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Progress in Research on Seniors' Well-being in Tourism: A Systematic Review

Abstract

Research on well-being has experienced exponential growth in tourism studies. However, knowledge about well-being of seniors in tourism is still limited, and thus conceptually underdeveloped, despite the growth of the ageing population and increased research focus on the subject. Consequently, the purpose of this review is to provide a holistic understanding of seniors' well-being in tourism, delineate the current research status, then identify gaps and future avenues for research. A systematic quantitative literature review was conducted, leading to 56 eligible articles extracted for subsequent analysis. By mapping the current state of knowledge, the study indicates a need for a comprehensive theoretical framework based on a holistic view of seniors' well-being in tourism. The findings of the systematic review suggest the need for a eudaimonic approach to the topic and research from residents' perspectives. Suggestions are made to investigate constraints to well-being and cultural differences in conceptions of seniors' well-being in tourism.

Keywords: Seniors; Ageing; Older; Well-being; Tourism

Progress in Research on Seniors' Tourism Well-being:

A Systematic Review

1. Introduction

Tourism scholars have become increasingly interested in the concept of well-being, evidenced by the exponential growth of research (Farkić et al., 2020; Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Mendes et al., 2022). Scholarly attention on well-being initially commenced in the 1970s, with embryonic research concentrated in North America and Europe (Vada et al., 2020). Early conceptualizations were dominated by sociology and economics, building on the social indicators movement (Uysal et al., 2018). Economists attempted to develop a macro-level conception of well-being by synthesizing indicators related to the length of life and education (Fogel, 1993). However, as the area evolved, prior studies contend that economic measures (e.g., GNP) could not be reconciled with indicators that capture subjective well-being (Antolini & Grassini, 2020). To address this issue, sociologists provided a solid foundation designed to enhance the understanding of the underlying social aspects of well-being, such as education, social structure and crime (Søraker et al., 2015). Nonetheless, sociological approaches were criticized for their inability to capture the underlying dimensions of individual well-being (Veenhoven, 2008).

Subsequently, studies grounded in psychology emerged, focused on enhancing the conceptual understanding of subjective well-being, integrating constructs such as life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). While predominantly grounded in psychology, contemporary studies on well-being are often interdisciplinary (Cobbold et al., 2022) with prior studies often accepting the use of the term well-being as an umbrella term (Cobbold et al., 2022) which captures life satisfaction, happiness, quality of life and related terms. For example, whilst Dodge et al. (2012) argue that quality of life is merely a dimension of overall well-being, Pinto et al (2017) argue that quality of life is a broader concept characterized by the satisfaction of

one's needs and by an individual feeling strong, safe, supported and cared for. Well-being tends to be used in a more psychologically oriented perspective and mental health definition.

Theories and methodological approaches in psychology are focused on the articulation of well-being concepts (Uysal et al., 2018). Within positive psychology, well-being is examined as two concepts, hedonia and eudaimonia (Huta, 2013). The concept of hedonia focuses significantly on happiness and pleasure whilst eudaimonia focuses on personal growth and optimal functioning (Huta, 2013). An important distinction between the two approaches is that hedonia is about feeling good whilst engaging in an activity, whereas eudaimonia can result from activities that are not particularly pleasant at the time but may have delayed positive effects that occur well after a trip. Well-being is also identified as embracing both objective and subjective well-being (Diener & Ryan, 2009), and life satisfaction is considered a component of subjective well-being (Uysal et al., 2018). As such, this paper views well-being as a complex multidimensional concept, broadly encompassing happiness, life satisfaction, and quality of life.

Since the proliferation of well-being into the disciplines which inform tourism research, research on well-being has subsequently diffused into the tourism field. Tourism studies have focused on well-being and its related concepts for a few decades (Smith & Diekmann, 2017). One of the major challenges that plague tourism research on happiness, well-being and quality of life is the difficulty in clearly defining and differentiating between these terms and concepts as tourism scholars often use the concepts of happiness, well-being, quality of life and life satisfaction interchangeably (Filep & Deery, 2010; Pearce, 2009). Eslami et al. (2018) and Cho (2010) noted that tourism has centered increasingly more on non-economic indicators such as satisfaction, well-being, quality of life, wellness, and sustainability of tourism stakeholders in recent years. In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the

United Nations as an ambitious call to ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by the year 2030 (United Nations, 2015). The SDGs contain an explicit goal which aims to improve the health and well-being of the global population (United Nations, 2015). Moyle et al. (2021) note the tourism sector should focus on the achievement of the SDGs. However, well-being research in tourism is still in relative infancy with definitional issues, conceptual ambiguity and methodological contests (Filep et al., 2022). Calls for innovative and creative approaches have been made to ensure tourist well-being is integrated into the policy (Nawijn & Filep, 2016), as well as respond to global trends, such as the ageing population across the globe (Roberts et al., 2020).

The growth of the ageing population is considered to be one of the most significant transformations of the 21st century (Patterson & Balderas, 2020). Age, combined with the acquisition of wealth and leisure time has resulted in older people, referred to in this manuscript as 'seniors', emerging as a key market in the global tourism sector (Balderas-Cejudo, 2019). Studies demonstrate a critical aspect in the life of seniors is to adjust to retirement (Rafalski et al., 2017). Consequently, seniors increasingly consider travel a priority after retirement (Totsune et al., 2021), largely due to tourism's capacity to lead to beneficial health outcomes (Filep, 2014).

Research in conceptually related areas to tourism articulated the merit of treating seniors as a separate group (Pikhart & Klimova, 2020). Older travellers have been found to differ from younger travellers in a variety of ways, including motives for travelling, destination preferences and their destination activity involvement (Esichaikul, 2012). Seniors often have increased leisure time and, if their physical health allows, tend to be more mobile than young people (Patterson & Balderas, 2020). However, ageing is often linked to functional declines and major life changes due to losses of partners or friends. As such, older people may

- experience chronic issues such as loneliness, and experience a decreased sense of well-being (Boyes, 2013).
- Despite a mounting interest in tourist well-being, there is a lack of understanding of the role of tourism in the well-being of seniors. Consequently, the aim of this study is to systematically assess prior research on tourism and the well-being of seniors. Achieving this will enable a critical assessment in progress in research on prior research on travel and the wellbeing of seniors. The following six key objectives drive this manuscript.
- 1. To explore the geographic and cultural diversity of research on seniors' well-being in tourism
 - 2. To identify the disciplines that inform research on seniors' well-being in tourism
- 3. To assess the theories and models applied in research on seniors' well-being in tourism
- 4. To critically assess how well-being is conceptualized in research on seniors' well-being in tourism
 - 5. To examine the methods applied in research on seniors' well-being in tourism
- 88 6. To examine the facilitators and barriers in research on seniors' well-being in tourism

