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Negotiating Support Constraints: The Role of Technology-Enabled Capability in Adult Children's Travel Support Intention for Elderly

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Abstract

Purpose: This conceptual paper develops a conceptual framework explaining adult children's intention to support their elderly parents' travel. Amid population ageing and digital tourism transformation, adult children's support is essential for promoting elderly tourism participation and active ageing. **Design/methodology/approach:** Drawing on leisure constraints theory and constraint negotiation theory, this paper synthesises literature on support constraints, constraint negotiation, technology-enabled capability and travel support intention, and proposes an integrated conceptual model. **Findings:** The conceptual analysis suggests that adult children's support constraints may influence travel support intention through constraint negotiation. Technology-enabled capability may help adult children translate support constraints into workable negotiation strategies. **Research limitations/implications:** The proposed relationships require empirical validation. Future research could use survey data and structural equation modelling. Dyadic and cross-cultural designs could further examine the applicability of the framework. **Practical implications:** The framework suggests that destinations, tourism businesses, and digital platforms should support not only elderly tourists but also adult children who facilitate parental travel. **Originality/value:** This paper shifts attention from elderly tourists as support recipients to adult children as support providers and integrates technology-enabled capability into the constraint negotiation process.

Keywords: Intergenerational Tourism, Travel Support Intention, Leisure Constraints, Constraint Negotiation, Technology-Enabled Capability

Introduction

Population ageing has become a significant social and economic issue for tourism development, active ageing, and social sustainability (Patterson & Balderas-Cejudo, 2023). Every country is experiencing growth in both the size and proportion of its elderly population, and the greatest change is occurring in countries with low or middle income levels (World

Health Organization, 2024). In China, the ageing trend is particularly evident. This demographic transformation has increased scholarly and practical attention to elderly tourism, because the elderly represent an expanding tourism market, and tourism participation can enhance the elderly physical and psychological well-being, social interaction, life satisfaction, and healthy ageing (Kazeminia et al., 2015; Patterson & Balderas, 2020; Zielińska-Szczepkowska, 2021). Therefore, encouraging elderly tourism participation is not merely a market issue, but also a broader concern related to quality of life and social inclusion in later life.

Elderly people's tourism participation depends not only on their own motivation or willingness to travel but also on the availability of family support, particularly support from adult children (Chen et al., 2021). Elderly participation in travel activities is often limited by health issues, mobility challenges, safety concerns, financial pressure, and lack of a companion (Chen et al., 2021; Kazeminia et al., 2015; Xiong et al., 2021). These constraints may reduce their confidence and willingness to travel (Priyanto et al., 2025). In the Chinese intergenerational context, adult children often play an important role in helping their elderly parents overcome these difficulties by providing emotional encouragement, financial assistance, travel information, itinerary planning, and booking support (Li & Yan, 2021; Xiong et al., 2023; Zha et al., 2025). In this sense, elderly tourism participation is an intergenerational process influenced by adult children's intention to provide travel support (Zhu et al., 2026).

Supporting elderly parents' travel may require adult children to coordinate schedules and financial resources, make reservations and purchase tickets, plan the itinerary, provide care, and manage intergenerational preferences difference (Li & Yan, 2021; Qiao et al., 2025). Existing tourism research has provided valuable insights into the travel constraints of elderly tourists, family travel, intergenerational interactions, and the travel experiences of elderly (Fu, Hu, et al., 2021; Huber et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2024). However, most studies of travel constraints focus primarily on the constraints experienced by elderly tourists themselves with less attention paid to the constraints perceived by adult children in their role as support providers (Chen et al., 2021; Wen et al., 2020; Xiong et al., 2023). This limits our understanding of elderly travel participation, as their participation in travel may depend to a large extent on whether their adult children are able to provide sufficient support (Hu et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2026).

Research on intergenerational travel has primarily examined conflicts within family travel, interactions between adult children and their parents, and the benefits of intergenerational travel (Hu et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2020). However, supporting elderly parents' travel is not always straightforward. Although recent studies have begun to identify adult children's motivations and perceived barriers when supporting parental travel, relatively little attention has been paid to explaining the process through which provider constraints are converted into travel support intention (Zhu et al., 2026). Existing research has also not sufficiently explained the conditions under which adult children are more likely to respond to such constraints by adopting active negotiation strategies.

