

**Lifestyle Migrant Tourism  
Entrepreneurship on Hainan Island:  
Chinese Family Perspectives**

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## **Abstract**

This research project is about *lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship* (LMTE) on Hainan Island in China. Hainan Island has become a popular place for Chinese families from the mainland to migrate for entrepreneurial reasons. This study explores how Chinese families are embedded within lifestyle migration and the tourism entrepreneurial process and how this goes beyond the Western definition of ‘family’ and ‘tourism entrepreneurs’. First, this study conceptualises LMTE from a Chinese lifestyle entrepreneurship perspective and extends the concept to family involvement and lifestyle migration. Second, the motivations behind lifestyle migration, the path to the tourism business, and family experience are studied with eight LMTE families.

Tourism scholars recently turned their attention to families, specifically children’s experiences—and yet, research illustrating children’s perspectives in tourism family entrepreneurship is missing. Social researchers are encouraged to include children’s voices to reveal their lived experiences rather than considering them too vulnerable to be interviewed. For this qualitative study, underpinned by constructivist epistemology, a combination of methods was adopted to create a toolbox suitable for family research, including children’s voices through whole-family interviews and Lego<sup>®</sup> Serious Play<sup>®</sup> (LSP) workshops. Data collection was tailored for Chinese families and was implemented through semi-structured interviews with the individual entrepreneurs and group interviews with the entrepreneurs’ families. Thirty-seven participants were involved, and 15 were children aged six to 17. Family data was collected at Old Dad Teahouses (or Laobacha in Chinese) using culturally sensitive methods. The methodological toolbox allowed an understanding of the scholarship on tourism entrepreneurship from a Chinese cultural perspective by providing insight into the experiences of children from LMTE families, providing agency to the children.

As an inductive study, two major data analysis methods were used in this research: thematic and narrative analysis underpinned by critical discourse analysis to help refine the themes. The results showed that the motivations driving Chinese families to relocate to Hainan for tourism

entrepreneurial ventures add a new lens to existing tourism studies. The involvement of their families encourages LMTEs to work hard while simultaneously pursuing work-life balance and an aspirational lifestyle. Families and individuals may hold diverse viewpoints about their experiences after migrating to Hainan, yet notable shared perspectives and experiences exist, and family relationships are nurtured during the migration and entrepreneurial processes.

This study sheds light on how LMTE families navigate the complexities of migration and entrepreneurship, elucidating the complex aspects of their experiences. By addressing both the prior motivations and the entrepreneurial journeys of these families, this study presents a holistic view of the LMTE phenomenon, demonstrating the uniqueness of LMTE in a Chinese setting, and revealing the family experiences by including all family members. It offers conceptual and theoretical insights into understanding lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurs and their families in Chinese society and culture.

This research project serves as a beacon in the burgeoning field of LMTE. Its unique blend of qualitative methodologies, encompassing individual and family perspectives, opens avenues for future research while emphasising the need for tailored support mechanisms and policy interventions. As the entrepreneurial landscape continues to evolve against the backdrop of migration, this research project lays a foundation for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of the intricate tapestry woven by those families who embark on the journey of lifestyle migration entrepreneurship.

For Nicole, you are the future of China

To the families in this research, it has been a wonderful experience

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# Research Project Output

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# Table of Contents

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>RESEARCH PROJECT OUTPUT</b> .....	<b>V</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>IX</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>X</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>XI</b>
<b>CHINESE TERMS</b> .....	<b>XI</b>
<b>ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP</b> .....	<b>XII</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 PERSONAL BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2 TOURISM MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP .....	3
1.3 FAMILY EMBEDDEDNESS IN LIFESTYLE MIGRANT TOURISM ENTREPRENEURSHIP (LMTE).....	5
1.4 CASE STUDY: HAINAN ISLAND, CHINA .....	8
1.4.1 Hainan Island, China .....	8
1.4.2 Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship (LMTE) on Hainan Island.....	14
1.5 GAPS IDENTIFIED FOR THIS RESEARCH PROJECT .....	16
1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS .....	17
1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY DESIGN .....	18
1.8 RESEARCH PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS .....	19
1.9 CHAPTER OVERVIEW .....	20
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>22</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	22
2.2 DEFINING LIFESTYLE MIGRANT TOURISM ENTREPRENEURSHIP (LMTE) .....	22
2.2.1 Tourism Entrepreneur .....	25
2.2.2 Lifestyle Entrepreneur .....	27
2.2.3 Migrant Entrepreneur.....	29
2.2.4 Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneur .....	32
2.3 LMTE FAMILY EMBEDDEDNESS.....	37
2.3.1 Family Embeddedness in Lifestyle Migration .....	38
2.3.2 Family embeddedness and resilience during the entrepreneurial process.....	40
2.4 CHINESE FAMILIES AND THEIR MIGRATION DESTINATIONS.....	44
2.5 WOMEN LMTERS.....	49
2.6 CHILDREN IN TOURISM ENTREPRENEURIAL FAMILIES.....	52
2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING LIFESTYLE MIGRANT TOURISM ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR FAMILIES ON AN ISLAND .....	56
2.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION .....	58