2. Method

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There are several types of literature reviews, which evaluate, synthesize and summarize existing bodies of knowledge. Grant and Booth (2009) named 14 kinds of reviews, which can be broadly categorized into integrative reviews, narrative reviews and systematic reviews (Snyder, 2019). An integrative review tends to explore theoretical frameworks and advancement of knowledge, that is, to generate a new conceptual framework or theory, rather than be descriptive or historical. Narrative reviews are considered traditional, with a reliance

on the expertise of the authors (Vada, et al., 2020), often conducted in a qualitative way but rarely synthesized and quantified to demonstrate patterns (Snyder, 2019). A systematic review emphasizes a systematic reproducible and explicit process of the database search, exclusion, and synthesis (Yang et al., 2017), minimizing the subjective bias in alternative approaches.

A systematic approach was adopted to assess the current states, gaps and directions of research on seniors' well-being in tourism. Taking a systematic approach allows for a comprehensive mapping of the landscape and boundaries of knowledge, determining "what we know" and "what we don't know" enabling the researcher to deduce conclusions on "what we need to know" (Pickering et al., 2015). This research method is "quantitative", as the data collected is quantified to assess the scope, breadth and depth of research on the topic (Pickering & Byrne, 2014). However, this type of quantitative literature review includes knowledge and data generated through both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Pickering et al., 2015). As such, this quantitative assessment of an evolving knowledge base, such as seniors and well-being in tourism, involves the collection and assessment of both quantitative and qualitative research. The systematic review process (Figure 1) used in this study was adapted from Pickering and Byrne (2014).

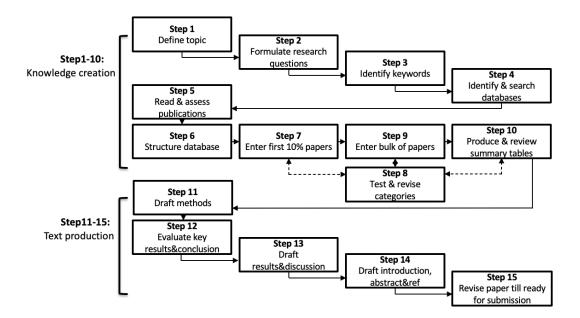


Figure 1. Fifteen stages in undertaking systematic quantitative literature review

Three categories of keywords (A, B, C) were created to locate articles (please refer to Table 1). For category A, "tourism", "travel", and "tourists" were selected since they were common keywords in recent tourism studies (Vada et al., 2020). Terms such as "seasonal migration" and "seasonal mobility" were used, as these were identified in previous studies to refer to seasonal travel mostly undertaken by older people (Chen & Bao, 2020; Kou et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2018). For category B, the keyword of "well-being", including a variation of the spelling, such as wellbeing, was applied. According to Daykin et al. (2018) and Kekäläinen et al. (2017), studies focused on well-being through a string of terms inspired by psychology and philosophy, such as "quality of life" (Uysal et al., 2016; Dolnicar et al., 2012), "life satisfaction" (Sirgy et al., 2010), "happiness" (Filep & Deery, 2010; Nawijn, 2011). As such, a series of conceptually related terms were also selected from previous studies, presented in Table 1 (Mahadevan & Fan, 2020; Kim et al., 2015; Hwang et al., 2020). For category C, the terms "older adults", "older people", and "elderly" were identified as frequently applied in

existing studies (Hung & Lu, 2016; Gao et al., 2021). To ensure the inclusiveness of all relevant articles, other synonyms, such as "seniors" and "retirement" were selected.

Multiple combinations of each of the five keywords in Category A, B and C were applied to search for relevant literature. Each keyword in one term category was searched in combination with each in the other two categories (Term A* Term B * Term C, e.g., "tourism, well-being, seniors"). There were 125 searches in each database (5*5*5). Articles with the search terms in the title, abstract and/or keywords were considered.

Table 1. Search terms that were combined to find relevant texts

Term A	Term B	Term C
 tourism 	well-being	seniors
travel	wellbeing	retirement
tourists	quality of life	 older adults
 seasonal migration 	 life satisfaction 	 older people
 seasonal mobility 	happiness	elderly

The database search was conducted in five academic databases that were identified from prior tourism review publications. Based on a method adopted by Liu et al. (2020), Pahlevan-Sharif et al. (2019), Vada et al. (2020), Web of Science, Scopus, ProQuest and EBSCO Host databases were used to search for relevant articles. Following the initial search in four databases, ScienceDirect and Sage was added, with only one new eligible result identified, indicating the search of the initial database had been exhausted. All the articles published until the end of 2021 were included in the research to present an up-to-date review.

To ensure the quality of the research, records were screened to identify research articles published in English-language peer-reviewed journals. The papers were assessed based on the abstract, and full texts were referred to when necessary. After the preliminary screening, 1152

records remained, which were exported to the Endnote software for data management. 490 duplicates were recognized and removed before the further screening. The remaining 662 records were screened against the selection criteria adapted from Watson et al. (2018).

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion	
Study Type	Original theoretical/conceptual and empirical studies Peer-reviewed journal articles		
Language	English	Any other language	
Sector	Tourism research	earch Non-tourism related focus	
Sample	Older people	Other age group	
Relevance	Well-being (or quality of life or life satisfaction or happiness) of older adults	The subjects were not the elderly Unrelated to well-being (or quality of life or life satisfaction or happiness)	

The selection was based on three key characteristics, sector (the research belongs to the distinct tourism sector); demographic (the research concerns the group of older people); and relevance (the research must focus on the concept of well-being) (Table 2). Articles which did not satisfy these criteria were excluded from the analysis (Table 3). For example, publications that were excluded due to a focus on medicine, care, or public health domains were removed because well-being was investigated from a pathological or nursing or non-travel-related mental health perspective.