Constraints do not necessarily prevent support intention. Constraint negotiation theory argues that individuals do not simply give up passively; instead, they may actively seek ways

to cope with and negotiate these constraints (Jackson et al., 1993). In the context of supporting elderly parents' travel, adult children may negotiate support constraints by choosing shorter trips, selecting safer destinations, comparing affordable tourism products, purchasing travel insurance, arranging flexible schedules, coordinating with siblings, or relying on senior-friendly tourism services (Chen et al., 2021; Kazeminia et al., 2015). The digital transformation of tourism has made adult children's travel support increasingly dependent on their ability to use online platforms, smart tourism tools, and digital resources (Wen et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2023). Technology-enabled capability may help adult children access information, coordinate resources, reduce uncertainty, and negotiate support constraints more effectively (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). Therefore, this study introduces technology-enabled capability as a boundary condition that may strengthen the relationship between support constraints and constraint negotiation.

To address these gaps, this conceptual article proposes an integrated framework linking support constraints, constraint negotiation, technology-enabled capability, and travel support intention. Specifically, it relocates the focal actor of leisure constraints theory from the elderly traveller to the adult child as a support provider. It also identifies constraint negotiation as the mechanism linking support constraints with travel support intention. Finally, it introduces technology-enabled capability as a boundary condition that strengthens the relationship between support constraints and constraint negotiation. By centring adult children in the conceptualisation of intergenerational support tourism, this paper explains how adult children negotiate their own constraints when supporting elderly parents' travel and how digital capability may reshape this support process.

Literature review

Leisure Constraints

The concept of leisure constraints was first proposed by Crawford and Godbey (1987) to refer to factors that limit or inhibit individuals' participation in leisure and tourism activities. Subsequently, Crawford et al. (1991) expanded this theory by introducing the well-known Hierarchical Constraints Model (HCM), which includes three types of constraints: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints: Intrapersonal constraints are associated with an individual's psychological condition, such as personal interests, attitudes, anxiety, or perceived capability. Interpersonal constraints refer to factors that potentially influence the interaction between leisure participants and others. Structural constraints are external factors that limit a person's behavioural intention or participation, such as time, financial resources, accessibility, and other situational conditions (Crawford et al., 1991). This categorization of constraints represents a systematic analysis of leisure constraints and has been adopted as a common analytical framework in the fields of leisure and tourism (Hung & Petrick, 2012).

In tourism research, leisure constraint theory has been widely applied used to explain why individuals may be unable to participate in travel even when they have travel motivation or interest (Chen & Wu, 2009; Jian et al., 2021). Researchers have applied the hierarchical constraints model to explain travel behavior under different tourism contexts (Hung & Petrick, 2012; Ying et al., 2022; Zha et al., 2025). In elderly tourism, health issues, limited mobility, financial concerns, lack of social companionship, and difficulties in accessing travel resources may become important barriers to tourism participation (Chen & Wu, 2009; Huber et al., 2018;

Kazeminia et al., 2015; Zha et al., 2025). These studies suggest that tourism participation is not shaped by motivation alone, but also by intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural conditions. Although most studies have focused on the travel constraints by elderly tourists themselves, intergenerational tourism suggests that adult children may also encounter constraints when supporting elderly parents' travel (Li & Yan, 2021). As family life cycles and travel decision- making power shift, intergenerational tourism involves more complex interactions, negotiations, and role expectations between adult children and their parents (Yao et al., 2020). Adult children may undertake important travel tasks, including information collection, itinerary planning, booking flights and hotels, providing companionship, and coordinating travel arrangements (Fu, Zhang, et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2023; Li & Yan, 2021). Therefore, applying leisure constraints theory to adult children as support providers can extend the theory from the tourist participation context to the intergenerational travel support context.

