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Systematic Quantitative Literature Review: Reviewing Interdisciplinary Literature on Host- Children

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Abstract:

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) aims to protect and eliminate all forms of child labour by 2025 (United Nations, 2018). According to the International Labour Organization (2002), roughly 19 million workers in tourism-related industries (15%) are children. However, limited research has investigated this topic because the voices of children, in general, have been neglected in tourism research (Poria & Timothy, 2014). In response to the scant attention to child labour in tourism, we conducted a Systematic Quantitative Literature Review (SQLR) to map existing research on host-children who live and work in tourist destinations, in interdisciplinary literature (refer to Figure 1) in order to identify knowledge gaps in terms of the disciplines, themes, theoretical frameworks and geographical locations of existing research. The review also aims to reveal how and to what extent existing literature reflects host-childrens' voices. This review is expected to shed light on host-children from an interdisciplinary perspective and provide directions for future studies on host-children. *Note: The shaded boxes are an additional step to the original PRISMA flowchart to identify the extent to which the existing literature paid attention to host-children compared with tourist-children.

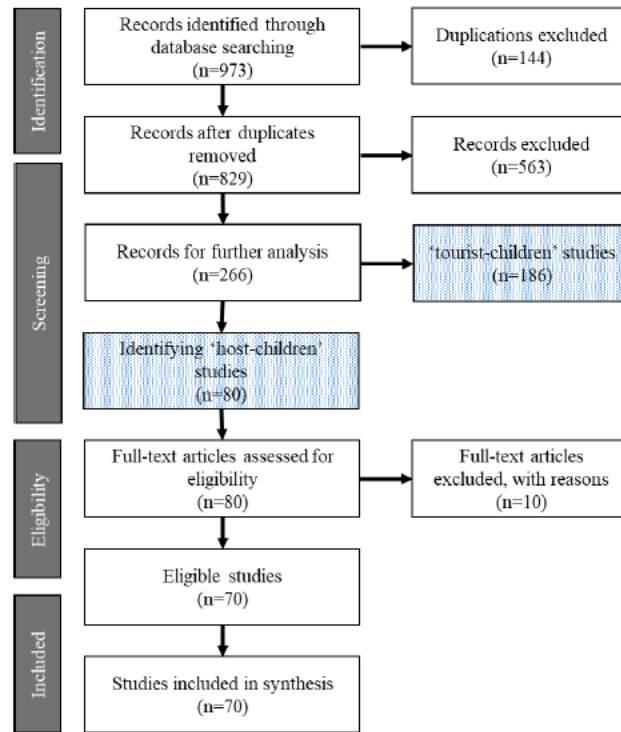


Figure 1. Modified PRISMA Flowchart (Source: Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & Group, 2009)

Three main gaps were identified from the review. Firstly, the lack of research attention to host-children is evident. Within the limited research on children in tourism, even fewer studies have explored host-children with empirical data and explicit theoretical underpinnings. Various disciplines have shown an interest in host-children, but no discipline has studied this topic in depth. In addition, attention is skewed to child sex workers while issues related to general child workers outside of child sex tourism have been neglected. Child labour issues in African and Asian regions are also scant compared to other regions. Secondly, even though some studies investigated utilitarian dimensions such as tourism impacts on children's health, attitudes and commodification, few studies explored how tourism impacts children's life satisfaction or happiness. Finally, there is pronounced absence of host-children's voices. Children are the best informants on issues that concern them and yet, very little research involved the voices of host-children due to ethical and methodological challenges. Few studies explicitly reported how they addressed the ethical issues of involving children in research and only a handful of studies briefly mentioned seeking consent from children's guardians.

On the basis of the identified gaps, three recommendations are provided. First of all, it is necessary to deepen current knowledge about host-children with empirical data but also the development of theoretical frameworks for understanding host-children's issues. In particular, future researchers should pay attention to all types of child labourers beyond child sex workers, and in the African and Asian regions. Scholarly attention to child labour in the tourism industry is urgent because of the risky tourism working environment where working hours are long, jobs

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are not secure, wages are low and laws are often infringed. Secondly, the findings from the SQLR suggest that there is a need for researchers to investigate the quality of life of host children, and to extend knowledge on less utilitarian dimensions of tourism impacts. Finally, it is recommended that future research involving host-children reflect on ethical issues. In summary, this study systematically reviewed the existing literature on host-children and identified three main research gaps that are the deficiency of studies on general host-children (besides child sex workers) and the absence of host-children's voices. It is hoped that this paper will initiate further research on host-children and contribute to achieving the UNSDG (Goal 8.7) which protect and eliminate all forms of child labour.

International Labour Organization. (2002). A future without child labour: Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work.

Retrieved from Switzerland: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_publ_9221124169_en.pdf

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