Table 3. Rationale for exclusion

Exclusion Criteria		Articles Record	Excluded
(1) Not within Tourism Sector			
	Medicine	127	
	Care and Nursing	38	
	Public Health	19	
	Transportation System	68	

	Daily Travel and Mobility	73
	Business Management	42
	Environment and Planning	18
	Physical Activity and Sport	25
	Leisure Activities Excluding Travel	22
	Migration	13
	Online Activity	5
	Others	77
(2) Not Concerns Older People	1	28
(3) Not Focus on Well-being		47
No Full Text		8

Articles which belonged to the tourism sector were screened to check if they concerned older people. During this process, 28 articles were excluded. For example, although the study by Wolf et al. (2015) investigated the national park tourism experience, it was discarded as the research participants were of all ages. Likewise, the remaining articles that met the first two conditions were examined to filter out those that focused on well-being. Another 47 items were excluded in this step. For example, the study by Ross (2005) was excluded because it examined the impact of travel preparation on destination satisfaction instead of life satisfaction.

The screening process articulated above yielded 52 legible peer-reviewed journal articles. As a supplement to database searching, the references list of these papers was examined for new relevant studies (Liu et al., 2020). Four additional eligible articles were identified. The final database is composed of 56 peer-reviewed articles. Figure 2 presents the number of studies excluded and included at different stages of the review (Moher et al., 2010).

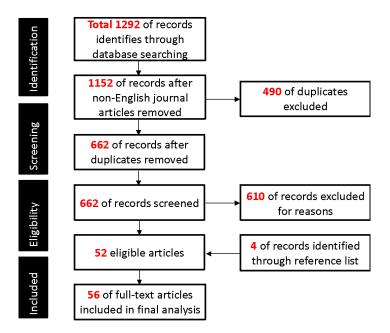


Figure 2. Summary of systematic review process

To analyze the eligible articles, a structural overview was first summarized in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Categories were coded by information of authors (country, institution), publication information (title, year, journal name, journal discipline), fieldwork location, samples (age, gender, scale), travel types, theoretical frameworks, methodology applied, research content (definition of older people, conceptualization of well-being, the factors that influence well-being), research findings, future research and practical implications.

3. Results

3.1. Overview of Research Characteristics

To analyze the trends of academic interest on seniors' well-being in tourism research, every decade since 1980 was considered a separate period, when the first article on this topic was published in the reviewed literature (Figure 3). Overall, there was little interest in this topic during the first two periods (1980-1999) with only sporadic articles published in individual

years. The following period (2000-2009) saw an increase in the number of articles, with eight publications, doubling the sum of the preceding two decades. An upsurge in interest in senior tourism well-being research surfaced in the fourth period, with nine manuscripts published in 2018 and 2020.

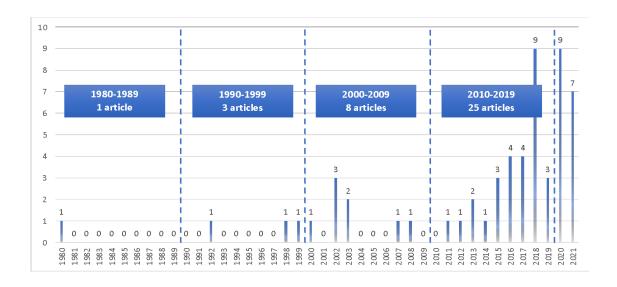


Figure 3. Total Publications (1980-2021)

The collected articles were derived from 39 journals. The top three journals for seniors' well-being research in tourism include *Annals of Tourism Research* (8.93%), *Ageing & Society* (7.14%), *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events* (5.36%), and *International Journal of Tourism Research* (5.36%) (Table 4).

Table 4. Top journals for seniors' well-being research in tourism

No.	Journals	No. of studies	%
1	Annals of Tourism Research	5	8.93%
2	Ageing & Society	4	7.14%
3	Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events	3	5.36%
3	International Journal of Tourism Research	3	5.36%
	Total	15	26.8%

Regarding the distribution across disciplines, when disciplines were identified according to journals classified by Web of Science, it was found that the disciplines have become increasingly diverse over time (figure 4). In the first decade, only Psychology was utilized in seniors' well-being research in tourism, with Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism and Sociology emerging subsequently. After 2000, there emerged attention in Gerontology, Public, Environmental & Occupational Health, and Business. However, when disciplines are classified according to theories or tools adopted in studies, rather than the discipline of the journal, results demonstrate that, although only two articles have been published in Psychology journals, numerous studies from other journals borrowed theories or tools from Psychology.

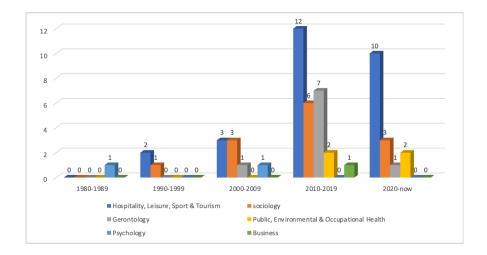


Figure 4. Number of articles in different disciplines every decade

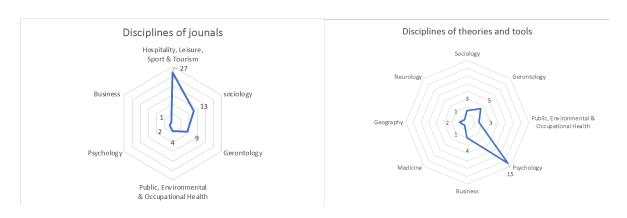


Figure 5. Disciplines of journals Figure 6. Disciplines of theories and tools

Regarding research location, a majority of the studies on senior tourist well-being conducted fieldwork in Asia and Europe (77%). The other 15.3% were performed in North America, and only 2% were conducted in Oceania and Africa. In terms of specific countries, seniors' tourism well-being in China (19%), the United States (15%) and South Korea (15%) have attracted the most attention (Figure 7). As regards its development trends, the topic has begun to gain momentum in Asia and Europe since 2010, while there were negligible fluctuations in other regions.

