



Destination Selection and Readiness for Pet Tourism: Travelling with Man's Best Friend

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Abstract

This scoping review explores pet owners' motivations and experiences when selecting destinations for accompanying pet travel to guide future research. A scoping review, followed by snowballing method were conducted, to counter limitations of each search method. Electronic databases used were SA e-publications, Scopus and Web of Science, the search criteria included publications within a five-year period between January 2020 to July 2025 and only in English. In order to identify emerging themes that addressed the research objectives and provided a narrative description of the data, an abstract screening process was conducted through Rayyan. Articles that did not meet set eligibility criteria like language, duplications, or irrelevant focus were excluded. Only four articles emerged from this screening. These "origin papers" were run through Connected Papers, and the snowballing process yielded a further 27 relevant articles. The total 31 articles highlighted emotional attachment as a powerful motivator for pet-owners traveling with their pets. Obstacles in destination selection pointed to exorbitant prices, a lack of suitable housing, transportation problems, and ambiguous regulations continue to exist. Availability of pet-focused services like safety, health, and accessible activities play a major role in destination selection, and many owners are willing to pay more for higher-quality options. The review also highlighted a critical gap in African focus of this research whereby tourism facilities do not accommodate the needs and priorities of pet owners when traveling to destinations.

Keywords: Pet-friendly, destination selection, travel, tourism

1. Introduction

There have been accounts throughout human history of people from various cultures coexisting or living close to one another with pets (Yilmaz, 2023). Pets are defined as animals that reside with people in their homes through companionship, are not used as food, and have a name (Zhang, 2012). Beck (2014) suggests that the "evolutionary, psychological, and physiological processes" are the origins of the tie between humans and animals as well as the human-companion animal relationship. Pets or companion animals are regarded as "family members" who provide health benefits, while playing a pivotal role in family structures (Marsh, 2019).

Although, like all emotional needs, people's attachment to their pets can occasionally become excessive and even pathological, interfering with day-to-day activities, our relationship with companion animals is generally advantageous to all parties (Beck, 2024). Pets and domestic animals are the most common definitions of companion animals (Tomassini, 2022). Companion animals are "domesticated or domestic-bred animals whose physical, emotional, behavioural, and social needs can be readily met as companions in the home, or in close daily relationship with humans," according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA, n.d.).

Dogs are the most prominent of these companions and family pets (Greenebaum, 2004). Previously kept as guard dogs or for housework, they are now increasingly regarded as family members and pets (Boni, 2008). Those with pets can be categorized into a variety of groups, such as wealthy families, retirees, spouses without children, and those with disabilities (Ying et al., 2021). According to Kretzler et al. (2022) these people may be the main factor behind the new and growing pet-friendly tourism industry since they are quite willing to spend money on pet-related services. People often take their dogs on vacation because they consider them to be family members and believe that they will be treated as tourists in the same way as people (Siam, 2023).

Non-human travellers are becoming more common, despite the perception that tourism is exclusive for humans (Ivanov, 2018). The rising pet-friendly travel business has the potential to be worth USD 50.1 billion by 2030 (University of Surrey, 2023). Tourism destinations' competitiveness impacts both national economies and local

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communities (Leung & Baloglu, 2013). In order to compete for business, tourism destination managers need competitive tactics to navigate the industry's ever-changing environment (Gonzalez-Rodriguez et al., 2023). In light of this, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) created a conceptual model that is specific to the unique features of destination competitiveness. The model illustrates how tourism demand and situational factors interact with resources and destination management to affect destination competitiveness and socioeconomic development (Ritchie & Crouch, 2023).

Several industries made the decision to become "pet-friendly" by reshaping themselves to accept pets (Alves et al., 2022). To appeal to tourists who bring their pets, more and more places are designating themselves as pet-friendly (Ying et al., 2021). The sociological and physical aspects of tourism and hospitality, the latter with its facilities and offerings, are not yet covered by such research (Tomassini, 2022). The presence of companion animals is still uncommon, unreported, and sporadic. Furthermore, the author adds that it appears to be most noticeable in upscale hotels that provide amenities like a "pet concierge" and staff members who are happy to take visitors' dogs for walks and host pet-friendly cultural evenings. Since companion animals are small, quiet, and well-behaved, they can be tolerated or even welcomed in the hospitality and tourism industries, which still seem to be primarily a human world (Tomassini, 2022). An indication that the hospitality and tourist industries are still ignorant to the potential associated with appropriately accepting and hosting companion animals, which may, for example, enable the co-creation of an engaging and "more-than-human" space as well as a more fulfilling visitor experience (Tomassini, 2022).

