

The following publication Wang, Q., Hung, K., & Liu, C. (2023). Tourist experience and well-being of Chinese elderly tourists through intergenerational interaction with their adult children. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 57, 18-28 is available at <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2023.08.016>.

Tourist experience and well-being of Chinese elderly tourists through intergenerational interaction with their adult children

Abstract

Studies on senior travel have focused on older adults' travel motivations, experiences, and well-being separately; less attention has been paid to how intergenerational interactions define these tourists' experiences and well-being. This study explored how intergenerational interactions with adult children shape the elderly's travel experience and well-being. In-depth interviews with elderly tourists revealed that their interactions with adult children occur when they travel together and not, and, in the pre-travel, and in-transit travel, and post-travel. Results further showed that adult children's acknowledgement (disconfirmation) of elderly tourists' experience plays an important role in the supportive (conflicting) interactions and subsequently enhanced (jeopardized) the elderly's well-being. Thus, a close investigation of the impact of intergenerational interaction on the travel experience and well-being of seniors enables tourism industry to make appropriate changes to its strategies and tourism products to enhance intergenerational interaction, thereby contributing to the growth of the silver-haired tourism market and destination performance.

Keywords

Elderly tourism; intergenerational interaction; China; adult children; tourist experience; well-being

1 Introduction

China's aging population is growing rapidly. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, 264.02 million residents were aged 60 and above as of November 2020, accounting for 18.70% of the population; this proportion represented a rise of 5.44 percentage points compared with 2010. This swift increase has caused active aging through leisure to become a prime area of investigation, especially in terms of later-life satisfaction. The World Health Organization (WHO) described active aging as "the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age" (WHO, 2002, p. 12). In November 2021, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council released *Opinions of on Strengthening Work on the Elderly in the New Era* and suggested developing tourism products for the elderly to improve the quality and level of tourism services for the elderly. An expanding body of literature has shown that travel plays a positive role in active aging, offering benefits such as improved health and positive emotions (Dong et al., 2022; Gustafson, 2002; Li & Chan, 2021) and contributing to the elderly's quality of life and well-being (Chang et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2015; Uysal et al., 2016). Seniors in China have apparently embraced travel as part of their lifestyle (Chang et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2020).

As the elderly's propensity for travel continues to rise, the antecedents and consequences of senior travel have garnered increasing attention (Chang et al., 2022; Pestana et al., 2019). Related studies have offered valuable insights into marketing strategies and active aging (Hung & Lu, 2016; Sie et al., 2021). Associated research has addressed senior tourists' motivations (Lewis & D'Alessandro, 2019), senior tourism market segmentation (Otoo et al., 2021), travel demand (Pak, 2019), determinants of tourism destination attractiveness (Pan et al., 2021), older adults' travel experiences (Sie et al., 2015), technology usage (Wang et al., 2017), emotional solidarity (Wang et al., 2022), staged decision-making process (Nicolau et al., 2019) and travel behavior (Chen & Shoemaker, 2014; Huber et al., 2018).

Work regarding aging within the tourism and hospitality field has also covered the influences of tourism on senior tourists' quality of life and well-being (Chang et al., 2022; Hung & Lu, 2016; Kim et al., 2021; Li & Chan, 2021). Tourism studies have demonstrated that

tourism experiences and activities contribute positively to overall life satisfaction and wellbeing (Uysal et al., 2016). To be specific, several factors about tourism experience and activities have been deemed conducive to tourists' later-life well-being, such as travel frequency, family budget, personal curiosity, tourist motivation, involvement, perceived value, satisfaction with trip experience, satisfaction with leisure life and life coherence and memory creation (Li & Chan, 2021; Kim et al., 2015; Totsune et al., 2021; Woo et al., 2016). For instance, Woo et al., (2016) investigated the missing link between travel behaviors of the elderly tourists in South Korea and how their travel activities contribute to their quality of life, and they found a substantial relationship between motivation, satisfaction with leisure-life and overall life satisfaction. However, these studies have assumed either a universalist and contextualist stance or have employed cross-sectional data to understand well-being and outline systematic research paths (Li & Chan, 2021; Qiao et al., 2022), or concentrated on the influences of specific tourism activities (e.g., shopping and dining) (Lee & Lee, 2021). Findings related to seniors' well-being in tourism remain fairly unclear; the senior travel market is dynamic and requires a broad academic focus (Chang et al., 2022; Hung & Lu, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2021; Otoo & Kim, 2018). A perspective involving interpersonal interaction could offer novel findings to explain how travel can affect the elderly's well-being (Chen & Chen, 2010).

Existing studies have revealed that adult child-parent relationships played an important role in family members' tourist experience and well-being. According to solidarity–conflict model, an internationally and widely adopted theory on parent–child relationships (Lin et al., 2015; Steinbach, 2008), interactions between aging parents and their adult children can include feelings of closeness and unity as well as alienation and conflict (Bengtson et al., 2002; Lin et al., 2018). On one hand, Chinese adult children usually possess a strong sense of responsibility to care for their parents due to the influences of filial culture, which highlight children's devotion to their parents and the subordination of their personal interests to family harmony (Wang et al., 2018; Yao et al., 2020). This obligation manifests through actions such as travelling with aging parents (Yi et al., 2022) and providing support for elderly parents' travel (Wu & Wall, 2017; Xiong & Shi, 2016). Hsu and Kang (2009) found that Chinese children are supposed to fund their older parents' travel for the sake of parents' well-being. According to

Ctrip (2016), China's largest online travel agency, "filial travel" products targeting seniors appeal more to adult children than to the elderly themselves. The trend for adult children to enhance well-being of their elderly parents by traveling with them or providing remote travel has emerged (Uysal et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2023; Yi et al., 2022). Clarifying the underlying logic of elderly parents' perceived well-being in connection to their interactions with their adult children is critical and warrants more academic research, which may offer specific references for senior tourism market (Yi et al., 2022).

Aside from the positive influences, some scholars began to investigate potential conflicts between the elderly and their adult children. Due to the fact that adult children and their parents grow up in completely different environments, these two generations tend to have different values and consumption patterns, which induce tensions and collisions (Fu et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2020; Yi et al., 2022). Considerable conflicts have been reported in the literature when young adult children travelling with their parents, in terms of travel habits, trip choice and consumption, trip engagement level, timetable, and uncivil parental behavior (Yao et al., 2020; Yi et al., 2022). These issues may erode filial piety and reduce intergenerational contact, thereby affecting the travel experience and well-being of older people (Lin et al., 2015; Silverstein et al., 1996). Given the prevalence of conflict between young adult children and their aging parents (Jia et al., 2023), it is also crucial to explore how older parents perceive intergenerational conflicts with their adult children and how the intergenerational conflicts affect the well-being of older parents (Hu et al., 2023).