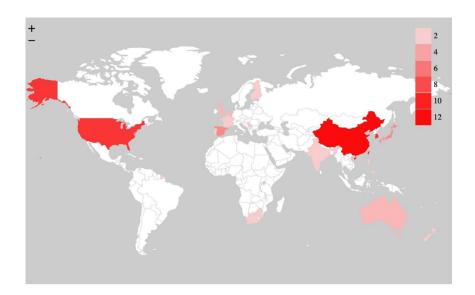


Figure 7. Geographic distribution of fieldwork location

3.2. Concepts and Theory

3.2.1 Defining Seniors

There is no clear and consistent definition and unified age limit for older people or seniors in the reviewed literature as the definition of old age is context specific and varies from one country to the next (Tsartsara, 2018). Over half of the selected articles (53.6%) did not present a specific criterion to define older people, while the others identified seniors according to a certain age, which often depends on the fieldwork location. Additionally, mainly three

criteria were used to segment older people: legal standard by the World Health Organization (WHO) or National Statistics, legal retirement age, and the age limit utilized in previous studies. For example, in South Korea, people aged 65 or older were selected as research participants, because the elderly legal standards in Korea are 65 years old and over (Hwang & Lee, 2019a), as in many European countries (Sedgley et al., 2018). While some studies conducted in China selected 60 as the age limit since it is the general retirement age in China (Pan et al., 2020).

3.2.2 Travel Types

As presented in Table 5, the travel activities adopted by seniors can be classified according to travel distance, travel duration and travel arrangements. Across the studies that have clarified travel types, overseas travel and domestic travel were examined equally (36%), while long-stay travel (41%) was given more attention than short-stay travel (24%). This study followed Tkaczynski et al. (2009) and Lyu et al. (2021) to define long-stay travel as staying in the destination for more than 10 days. "Second home travel" (Oliveira et al., 2018), "seasonal mobility" (Kou et al., 2017) and "snowbirds travel" (Bjelde & Sanders, 2012) were investigated predominantly in long-stay travel studies, with a focus on package tours (42%) slightly more than independent travel (37%).

Table. 5 Travel types

Typology	Travel types	No. of Studies	% in each typology
	Overseas travel	10	36%
Distance	Domestic travel	10	36%
	Both	8	29%
	Long-stay travel*	7	41%
Duration	Short-stay travel	4	24%
	Both	6	35%
	Package travel	8	42%
Arrangement	Independent travel	7	37%
-	Both	4	21%
	Others	8	/

Note: more than one travel type can be considered in one single article.

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3.2.3 Definition of Well-being

Regarding the definition of well-being, less than half of the reviewed articles (41%) provided an exact definition. Among these studies, multiple terms were used interchangeably, such as well-being, life satisfaction, quality of life, health-related quality of life, amongst others. Although the terms adopted were subtly diverse, some were defined similarly. The detailed definitions presented in reviewed articles are summarized in Appendix A. Overall, reviewed articles defined well-being in two ways, indicating its components or further explaining the connotation. The components of well-being can be encapsulated in five dimensions: physical, psychological (mental), social, economic and ecological. Physical, psychological (mental) and social aspects are fundamental components, with a viewpoint that well-being is more subjective valuation and perception in nature (Kim & Woo, 2014; Yoon et al., 2020; Kekäläinen et al., 2017). Besides, some close statements were used in defining wellbeing, for example, the "balance" or "dynamic interaction" of external and internal conditions (Tsartsara, 2018; Zhang & Zhang, 2018); the "fit" between personal goals and achievements (Yoon et al., 2020); the "balance" of positive and negative feelings (Milman, 1998), as well as the "extent" to which a person's needs, goals and wishes are fulfilled (Bai et al., 2017). This suggests that well-being is a dynamic, subjective concept. By and large, the results indicate that there is no unified definition of well-being among reviewed articles, in accordance with the already stated position that the definition of well-being remains ambiguous (Dodge et al., 2012). However, on the basis of Appendix A, the manner in which the reviewed articles explain well-being is somewhat consistent with the definition offered by Dodge et al. (2012). They proposed an equilibrium between an individual's resource pool and challenges faced by three

dimensions: physical, psychological and social (Figure 8). The definition by Dodge et al.

(2012) emphasizes the dynamic nature of well-being and the pursuit of a balanced life, which

is highly consistent with previous discourses.

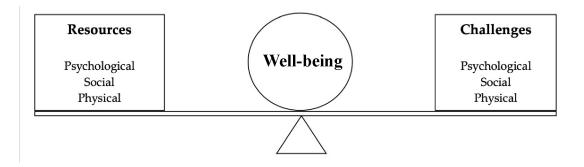


Figure 8. Definition of Well-being (Dodge et al., 2012)

3.2.4 Theoretical Orientation

Analysis revealed only 26 studies have applied, cited, or responded to specific theories. Table 6 displays the theories or models in senior tourist well-being, which originated from numerous disciplines. Psychological theories were the most popular, such as bottom-up spillover theory, activity theory, successful theory, Maslow's theory, socioemotional selectivity theory and the theory of flow, amongst others. Disengagement theory, self-determination theory and continuity theories from gerontology and sociology were used several times, while others, such as Attachment theory, PERMA model of well-being theory and self-congruity theory were only employed once.

Table 6. Theories applied or cited in reviewed articles

No.	Theories	No. of studies
1	Bottom-up spillover theory	7
2	Activity theory	6
3	Disengagement theory	3
3	Self-determination theory	3
3	Successful ageing theory	3
6	Continuity theory	2

6	Maslow's theory	2
6	Socioemotional selectivity theory	2
6	Theory of flow	2

Please see Appendix B for the whole table

As presented in Table 6, the bottom-up spillover theory was the most applied theory (Kim et al., 2015; Kim & Woo, 2014; Diekmann et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2020; Zhang & Zhang, 2018; Woo et al., 2016; Sie et al., 2021). Bottom-up spillover theory is often used to measure the overall quality of life (Pan et al., 2020), claiming that the overall quality of life is affected by a variety of life domains, such as health, social life, leisure life and emotional well-being (Bayulken & Huisingh, 2015; Sirgy et al., 2010). Studies drawing on bottom-up spillover theory tend to conclude that travel or leisure life satisfaction has a positive impact on seniors' overall life satisfaction. The activity theory is another commonly used theory (Kim et al., 2015; Gu et al., 2016; Møller, 1992; Nimrod & Rotem, 2011; Mélon et al., 2018; Pan et al., 2020). It postulates that well-being is a by-product of human activities (Møller, 1992). Based on this, empirical studies found that as an important senior leisure activity (Pan et al., 2020), travel contributes to the better well-being of older people (Mélon et al., 2018; Bai et al., 2017). Overall, although the presented theories provide support for investigating influencing factors of well-being, they are limited in helping theoretical understanding or advancing the conceptualization of well-being itself.