Existing leisure and tourism studies commonly treat constraints as multidimensional rather than as a single constraint. The hierarchical constraints model distinguishes intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints, and this multidimensional logic has been widely used to explain tourism participation and travel decision (Huber et al., 2018; Xiong et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2026). In the context of adult children supporting elderly parents' travel, these three sources of constraints may appear simultaneously: internal concerns such as anxiety about parents' health and safety, relational difficulties such as parent and child preference differences or sibling coordination, and external limitations such as time, financial pressure, work commitments, transport arrangements, and the availability of senior-friendly tourism services (Chen et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2023; Xiong et al., 2021; Yao et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2026). Because these dimensions are conceptually distinct but jointly represent adult children's overall perceived barriers in providing travel support, support constraints can be treated as a higher-order construct formed by three first-order dimensions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural support constraints. This treatment is consistent with prior leisure and tourism research that uses the three constraint dimensions to represent an overall constraint construct while retaining their distinct sources (Crawford et al., 1991; Hung & Petrick, 2012; Mahajan et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2026). This specification retains the multidimensional structure of leisure constraints theory while allowing the conceptual framework to examine the overall role of support constraints in the constraint negotiation process.

Constraint Negotiation

Constraint Negotiation can be seen as a significant refinement and extension of the hierarchical model of leisure constraints (Crawford et al., 1991). It reflects that constraints are negotiable rather than insurmountable, and nonparticipation should be understood as only one possible response to constraints rather than their inevitable consequence (Hung & Petrick, 2012; Jackson et al., 1993; Scott, 1991). Later work repeatedly states that constraints do not necessarily prevent participation and that their negative effects can be reduced after successful negotiation (Ma et al., 2024; Son et al., 2008).

In leisure studies, constraint negotiation has been widely used to explain why some individuals continue to participate in leisure activities despite facing barriers (Kono et al., 2020). The constraint negotiation strategies are often framed as cognitive and behavioural (Karl et al., 2022), including adjusting expectations, managing time, acquiring skills,

coordinating with others, and managing financial resources (Kennelly et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2022; Slaney et al., 2025). Some empirical studies have verified that there is a significant positive correlation between leisure restriction constraint negotiation and participation level (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Mahajan et al., 2025; White, 2008).

In tourism research, the constraint negotiation model has been widely used to explain how particular groups make decisions in complex tourism contexts (Xu et al., 2026), such as elderly tourism, family and intergenerational tourism, disabilities tourism, and special interest tourism (Chen et al., 2021; Hung & Petrick, 2012; Priyanto et al., 2025; Xu et al., 2026). Negotiation strategies may involve adjusting preferences and expectations, developing emotional coping mechanisms, changing financial and time management practices, seeking social support and rebuilding social networks, revising travel expectations, modifying travel plans, and reducing perceived risks (Chen et al., 2021; Huber et al., 2018; Jian et al., 2021; Karl et al., 2022). This is particularly important in elderly tourism, where travel participation is shaped by multiple constraints and the elderly may negotiate these constraints by planning ahead, choosing familiar destinations, and adapting the way they travel (Huber et al., 2018). Chen et al. (2021) incorporated social support into the hierarchical model of leisure constraints and found that constraints play an important role in shaping elderly travel intention, while structural constraints appear to be relatively more negotiable. Taken together, constraint negotiation confirms that tourists are not simply passive recipients of constraints, but may sustain or reshape their tourism participation through cognitive and behavioural negotiation strategies (Jian et al., 2021; Karl et al., 2022). These findings suggest that constraints on elderly tourism are not merely individual issues, but are also closely tied to family, companions, and broader social support networks.

Existing tourism studies on constraint negotiation have largely examined elderly tourists as “constraint perceivers” and “support recipients”, while paying less attention to the constraint experiences of support providers during the support process (Chen et al., 2021; Wen et al., 2020). In the Chinese family context, elderly tourism participation is often embedded in parent–child relationships, filial norms, and intergenerational family support (Liu et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2018; Zha et al., 2025; Zhu & Ma, 2023).

As support providers, adult children not only help their parents negotiate tourism constraints, but also have to negotiate their own constraints related to time, finances, emotions, decision-making power, family roles, and intergenerational conflicts (Hu et al., 2023; Li & Yan, 2021; Xiong et al., 2021; Yao et al., 2020). Therefore, constraint negotiation provides a useful theoretical lens for explaining how adult children manage support-related barriers when facilitating elderly parents’ travel.