During the pandemic, interest in and adoption rate for pets increased significantly as social isolation became more demanding (Morgan et al., 2020). The ever-growing number of pet ownership spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw a need in the hospitality industry to adjust their policies for guests traveling with their pets (Thornell, 2022). In general, the pet industry is a vast sector with a wide range of goods and services (Saarnivaara, 2021). Given that people prefer to prioritize their pets and spend a significant amount of money on them, especially during difficult economic times, is an indication that the pet business has been regarded as one of the most stable in the world (Priya & Nandhini, 2018).

Tomassini (2022) highlights the disconnect between services offered within hospitality and the needs or expectations of traveling pet-owners. Ratz (2012) highlighted some issues that could limit the owner's ability to participate in tourism by influencing their leisure or vacation habits. For example, they questioned the lack of services provided for pets, which would affect the choice of destination if pet owners decided to take their animals on vacation. Similar to how couples with kids plan their leisure activities in advance, pet owners do the same (Chen et al., 2011).

If service providers concentrate on the features of the destination that are related to the comforts that pet owners look for, they should also be able to examine every activity that a pet might be able to partake in at the location (Carr, 2017). The author adds that when pet owners have a positive time traveling with their pets, it improves their contentment with the location and helps the local tourism industry. According to Walker (2014), hospitality workers constantly aim for extraordinary customer pleasure since it fosters repeat business and revenue. Since it may be more difficult to meet the requirements of pets whose voices we cannot comprehend, this is particularly crucial in pet hotel services.

Traditional vacation plans which, involved seeking pet-sitting services, has changed into an emerging trend whereby travellers are now vacationing with their pets (Dashper, 2020). However, Buhalis and Chan (2023) recognises certain challenges when travelling with pets. Pet owners are typically constrained by restrictions on the places they may visit and the services they can use because such places put their pets' needs below their own (Buhalis & Chan, 2023). The pet-friendly market category is extremely broad since it includes any content pertaining to animals and the pet-friendly concept, such as establishments, businesses, and services (Alves et al., 2022). Alves et al. (2022) further explain that the proliferation of pet-friendly travel amenities in the travel and tourism sector, including pet-friendly rental vehicles and airport restrooms, is making travelling with pets easier. Even with these developments, many hotels worldwide do not allow pets on their grounds, indicating the growing demand for lodgings designed specifically for pets (Saarnivaara, 2021).

The University of Surrey (2023) suggests tourism providers should understand what influences the decision-making process for people travelling with pets and provide clear and accessible information through communication channels. Considering the rise in pet owners, pet-friendly tourist sites and facilities are still currently in their infancy because of a lack of understanding about this type of tourism as well as a shortage of suitable lodgings, recreational areas and information in travel areas (Siam, 2023).

Due to the growing perception of pets as part of the family, pet owners are making investments in their comfort and welfare when travelling (Grand View Research, 2025). The number of vacationers bringing their pets on vacation has been rising in recent years (Condor Ferries, 2025). Pet owners are increasingly looking for all-inclusive services that guarantee the comfort and protection of their animals when they are travelling or moving (Globe Newswire, 2024). Given the global interest in studying emerging markets in destinations, this study will conduct a scoping review to explore existing literature of pet-owners' travel motives and decision-making process and the destination's ability to meet these requirements, highlighting the following study objectives and related questions:

1.1 Research objectives:

RO1: To identify key factors influencing travellers' selection of destinations when travelling with pets

RO2: To analyse the role of pet-friendly accommodation, transport, and attractions in enhancing a destination's appeal to pet-owning travellers

RO3: To analyse the gap that exists in the current literature regarding pet-travel as an emerging tourism market

1.2 Research questions:

RQ1: What key factors influence travellers' selection of destinations when travelling with pets?

RQ2: How do pet-friendly accommodation, transport, and attractions contribute to enhancing a destination's appeal to pet-owning travellers?

RQ3: What gaps exist in the current literature regarding pet travel as an emerging tourism market?

2. Methods

2.1 Study design

To comprehensively map the existing literature on destination selection and readiness for pet tourism, we employed a two-phase search strategy comprising a scoping review followed by snowballing. The scoping review was the primary method for obtaining literature data. The second method was snowballing, which supported the shortfall of relevant literature for the pet-travel focus areas. The first author acted as a reviewer while the second author was the moderator. Disputes were dealt with in a joint session and coding features of "accept", "maybe" or "decline" within Rayyan, as well as enlisted the assistance of a qualified librarian.

