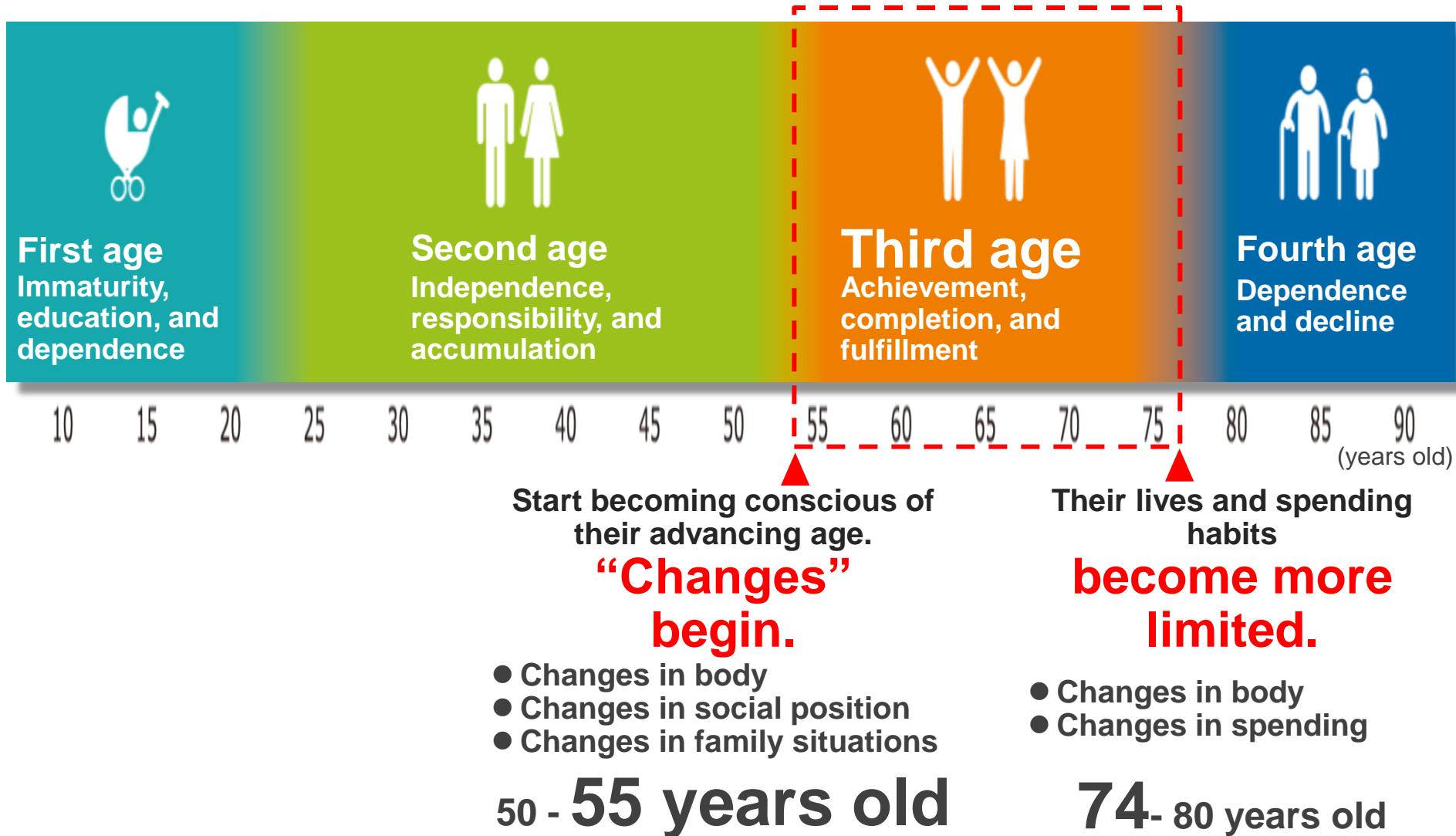




3. Concept of Senior Marketing (spending habits)

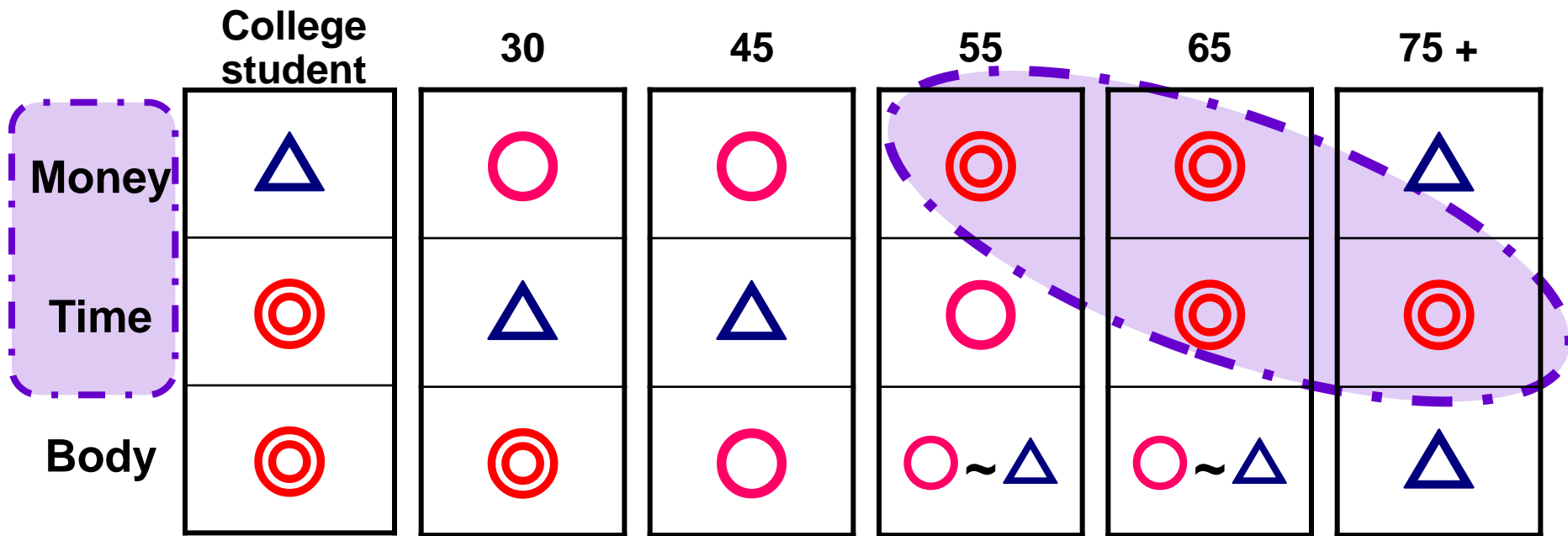
Four ages based on our concept

The theory of the four stages of life by Peter Laslet



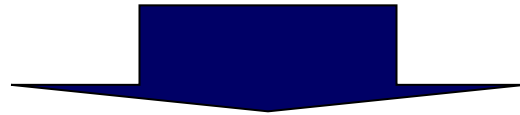
As people grow older, they become more active.

We see active seniors who have ample time and money.



So why isn't senior marketing working?

Assumption by sellers and producers (stereotype)



- **They don't understand the mind/body or evolution of seniors.**

||

- **They don't have the opportunity to learn holistically about the elderly like in gerontology.**