Technology-Enabled Capability

With the widespread adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs), service provision in tourism has undergone a paradigmatic shift, reshaping the structure of the industry (Leung, 2020). In tourism contexts, travel decision-making and access to services have become increasingly dependent on digital resources (Xu et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2025). Earlier studies have shown that technology has transformed tourism product development, information dissemination, marketing management, and the ways in which consumers interact with tourism businesses (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Buhalis & O’Connor, 2005). Later,

tourism technology research has moved towards smart tourism and technology-enabled services, highlighting how digital tools reshape travel planning, service access, and tourist experiences (Alsharif et al., 2024; Buhalis et al., 2019; Leung, 2020). Thus, the role of technology in tourism is no longer limited to information provision; it also helps individuals coordinate resources, reduce uncertainty, and address practical problems that arise in the course of action.

Technology-enabled capability emphasises an actor's integration, deployment and application of technical resources, rather than the mere presence of technology itself (Badrinarayanan et al., 2022; Ooi et al., 2026; Vilkas et al., 2024). In the tourism context, this capability is reflected in whether individuals are able to use technology to obtain information, assess destination safety and risks, compare transport and accommodation options, make online bookings and mobile payments, use navigation and translation tools, and access health and safety information (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Navío-Marco et al., 2018; Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). Technology can support the negotiation of cultural, family, and structural travel constraints by facilitating information access, coordination, reassurance, and decision making (Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019; Badiei & Popkova, 2023; Johnson & Rogers, 2024). Technology-enabled capability may further reduce barriers caused by information asymmetry by enabling them to identify health and safety concerns before, during, and after their parents' trips (Badiei & Popkova, 2023; Tian & Wangmo, 2026). However, these benefits depend on whether adult children can effectively integrate technology resources into the support process. Thus, technology-enabled capability is conceptualised as a capability that determines the extent to which adult children can translate support constraints into workable negotiation strategies.

Travel Support Intention

Travel support intention refers to adult children's willingness to provide tourism assistance that enables elderly parents to participate in travel. It differs from elderly tourists' own travel intention because the focal actor is the support provider, not the traveler. Elderly tourists may encounter physical decline, health concerns, safety risks, limited travel information, insufficient companionship, and unfamiliarity with digital travel arrangements (Chen et al., 2021; Xiong et al., 2023). Under such circumstances, adult children often play an enabling role by offering emotional encouragement, practical assistance, travel information, booking support, financial help, and companionship (Wang et al., 2018; Xiong et al., 2021; Zha et al., 2025). Therefore, it is meaningful to study the willingness to provide support in intergenerational tourism from the perspective of tourism support providers.

Existing studies have shown that family support can facilitate elderly tourism participation and improve travel confidence. For example, intergenerational support from adult children has been found to promote senior tourism consumption and help elderly tourists overcome participation barriers (Zha et al., 2025; Zhu & Ma, 2023). Research on intergenerational tourism also suggests that family interaction may strengthen intimacy, engagement, and future travel intention (Hu et al., 2024). However, adult children's travel support intention should not be treated as a simple extension of family obligation. Supporting parents' travel may involve emotional labour, practical planning, risk consideration, and adjustment of family responsibilities (Fu, Zhang, et al., 2021; Jia et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2020). Thus, adult children

may recognize the value of elderly tourism while still differing in their intention to provide travel support.

Although recent studies have begun to examine adult children's role in elderly tourism, existing research still tends to emphasize elderly tourists as support receivers rather than adult children as support providers (Xiong et al., 2021, 2023). Zhu et al. (2026) specifically addressed adult children's motivations and constraints in supporting senior parents' travel, confirming the importance of examining travel support intention from the provider side. However, the formation of travel support intention remains insufficiently explained in relation to how adult children respond to support constraints before forming a concrete willingness to help. This provides a theoretical basis for positioning travel support intention as the behavioural outcome of adult children's support decision process in the proposed model.