3.3. Antecedents and Consequences of Senior Tourists' Well-being

Of particular interest in this review were the related factors of seniors' well-being in tourism, specifically the antecedents and consequences and the antecedents could be viewed from the perspectives of triggers and barriers. All the relevant factors were classified as external and internal (Table 7). The findings of this review have shown that seniors' well-being in

tourism has been predominantly examined as a dependent variable or result, that is, antecedents of well-being have attracted more academic attention. 84.2% of studies investigated triggers and barriers to seniors' well-being in tourism, where the discussion of the triggers accounted for the majority. In line with the knowledge of the previous study that older people who travel are happier (Vega-Vázquez et al., 2020) and have a greater level of well-being (Wei & Milman, 2002), travel experiences such as romance tourism (Stončikaitė, 2020), social tourism (Morgan et al., 2015) and local tourism (den Hoed, 2020) were considered to have a positive impact on seniors' well-being in 27 reviewed papers.

More studies have suggested the importance of higher travel frequency (Diekmann et al., 2020; Mélon et al., 2018; Totsune et al., 2021; Bai et al., 2017) on seniors' well-being than average travel duration (Staats & Pierfielice, 2003). For example, it was argued that it could be more beneficial to go on holiday several times over a year rather than to go once for a longer duration (Mélon et al., 2018). Satisfaction with travel was the most investigated internal facilitator, with 6 reviewed studies concluding a positive impact on seniors' overall life satisfaction. The level of activities (Wei & Milman, 2002; Milman, 1998; Simpson & Siguaw, 2013) during travel was another accepted external trigger of seniors' well-being. As suggested by Wei & Milman (2002), senior tourists' various activities during vacation were significantly associated with their satisfaction with the travel experience and their psychological well-being. Other multiple triggers identified included perceived value, travel motivation, socialization, brand prestige and gender.

There were also several barriers investigated as antecedents of seniors' well-being. A major barrier is travel constraints, such as external resources (including lack of information, financial difficulty, lack of appropriate travel items...), time factor (insufficient time, tourism interrupting normal routine...), social conditions (spouse dislikes travel, no companion...),

physical condition (no energy, poor health...), approval (family and friends do not approve, feeling guilty about going on trips...) (Woo et al., 2016), and health care (Kekäläinen et al., 2017). Except for this, living with children (Mahadevan & Fan, 2020) and hard decision-making (Pan et al., 2020) were specifically identified as seniors' travel constraints in Chinese culture. Other barriers were discussed in specific tourism contexts such as romantic tourism and seasonal migration. For example, the study by Stončikaitė (2020) argued that romance tourism has negative implications for senior women, as casual sex may generate conflicting feelings once the travel romance is over. In a study by Kou et al. (2018), it is shown that older senior migrants encounter difficulties in constructing long-term well-being due to long periods of separation from their lifelong partners in their places of origin.

Table 7. Antecedents and consequences of seniors' well-being in tourism

		External (65.8%)	No. of studies	Internal (34.2%)	No. of studies
Antecedents of well-	Triggers (88.9%)	travel experience (Including various travel types)	27	travel satisfaction	6
being		travel frequency	4	perceived value	5
(84.2%)		level of activities during travel	3	travel motivation	4
		brand prestige	2	socialization	3
		gender	2	curiosity	1
		travel duration	1	travel preference	1
		travel expenditure	1	experience economy	1
		aesthetics of locations	1		
		medical assistance	1		
		therapeutic landscape	1		
-	Barriers	travel constraints	3	travel constraints	2
	(11.1%)	romance tourism	1		
		seasonal migration	1		
		health care	1		
Consequences	of well-	brand attachment	2	travel motivation	2
being (15.8%)		brand loyalty	2	consumer attitude	2
		involvement degree	1	revisit intention	1
		word-of-mouth	1		
		gap between actual and self- perceived age	1		

In addition to antecedents, 15.8% of studies investigated the consequences of well-being, which revealed the bonus of experiencing well-being in tourism. Studies demonstrated there are not only benefits for ageing tourists, but also for the tourism market and managers due to higher levels of attachment, loyalty and word-of-mouth to the brand, involvement degree, attitude, motivation, and revisit intention to the destination (Hwang et al., 2020; Hwang & Lee, 2019b, Kim et al., 2015; Sangpikul, 2008). Another important consequence for seniors was the feeling of being younger, as those who have high perceived health levels are more likely to feel younger than their actual age (Cleaver & Muller, 2002).

3.4. Methods in Previous Studies

There were 51 empirical studies and 5 non-empirical studies from the 56 reviewed articles. Across the 51 empirical articles, the methodology approaches utilized were classified as quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods. A majority of the studies reviewed (69%) preferred a quantitative research method, and approximately 29% utilized qualitative measures with only one paper adopting a mixed method (Boyes, 2013). Questionnaire was the dominant tool in quantitative research, with other five studies adopting data from other surveys (Mahadevan & Fan, 2020; Gu et al., 2016; Lee & Heo, 2021; Domínguez-Parraga, 2020; Kekäläinen et al., 2017), of which three conducting longitudinal research (Mahadevan & Fan, 2020; Gu et al., 2016; Lee & Heo, 2021). Interviews comprised the most common qualitative method, with research often engaging multiple data sources to improve the reliability of the findings, often by integrating participant observation methods, geographical data obtained with GPS devices, or digital text and photos in travel blogs.

In combination with the aim of understanding well-being in the given context, as identified above, the antecedents of seniors' well-being in tourism were investigated more often than the consequences (Table 8). Various methods were used to investigate the antecedents of seniors' well-being, while only quantitative ways were employed in exploring consequences or both in one research. Overall, questionnaire was the most commonly used research method utilized by 57.1% of the reviewed papers. Other data sources included other survey results, experiment design, interview, observation, geographical information, mobile ethnography and focus group.