2.1.1 Scoping Review Protocol

The primary goal of a scoping review is to provide a comprehensive overview of the available literature rather than to perform a detailed quantitative or qualitative analysis. Scoping reviews follow a systematic process to locate and chart relevant literature that aligns with predefined criteria, addressing specific objectives and research questions (Zarshenas et al., 2023). It is a form of evidence synthesis aimed at identifying and mapping existing research that meets specific inclusion criteria related to a particular topic, field, context, concept, or issue (Gottlieb et al., 2021). The research team, new to the process, enlisted the assistance of librarians to assist with the scoping review and search strategies. The scoping review was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines for scoping reviews (Moher et al., 2010; Khalil et al., 2021).

The goal of evidence synthesis is to be as thorough as one can be. This entails looking in multiple locations. Using at least three databases, one of which should be a multidisciplinary database (such as Web of Science), is best practice for scoping reviews (Texas A&M University, n.d). We conducted electronic searches over three databases, SA e-publications, Scopus and Web of Science (Table 1). The search terms included "pet", "friendly", "destination", "marketing", "not medical" and "not farming, with Boolean terms AND and NOT being used to

separate the keywords. For this study, the inclusion criteria were to extract articles in English published over 5 years from January 2020 to July 2025. The exclusions were articles not in English, outside of the 5-year perimeters. The review explored key concepts, theoretical frameworks, regional concentration of works published and identified gaps in data and evidence.

Table 1: Four search strategies and articles (n=) over three databases

Search strategy	SABINET (SA - e- publications)	SCOPUS	WOS
pet AND friendly AND travel AND destination AND marketing NOT medical NOT farming	n=283	n=7	n=3
pet-friendly AND travel AND destination AND marketing NOT medical NOT farming	n=292	n= 8	n=4
pet AND friendly AND tourism AND destination AND marketing NOT medical NOT farming	n=54	n=8	n=3
pet-friendly AND tourism AND destination AND marketing NOT medical NOT farming	n= 53	n=9	n= 3
Sub total	n=682	n=32	n=13
Total extraction	n= 727		
	(Exclusions = 723 irrelevant focus or no abstract)		
	Total articles used/Origin papers (n=4)		

The next step of the scoping review was conducted using Rayyan AI, a powerful tool designed to assist researchers with systematic reviews (Ouzzani et al., 2016). A total of 727 papers that were extracted in RIS format from the three databases were populated onto Rayyan AI for review. Using the review tool, it was easier to assess each PDF document that was loaded to the platform by assessing first the article title, and full abstracts to determine the suitability of the paper. Inclusion criteria indicated that publications were to be in the English language, to review a five-year timeframe (January 2020 to July 2025), and must include an abstract. All publications that did not match all the criteria were excluded. To ensure consistency authors split the papers into equal amounts to each review, as the first step. The second step included the authors acting as reviewers of each other's assessments, to ensure consensus. In the first step where an author was not certain whether to include or exclude, a folder with “maybe” was created, for both authors to review and determine final outcome. The initial screening was to remove duplicates; 421 publications were removed. The 306 remaining papers were reviewed based on suitability to the study objectives and inclusions. A total of 302 papers were excluded, based on an irrelevant focus area, or did not include an abstract. Once all inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied, 4 articles met all criteria for inclusion into the study.

2.2 Snowballing

Recognising the limitations of database indexing and keyword variability, four publications were not sufficient for analysis. Using guidance of literature, a snowballing approach was initiated (Grassini, 2022; Wohlin, et al., 2022). The snowballing strategy was composed of four steps. The initial step was the identification of the “take-off-articles” or “origin papers” from the scoping review, enabling a broad exploration of the topic and identification of key concepts, gaps, and types of evidence. The reference list of the “take-off articles” were analysed (backward snowballing) and identified cited articles (Wohlin, 2016). This strategy enhanced the sensitivity of our search and ensured the inclusion of relevant studies that may have been missed due to terminological inconsistencies or limited indexing. Snowballing has been shown to improve precision and recall in literature searches (Jalali & Wohlin, 2012). This method was supported using a visual reference tool called Connected Papers. Connected Papers is a visual tool that maps research articles based on similarity, using citation and bibliographic coupling to identify related works, and displays them in a force-directed graph where closely connected papers cluster together, allowing researchers to explore relevant literature beyond direct citation links (Connected Papers, n.d).

In its integration here, the process supported a more exhaustive and nuanced synthesis of the evidence base. We were very careful not to consider this approach as a hybrid search (Wohlin et al., 2022). Our decision to include

snowballing in this study was necessitated by the low article count from the primary database search (Wohlin, 2022) and was not an initial research design decision; hence the apprehension to use the term hybrid search. The snowballing resulted in a total of 67, with 40 duplicates (Table 2). The additional step to the scoping review yielded 27 articles, with 16 articles aimed at RO1 and 11 aimed at RO2.