Conceptual Framework

Methodological Approach

Following the theory synthesis approach to conceptual research (Jaakkola, 2020), this conceptual paper develops a theoretically grounded conceptual framework to explain adult children's travel support intention towards elderly parents. Theory synthesis is appropriate for this paper because the research problem draws on several related but previously fragmented streams of literature, including leisure constraints theory, constraint negotiation theory, intergenerational tourism, travel support intention, and technology-enabled capability. Rather than collecting and analysing primary empirical data, this paper develops its argument through the integration of relevant theoretical and empirical studies.

Development of the Conceptual Framework

The synthesis was conducted through a problem driven integrative reading of the literature. First, the problem was framed around how adult children experience and negotiate support constraints when facilitating elderly parents' travel. Leisure constraints theory provides the basis for understanding intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints (Crawford et al., 1991; Crawford & Godbey, 1987), while constraint negotiation theory explains why constraints do not necessarily prevent participation and may instead trigger cognitive and behavioural coping strategies (Hung & Petrick, 2012; Jackson et al., 1993). In the context of intergenerational tourism, prior studies suggest that adult children often act as important travel support providers for elderly parents, but their own support constraints remain insufficiently theorised (Xiong et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2026).

Second, key constructs were identified according to their relevance to the research problem and their role in the proposed framework. Support constraints were positioned as the barriers encountered by adult children, constraint negotiation as the process through which these barriers are managed, travel support intention as the intended behavioural outcome, and technology-enabled capability as a boundary condition shaping the translation of support constraints into negotiation strategies. This positioning is supported by technology-enabled capability research, which emphasises actors' ability to integrate, deploy, and apply technological resources rather than the mere presence of technology itself (Badrinarayanan et al., 2022; Vilkas et al., 2024). In tourism contexts, technology-enabled support may help

individuals obtain information, coordinate resources, reduce uncertainty, and negotiate travel constraints (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019).

Finally, the retained constructs were integrated into a conceptual framework (see Figure 1). The framework proposes that adult children's support constraints initiate constraint negotiation, which subsequently shapes travel support intention towards elderly parents. Technology-enabled capability is further proposed to moderate the relationship between support constraints and constraint negotiation. The outcome of this synthesis is a set of theoretically grounded propositions and a conceptual framework for future empirical testing.

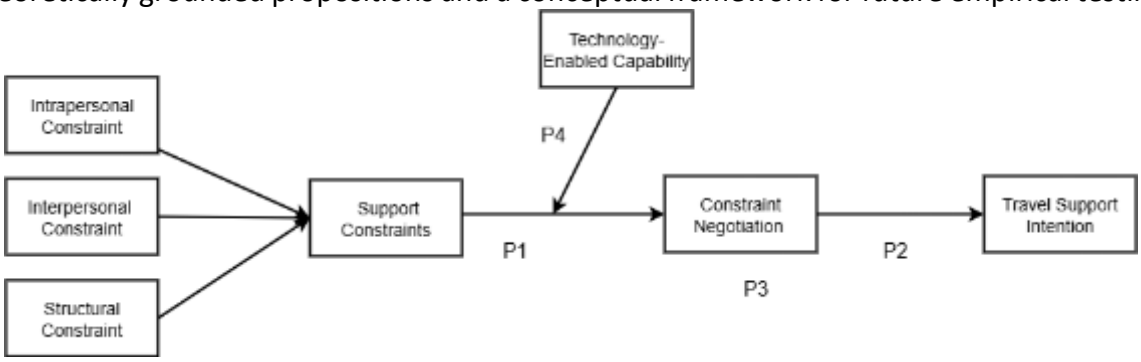

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Proposition Development

Support Constraints and Constraint Negotiation

Previous leisure and tourism studies have suggested that participation in leisure and tourism activities can be shaped by various constraints. Crawford and Godbey (1987) first conceptualised leisure constraints as factors that limit or inhibit leisure participation, while Crawford et al. (1991) further proposed the hierarchical constraints model, which classifies intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints. This framework has been widely applied in tourism research to explain why individuals may be unable or unwilling to travel despite having travel interest or motivation (Chen et al., 2021; Huber et al., 2018; Kazeminia et al., 2015).