Furthermore, existing studies mostly separately investigated intergenerational solidarity and conflict (Van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006). Exactly how supportive and oppositional interactions may co-define the elderly's travel experiences and well-being merits further exploration, particularly within Chinese families (Yao et al., 2020). This study accordingly examines the importance of senior tourists' rapport with their adult children to their well-being. Specifically, we firstly seek to contextualize elderly tourists' perceptions of their positive and negative intergenerational interactions with their children who travelled with or without them. Second, this study investigates the roles of such interactions in older tourists' travel experiences and well-being. Our findings help to bridge a knowledge gap around intergenerational

interaction in the elderly travel context. Results also offer actionable suggestions for tourism practitioners and policymakers in devising strategies to enhance older people's well-being via travel.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Interaction between elderly parents and adult children: solidarity and conflict

As mentioned, the solidarity–conflict model is one of the most influential frameworks on parent–child relationships (Lin et al., 2015; Steinbach, 2008). Intergenerational relationships are multifaceted; interactions between elderly parents and their adult children involve not only intimacy and cohesion but also alienation and conflict (Bengtson et al., 2002; Lin et al., 2018). Solidarity refers to “feelings of mutual affinity within family relationships” (Dykstra et al., 1999, p. 6), which is generally thought in China to follow from practices associated with filial piety (Lin et al., 2015). Filial piety is treasured in China and has been empirically identified as a motive driving Chinese adult children to travel with and support their parents (Fu et al., 2022; Xiong & Shi, 2016; Yao et al., 2020). Such intergenerational interactions initiated by adult children as a result of filial piety has further been highlighted as a major source of well-being for their elderly parents in a handful of family and population studies (Aziz & Yusooff, 2012; Chen et al., 2021; Lee and Lee, 2021; Wang & Li, 2011). Yet, the phenomenon has only recently attracted the attention of tourism academics and has typically been investigated from the perspectives of adult children. Tourism scholars usually focused on adult children's motivations to travel with their elderly parents (Wang et al., 2018) or their perceived barriers in support of their elderly parents' outbound travels (Xiong et al., 2021). For instance, Wang et al. (2018) outlined several motivations inspiring Chinese adult children to travel with their parents, namely parent-oriented motivations, family-oriented motivations, and self-oriented motivations. Xiong et al. (2021) identified seven perceived barriers that Chinese adult children face in supporting their parents' travel abroad, including fear of failing their family, reluctance to scarify their leisure time and travel demands, perceived unfavorable parental views regarding international travel and so on.

Conflict is also inevitable in intergenerational relationships (Lin et al., 2018); negative

elements of parent–child relationships can include tension, arguments, or disagreement among family members (Silverstein et al., 1996). Intergenerational conflict may arise from preference and value dissimilarities, differences in knowledge levels, reduced intergenerational contact, personal characteristics, and children’s decreased adherence to filial piety (Lin et al., 2015; Yao et al., 2020). Scholars have explored conflicts between adult children and their parents over living habits, communication approaches, and career choices (Yao et al., 2020). In the field of tourism, researchers have conducted generational analysis and uncovered discrepancies in different generations’ (baby boomers and Generations X, Y, Z) travel motivations, trip planning, engagement behaviors, repeat purchase behavior, consumption preferences, attitudes and intentions, work and leisure value perceptions (Bravo et al., 2019; Gardiner et al., 2015; Ruiz-Equihua et al., 2021; Tsaur & Yen, 2018). Such differences can lead to conflicts (e.g., complaints, anger, and arguments) during travel (Fu et al., 2019). For instance, Yao et al. (2020) identified four types of conflicts between adult children and their parents, namely travel choice and consumption, schedule, travel involvement level and uncivil parental behavior, resulting from intergenerational differences and personal characteristics from the perspectives of young adults. Hu et al. (2023) further demonstrated the negative impacts of intergenerational conflict on parents’ travel satisfaction and subjective well-being through the serial mediating effects of two serial mediators (family intimacy and travel satisfaction, self-efficacy and travel satisfaction). Jia et al. (2023) indicated that adult children may do what they want or abide by their parents’ wishes to avoid intergenerational conflicts depending on conflict attribution (self-concern vs. other concern).

Although the above findings shed light on intergenerational interactions among family members during travel, the elderly’s travel with their adult children is relatively under-researched (Jia et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2020), including in the Chinese senior context (Qian & Lin, 2022). Three research gaps deserve attention. First, as a nascent but expanding field, senior travel has become a topic of academic interest. Scholars have begun to investigate positive and negative aspects of intergenerational interactions in isolation, ignoring the coexistence of harmony and conflict (e.g., conflicts frequently develop in circumstances where solidarity is displayed) (Van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006; Yao et al., 2020). In social sciences, there is a

propensity to portray the family as either a haven of peace, shelter, and harmony or as a place of abuse, rage, and violence (Van Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006). Studies jointly covering supportive and oppositional family interactions are rare (Yao et al., 2020), leading to an incomplete understanding of intergenerational interaction. An exception is that Qian and Lin (2022) Uysexamined a senior international tour accompanied by a young son and confirmed the existence of six sources of conflict (e.g., mothers' role, face saving and mental preparation) and harmony based on autoethnography. Another exception is that Yi et al. (2022) identified that the intergenerational differences between parents and adult children induce tensions, but also foster interdependency. Aside from that, their findings further suggested that both generations feel an obligation to compromise and meet the other's needs in order to achieve their ideal family travel (Yi et al., 2022). A joint examination of the positive and negative intergenerational interactions is of significance.

Second, more research is needed to unveil the possible interactions when senior tourists travelling without their offspring's accompanies. Interpersonal interactions between elderly tourists and their adult children occur both when traveling together and not. Interpersonal relationships have changed as technology traps people in a world of machine-mediated relationships, providing alternatives to face-to-face interactions (Turkle, 2011). Aside from the face-to-face interactions during their travelling together, the elderly who are travelling interact with their adult children who are at work via technological devices (e.g., smartphones). For instance, when Chinese seniors travel abroad and face travel constraints, they are likely to pick up the phone to seek support from family in China (Wen et al., 2020). They ask their relatives to research travel destinations, healthcare resources, and steps to take in the travel emergencies (Wen et al., 2020). These types of interactions should be considered in addition to on-site interactions.

In addition, research on family tourism with older parents has conventionally amplified the voices of adult children (Jia et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2021; Yao et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2019) with less focus on older parents' perceptions and travel experiences. Yet, elderly tourists are the best informants about themselves; it is necessary to showcase their voices to better conceptualize how older tourists view travel-related interactions with their adult children. To

fill these gaps, the study intends to answer the following question from the perspective of elderly tourists:

Research Question 1: How do intergenerational interaction take place during elderly's travel?