Difficulties in Senior Market

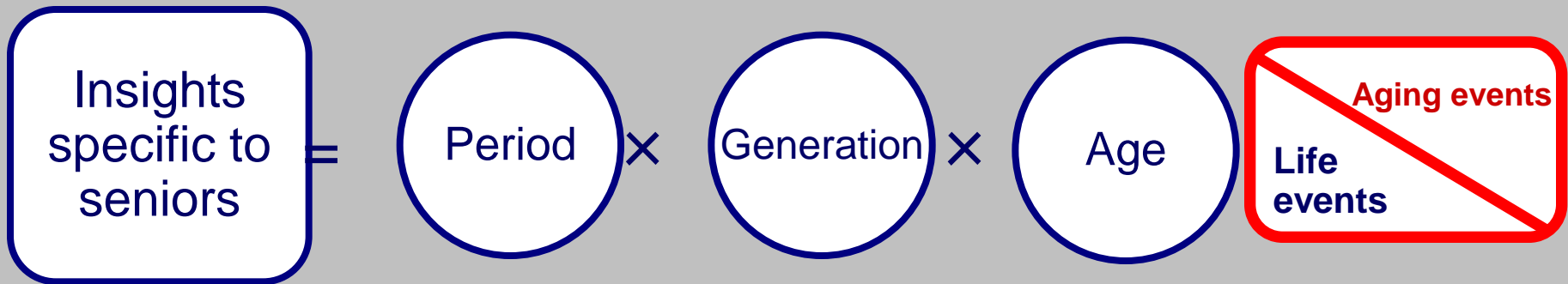
- 1. Diversity** → **Income, employment status, and past experience**
- 2. Understanding of needs** → **Long years of experience and appearances**
- 3. Recognition and comparison of products** → **Gaps in information technology skills**
- 4. Invisible spending** → **Spending for others, spending for experiences**
- 5. Identification of their future anxieties** → **Concerns about illness, aging, and financial matters**

⋮
etc.

An Equation to Understand Seniors