Perceived travel constraints can stimulate negotiation strategies, such as adjusting travel plans, changing destinations, seeking companions, reallocating resources, or reframing constraints cognitively (Gao & Kerstetter, 2016; Huber et al., 2018; Karl et al., 2022; Wen et al., 2020). In elderly tourism, health issue, lack of time, financial, social companion, and transportation constraints have been shown to influence travel decision-making (Fleischer & Pizam, 2002; Zha et al., 2025), As important support providers, adult children may assist with travel planning, information search, accompaniment, and risk management (Hu et al., 2024; Xiong et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2020). In this framework, support constraints are treated as a higher-order integrated construct formed by intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural support constraints. Accordingly, propositions are made as follows:

P1: Support constraints initiate adoption of constraint negotiation. The more constrained a person is, the more likely the person will use negotiation strategies.

Constraint Negotiation and Travel Support Intention

Constraint negotiation does not only help individuals cope with constraints, but also shapes subsequent intention by making participation or support provision more feasible. Prior leisure

and tourism studies suggest that negotiation strategies and social support can reduce the negative effects of constraints and help individuals maintain participation despite barriers (Chen et al., 2021; Hung & Petrick, 2012; Karl et al., 2022). In this sense, negotiation functions as a practical adjustment process through which constraints are not removed completely, but are managed in ways that allow the intended activity to continue.

In the context of adult children supporting elderly parents' travel, constraint negotiation may help transform support difficulties into workable travel arrangements. Adult children may face concerns about parents' health and safety, limited time, financial pressure, family coordination difficulties, and uncertainty about suitable tourism services (Li & Yan, 2021; Xiong et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2026). Through negotiation strategies, they may adjust schedules, coordinate with siblings, seek travel information, select safer or senior-friendly tourism products, arrange shorter trips, or modify the form of support provided (Chen et al., 2021; Kazeminia et al., 2015; Xiong et al., 2023). These strategies can reduce the perceived burden of travel support and make parental travel appear more manageable.

When adult children are able to negotiate support constraints effectively, they may perceive travel support as more achievable, less risky, and more compatible with their personal and family resources (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Karl et al., 2022). This increased feasibility may strengthen their willingness to provide travel support for elderly parents (Zhu et al., 2026). Therefore, constraint negotiation is expected to positively influence adult children's travel support intention. Accordingly, the following proposition is made:
P2: Constraint negotiation has a positive impact on travel support intention. The more constraint negotiation strategies a person adopts, the more likely the person would have travel support intention.

The Mediating Role of Constraint Negotiation
The constraint negotiation perspective argues that constraints do not automatically result in behavioural withdrawal; instead, individuals may respond to constraints by adopting cognitive and behavioural strategies to overcome or reduce their effects (Crawford et al., 1991; Jackson et al., 1993). In tourism research, negotiation has been regarded as an important process linking leisure constraints with travel decisions and intentions (Hung & Petrick, 2012; Karl et al., 2022). The constraint negotiation is widely regarded as a key mediating bridge connecting tourism constraints with final participation intention, or actual behaviour. For example, elderly negotiate multiple constraints in relation to tourism participation, and space tourists negotiate the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints they face in relation to future intention (Chen et al., 2021; Slaney et al., 2025).

For adult children, support constraints such as limited time, financial pressure, insufficient travel knowledge, family coordination difficulties, and concerns about elderly parents' health may make travel support more difficult (Li & Yan, 2021; Zhu et al., 2026). However, these constraints can also activate negotiation efforts, such as adjusting schedules, reallocating family resources, selecting senior-friendly travel products, seeking information, or modifying the form of support (Hung & Petrick, 2012; Kazeminia et al., 2015). Thus, constraint negotiation can transform support constraints into feasible support arrangements, thereby explaining how support constraints ultimately affect travel support intention. Therefore, the following proposition is developed:

P3: Constraint negotiation mediates the relationship between support constraints and travel support intention.