2.2 Elderly tourists' experience and well-being

The research on interpersonal interaction in tourism originates from the concern for tourism experience that is a process of continuous interaction between individuals and tourism space (Wearing & Wearing, 1996). Tourism experience is created by the interaction with everything and everybody during tourism (Sharpley, 2014). Many studies have discussed the influences of different types of interpersonal interaction on tourism experience. For instance, the interaction between tourists and local residents was an important part of tourism experience (Kastenholz et al., 2018), which could promote the emotional unity between the host and the guest (Woosnam et al., 2020). Ingvild et al. (2020) revealed that co-creation between tourists and scenic spots helps to improve the quality of tourist experience and exerts positive impacts on tourists' post-trip behavior intention. Lin et al. (2019) quantitatively confirmed that the influences of tourist-to-tourist interaction (e.g., perceived cohesion and intimacy) on satisfaction with experience was mediated by engagement.

In contrast to interactions with tourists, local people, scenic spots, or other casual tourists, tourists interact with their travel companions and families more regularly, exert greater impacts on tourists' feelings and improve tourists' emotional experience and satisfaction (Chen et al., 2021). Given that previous research has concentrated on intergenerational disparities in destination preferences and information search (Bravo et al., 2019), it is necessary to examine elderly tourists' experiences and well-being in the context of intergenerational relationships. The senior tourism studies have quantitatively showed that factors such as travel motivations, travel constraints, involvement and perceived value can influence elderly' trip satisfaction (Kim et al., 2015; Pan et al., 2020; Uysal et al., 2016). However, there is little study focusing on the influences of intergenerational interaction with adult children. Lehto et al. (2008) conducted research in the specific context of senior tourism and found that the Boomer and Silent generations have different travel experience and actual vacation activities. Hu et al.

(2023) further proved the negative influences of intergenerational conflict on elderly parents' travel satisfaction. Yet, their research used six measurement items to assess intergenerational conflict (Hu et al., 2023), in contrast to the many sorts of conflicts and positive interactions shown by adult children (Wang et al., 2018; Yao et al., 2020). Similarly, trip satisfaction was measured with only three items (Hu et al., 2023), contrasting with the multidimensional nature of travel experience. Therefore, it is of significance to deeply and comprehensively reveal intergenerational interactions and travel experience as well as their relationship from the perspectives of elderly tourists. Hence, the current study also intends to provide an answer to the following question:

Research Question 2: How do elderly's travel experiences interplay with intergenerational interaction?

Furthermore, interpersonal interaction in tourism is seen as a significant aspect influencing well-being. It is specifically good experience that enhances interpersonal contact and, as a result, leads to well-being (Chen & Chen, 2010). A substantial number of studies suggested that travel interpersonal connection aides in the creation of good feelings (McCabe et al., 2010; Nawijn & Mitas, 2012), then bringing higher level of satisfaction and well-being (Mitas et al., 2012; Song et al., 2013). Population studies have proven that getting financial and emotional support from adult children, offering intergenerational aid to adult children, and greater emotional cohesiveness with children can boost the life satisfaction of rural old (Wang & Li, 2011). In the context of elderly tourism, researchers said that adult children's support their elderly parents' travel out of filial piety, therefore enhancing their parents' sense of well-being (He et al., 1999; Hwang & Lee, 2019). While earlier research has found that these interactions have a positive impact on tourist experience and well-being, intergenerational conflicts and their negative impact on travel experience and well-being have also been documented but have received less attention (Fu et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2023; Huang & Liu, 2016; Yao et al., 2020). Most studies on Chinese family travelers focus on early-stage motivation exploration and activity engagement, falling short of offering a comprehensive grasp of the transforming effects (e.g., quality of life and well-being) of family members (e.g., old parents) (Fu et al., 2022).

Among the limited studies focusing on the influences of intergenerational conflicts on elderly tourists' subjective well-being, intergenerational conflict and quality of life was usually treated as a single dimensional factor (Hu et al., 2023). The simplified measurement disregards the multiple dimensions of well-being, limiting our comprehension of senior travel. There are objective and subjective dimensions of well-being. The objective measures cover economic well-being, leisure well-being, environmental well-being, and health well-being (Uysal et al., 2016). The subjective aspects of well-being refers to psychological constructs such as subjective well-being, happiness, life satisfaction, perceived quality of life, domain satisfaction, hedonic well-being, positive and negative affect (Uysal et al., 2016). Therefore, it is necessary to take an exploratory qualitative approach to understand and explain the well-being of senior tourists and how it was influenced by intergenerational interaction, beyond what has been investigated in previous quantitative studies (Chang et al., 2022). Thereby, this study also attempts to address the following question:

Research Question 3: How do intergenerational interaction influence elderly' well-being?

3 Methodology

In-depth interviews represent a useful approach to data collection in qualitative studies. Researchers can obtain first-hand data by “talking with” informants (Chen, 2000). Qualitative research, as an inductive approach, is usually performed to explore untapped topics. This type of work can enrich the understanding of individuals' experiences as well as the meaning of experience generation. Qualitative data are also useful for summarizing and explaining essential connotations of ideas to promote new theories (Waller et al., 2016). Our study focused on the characteristics of intergenerational family interaction with respect to elderly tourism in the traditional Chinese cultural context, which remain unanswered. Hence, our decision to adopt a qualitative approach was reasonable. This is also a response to Qian and Lin's (2022) call for more in-depth research to reveal the complex psychological processes and communication involved in senior tourism.

Table 1 Demographics of interviewees

Number	Gender	Age	Education Level	Living Style with Adult Children	Travel Party Composition	Interview Type
Informant 1	Female	65	Undergraduate	Live together	With adult children	Personal interview
Informant 2	Female	60	Senior high school	Live together	With adult children and grandchildren	Personal interview
Informant 3	Female	63	Undergraduate	Live together	With grandchildren	Personal interview
Informant 4	Female	62	Senior high school	Live together	Couple	Personal interview
Informant 5	Female	62	Primary school	Live together	Couple	Personal interview
Informant 6	Male	61	Master	Live apart	With adult children and grandchildren	Personal interview
Informant 7	Male	69	Undergraduate	Live apart	With adult children and grandchildren	Personal interview
Informant 8	Male	67	Master	Live apart	With adult children and grandchildren	Personal interview
Informant 9	Female	62	Master	Live apart	Couple	Personal interview
Informant 10	Female	60	Primary school	Live apart	With adult children and grandchildren	Personal interview
Informant 11	Female	68	Primary school	Live apart	With adult children and grandchildren	Personal interview
Informant 12	Male	70	Undergraduate	Live apart	With adult children	Personal interview
Informant 13	Female	60	Undergraduate	Live apart	Alone	Personal interview
Informant 14	Male	62	Undergraduate	Live apart	With adult children and grandchildren	Personal interview
Informant 15	Female	66	Primary school	Live apart	Couples	Joint interview
Informant 16	Male	68	Primary school	Live apart	Couples	Joint interview
Informant 17	Female	61	Undergraduate	Live apart	Alone	Personal interview
Informant 18	Male	64	Doctor	Live apart	With adult children and grandchildren	Personal interview
Informant 19	Male	82	Undergraduate	Live apart	Couple	Joint interview
Informant 20	Female	77	Undergraduate	Live apart	Couple	Joint interview

It is crucial to recruit the right informants who can seriously and accurately answer the research questions (Waller et al., 2016). In qualitative research, researchers do not randomly select information providers, but purposefully and consciously select specific information providers in order to collect necessary and sufficient data for in-depth research (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Therefore, data in this study were gathered through purposive sampling and snowball sampling. First, interviewees were encouraged to recall their past travel experiences.