Table 8. Methodological approaches and sources of data

Methods	Antecedents (82%)	No.	Consequences (5%)	No.	Both (13%)	No.
Quantitative (69%)	Questionnaire	22	Questionnaire	2	Questionnaire	7
	Data from other survey	4	Interview	1	Data from other survey	1
	Experiment	1				
Qualitative (29%)	Interview	14				
	Observation	3				
	Geographical data	3				
	Mobile ethnography	1				
	Focus group	1				
	Digital text and photos	1				
Mixed method (2%)	Questionnaire and interview	1				

The measurement approaches to well-being were heterogeneous across the reviewed empirical articles. In excess of half (51.6%) derived measurement items from previous studies. The most commonly applied scale (19.4%) was the 'Satisfaction with Life Scale' produced by Diener et al. (1985), a measure widely used in studies on the relationships between tourism experiences and well-being (Mélon et al., 2018), containing five items. Other measurements (6.5%) included the Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale of Happiness (MUNSH), which conceptualizes happiness as the interaction between positive and negative effects and positive and negative experiences. The 12-Item Short Form Survey (SF-12) (6.5%) was also utilized to measure self-perceived health status (Ferrer et al., 2016). Other scales utilized are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Measurement approaches

No.	Measurement	No. of studies	%
1	Measurement derived from previous articles	16	51.6%
2	Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	6	19.4%
3	Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale of Happiness (MUNSH)	2	6.5%
3	12-Item Short Form Survey (SF-12)	2	6.5%
5	The EuroQol five-dimensional (EQ5D-5L)	1	3.2%
5	World Health Organization-Five Well-Being Index	1	3.2%
5	Subjective Happiness Scale	1	3.2%
5	Quality of Life Scale-Adult 5th edition (ComQOL-A5)	1	3.2%
5	the Life Satisfaction Index-Z(LSIZ)	1	3.2%

In terms of the sample characteristics of the empirical studies, the mean age of participants was all above 60 years old, while the sample scale ranged from 15 seniors (de Guzman et al., 2019) to 41644 seniors for a quantitative study adopting raw data from the Korean Longitudinal Study of Ageing (Lee & Heo, 2021). Regarding sample gender distribution, 7.5% of the empirical studies that reported gender features kept gender balance, and 65% of them collected more females than males. There were two studies specifically focused on females because they believed that activities of older women have received limited attention compared to men (Staats & Pierfielice, 2003), and the older women could be empowered by the emergent mass tourism phenomenon at that time (Møller, 1992).

3.5. Well-being Dimensions

Table 10 encapsulated different dimensions of well-being focused on by reviewed articles. Researchers believed that psychological well-being mainly contains two dimensions, Hedonia and Eudaimonia. Hedonia refers to the pleasure aspect of well-being, i.e., having more fun, enjoyment, happiness, life satisfaction and fewer negative emotions (Rahmani et al.,

2018). While eudaimonic well-being focuses on meaning-related outcomes, such as personal growth, purpose in life and self-actualization (Ryff, 1989).

Table 10. Dimensions of seniors' well-being in tourism

Dimensions of Well-	Dimensions of Well-being			
Physical	Physical Social			
Social				
D 11 1 1	Hedonic	43		
Psychological	Eudaimonic	19		
Others		9		

Compared to physical (18%) and social dimensions (21%), psychological dimension (53%) of well-being received the most concern in reviewed studies. A greater proportion of studies focusing on the hedonic aspect in the psychological dimension were identified, with 43 of the reviewed articles concerned the hedonic dimension of well-being, while only 19 of them examined the eudaimonic aspect. In addition, nine articles investigated other dimensions of well-being, such as environmental (Li & Chan, 2021), safe (Tomka et al., 2015) and financial (Kim & Woo, 2014).

Prior studies have posited that the perception of well-being dimensions differs between genders. However, in spite of the diversity in tourism well-being perception between older women and men, gender factor was only discussed in six reviewed articles (Bai et al., 2017; Cleaver & Muller, 2002; Mélon et al., 2018; Simpson & Siguaw, 2013; Vega-Vázquez et al., 2020; Xu & Wang, 2021). For example, Simpson & Siguaw (2013) argued that older women prefer social activities when traveling, which help them gain higher psychological and social well-being levels than men. Xu & Wang (2021) discussed that older female seasonal migrants always have more abundant and meaningful activities and hence receive more emotional

support compared to males. It is also found that older men usually have higher scores in physical function and evaluation after travel (Vega-Vázquez et, al., 2020).

4. Discussion

4.1. Overview of Key Findings from Existing Studies

This systematic literature review assessed progress in research on seniors' well-being in tourism and was designed to identify the directions for future research. Overall, research on seniors' well-being in tourism has been dominated by studies in Europe and Asia during the last decade (spanning the years 2011 to 2021). This could be explained by the fact that countries in the Asian and European regions (especially Japan, Italy, Germany, Portugal and Greece) regularly feature in the list of the countries with the largest amount of ageing population in the world (United Nations Population Division, 2019). Similarly, China has recently attracted substantial research focus on this topic as the most populated country with one of the fastest ageing populations (Bai et al., 2017; Pan et al., 2020; Xu & Wang, 2021). To address the growing challenges of an ageing population, China is taking steps such as formulating a national five-year plan (2016-2020) based on the WHO recommendations to improve the health and well-being of older populations (WHO, 2021), where tourism is seen as an important facilitator of health and well-being in the general population (Pan et al., 2021).

The complexity of the senior tourism phenomenon and the interconnections with health and well-being require researchers to learn and adopt concepts from various disciplines (Bauer, 2018). Up to now, many empirical studies have focused on examining physical and mental health aspects such as cardiovascular health (Gump & Matthews, 2000), loneliness (Boyes, 2013) and personal development (Tomka et al., 2015). However, while existing studies were helpful in identifying relevant factors of well-being (Hwang & Lee, 2019a; Hung & Wu, 2021;

Kim & Woo, 2014; Mahadevan & Fan, 2020), further research is required to theoretically conceptualize the dimensions of seniors' well-being in tourism. The challenge for the future is therefore to map out and widen our theoretical understandings of the multiple domains of seniors' well-being as a result of seniors' engagement in various tourism activities. Further cross-disciplinary collaboration connecting scholarship on tourism and public health is required to allow researchers to approach well-being in new and creative ways (Sigala et al., 2021).