We are trying to understand insights specific to seniors based on the two perspectives of aging events (aging-related changes) and life events.

An Equation to Understand Seniors



**Psychological/physical factors =
trigger spending**

Market trigger point based on “the past experiences” is “when the gates of the mind[©] (doors) are opened”, which is the key to triggering their spending.



A hint is “reminiscence therapy”.

“Keys” vary from generation to generation.

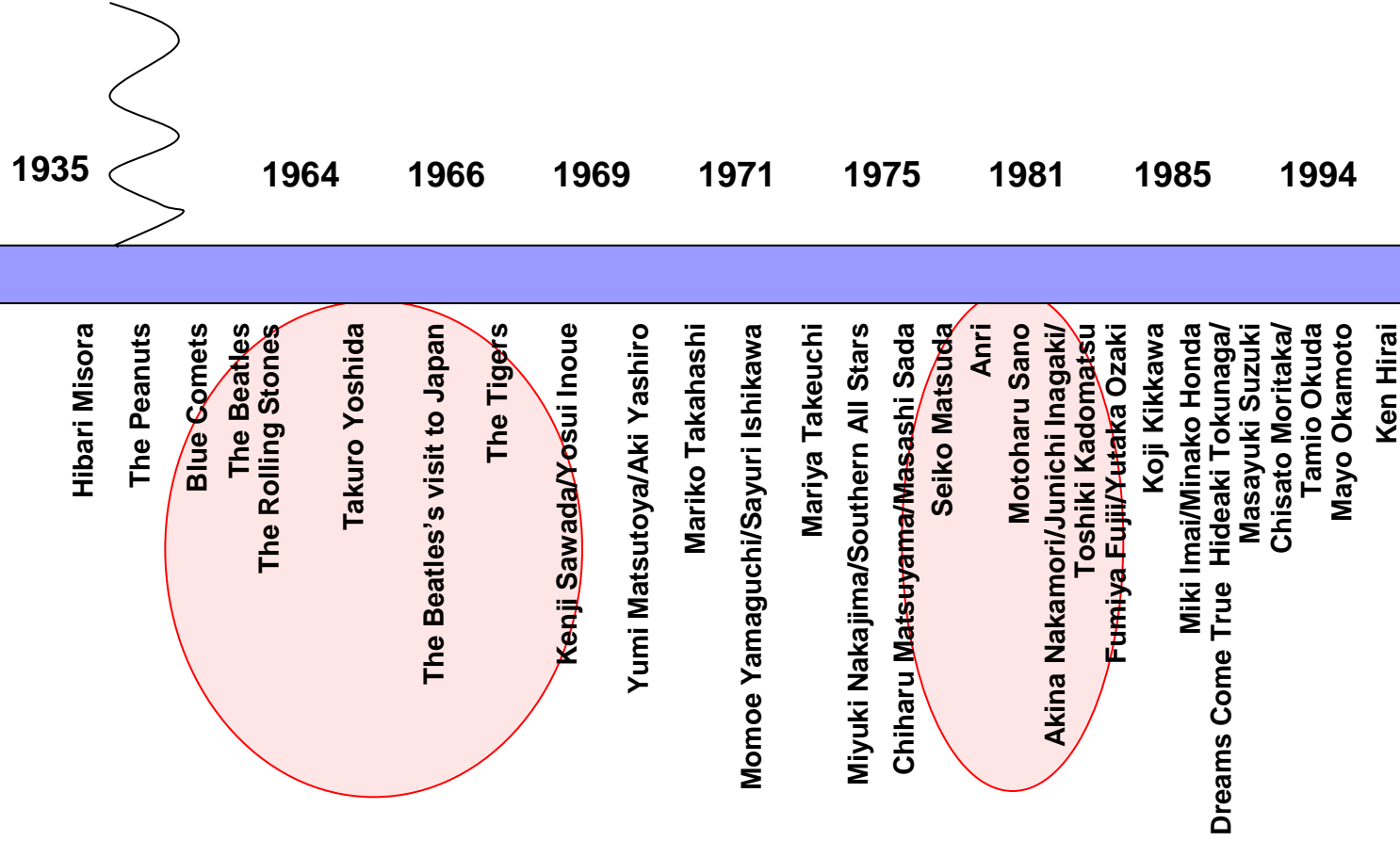
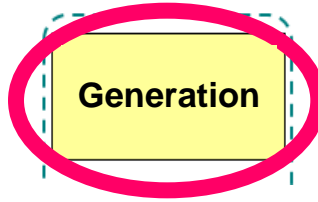
“Five senses keys”