To ensure the accuracy of tourists' memories, we invited the elderly who had traveled in the past 12 months. Second, "empty-nesters" (i.e., elderly people who did not live with their children) and "unempty-nesters" (i.e., those who lived with their children) were invited to take part in interviews. According to the World Health Organization' and Chinese government' description of aging, all informants aged 60 years and older (Table 1).

To ensure the trustworthiness of data, we adopted triangulation which can be achieved through varied information sources (Willis, 2007). First, we recruited diverse travel parties including elderly people traveling alone, elderly couples traveling together, elderly parents traveling with their adult children, elderly parents traveling with their grandchildren, and elderly parents traveling with their adult children and grandchildren (Table 1). Our sample also covered different travel types, such as overseas travel, domestic travel, independent trips, and group tours. Elderly tourists' travel destinations spanned seven provinces in mainland China (Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hainan, Anhui, Guizhou, Beijing, and Qinghai) and overseas (e.g., Japan). Elderly tourists' pre-retirement occupations varied; positions included civil servants, teachers, medical staff, employees of state-owned enterprises, company personnel, researchers, workers, farmers, individual industrial and commercial households, and freelancers.

To recruit qualified informants, we first referred to familiar colleagues, friends, and other easily accessible families. The researchers then contacted other suitable interviewees through these acquaintances (Veal, 2011). Interviews were held between early August and late September 2020. Qualitative research does not feature specific sample-size requirements; samples can range from a single case to many, mainly depending on data saturation and target-sample accessibility (Patton, 2002). Eighteen interviews were held with 20 participants (two joint interviews with couples and 16 individual interviews) and reached theoretical saturation. Interviewees' demographics are summarized in Table 1. Joint interviews feature couples conversing simultaneously. This method is efficient in terms of time and cost while offering a space for mutual reflection. It also helps to produce rich data, both in terms of expanding evidence and identifying when disagreements occur (Bjørnholt & Farstad, 2012). In this study, elderly tourist couples with shared travel experiences were invited to participate in joint interviews. Individual interviews enable researchers to obtain relevant data through separate

conversations with interviewees. These types of interviews can compensate for the deficiencies of joint interviews in terms of space and independence, such as by avoiding the mutual disclosure of information which can lead to a “cueing phenomenon” (Morgan & Kruger, 1993).

To ensure smooth interview progress, a detailed interview protocol and record form were developed before interviews began. First, the elderly provided background information and an overview of their most recent trip within the past 12 months. They then explained their travel purpose, travel experience, interaction with their adult children regarding the trip, the reasons for such interaction, and its impact on their travel experiences. Interviews lasted roughly 40 minutes on average.

Content analysis is frequently used to explore the characteristics of interview transcripts, classify topics, and reveal potential meanings and opinions (Holsti, 1969). We conducted content analysis to process the interview data (i.e., to determine themes and reveal the potential connotations). First, after collecting interview data, the recordings were transcribed using professional software, and the transcripts were double checked word by word by one of the authors. The interview verbatim is 80,000 words in total. Second, the interview data were coded and analyzed to be classified systematically (Creswell, 2007). Marked recording units included single words or symbols, characters, and sentences or paragraphs (Holsti, 1969). Third, based on the recording units, the codes were classified into several categories. We used a trial-and-error method to adjust the categorization as needed (Holsti, 1969). Specifically, category building involves moving back and forth, checking if temporary categories are useful, and tweaking them based on the content (Holsti, 1969).

Data were processed in NVivo 11. Results revealed three forms of interaction between elderly tourists and their adult children: 1) intergenerational interaction initiated by adult children (Table 2); 2) intergenerational interaction initiated by elderly parents (Table 3); and 3) intergenerational interaction jointly implemented by elderly parents and their adult children (Table 4). Elderly tourists’ travel experiences (Table 5) and well-being (Table 6) were also pertinent.

4 Findings

Data analysis revealed the mechanism of how elderly tourists interact with their adult

children during the pre-travel, and in-transit travel, and post-travel and such intergenerational interaction' influences on elderly tourists' well-being. More specifically, findings revealed that intergenerational interactions occur whether or not older adults travel with their adult children. Three kinds of interaction between elderly Chinese tourists and their adult children were identified. We further noted two styles of intergenerational interaction (i.e., supportive and conflicting interactions) based on elderly tourists' travel experiences and then explored the effects of different forms of intergenerational interaction on these tourists' well-being. The following section provides examples with interview excerpts to illustrate our findings.

4.1 Three Types of Interaction Between Elderly Tourists and Their Adult Children

Most elderly Chinese tourists considered their finances, time, and physical health while traveling. Elderly tourists began to interact with their children as they planned to travel (pre-travel), visited the destination (in-transit travel), and return back home (post-travel). These intergenerational interactions can be initiated by either adult children, elderly tourists, or both.

Table 2 Intergenerational interaction initiated by adult children

Category	Subthemes	Informants (n)
Instrumental support	Help to prepare for the trip	15
	Search for travel information	14
	Arrange time and route	14
	Help adjust travel plans	6
	Help solve technical problems	5
Emotional support	Listen to parents' feelings	12
	Take care of parents' safety	16
	Care for parents' health	15
	Thank parents for their travel arrangements	5
Economic support	Pay for parents' travel	6
	Subsidize parents' purchases	3

4.1.1 Intergenerational Interaction Initiated by Adult Children

Adult children initiated the first type of interaction, which entailed economic, instrumental, and emotional support for their elderly parents' travel (Table 2). In China, adult children in strong financial standing take their elderly parents to travel. Elderly tourists indicated that this action embodied filial piety, broadened their horizons, and enabled them to experience a better life. Older tourists also reported that, even if their children were too busy to travel with them,

the children would provide financial assistance for their travel. Informant #5 explained: *“We do not have to pay or use our brains to make the itinerary. My son will pay for it, and all the expenses are funded by him.”* Elderly tourists also mentioned that their adult children helped with travel plans:

“Before traveling, my daughter will make travel plans and preparations, such as deciding which scenic spots to visit, searching for information, and arranging the trip. Especially when is the departure time? How to arrange the driving route? She will also help make adjustments to our travel plans.” (Informant 1)