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A majority of reviewed manuscripts did not provide a fundamental and exact definition of well-being. Nevertheless, primary dimensions of well-being such as physical, psychological and social were discussed in the majority of articles. A substantial proportion of reviewed articles were based on the hedonic aspects of well-being, especially within the context of leisure travel (Iwasa & Yoshida, 2018), adventure experience (Hung & Wu, 2021), package tours (Hwang & Lee, 2019b) and social tourism (Sedgley et al., 2018). Typical hedonic elements include positive emotions (Moal-Ulvoas, 2017; Gu et al., 2016), relaxation (Morgan et al., 2015), and a sense of fun (Kou et al., 2018; Boyes, 2013). However, the eudaimonic aspects which emphasize longer-term underlying dimensions of well-being (sense of purpose and meaning, quality relationships, sense of achievement) are underexplored and conceptually underdeveloped. Although there has been an emphasis on eudaimonic effects of travel for specific niche sectors, such as the pilgrimage experience and the Arctic travel (van Iwaarden & Nawijn, 2021; Cai et al., 2020; Hao & Xiao, 2021), further research on the eudaimonic wellbeing of senior tourists is required. Furthermore, the interplay amongst eudaimonic and hedonic well-being dimensions in specific travel segments is still understudied (Cai et al., 2020; Smith & Diekmann, 2017), and would need further investigation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their impact on seniors

Studies which assess the perspective of older residents, rather than tourists, are underrepresented (Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 2000; Oliveira et al., 2018). A slight gender bias was present, with females the most common population of assessment. No heterogeneity was identified within seniors' in-group structure, with reviewed articles treating older people as one whole unit of analysis. On the other hand, there was a dearth of in-depth qualitative research methods designed to provide rich, in-depth insights into the role of tourism in the well-being of seniors (Yoon et al., 2020). Most of the reviewed studies employed positivist perspectives and measured well-being by testing various hypotheses, with samples varying from 60 to 65 years of age, depending on retirement ages in respective countries (Hwang & Lee, 2019a; Zhang & Zhang, 2018). Figure 9 presents an overview of the key findings derived from the systematic review.

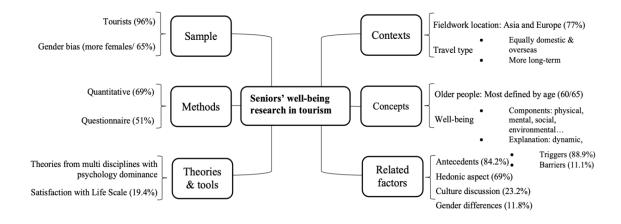
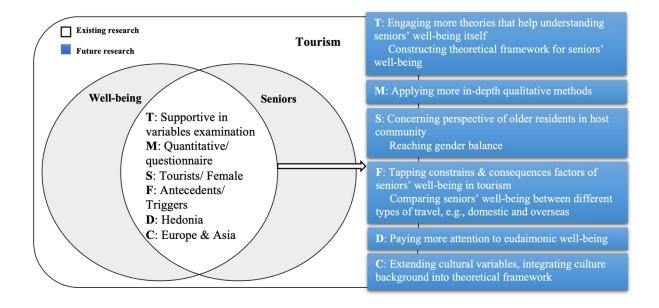


Figure 9. Key findings of the review

4.2. Avenues for Future Research

This study mapped the current state of seniors' well-being research in tourism. Figure 10 visually represents a series of recommendations for future research on seniors' tourism well-being, across the dimensions of theories, methods, samples, dimensions, related factors,

and context. The study proposes that future research should clearly delineate criteria of what constitutes old age, which is a crucial and often overlooked aspect in the reviewed articles, which is essential for future empirical work.



T: Theories, M: Methods, S: Samples, F: Related Factors, D: Well-being Dimensions C: Context

Figure 10. Avenues for future research in seniors' well-being in tourism (adapted from Vada et al, 2020).

(1) Theories. A comprehensive theoretical framework based on a holistic view of seniors' well-being in tourism is needed (Zhang & Zhang, 2018). Future research should be focused on embedding theories from tourism' foundation disciplines (psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics and human geography) as well as medical fields (like travel medicine) to better develop conceptual foundations of senior tourist well-being. For example, the PERMA model of well-being embedded in psychology combines both hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives (Huang et al., 2019) illustrating five building blocks of well-being: positive emotions (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M) and achievement (A) (Seligman, 2011). Building on such an established theoretical framework would allow for a

clearer definition of seniors' well-being in the tourism field. An established model or framework has greater potential to unearth the dimensions of well-being relevant for senior tourists. Considering the lack of eudaimonic perspectives in previous studies, theories that more specifically adopt eudaimonic views of well-being could also be employed in the future. As such, studies which focus on human flourishing (Ryff, 1989), DRAMMA (Detachment-Recovery, Autonomy, Mastery, Meaning, and Affiliation) model (Newman et al., 2014) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2011).

- (2) Methods. Articles on seniors' tourism well-being favour a positivist approach, limiting the richness and depth of the current knowledge base. This paper highlights the potential of interpretivist or constructivist paradigms, utilizing qualitative research methods to explore the underlying dimensions of seniors' tourism well-being (Cavender et al., 2020). Literature suggests that the remembrance of life experiences has a considerable impact not only on how we direct our future experiences but also on how we view our own life (Kahneman, 2012). Moreover, individuals' life experiences can be understood through their subjective narratives (Arsel, 2017; Filep et al., 2017), which is considered a relevant proxy for the assessment of personal well-being (Mugel et al., 2019). A hermeneutic interpretive approach, for example, could facilitate the interpretation of tourism experience and inner feelings about the well-being of respondents during the interview process (Yoon et al., 2020; Farkić et al., 2020).
- (3) Samples. A clarification of the criteria adopted to define seniors is suggested. Future research is encouraged to include a gender balance in sample selection in order to minimize bias in the research design. Studies of in-group heterogeneity amongst older people would also be beneficial as there is a significant life stage above the age of 60. Well-being perceptions and associated travel behaviors between the "young-old", "old" and "old-old" could be quite

different (Jung & Siedlecki, 2018; Son et al., 2022). As empirical work demonstrates, when communities start to develop tourism in their geographical regions, residents' lives often change economically, socially, environmentally, and culturally (Deery et al., 2012; Pratt, 2015; Seetanah, 2011). Older residents are more susceptible to the impacts of tourism than younger residents (Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 2000). For example, given the limited incomes of the majority of older residents, they tend to be less mobile and less likely to move as a result of tourism development in their region (Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 2000). Studies could also consider the well-being of senior residents, noting some of this research may have taken place in broader studies on residents' attitudes towards tourism and perceptions of future development (Domínguez-Parraga, 2020; Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 2000). Further comparative studies on older and younger residents' well-being at tourism destinations would also be beneficial.