Table 2: Snowball search results

Articles	Sample
Total articles retrieved	n=67
Duplicates	n=40
Articles used	n=27
RO1: n=16 / RO2: n=11	

2.3 Charting data

Data analysis followed deductive coding, using pre-established codes/themes that were derived from the research objectives. Deductive coding allows a top-down view of data where the researcher is able to explore and test theories and concepts within that data (Atlas.ti, 2025). The approach is beneficial when researchers have drawn a framework and specific research objectives that need to be achieved (Atlas.ti, 2025). The thematic analysis of the papers were grouped according to the study ROS. Extracted data was then added to an Excel sheet under each relevant theme and objective. The data represented the following: paper title, author/s, year of publication, origin, methodology, sample size, and summary of findings. Each reviewer was responsible for ensuring the information was captured correctly. The second reviewer would oversee the primary input. Supplementary A provides the detailed data charts for the results and findings analysis below.

3. Results

To recap the keywords search strategy, over the three databases found 727 potentially eligible articles. Following the abstract screening processes through Rayyan, 421 duplicates were resolved, leaving 306 articles to be included in the abstract screening process. Following the abstract screening process through Rayyan, 302 articles were excluded, and only four articles were left for full article screening. In addition to the scoping, the four remaining articles or “origin papers” were run through Connected Papers, which resulted in retrieving 67 articles. The same inclusions and exclusion processes were applied. 40 duplicates were resolved, and a final total of 27 articles were used.

3.1 Study findings

Thematic content analysis of the included studies revealed the following key topics: motives for travelling with pets, destination selection and tourism offerings to support pet-friendly travelling within destinations, and concentration of studies within a specific region only.

3.1.1 Motives for travelling with pets

Emotional attachment, well-being, and lifestyle expression are all major factors in pet-inclusive travel motivations. A recurring topic is that taking pets on vacation is frequently seen as advantageous for both the pet and the owner. This is demonstrated by Gong et al. (2020) in the Chinese setting, where pet-owners see travel as an extension of their love and care for their animals and see it as a means of improving their happiness. This is consistent with Siam (2023), who discovered that Egyptian pet-owners place a higher value on their pets' comfort and well-being than on cost when making vacation decisions, indicating that emotional fulfilment is a key incentive.

Three studies highlight the connection between people and animals as a driving force behind travel habits. A stronger dog connection is associated with higher spending and a more active search for dog-friendly locations,

according to Hidalgo-Fernández et al. (2023). Similar to this, Hoy et al. (2023) contend that a lot of pet-owners view travel as an "expected extension of companionship," with their reasons rooted in the desire to keep routines and share experiences with their animals. This idea is expanded upon by Quan et al. (2023), who contend that pet-friendly activities directly improve owners' overall life happiness, making such travel both mentally and emotionally advantageous.

At the same time, motivations are shaped by safety and responsibility concerns. Ying et al. (2021) point out that pet health issues have a significant impact on the kind and duration of travel. Additionally, Han et al. (2024) note that owners prioritise accessibility, safety, cleanliness, and emotional fulfilment over aesthetics when planning a trip, proving that incentives are both practical and hedonistic. The significance of the pet-human link in travel decisions is shown by the fact that reasons for bringing pets on vacation include a combination of lifestyle, health, and emotional factors (Veas-González et al., 2025). In short, motives for travelling with pets reflect a hybrid of emotional, health-related, and lifestyle-oriented drivers, underscoring the importance of the pet-human bond in tourism decisions.

3.1.2 Destination selection and tourism offerings for pets

The availability of pet-focused infrastructure and services greatly influences the choice of destination in pet-friendly travel. Three studies from the research highlight the lack of pet-friendly options as a significant drawback. The absence of pet-friendly boarding facilities and information-searching platforms was identified by Gong et al. (2020) and Chan and Tung (2022) as a major challenge for pet-owners in Hong Kong and China, respectively. In a similar instance, Siam (2023) emphasises Egypt's stringent hotel regulations as obstacles that influence traveller choice, arguing that consistent legislation and lodging standards are still essential for promoting pet tourism.

However, recent studies show that the market is responding to demand more and more, as strong family commitment to pets in Spain influences traveller choice, with many choosing destinations based on accommodations and beaches that allow dogs (Aguilar-Rivero et al., 2025). Owners are, however, still irritated by uneven regional regulations, such as seasonal beach limits. Veas-González et al. (2025) also point out that, despite an increase in the readiness to pay among emotionally attached owners, cultural norms in Chile restrict the prevalence of pet-inclusive products.