**Q. What are your nostalgic songs?
Favorite food, snacks, fashion, etc.**



The gate related to singers: puberty

The gate related to snacks: childhood

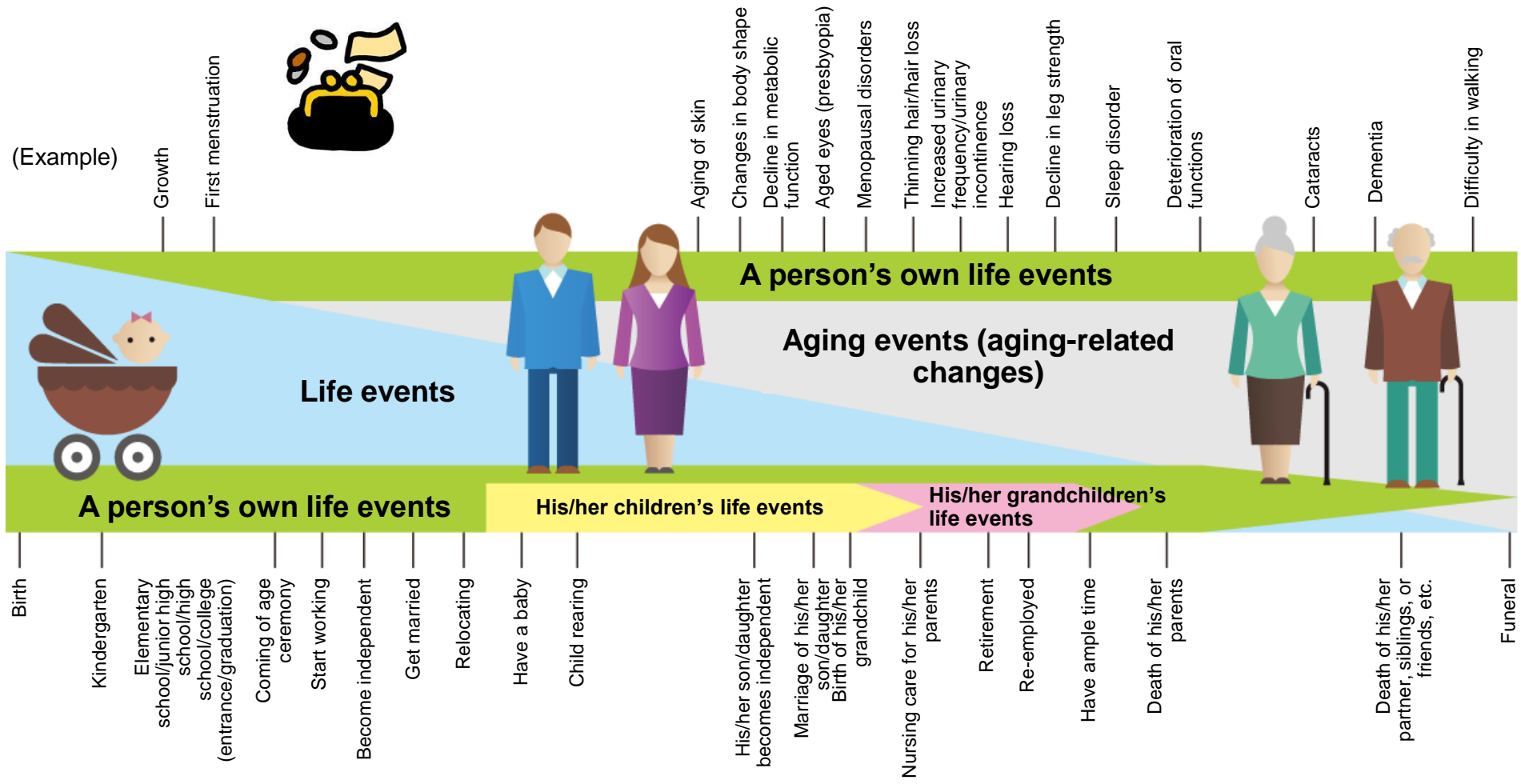


Source: Nendai Ryuukou (trends by period); <http://nendai-ryuukou.com/1970/food.html>
 Source: List of Japan Artists' Debut Years; http://www.cube-music.com/j-artists/set_up/

Age

The market trigger point concerning seniors is to capture “aging events (aging-related changes)”.

Don't miss “the opportunities to make a profit”!



Age

“Subtraction thinking” will lead to loosening the purse strings!

The thought of “This might be the last...” can be the biggest driver of spending.



I want to go on a trip to the World Heritage Sites while I am healthy.
I wonder how many more times I can change cars... then I should buy what I want!
I wonder how many more times I can go to Paul McCartney’s concerts... then I should go to his concerts while I can.

Life

Birth → Death



Products that they don’t get tired of or long lasting ones, which will be eventually transferred to their children.

How many more times, how many more years...

Triggering factors: physical decline/illness, death of friends/acquaintances, or the thought of remaining years of life, etc.

Positive spending based on subtraction thinking

How many more times can I go there? How many more times can I do that?

Trigger:

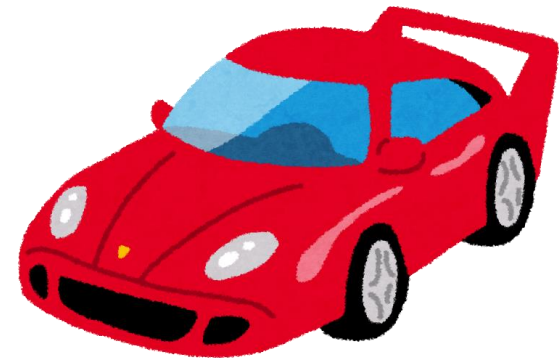
illness or the death of someone of the same age

Male ⇒ 50 years old

(When the retirement age comes in less than 10 years)

Female ⇒ When suddenly feeling old

(when facing menopause or when their children/
grandchildren become independent)



While I am healthy...

Considering that there are only a few more times that I can replace cars...