The Moderating Role of Technology-Enabled Capability

Current tourism literature has extensively examined the relationship between constraints and constraint negotiation. Participation in tourism or leisure activities does not depend on the absolute absence of constraints, but on whether individuals can manage them through negotiation strategies (Chun et al., 2025; Clark & Nyaupane, 2023; Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Karl et al., 2022). However, existing findings indicate that the constraint negotiation relationship may vary across contexts. For example, Chen et al. (2021) found that structural constraints among Chinese seniors were more negotiable than intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints, whereas Hung and Petrick (2012) found that in cruise tourism, tourists' travel constraints did not significantly facilitate constraint negotiation. These findings suggest the need to examine boundary conditions that may shape when constraints are more likely to activate constraint negotiation strategies. This suggests that support constraints do not automatically lead adult children to adopt negotiation strategies. Their responses may depend on whether they have the capability to deal with these constraints.

Technology-enabled capability may provide such a boundary condition because it enables adult children to use digital resources to respond to support constraints. It is of vital importance in modern life, but its role in negotiating travel constraints for specific groups has long been overlooked (Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). When technology-enabled capability is high, constraints such as limited time, insufficient information, financial pressure, risk concerns, parent-child conflict, and difficulties in obtaining family support are more likely to prompt adult children to adopt workable responses, such as comparing tourism products, managing family relationships, assessing risks, and accessing relevant services (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2005; Chun et al., 2025; Hunsaker et al., 2019; Johnson & Rogers, 2024; Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019; Tuomi et al., 2023). But barriers such as digital literacy, complexity, and technological maturity may prevent these benefits from being fully realised (Tian & Wangmo, 2026), particularly in the context of family care (Lindeman et al., 2020; Thompson et al., 2024). Thus, support constraints create a need for negotiation, whereas technology-enabled capability shapes the extent to which adult children can translate this need into workable responses. Accordingly, the following proposition is proposed:

P4: Technology-enabled capability moderates the relationship between support constraints and constraint negotiation.

Discussion

This paper set out to explain how adult children's support constraints may be transformed into travel support intention towards elderly parents. The argument developed across the preceding sections is that such intention is not shaped by constraints alone, but by the extent to which adult children are able to negotiate these constraints when facilitating their parents' travel. Technology-enabled capability further explains why this constraint negotiation process may be more effective for some adult children. The proposed propositions formalise this account.

Theoretical Implications

This conceptual paper contributes to elderly tourism and intergenerational tourism research in several ways. First, it shifts the research focus from the elderly as travellers facing constraints to adult children as travel support providers. Previous studies on elderly tourism have mainly examined the constraints that limit elderly participation in travel (Kazeminia et al., 2015; Xiong et al., 2023). However, in intergenerational tourism, adult children often play an important role in planning, coordinating, and facilitating their elderly parents' travel (Zha et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2026). By conceptualising adult children's support constraints as intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints, this paper extends leisure constraints theory to the context of intergenerational travel support and provides a more specific explanation of why adult children may or may not support their elderly parents' tourism participation.

Second, this conceptual paper introduces constraint negotiation as a key mechanism linking support constraints and travel support intention. Constraint negotiation theory suggests that constraints do not necessarily lead to non-participation, because individuals may respond by adjusting plans, reallocating resources, or seeking alternative solutions (Jackson et al., 1993; Li & Yan, 2021). In the context of this study, adult children may negotiate support constraints through budget planning, information searching, family communication and so on. Therefore, this paper provides an explanation of how support constraints may be transformed into travel support intention through negotiation strategies. This contributes to constraint negotiation research by applying it to the support provider perspective of adult children's support decision rather than only to tourists' own participation decisions.

Third, this paper incorporates technology-enabled capability as a moderator in the constraint negotiation process. Existing tourism research has increasingly discussed the role of digital technologies, online platforms, and smart tourism tools in improving travel planning, information access, booking efficiency, communication, and risk management (Leung, 2020; Xu et al., 2023). However, its role in coping with support constraints when facilitating elderly parents' travel remains underexplored. By positioning technology-enabled capability as a moderator, this paper links leisure constraints and constraint negotiation theory with the digital transformation of tourism services and suggests that technology functions not only as a travel tool, but also as a capability for managing constraints, coordinating resources, and supporting elderly tourism participation.