Additionally, the findings emphasise how particular offerings improve experiences. Green spaces, natural landscapes, and planned pet-friendly activities improve not just the wellness of pets but also owner happiness and destination loyalty, according to Quan et al. (2024). According to Han et al. (2024), pet-owners place a higher value on cleanliness and service quality than on aesthetics when selecting lodging or travel places. These findings emphasise the need to develop holistic pet-inclusive tourism ecosystems, where experiences, regulations, and amenities combine to make destinations attractive to pet tourists.

3.1.3 Region of studies identified

The expanding body of literature illustrates the regional variance and global scope of pet-friendly tourism studies. The initial studies were focused on China and Turkey (Dilek et al., 2020; Gong et al., 2020; Ying et al., 2021), which reflected environments where pet ownership is fast increasing but infrastructure and legislation are not keeping up. This research brought to light basic obstacles such lack of facilities, information scarcity, and expenses.

By 2022 to 2023, research expanded into Hong Kong, Egypt, and Spain regions with diverse cultural and policy frameworks. Studies in Hong Kong by Chan and Tung (2022) emphasised the challenge of transportation and limited urban infrastructure, while research in Egypt conducted by Siam (2023) demonstrated how restrictive policies hinder the potential of a growing pet-friendly industry. Spanish studies from Aguilar-Rivero et al. (2025)

introduced the perspective of policy inconsistency across regions, a barrier less noted in Asian or Middle Eastern contexts.

In more recent times, studies have spread throughout Latin America, with East Asia generating a total of 9 articles. With a focus on emotional fulfilment and service quality, Korean research by Han et al. (2024); Choi et al. (2025) offer comprehensive insights into how pet travel objectives vary from those of general tourism. Despite rising willingness to pay, cultural beliefs limit the rise of pet tourism, according to Chilean research, which only resulted in 1 article (Veas-González et al., 2025).

4. Discussions

The scoping review and snowballing method mapped available literature on current studies about pet tourism, travellers' motives and destination selection processes in a global context. According to the reviewed studies, the decision to travel with pets is influenced by a variety of emotional, cultural, logistical, and regulatory issues, making pet-friendly tourism a quickly growing yet unevenly developed topic. The analysis reveals a number of overarching themes that offer significant perspectives for both research and application. First of all, the reasons behind pet-inclusive travel emphasize how important the human-pet link is to traveller behaviour. Many pet owners travel because they think it improves their pets' happiness, health, and well-being rather than only for their own enjoyment (Gong et al., 2020; Siam, 2023). Across all regions, emotional fulfilment, pet comfort, and safety stand out as common motivators. Significantly, this research contradicts conventional theories of tourism behaviour that view pets as outside limitations; rather, pets are fellow travellers whose demands influence human choices. According to this viewpoint, pet-friendly travel should be viewed as a type of family vacation in which everyone contributes to the communal construction of wellbeing.

Second, infrastructure, regulation, and service quality are major determinants of tourist offerings and destination selection. Owners look for locations that can combine human convenience with pet comfort. Globally, there are still gaps, though: China and Hong Kong lack pet-friendly lodging and transportation; Spain struggles with uneven regional beach access policies; Egypt shows how stringent hotel regulations impede the expansion of the sector; and Chile exhibits cultural reluctance despite rising demand. All of these incidents demonstrate how industry practices and policy frameworks fall short of customer expectations, frustrating demand. The data clearly demonstrates higher expenditure and loyalty in places that have embraced pet inclusion, such as Spain's dog-friendly facilities (Hidalgo-Fernández et al., 2023; Aguilar-Rivero et al., 2025). Finally, the regional distribution of research shows the uneven distribution of pet tourism scholarship as well as its global reach. The prevalence of research in the Middle East (Egypt), Europe (Spain), and East Asia (China, Korea) emphasizes how crucial contextual factors are in determining both opportunities and limitations. Significant research gaps still exist, nevertheless. Despite the fast rise in middle-class pet ownership and the emergence of pet-related services in nations like South Africa, Africa is mainly left out of this literature outside of Egypt. In South Africa, certain laws govern where animals, particularly pets, are prohibited, especially in cafes, restaurants and even markets, explained Rolan Butler the Knysna acting municipal manager. The Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, Act 54 of 1972, outlines the rules pertaining to general hygienic standards for food establishments, food transportation, and other associated issues. These laws, however, do make provisions for special assistance dogs/animals for persons with disabilities (Butler, 2022). Butler (2022) also reiterated that not all individuals are accepting of certain social norms when it comes to sharing meals in public setting with pets. This could be the reason for the slow uptake to pet travel in the region.