Negative spending based on subtraction thinking

How many more years do I have to live?

Trigger:

illness or the death of someone of the same age

Male ⇒ 50 years old

(When the retirement age comes in less than 10 years)

Female ⇒ When suddenly feeling old

(when facing menopause or when their children/
grandchildren become independent)



Life insurance products
to cover longevity risk

長生き支援終身保険

安心保険

認知症保険

Spending to dispel worries

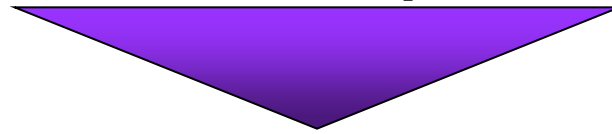


Dietary Supplement
Health food

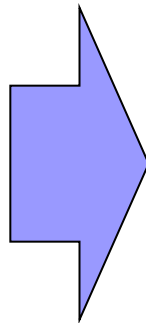
Spending for commodities or for experiences?

Spending not because of simply wanting goods
but because of the necessity to buy them in order to
experience what one wants

If “what they want to experience” is focused
on, it is possible to offer products that sell.



Example: when they go on a trip, they will need:



a light
crossbody bag
with a lot of
pockets



Stylish shoes
easy to walk



Folding sun
protection hat



Goods to protect
oneself from air
conditioning or
from getting
sunburned





4. Summary

Key Points of the Senior Market

2.
Past



+

1.
Today's seniors



+

3.
Future

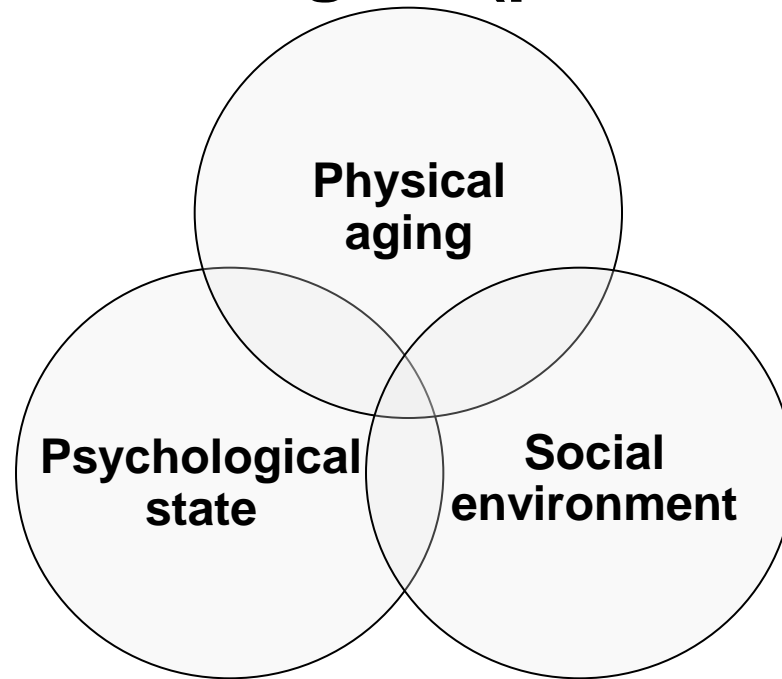


Impact of past experiences and encounters on spending habits

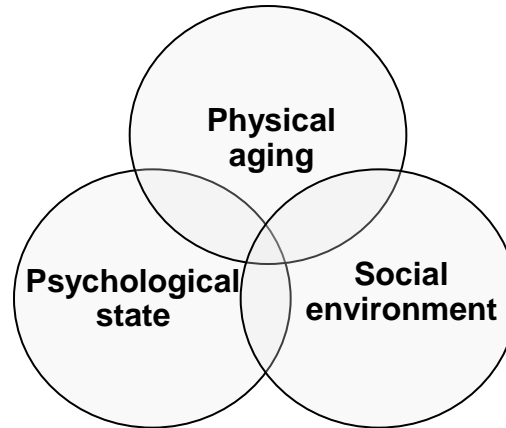
Spending due to current needs, life stage, and social conditions

Spending considering the remaining years of life

“Market-oriented” instead of “Product-oriented”;
however, **capture the senior market holistically** by taking into account their mind and body and social environments while utilizing the strengths (products).