Many elderly tourists pointed out that their children were concerned about their safety and health during the trip. Terms such as “remind” and “caring” were commonly used to express their children’s warmth. Informant #8 said: *“My daughter reminded me not to drive for too long and suggested shortening the driving time and distance and arranging more rest stations for the sake of maintaining [my] health.”* Informant # 10 stated: *“When visiting scenic spots, my daughter took care of my safety and asked me to walk slowly. She is really caring and filial.”* Emotional support was more satisfying than financial support for elderly parents who had financial means:

“When traveling with children, the whole process is a kind of emotional exchange and sharing of lifetime. Both of us spend the same time [together] to eat, live, chat, and appreciate the scenery. [My children] express their different views, while in most cases, they listen to my feelings. This is very important in life. It does not require more language but tightens the relationship between us.” (Informant 6)

According to the elderly, if their adult children were not traveling with them, then the children often considered restrictions in their parents’ physical condition, activity abilities, and travel knowledge. Their children would use communication technologies (e.g., smartphones or WeChat, a popular social networking/messaging app in China) to provide “off-site” help along with emotional and instrumental support. Some elderly tourists who traveled alone mentioned that their children would send helpful sketches or text introductions if they encountered problems during their trip, such as when being unfamiliar with using a camera or local customs and religious etiquette (Informant #13). Informant #9 shared: *“[Our children] are particularly concerned about our safety. They called me and used WeChat to ask me which attraction I went*

to and what happened. Maybe this is their expression of love.” Informant #17 explained:

“When my daughter called, she asked me to report my physical condition, such as whether I had altitude sickness or motion sickness. When she learned that none of these conditions had happened to me, she was relieved. She also said, ‘You can travel as long as you are happy and safe.’”

4.1.2 Intergenerational Interaction Initiated by Elderly Tourists

Elderly parents initiated the second kind of interaction: the sharing of knowledge, experiences, and materials with their children (Table 3). These tourists were the head of the family during travel and provided their children with timely trip-related knowledge, particularly when their children did not travel with them:

“I took a video of how to educate children in the local area [where I was traveling] and told my son that he should pay attention to sports training when educating the next generation. I also encouraged him to take the children to similar places to experience it. I send him some pictures of local attractions, and I told him that he needed to choose a suitable place to stay to see this attraction.” (Informant #9)

Table 3 Intergenerational interaction initiated by elderly parents

Category	Subthemes	Informants (n)
Knowledge delivery	Introduce scenic spots to children	8
	Teach travel lessons to children	6
Experience sharing	Share travel experiences with children	14
Material sharing	Bring tourist souvenirs to children	5
	Bring local food to children	6

When their children did not travel with them, elderly tourists would also share travel memories, souvenirs, or food from destinations after returning home:

“I brought back local souvenirs and special foods for [my children]. They felt very happy. This is a kind of emotional connection with my children. They think that I have

them in my heart. When they travel in the future, they will also think about me. This will promote harmony in the family relationship.” (Informant #3)

The productive communication between elderly tourists and their adult children pleased these tourists and amplified their recognition of their personal value or self-existence. Elderly tourists therefore gained a sense of psychological satisfaction.

4.1.3 Intergenerational Interaction Jointly Implemented by Elderly Parents and Their Adult Children

The third type of interaction featured elderly tourists and their adult children simultaneously. Related tasks included joint activity participation, mutual assistance during travel, and recollection of memories and a sense of togetherness after travel (Table 4). Effective intergenerational communication facilitated tourists’ travel journeys and generated more positive moods and active behavior among the elderly. For example, Informant #2 said: *“We like to take pictures with each other when we go to a place. We will keep these in mind, and these would be a memorial for our lifetime.”* Informant #6 shared:

“After getting back, we exchange some opinions on these attractions and the feeling of the trip, and we communicate with each other. We objectively evaluate whether a tour was successful, semi-successful, or unsuccessful. In order to keep this kind of activity going, everyone gives the organizers encouragement and affirmation so as to make everyone happier. This is very important.”

Table 4. Intergenerational interaction jointly implemented by elderly parents and their adult children

Category	Subthemes	Informants (n)
Joint activity participation	Discuss travel arrangements and itineraries with each other	11
	Take photos together	10
	Participate in activities together	6
	Accommodate each other's thoughts and behavior	10
Mutual assistance	Take care of each other	4
	Praise and encourage the event organizer	8
Shared memories and evaluations	Reminisce about impressive scenic spots together	8
	Share travel experiences together	7
	Evaluate tourism experiences together	13
	Different experience perceptions	6
Implicit conflict between generations	Different opinions	3
	Get angry and quarrel with each other	2
Explicit conflict between generations	Inconsistent action and confrontation	

At the same time, distinct voices between generations could create friction. Disparities in travel experiences between elderly tourists and their adult children sometimes led to rifts in perceptions, verbal conflict, and even confrontation. Implicit or explicit conflict influenced elderly tourists' well-being as discussed in the following section.

4.2 Intergenerational Interaction Triggered by Tourists' Experiences and Its Effects on Tourists' Well-Being

As described, elderly Chinese tourists interacted with their adult children in various forms during travel. Data analysis revealed that intergenerational interaction triggered by tourism experiences influenced elderly tourists' well-being. Their tourism experiences were mainly composed of sensory, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions (Table 5). Sensory experiences were the most direct, reflecting elderly tourists' perceptions of destinations' natural environment (e.g., spaces, natural scenery, and facilities) through sight, touch, and sound. Emotional experiences featured tourists' reactions such as relaxation, comfort, pleasure, enjoyment, surprise, and excitement. Cognitive experiences encapsulated the process by which elderly tourists learned. Aspects included judgment and thought, such as about tourism decisions, knowledge enhancement, and self-reflection during tourism. Social experiences represented how elderly tourists connected with society and industry (e.g., the development of the tourism industry and society; self-value within society as a whole).

Table 5. Elderly tourists' travel experiences

Category	Subthemes	Informants (n)
Sensory experience	Scenic spot spatial experience	10
	Natural scenery experience	19
	Tourism facilities experience	14
Emotional experience	Relaxation and comfort experience	17
	Enjoying pleasant experience	16
	Novel, exciting experience	8
Cognitive experience	Decision-making perceptions	6
	Learning experience	16
	Self-perception experience	12
Social experience	Tourism development experience	14
	Social development experience	12
	Individual value experience	8

Although intergenerational interaction between elderly travelers and their adult children partly defined their travel experiences, our data indicated that this relationship was bidirectional rather than unidirectional. Tourism-related intergenerational interaction spanned two types. The first was supportive intergenerational interaction. Elderly tourists' sensory experiences with natural scenery in a destination encouraged them to engage in joint activities with their children, such as taking pictures, reminiscing, evaluating the travel experience, and generally sharing experiences. This kind of interaction improved elderly tourists' subjective well-being through positive emotions and life satisfaction. Informant #7 mentioned: *"When we see beautiful scenery, our family will take photos, make some memories, and keep some memories, and our mood will be particularly good. It feels like we are enjoying the happiness of life."*

Second, elderly tourists recalled pleasant emotional experiences (e.g., enjoyment and comfort) and shared them with their adult children. They could also receive encouragement, support, and recognition from their children who had not traveled with them. Such interactions further increased elderly tourists' subjective well-being (Table 6) and psychological satisfaction. Informant #2 remarked:

"I stayed in the same room with my daughter-in-law and granddaughter during the trip. It was very kind, lively, and happy. After the trip, we often recalled these experiences together. Although my son did not participate, he encouraged me. He also supported me to travel and expressed that he would go with us if time permits in the future. I was very grateful to my daughter-in-law for organizing this trip. I was

really satisfied.”