Likewise, studies in Latin America are just starting to investigate how culture, social status, and pet tourism are intertwined (Veas-González et al., 2025). Maintaining or expanding market share in a national and/or global tourism market requires tourist destinations to take successful strategic activities (Gonzalez-Rodriguez et al., 2023). This points to the necessity for cross-cultural comparative studies that look at the ways in which economic growth, cultural norms, and legal frameworks interact to influence pet travel habits. This could ultimately expand the research area to compare tourism destinations' competitive models, such as Ritchie and Crouch's TDC (Tourism Destination Competitiveness) model. When it comes to business and strategic management, competition

is particularly pertinent, even if it is a well-researched topic that is explored and discussed in the academic literature in a variety of thematic areas and departments of study (Santos, et al., 2014). The primary causes are mostly ascribed to the tourism industry's growing economic significance as well as the market's growing competition, which necessitates a deeper comprehension of both the resources and capabilities of tourist destinations as well as the unique needs and attitudes of travellers (Fernandez, et al., 2020). In order to remain competitive within the tourism industry, Ritchie and Crouch (1999) suggest applying the TDC to evaluate both micro and macro environmental factors for adaptability.

4.1 Implications for research

The results indicate that additional research on pet-friendly travel is clearly needed in a few specific places. First, we need to conduct additional research in different regions of the world to determine whether the same trends hold true, as the majority of the studies are from Asia and Europe. Second, many research publications just explain how pets travel; more robust theories should be used in future studies to explain the reasons behind owners' decisions to travel with different species of pets. Third, combining techniques like surveys and interviews or tracking owners over time may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how behaviours evolve. Fourth, since no two pet-owners are alike, studies should examine several groups, such as those based on lifestyle, age, or degree of attachment.

4.2 Limitations of the research

The use of a scoping review and snowballing methodology ensured that there was an inclusion of a wide range of study types. Due to the exclusions limiting the study range, of those articles not being in English or within the range of January 2020 to July 2025. Despite this, our search was seen as comprehensive and led to a thorough review of literature through both methodology strategies.

5. Conclusion

According to this article, there is growing evidence that pet-friendly travel is becoming more popular as more pet-owners want to bring their animals along on vacation and view them as members of the family. Although emotional attachment is a powerful motivator, obstacles including exorbitant prices, a lack of suitable housing, transportation problems, and ambiguous regulations continue to exist. Pet-focused services like safety, health, and accessible activities play a major role in destination selection. Many owners are willing to pay more for higher-quality options. All things considered, the tourist sector has the chance to grow by enhancing laws and infrastructure to better serve the demands of this new market. Future research could focus on conducting comparative studies between regions where literature is evident, against regions where pet travel is still seen as an emerging market.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Disclosure of interests

Regarding the subject matter of this article, the writers have no conflicting interests to disclose.

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Supplementary A: Results of snowballing

Authors	Date	Methodology	Sample Size	Findings
S. E. Dilek, N. Dilek, D. Fennell	2020	Quantitative surveys	393 pet owners from Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir	Constraints such as costs and lack of information hinder pet owners from participating in tourism activities
X. Gong, Hongxia Q, Jiaojiao X, Nandi Qi	2020	Qualitative research design	In-depth interview with 23 participants	The lack of pet-friendliness boarding places in China. Many participants proposed that involving pets in their tourism activities was a way to enhance pets' happiness
Hansen, M., Rickly, J.M., Halpern, N. and McCabe, S.	2021	Ethnographic observation with a dog owner &	Semi-structured interviews with traveller guide dogs	More common occurrence to travel with a guide dog (ease of accessibility) for humans and guide dogs
R. Huang, L. Krier, B. Josiam, H. Kim	2021	Qualitative study through online surveys	Snowball sampling, 196 surveys conducted to dog owners	Service operations in hotels were not balanced for pet-owners and non-pet owners staying in the same hotel. Pet owners requested more essentials for the comfort of their pets.
T. Ying, J. Tang, J. Wen, S. Ye, Y. Zhou, F. Li	2021	Mixed-methods strategies (interviews and online blogs)	615 Chinese pet owners were surveyed (total of 36 blogs within the 2 main blogging sites)	Pet owners being concerned about his pet's health before traveling, the types of challenges experienced determined length and type of stay.
W. Chong, Xin Hui Choong, T. Sam	2022	Theoretical Framework (based on the theory of planned behaviour)	Existing literature on pet-owners and pet travel	It has emphasized the need to consider human-pet relationships when trying to understand pet-owner intentions to travel with pets
H. Alves, B. Sousa, A. Carvalho, V. Santos, A. Dias, Marco Valeri	2022	Questionnaire	190 pet-owners	The study revealed that consumers' decision-making regarding pet-friendly services in Portugal is influenced by factors such as safety, quality, comfort, and hygiene, with brand attachment playing a key role by strongly impacting trust, satisfaction, and commitment which is enhanced when services demonstrate high quality and attentive care.
V. T. H. Chan, V. Tung	2022	Qualitative approach	32 urban staycation experiences of pet tourists in Hong Kong	The lack of information-searching platforms and the difficulties of finding a place to travel to with a pet. Transportation was a common concern faced by many pet owners who did not drive or take their vehicles on their vacation
R. Siam	2023	Surveys and semi-structured interviews (face-to-face and online)	Sample size of 400 respondents, in addition 10 surveys to 10 pet-friendly hotels and 10 non-pet friendly hotels, and 10 interviews with travel and tour operators	The results show that pet owners prioritize their pets' comfort and wellness when deciding to travel, while restrictive policies negatively impact their travel choices. In Egypt, pet-friendly