Last, this conceptual paper offers new insights into elderly tourism and intergenerational tourism by examining adult children's travel support intention for elderly parents. By integrating support constraints, constraint negotiation, and technology-enabled capability, this paper explains how adult children may move from facing support barriers to forming supportive travel intentions. Moreover, the moderating role of technology-enabled capability between support constraints and constraint negotiation is introduced. In other words, when adult children have higher technology-enabled capability, support constraints are more likely to be translated into active negotiation strategies, such as information search, resource coordination, risk assessment, and travel arrangement. As a result, this paper advances the conceptualization of adult children's travel support intention from a technology-enabled constraint negotiation context. It also provides useful insights into how family members support elderly tourism participation in an increasingly digital tourism context.

Practical Contribution

Although the proposed conceptual framework has not been empirically tested, it offers several practical implications for tourism stakeholders. Destinations, tourism businesses, and digital tourism platforms should consider adult children, as well as elderly tourists, because adult children's willingness and ability to arrange parental travel may affect elderly parents' tourism participation. Therefore, tourism stakeholders need to understand the practical difficulties faced by adult children, including limited time, cost concerns, safety considerations, intergenerational preference differences, and the complexity of arranging suitable tourism services.

With the framework proposed in this paper, destination management organisations and tourism businesses may develop more family-oriented and friendly elderly tourism services. For example, destinations can provide clear safety information, health-related travel guidance, accessible transport information, and emergency support services to reduce adult children's concerns about parental travel risks. Tourism businesses may also design shorter and safer travel, flexible booking, family booking services, travel insurance packages, and products that combine accommodation, transportation, medical assistance, and companion services. These arrangements may reduce the planning burden of adult children and increase their confidence in supporting their elderly parents' travel participation.

Furthermore, this conceptual paper provides practical insights for digital tourism platforms. Since technology-enabled capability may help adult children transform support constraints into active negotiation strategies, platforms should provide more integrated and user-friendly functions for comparing tourism options, arranging reservations, processing payments, receiving safety updates, contacting service providers, and maintaining family communication during travel. These functions may help adult children handle support difficulties more efficiently and develop practical solutions for elderly travel. Overall, this paper offers practical value for elderly tourism product development, family-oriented tourism services, smart tourism platforms, and active ageing initiatives.

Limitations and Future Suggestions

Although this conceptual paper develops a theoretical framework for understanding adult children's travel support intention for their elderly parents, several limitations remain. First, the proposed relationships have not been empirically tested. Future research could survey adult children aged 18 or above who have at least one parent aged 60 or above. The measurement scales can be adapted to the travel support context. PLS-SEM using SmartPLS could then be considered to assess the measurement and structural models. Second, this paper focuses on adult children as travel support providers. However, elderly parents' perceptions of support and willingness to receive it could also influence the travel support process. Future research could collect paired data from adult children and their elderly parents. A dyadic perspective could be used to compare their views. Third, the framework is developed in the context of elderly tourism and intergenerational family support. Its applicability should therefore be examined across different cultural contexts, tourism markets, and family structures. Finally, this paper considers technology-enabled capability as the main moderator. Future research could also examine cultural, psychological, and social factors, such as filial piety, self-efficacy, digital literacy, and social support.

Conclusion

Adult children's travel support intention for elderly parents should be understood not as a simple extension of family obligation, but as the outcome of a support decision process in which constraints are negotiated. This paper developed a conceptual framework explaining how intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints form adult children's support constraints, how these constraints activate constraint negotiation, and how negotiation further shapes travel support intention. Technology-enabled capability is positioned as a boundary condition that helps adult children translate support constraints into workable negotiation strategies. The four propositions formalise this framework by specifying the roles of support constraints, constraint negotiation, travel support intention, and technology-enabled capability. The value of this paper lies primarily in extending leisure constraints theory and constraint negotiation theory from the perspective of elderly tourists to that of adult children as support providers. It also provides destinations, tourism enterprises, and digital platforms with a clearer perspective for understanding how intergenerational tourism can be supported in a technology-enabled context.

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