Table 6. Elderly tourists’ well-being

Category	Subthemes	Informants (n)
Subjective well-being	Life satisfaction and enjoyment	16
	Happy and positive mood	17
	Depression and unfulfilled expectations	3
Psychological well-being	Self-identity	12
	Independence and self-renewal	8
	Positive interpersonal relationship	14
Social well-being	Confidence and expectations of social development	16
	Longing for life and social yearning	10

In addition, elderly tourists’ independence, sense of accomplishment, and perceptions during travel drew acknowledgement and support from their children. These tourists’ psychological well-being (e.g., self-worth and self-identity) improved as a result:

“I arranged and led this tour, and I was the main driving force. This allowed me to feel a little youthful myself, which made me more convinced that traveling can help improve myself. It seems that as time passed, I quickly returned to my youthful state... My daughter was very satisfied. Finally, she said to me: ‘Hey, Dad, thank you very much for making such an arrangement.’ This sense of accomplishment made me look forward to my future travel.” (Informant #8)

During tourism, elderly tourists often connected with greater society and experienced a sense of connection related to social development and a better life. This experience promoted the mutual exchange of feelings between generations. Elderly tourists’ social well-being (e.g., confidence in social development and social willingness) expanded accordingly. Informant #14 shared:

“I hadn’t been to Beijing for several years. When I visited Beijing again, I felt that its development was so fast. Seeing the Bird’s Nest, I felt that our country had developed really well. My daughter agreed with me and had the same feeling... I felt better and I was encouraged to go outside and take a look.”

The aforementioned findings show that elderly Chinese tourists gained positive sensory, emotional, cognitive, and social experiences from their trips. Their adult children recognized these benefits, which fostered supportive intergenerational interaction, such as jointly

participating in activities, sharing positive feelings, reminiscing about the travel process, and evaluating travel experiences together. Positive intergenerational interaction—whether between elderly tourists traveling with their adult children or traveling alone but with their children’s “off-site” help—also contributed to these tourists’ well-being.

The second form of tourism-related intergenerational interaction involved conflict. Differences in cognitive experiences and value pursuits during travel could spark conflict between generations. This kind of interaction reduced the elderly’s satisfaction and happiness. Cognitive differences between generations led to distinct experience-based perceptions. Although such conflict could be implicit, wherein elderly tourists sought psychological balance by comforting themselves, it nevertheless reduced tourists’ positive emotions. Informant #18 stated:

“We felt that this place was good, but our children thought that this place was not so satisfying. There may exist different views and choices of attractions. Finally, in order to take care of [our adult children], we followed their way. But relatively speaking, the freedom of travel was weakened.”

Conversely, disparate value pursuits between generations during tourism could lead to verbal conflict, inconsistent action, or antagonistic behavior. This explicit conflict directly engendered negative emotions among elderly tourists. Informant #19 took himself as an example and said:

“We took part in health tourism and bought health care products to stay healthy. My son objected to purchasing health care products. He said that it was all deceptive and ineffective. He got angry if we bought health care products. We quarreled several times, and we were in a bad mood. We did not talk to each other for several days. ...He was against us buying health care products during the tour. We thought about it and [decided] it is none of his business. This contradiction is quite deep. He opposed it, and I did not care about his attitude because I did not take his money to buy them. I bought them secretly without telling him.”

Elderly Chinese tourists’ pursuit of health represented a main travel motivation. They hoped to bolster their health through tourism consumption, whereas this philosophy did not align with their adult children’s sense of maintaining health. This value difference often spurred intergenerational conflict.

5. Discussion and Implications

5.1 General Discussion

We referred to in-depth interviews to explore interactions between elderly Chinese tourists and their adult children by considering elderly tourists travel both with children and without children as well as the relationships between such interactions and the elderly's travel experiences and well-being. A corresponding conceptual framework was assembled (Figure 1), depicting unidirectional and bidirectional supports and conflicts between elderly tourists and their adult children during the pre-travel, and in-transit travel, and post-travel. Elderly tourists' travel experiences inspired multiple intergenerational interactions that shaped these tourists' well-being.