				tourism is a growing industry that must compete by offering quality services, not just lower prices.
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Authors	Date	Methodology	Sample Size	Findings
A. Hidalgo-Fernández, S. Moral-Cuadra, A. Menor-Campos, T. López-Guzmán	2023	Mixed methods, online survey	The survey was shared primarily through pet-focused social media groups, received 1,804 responses, with 1,696 deemed valid.	A strong attachment to dogs is linked to both human- and dog-related travel motivations, influences how tourists assess dog-friendly destinations, and is associated with increased spending while traveling.
D. Buhalis, J. Chan	2023	Qualitative design methods, personal interviews	25 Hotel managers (sourced from Little Step Asia)	All respondents emphasize that hotels develop their pet-friendly services to address the growing and lucrative market niche during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, two upper upscale hotels removed size or weight limitations as they were unpopular with guests. These hotels also found that larger dogs tend to be quieter and more adaptable, as they are less threatened by new surroundings. The common standard is that a maximum of two pets is allowed per room. Pet facilities and services help create memorable experiences for both owners and pets.
B. S. Yilmaz	2023	Exploratory research, semi-structured interviews	52 pet owners in three big cities of Turkey (Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir)	Pet ownership type and travel decisions are influenced by both owner and pet characteristics, with emotionally attached owners more likely to travel with their pets, though various personal, pet-related, and external constraints can impact this choice.
L. S. Hoy, B. Stangl, N. Morgan	2023	Semi structured interviews were conducted via telephone calls (after posting in a pet friendly Facebook group online	34 semi-structured phone interviews	Qualitative findings reveal that the mutually beneficial bond between humans and dogs' influences guardians' tendency to travel with their pets, with many viewing it as normal behaviour, while also highlighting the challenges and time involved in obtaining necessary travel information.
W. Quan, S. Kim, N. G. Baah, H. Jung, H. Han	2023	Qualitative study using semi- structured	420 interviews (pet owners)	Because pets are more sensitive to their surroundings than humans, the physical and natural environment of a destination directly affects both pet well-being and owner satisfaction, with enjoyable pet-friendly activities also enhancing overall life satisfaction for pet owners.
W. Quan, S. Kim, N. G.	2023	Qualitative study using semi- structured survey,	13 interviews, 407 qualitative surveys	Since pets are highly sensitive to their surroundings, the physical and natural environments of tourism destinations directly impact both pet well-being and the owner's satisfaction, with enjoyable

Baah, H.G Jung, H. Han		in-depth interviews (quantitative)		pet-inclusive travel experiences further enhancing owners' overall life satisfaction with their pets.
Y. J. Joo, Y. Jo, H. Jo, H. Choi, Y. Yoon	2023	Online self-administered survey through Embrain	Pet-owners over the age of 20 – 495 samples	Although demand for pet travel is rising in the tourism sector, the lack of pet-friendly infrastructure remains a key barrier, with findings showing that travellers with pets are more willing to pay higher prices when service quality and accommodation standards are elevated.