Spending by seniors is based on various factors such as their mind/body or social environments, unlike the other generations; they don't buy products simply because they want them or they are necessary.



[Automatic vacuum cleaners/lightweight vacuum cleaners]

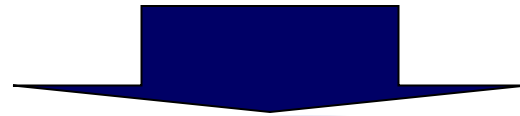
- Body:** Feeling weak lately.
- Body:** Interested in easy-to-use/user-friendly products.
- Society:** Issues concerning pension/nursing care insurance
- Society:** I have almost all of the necessary things. I need to think about the end of life planning or decluttering.
- Mind:** Good functionality gives a reason to buy. (justification)
- Mind:** Can't resist goods focused on health.

[Car/autonomous driving]

- Body:** Weakening of five senses
- Body:** Decline in the athletic ability
- Mind:** Risk is not considered due to "overconfidence based on the past experience".
- Mind:** Confidence/pride
- Society:** Problems of accidents caused by the elderly
- Society:** Return of driver's license by the elderly

(Problems concerning alternative functions/ transportation infrastructure)

“Seniors” cannot be considered as one category.



Senior people are highly diverse and are different from each other, so it is difficult to grasp their actual selves only from the perspective of the category of the senior age group.

It is necessary to try to understand seniors by period/generation/age while taking into consideration their body/mind and society.

**The last
important thing**

Acquire the ability to spot senior people's lies.

Have you experienced a situation where you created a product based on a survey targeting senior people but it didn't sell?

"Unconscious lies"

Tell lies without noticing.

- Gap between mind and body
- Normal aging

"Lies to get away with the situation"

Hide the true feelings.
(especially men)

- Pride
- General/public theories

"Lies due to empathy"

That's what I thought at that time. (especially women)


- Flexibility/empathy
- High level of coordination skills

"Well-intentioned lies"

Not telling the truth.

- Consideration/ thoughtfulness

Seek out the true feelings of seniors by observing the context of their conversations or their behavior, etc.



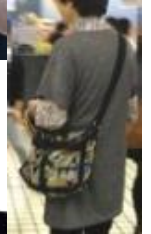
5. Case Study of the Senior Market

Points/keywords concerning the purchase of bags by senior people

Bags that meet the following: easy to use, gorgeous, user-friendly, comfortable/safe, providing several benefits, and good reason(s) for purchasing



Bags for seniors' outing need to meet the following: light, soft fabric, inside is bright enough to find things easily, wide opening that makes it easy to get things in and out, zippers/snaps are attached to hide things inside, messenger bag that makes both hands free, shoulder straps that are wide and don't cut into their shoulders and don't cause stiff shoulders, flower pattern or bright and gorgeous color pattern, high-brand luxury with emblem and monogram pattern, plenty of pockets to neatly arrange small items, etc.



[kipling]
Bags with large storage capacity while being compact
Easy to see inside; user-friendly because you can wear a bag across your body.



[Yamatoya]
Their bags are light, soft fabric is used, and they have a lot of pockets.
Easy to zip bags open. If you buy one, you want to buy more!

About Food in Small Packages

The points are whether it can be preserved long, whether it goes well with other dishes, and whether it is provided at a moderate price.



At a GMS in Tokyo

A product featured on a TV program about health was sold out at 10:30 the next day. They were purchased by senior people.

In the past, when it was broadcast that canned mackerel helps to lower cholesterol, it was sold out the next day (purchase mainly by male).

Also, linseed oil and sesame oil were sold out the next day after they were reported to be effective in preventing dementia. From the next day, “one bottle per person” was applied.

May 18, 2017

There were no
linseed oil/
sesame oil on the
shelf at 10:30.





END