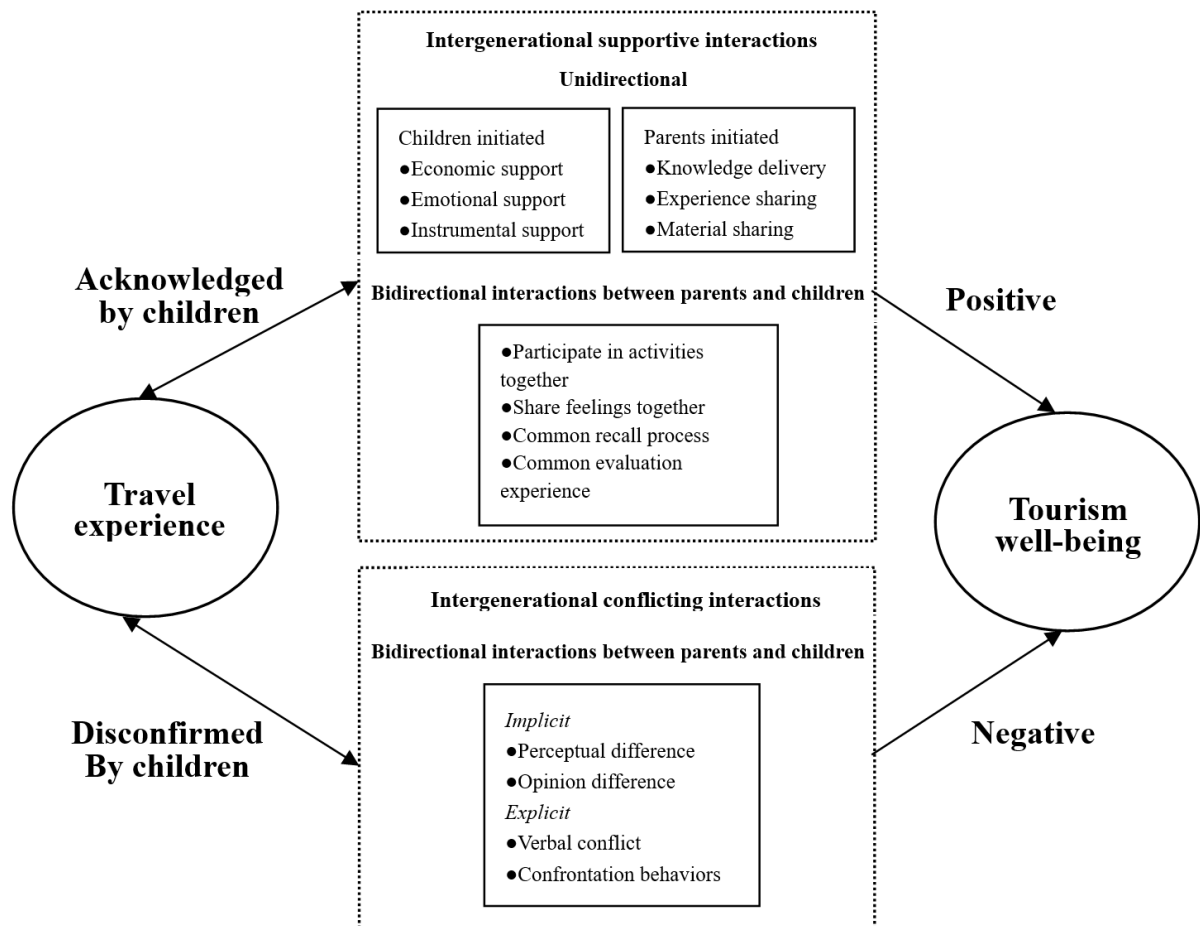


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of intergenerational interaction between elderly tourists and their adult children

Supportive intergenerational interaction in tourism displayed two dimensions: unidirectional and bidirectional. Unidirectional support covered the economic, emotional, and

instrumental support that elderly tourists received from their adult children in the pre-travel and on-site stages. These findings in relation to emotional support and economic support provide comprehensive explanations for and extend past statements that adult children provided their parents financial and emotional support based on filial piety (Allen & Bretman, 1981; Xiong et al., 2021). This study also revealed that adult children actively provide instrumental supports for their elderly parents, such as assisting with trip preparation, researching travel information, arranging schedule and route, modifying travel plans, and resolving technical issues. The identified instrumental support is consistent with Wen et al. (2020)'s finding that Chinese senior travelers confronted with travel restrictions would call their families for assistance.

Another unidirectional form of support entailed elderly tourists actively sharing their knowledge (e.g., introduce scenic spots to children) with their children who did not travel with them. After elderly tourists returning back home, they shared their tourism experience and tourist souvenirs with their children to maintain close bonds. Bidirectional support reflected mutual behavior between elderly parents and their adult children when traveling together. This support manifested as mutual activity participation and mutual assistance during the travel, and mutual recall and evaluation of the tourism experience in the post trip. These results validated the findings of Yi et al. (2022), who found that despite intergenerational differences, parents and children foster interdependence while traveling. Both generations could enjoy themselves while maintaining a harmonious and close family relationship (Lehto et al., 2009).

Conflicting intergenerational interaction in tourism were usually bidirectional and jointly initiated by children and parents. The elderly viewed tourism-related intergenerational conflict as either implicit or explicit. Implicit conflicts referred to distinct experience-based perceptions when they travelled with their adult children. Elderly tourists compromised with children to avoid head-on confrontation, and meanwhile, sought psychological balance by comforting themselves. This is in line with the findings of Yi et al. (2022), who found that under the effect of reciprocal filial piety, both parents and children feel under pressure to make concessions and satisfy the other's requirements in order to realize their desirable prospects of family travel. Explicit conflicts included verbal conflicts, inconsistent action and confrontation that occurred when elderly parents travelled alone and came back home. This kind of conflict indicates that

elderly parents would like to put their own interests first. In general, these results align with those of Jia et al. (2023). Similar to adult children, elderly parents would also adopt one of two approaches to intergenerational conflicts, depending on conflict attribution (self-concern vs. other concern): acting on their own wishes or complying.

The identified supportive and oppositional behaviors during intergenerational interaction between elderly tourists and their adult children are consistent with the theory of solidarity and conflict. This theory stresses that interactions between elderly parents and their adult children include intimacy and unity as well as alienation and conflict (Bengtson et al., 2002). We have introduced intergenerational interaction in the family domain into the tourism context. Compared with interaction between elderly parents and their adult children in daily life, intergenerational interaction during tourism appears more complex and more structured. For instance, older people often interact with their adult children face-to-face in everyday life. In a similar vein, tourism studies have primarily revolved around the views of adult children who have traveled with their parents, while neglecting on-site and off-site communication between older tourists and their children when unaccompanied. Data analysis firstly revealed that supports and conflicts between elderly tourists and adult children occurred when they travel both together and not, and, during the pre-travel, and in-transit travel, and post-travel. Our findings further confirmed the presence of children's support from home (Wen et al., 2020) and underscored older people's active roles in family travel (Lin et al., 2018). That is, aside from receiving financial and emotional support from their adult children, older tourists actively supported them (e.g., by sharing knowledge). Our work has conceptualized tourism-related intergenerational interaction in greater depth and expanded the applicability of solidarity and conflict theory.

Results also showed intergenerational interaction to be related to characteristics of the tourism experience. Scholars have generally observed that interpersonal interaction in tourism constructs tourism experiences (Sharpley, 2014). On the contrary, we documented that intergenerational interaction can also result from the tourism experience. Whether elderly tourists' adult children recognized or disconfirmed their parents' travel generated distinct interactions that influenced elderly tourists' well-being. For example, the elderly perceived their tourism experiences positively in terms of senses, emotions, cognition, and social

relevance. Such tourism experiences were acknowledged by their adult children. In this respect, both generations engaged in bidirectional support, leading to productive intergenerational interaction that greatly enhanced elderly tourists' well-being (e.g., subjective, psychological and social well-being). Additionally, the identified multidimensional travel experience and subjective well-being extend prior research in which only a few categories were used to measure satisfaction with travel experiences and subjective well-being (Hu et al., 2023).