Authors	Date	Methodology	Sample Size	Findings
B. Meng, X. Chi, J. Kim, G. Kim, W. Quan, H. Han	2024	Online questionnaire	421 Pet owners who travelled and stayed in pet- friendly hotels	The study found that pet owners who anthropomorphize their pets, as family members, are driven by a sense of responsibility and positive attitudes toward pet-friendly hotels, whereas those more influenced by travel constraints tend to choose such accommodations based on personal norms, revealing a pet-friendly market divided into anthropomorphist's and zoomorphists.
W. Quan, S. Kim, N. G. Baah, Hyojin Kim, H. Han	2024	Mixed-methods design combining qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires	832 questionnaires & 30 in-depth interviews (pet owners and non-pet owners)	Despite constraints, willingness to travel with pets remains high due to perceived behavioural control, with notable differences in attitudes between pet owners and non-owners especially regarding the value of green environments highlighting the need for targeted planning in pet-friendly tourism.
J E. Ramos-Ruiz, M. Aguilar-Rivero, J. Aja-Valle, L. Castaño-Prieto	2024	Questionnaire was a mixture of quantitative and qualitative design	1391 samples of pet owners in Spain	A family's choice of accommodation is closely linked to their motivations for traveling with their dog, the specific, interpersonal, and structural conditions encountered, and, most importantly, the attachment between the family and their pet
L. Xia, J. Wang, F. Gao	2024	Qualitative method	425 respondents (400 remained in data set)	The study shows that political identity shapes pet owners' relationships and purchasing behaviours, with liberals more likely to anthropomorphize pets and invest in medical services, while conservatives emphasize control and prefer luxury accessories which highlights political identity as a key factor in understanding consumer behaviour in pet-related markets.
H. Han, S. Kim, S. Blankson-Stiles-Ocran, W. Quan, Amr Al-Ansi, H.H Choi	2024	Mixed methods approach (questionnaire design)	Population size 10000 registered members from a pet online community (Naver Cafe) in Korea (349 samples were successfully retrieved)	Pet owners planning travel with their pets prioritize emotional satisfaction, accessibility, service quality, and cleanliness over aesthetics, with their decisions shaped by strong emotional bonds and heightened concern for pet safety, health, and accommodation

				which reveals needs that differ significantly from those of general tourists.
I. Veas-González, M. Escobar-Farfán, N. Carrión, Bernal-Peralta, E. Garcia-Salirrosas, S. Romero-Contreras, C. Diaz-Díaz	2025	Qualitative approach (online surveys)	Convenience sampling, 349 surveys	Emotional bonding with pets fosters a positive attitude and greater willingness to pay for pet-inclusive travel, but in Chile, cultural factors may limit this behaviour, highlighting that the owner-pet relationship, perceived benefits, and social prestige are key drivers in shaping intentions toward pet-friendly tourism.
M. Aguilar-Rivero, S. Moral-Cuadra, J. E. Ramos-Ruiz, T. López-Guzmán	2025	Structured questionnaire	1024 questionnaires collected, 933 were deemed valid for analysis, sample of tourists travelling with their dogs in Spain.	Destination choice in pet travel is shaped by both motivations and limitations, with family attachment to pets acting as a key mediator, as shown in Spain where strong owner-dog bonds influence travel priorities, but restrictive beach seasons and inconsistent regional policies hinder smooth pet-friendly travel experiences.
H. Choi, Y. Jo, Yeon-Jung Joo, Hyeona Jo, Yoo-shik Yoon	2025	Semi-structured online survey using qualitative and quantitative methods	Sample size of 495 pet owners in Korea	Familial attachment to pets significantly influences loyalty and intention to support pet travel, with higher motivation linked to the belief that pet-inclusive travel is worth the investment and offers unique experiences, highlighting how traveller preferences vary based on their motivation levels.
J. Kim, N. G. Baah, S. Kim, H. Han, B. Meng, X. Chi	2025	Mixed-methods, literature reviews	38 pet-hotels, 363 email surveys	Pet-centric amenities such as pet beds, food and water bowls, and pet pads which were top concerns for travellers with pets. They also noted the type of room which helped with the comfort of staying with pets. Restrictions included weight and size, which limited option for owners.
K. Doğukan Çiki, H. T. S. Çiki, N. Uyğün	2025	Online observation (online reviews)	10 hotels opted in, 1723 reviews analysed on TripAdvisor	Among those who indicated their country of origin, the highest participation was from Turkish customers. Service quality is crucial in shaping the overall guest experience in pet-friendly accommodations, as customers assess not only the services provided to themselves but also the care shown toward their pets, with factors such as pet-related fees, size restrictions, central location, and proximity to veterinary clinics significantly influencing their satisfaction.

H. Choi, Y. Jo, Yeon-Jung Joo, H. Jo, Y. Yoon	2025	Online surveys	475 pet owners who travelled	Familial attachment to pets significantly enhances loyalty and intention to support pet travel and type of accommodation selection, as travellers perceive it as a worthwhile investment of time and money that offers unique experiences for both pet and pet-owners.
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