(4) Well-being Dimensions. Existing studies examining a eudaimonic aspect of seniors' tourism well-being are limited. This review encourages future studies to adopt a eudaimonic perspective. Tourist well-being was long considered to be associated with positive emotions, pleasure, and stress relief (Lengieza et al., 2019), with academic studies focusing on hedonic aspects of well-being (Smith & Diekmann, 2017). However, travel is increasingly seen as an activity associated with personal meaning, self-growth (Su et al., 2020), sense of purpose, and reflections on inner nature (Matteucci & Filep, 2015), representing core features of eudaimonia (Filep & Laing, 2019). Travel has been suggested to make people mentally stronger and more confident, more adaptable to negative events and challenges (Pung et al., 2020) leading to major life transitions (Gibson et al., 2012). This transformative effect is a feature of eudaimonia (Filep & Laing, 2019). The transformation derived from travel leads to greater problem-solving skills, more effective navigation of life's challenges, better quality

relationships as well as higher purpose in life (Saunders et al., 2014). Some retirees celebrate their entrance to a retirement phase by undertaking long-term travel - tourism then becomes a transitional zone between the past and new beginnings (White & White, 2004). However, despite preliminary evidence about the specific transformative effects of tourism for seniors (White & White, 2004), current studies have mainly focused on young people (Colley et al., 2019). Hence eudaimonic well-being amongst seniors requires close attention and scrutiny by researchers in the future.

- (5) *Related factors.* Constraints and consequences of seniors' tourism well-being require further investigation. Elicitation of such factors will not only enrich our knowledge of well-being, but also help generate strategies for tourism marketing and management (Vada, et al., 2020). Although several types of travel have been investigated, the differences between them have not been tested. Comparative studies on seniors' well-being in domestic or overseas travel, long-stay or short-stay travel, and package or independent travel are suggested in the future. Gender requires more attention in research as differences exist in well-being perceptions between older women and older men (Bai et al., 2017; Cleaver & Muller, 2002; Mélon et al., 2018; Simpson & Siguaw, 2013; Vega-Vázquez et al., 2020; Xu & Wang, 2021). As women tend to outlive their spouses, they spend more years living alone (Chen et al., 2021). Moreover, older males and females are likely to differ in socioeconomic status, resources, obligations and preferences, thus may exhibit different well-being associations (Zhang et al., 2017).
- (6) *Context.* Prior work on tourism and well-being research has called for more non-Western perspectives (Smith & Diekmann, 2017, Filep & Laing, 2019). Research on seniors' tourism and well-being in Asia has risen recently, with Western models increasingly applied in the non-Western context (Pourfakhimi et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2019; Gu et al., 2016). These models and theories often assume a Western articulation of well-being (Buzinde et al.,

2014), with cultural dimensions required for further development (Dyall et al., 1999). Specifically, for Chinese older people, studies demonstrate that co-residence, proximity to their children and intergenerational contact remains the primary source of well-being, as the family provides daily care, monetary and emotional support (Kou et al., 2017). Hence, a feeling of guilt to travel could be generated from those living with children (Mahadevan & Fan, 2020). Consequently, future efforts to study seniors' tourism well-being undoubtedly require a multidimensional approach but also a grounded understanding of the concept as defined and experienced by the groups in the specific context.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose major challenges to the global tourism sector (Filep et al., 2022). The global pandemic impacts have led to severe travel restrictions, lockdowns, social distancing measures, and restrictions on gatherings. Additionally, the pandemic presented a severe health hazard, especially for vulnerable cohorts of senior tourists. The consequences of the pandemic have transformed the tourism industry and are expected to continue to change travel behaviors in the post-COVID-19 period (Totsune et al., 2021). As a result, further research should take into account major shifts or external shocks which could ultimately affect seniors' travel behaviors and well-being perceptions.

5. Conclusion

This manuscript critically assessed progress in research on senior tourists' well-being. The study synthesized 56 eligible articles to examine the theories and methods applied, disciplines concerning this topic, geographic distribution, conceptualizations of seniors' well-being, and the related factors examined in seniors' tourism well-being research. The contribution of this research is in charting the current state of knowledge on senior well-being in tourism, identifying six key areas for future scholarly attention, as outlined in section 4.2. By mapping the current state of knowledge on seniors' tourism well-being, the paper highlights

the need for a more holistic conceptualization of seniors' well-being in tourism, with the underlying dimensions of eudaimonic well-being further elucidated. Further investigations of constraints to well-being and cultural differences in experiencing well-being are also needed. In addition, future research should consider the application of relational bibliometric analysis to corroborate the results and reduce the subjectivity of the interpretation.

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The findings of this review have highlighted the exigency of deepening tourism wellbeing research to a niche group – Seniors. Specifically, existing studies showed that the barriers and triggers of senior tourists' well-being are notably distinct from younger groups, such as the barriers of insufficient health care services (Pan et al., 2020), feeling guilty about going on trips (Woo et al., 2016), and the triggers of expected healthier and longer life, resulting in different travel motivations and behaviors of seniors (Kim & Woo, 2014). This review also emphasized the significant contribution of senior tourists' well-being beyond the individual and towards families and society, against the backdrop of mounting pressure on health systems across the globe due to population ageing. A further perspective that puts emphasis on positive ageing may enhance the analysis of seniors' well-being in tourism. Additionally, this review identified the exclusively triggers of tourist well-being such as aesthetics of locations and therapeutic landscape, supporting the recent argument that relationships with other people are equally as important to tourist well-being as the affiliation with the natural environment (Filep et al., 2022). Finally, this review addresses a growing call in the literature to explore the connections between tourism and the public health agenda through tourist well-being (Pyke et al, 2016). For example, a recent study by Wen et al (2022) presents tourism as a pathway to improve dementia in seniors' well-being as an adjunct to non-pharmacological interventions. As such, more research is needed to address vulnerabilities especially for the senior market and determine how tourism can contribute to the medical science literature.

Managers of tourism enterprises have an opportunity to develop activities according to preferences across diverse senior tourism cohorts (including senior females, senior males, and senior transgender tourists). There is a need to eliminate barriers for seniors in their ability to engage in travel and experience a sense of well-being. For example, access to health care is considered one of the major barriers in existing studies, hence medical assistance should be well-equipped in destinations. This research has also identified the potential importance of social relationships during senior travel experiences, thus destinations could consider unique tourism experiences, such as homestay options, which provide an opportunity to connect with local residents.

Above all, this research revealed that travel has a complex and dynamic relationship with seniors' well-being. This dynamic relationship can be concluded from the reviewed articles and is suggested to be explored utilizing established frameworks in positive psychology. Considering this intricate relationship, it will assist researchers to address current challenges, such as how long will seniors' well-being last after travel? Is there an ideal travel duration for seniors? Does well-being always accumulate with the increase in travel frequency? Such research endeavors would be significant for tourists, educators and practitioners engaged in the tourism, leisure, entertainment and cultural industries.

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