However, adult children and their aging parents can hold dissimilar beliefs, core values, and role awareness that inform personal needs and decisions. Disagreements can thus arise regarding tourism consumption, tourism-related attitudes, travel intentions, and tourism values (Gardiner et al., 2015; Jia et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2020). Different demands and action strategies lead to distinct opinions about tourism experiences, resulting in differential perceptions, verbal conflict, inconsistent action, and confrontation. Conflict resolution depends on the roots of a disagreement (Kang & Hsu, 2016). Differences in points of view sometimes represented implicit conflict in our sample; these discrepancies could be somewhat reasonable, in that elderly tourists simply compromised with their children, sought psychological balance, and engaged in self-comfort to cope. Yet, self-comfort nonetheless diminished elderly tourists' travel expectations and their tourism-related well-being. Verbal conflict and confrontational behavior were explicit: intergenerational quarrels and anger directly and negatively affected elderly tourists' happiness.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical contributions of this study are grounded in the following developments. First, we established a detailed conceptual framework on intergenerational interaction between elderly Chinese tourists and their adult children (Figure 1). The extant literature on interpersonal communication in tourism has focused on interactions between tourists themselves, tourists and locals, and tourists and service providers; far less is known about intergenerational interaction in tourists' families. Among the scant research on this topic, scholars have attended to same-generation and alternate-generation communication between spouses (Kozak, 2010), young parents and children (Li et al., 2017), and grandparents and grandchildren (Gram et al., 2019; Spiers, 2017) during tourism. Interactions between the

adjacent generations of elderly parents and their adult children remain overlooked (Hwang & Lee, 2019; Qiao et al., 2022), particularly the voices of elderly tourists. Data from in-depth interviews with 20 elderly interviewees shaped a novel conceptual framework integrating the tourism experience, tourism intergenerational interaction, and tourists' well-being. This framework allows for a more nuanced analysis of tourism intergenerational interaction based on the tourism experience and its effects on tourists' well-being from elderly tourists' perspectives.

Additionally, this study extends the theory of solidarity and conflict by addressing “off-site” communication during tourism and the active roles of elderly Chinese tourists. First, consistent with this theory, our framework reveals that interactions between elderly tourists and adult children feature support and conflict. This outcome affirms the utility of the solidarity–conflict model (Lin et al., 2015). Moreover, our findings firstly indicated that supports and conflicts between elderly tourists and adult children occurred when they travel both together and not, and, in the pre-travel, and in-transit travel, and post-travel. For instance, data analysis showed that emotional supports from adult children could transpire during either their travelling together or not. We have thus delineated interpersonal interaction in tourism through a focus on elderly tourists to offer a more granular understanding of intergenerational interaction. That is, intergenerational interactions occur not only in “on-site” context but also under “off-site” situation.

We further discerned that intergenerational support for the elderly during tourism is both unidirectional and bidirectional. Adult children's unidirectional support included economic support and emotional support when traveling together along with “off-site” instrumental support when the elderly traveled alone. The elderly's unidirectional support for their children entailed sharing knowledge, listening to children's opinions, or sharing experiences and souvenirs after traveling independently. Bidirectional support was mutual and occurred when the two generations traveled together. These findings defy the stereotype of the Chinese elderly as dependants who require extensive care from their children under filial piety (Lin et al., 2018). Instead, Chinese older tourists can be active contributors to their families.

Moreover, this study contributes to the literature on active aging and senior tourism by exploring the unique interaction mechanisms between older tourists and their adult children.

We unveil these mechanisms' associations with elderly tourists' travel experiences and well-being. Prior studies typically explored how tourism-related interpersonal interaction contributed to the tourism experience (Sharpley, 2014); that is, tourism interaction was taken as an antecedent of such experience. We have illuminated how intergenerational relationships in tourism contexts can serve as consequences of the tourism experience—in other words, the tourism experience can spark distinct forms of intergenerational interaction. This study also showed that these intergenerational interactions varied from those that take place between tourists themselves. In particular, richer tourism-related experiences inspired more active interaction and participation. Tourism experiences acknowledged (disconfirmed) by adult children led to supportive (oppositional) intergenerational interaction, which in turn enhanced (jeopardized) elderly tourists' well-being. Our work has effectively linked the tourism experience with well-being by investigating intergenerational interaction. Results hence opened a new avenue to clarify the relationships among the tourism experience, tourism intergenerational interaction, and tourists' well-being.

5.3 Practical Implications

This study provides practically impactful insight as well. Population ageing is not a problem of China alone, but of other countries. Findings offer actionable guidance for tourism enterprises around the world to design tourism products geared towards elderly populations and to expand the so-called silver-haired tourism market. First, we found that tourism experiences acknowledged by adult children contribute to tourism-related intergenerational support between elderly tourists and their adult children. Tourism enterprises should strive to improve the travel environment to foster tourism experience construction. Specifically, enterprises can craft more experiential tourism products and amplify elements of the tourism experience. They should also seek to elevate their service quality, especially to promote agreement between elderly tourists and their adult children.

Furthermore, because intergenerational support is paramount to tourists' well-being, projects in elderly tourism should be designed carefully. Tourism enterprises should pay particular attention to tourism settings and activities to afford visitors engaging opportunities for intergenerational interaction. Tourism enterprises should also aim to create experiences requiring both generations' participation. For instance, enterprises can construct scenic spots

or areas for both generations to take photos and converse. These interactions can generate memories and enable family members to reminisce and evaluate their experiences together.

Third, tourism industry managers should encourage adult children to show elderly tourists more help, understanding, care, respect, and empathy at all phases of travel (pre-travel, and in-transit travel, and post-travel). Adult children should be reminded to acknowledge the elderly's tourism consumption habits and values, to respect their consumption preferences, to express appreciation of their tourism experiences, and to minimize intergenerational conflict.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, in-depth interviews with senior tourists in China allows us to deeply and comprehensively understand the intergenerational interaction between older tourists and their adult children. The qualitative nature may face a generalization issue. Future research can adopt quantitative approaches to test the universality and applicability of the conceptual framework. Second, given our focus on elderly Chinese tourists, subsequent work could take cultural background into consideration and include elderly tourists from other Asian countries and Western countries facing population aging and explore whether there are any differences in parent–child relationships across different countries. Third, this study did not differentiate between various forms of travel. Future research may compare intergenerational interactions and well-being across various types of travel, such as domestic versus overseas, short haul vs. long haul as well as independent tours vs. group tours. Fourth, we only contemplated tourism-related intergenerational interaction from elderly tourists' viewpoints; their adult children's opinions were not considered. It would be intriguing to conduct generational analysis to compare perceptual differences between elderly tourists and adult children.

6. Conclusion

The phenomenon of elderly travel is an emerging trend that can be regarded as an effective strategy for active ageing, a phenomenon that is presently understudied, especially from the perspective of intergenerational interactions (Cheng et al., 2022). Based on 20 in-depth interviews with senior tourists, this study developed a holistic conceptual framework for how intergenerational interaction occurs from the perspective of senior tourists and how senior

tourists perceive the interplay between travel experience and intergenerational interaction and provided insights into seniors' well-being in tourism. The qualitative data analysis revealed that: (1) intergenerational interactions occur whether or not older adults travel with their adult children and can be initiated by either adult children, elderly parents, or both; (2) adult children's acknowledgement (disconfirmation) of elderly tourists' experience plays an important role in the supportive (conflicting) interactions; and (3) the two types of intergenerational interaction (supportive vs. conflicting) subsequently enhanced (vs. jeopardized) the elderly's well-being. The development of such a conceptual framework fills a gap in the literature regarding the perspectives of the elderly on intergenerational interactions and provides valuable references for service providers to adjust and design travel products that facilitate the growth of the silver-haired tourism industry.

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