<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>60</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	60
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM: CONSTRUCTIVISM .....	60
3.2.1 <i>Ontology</i> .....	62
3.2.2 <i>Epistemology</i> .....	63
3.2.3 <i>Methodology</i> .....	63
3.3 METHODOLOGY .....	64
3.3.1 <i>Narrative Inquiry</i> .....	66
3.3.2 <i>Whole-Family Research</i> .....	68
3.3.3 <i>Case Study Approach</i> .....	70
3.3.4 <i>Lego Serious Play® Methodology</i> .....	72
3.3.5 <i>Old Dad Teahouse</i> .....	75
3.4 STUDY DESIGN .....	77
3.4.1 <i>Sampling Approach and Process</i> .....	77
3.4.2 <i>Participants' Information</i> .....	79
3.4.3 <i>Interview Guides</i> .....	80
3.4.4 <i>Data Collection Method</i> .....	81
3.5 DATA ANALYSIS .....	87
3.5.1 <i>Data Preparation</i> .....	87
3.5.2 <i>Data Analysis Procedure</i> .....	89
3.6 WHO AM I: INSIDER AND OUTSIDER .....	102
3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS .....	105
3.8 ETHICS .....	108
3.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION .....	110
<b>CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>111</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	111
4.2 INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS .....	112
4.3 CENTRAL AND KEY THEMES .....	119
4.3.1 <i>Thematic Framework of the Central and Key Themes</i> .....	123
4.3.2 <i>Central Theme: STRESS</i> .....	127
4.3.3 <i>Lifestyle and Amenity Migration</i> .....	142
4.3.4 <i>Moderate Work-Life Balance</i> .....	146
4.3.5 <i>Aspirational Lifestyle</i> .....	149
4.3.6 <i>Family Togetherness</i> .....	156
4.3.7 <i>Family Resilience</i> .....	158
4.3.8 <i>Shared Migration Experience</i> .....	161
4.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION .....	175
<b>CHAPTER 5 DYNAMICS OF LMTE: MOTIVATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS .....</b>	<b>178</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	178
5.2 REVISITING THE KEY FINDINGS .....	180
5.3 LMTE MOTIVATIONS .....	185
5.3.1 <i>Experiential</i> .....	188

5.3.2 <i>Locational</i> .....	194
5.3.3 <i>Financial</i> .....	196
5.3.4 <i>Personal</i> .....	197
5.3.5 <i>Familial</i> .....	200
5.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF LIFESTYLE MIGRANT TOURISM ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN HAINAN.....	206
5.4.1 <i>Neijuan and Tangping</i> .....	206
5.4.2 <i>Chinese Spirit of Sacrifice</i> .....	211
5.4.3 <i>Family Solidarity</i> .....	214
5.4.4 <i>Shared Migration Experience</i> .....	219
5.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION .....	224
<b>CHAPTER 6 GENDER, CHILDREN, AND FAMILY EXPERIENCES .....</b>	<b>227</b>
6.1 INTRODUCTION .....	227
6.2 GENDER IN LMTE .....	227
6.2.1 <i>Motivations</i> .....	228
6.2.2 <i>Entrepreneurial and Migration Experience</i> .....	230
6.3 CHILDREN IN LMTE.....	235
6.4 LMTE FAMILY EXPERIENCES .....	239
6.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION .....	243
<b>CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>245</b>
7.1 INTRODUCTION .....	245
7.2 SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT .....	246
7.3 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS .....	250
7.3.1 <i>Theoretical Contributions</i> .....	251
7.3.2 <i>Theoretical Implications</i> .....	255
7.4 METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS.....	262
7.4.1 <i>Methodological Implications</i> .....	262
7.4.2 <i>Methodological Limitations</i> .....	266
7.5 POLICY AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS .....	268
7.5.1 <i>LMTE Development</i> .....	269
7.5.2 <i>Empowerment of Women and Families in Tourism Entrepreneurship</i> .....	270
7.5.3 <i>Policy Implications</i> .....	272
7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....	274
7.6.1 <i>Comparative and Longitudinal Studies</i> .....	274
7.6.2 <i>Further Exploration of Children’s Perspectives</i> .....	275
7.6.3 <i>Empowering Women Entrepreneurs</i> .....	276
7.6.4 <i>LMTE Resilience and Coping Strategies</i> .....	277
7.6.5 <i>Other Recommendations</i> .....	278
7.8 FINAL REFLECTIONS .....	279
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>322</b>
APPENDIX A: ADULT CONSENT FORM.....	322
APPENDIX B: ADULT INFORMATION SHEET .....	323

APPENDIX C: CHILD INFORMATION SHEET .....	325
APPENDIX D: ASSENT FORM .....	326
APPENDIX E: PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM.....	327
APPENDIX F: LIFESTYLE MIGRANT TOURISM ENTREPRENEUR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	328
APPENDIX G: OLD DAD TEA FAMILY GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	329
APPENDIX H: RECRUITMENT POSTER.....	331
APPENDIX I: CHILD INFORMATION SHEET .....	332
APPENDIX J: ETHICS APPROVAL .....	333
APPENDIX K: FACILITATOR CERTIFICATE .....	334

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1</b> Location of Hainan Island.....	9
<b>Figure 2</b> Map of Hainan Island.....	10
<b>Figure 3</b> Positioning the LMTEr .....	33
<b>Figure 4</b> Conceptual Framework: A Family Embeddedness Perspective on Lifestyle Migration and Tourism Entrepreneurship on an Island in China.....	57
<b>Figure 5</b> Design of the Research Process .....	77
<b>Figure 6</b> Family Interview at Old Dad Teahouse .....	83
<b>Figure 7</b> Shared Model from the Yalong Family.....	84
<b>Figure 8</b> Windows Exploration Bag .....	85
<b>Figure 9</b> Lego® Models Built During the Family Interviews.....	86
<b>Figure 10</b> Data Analysis Framework.....	90
<b>Figure 11</b> Initial Codes on Individual Transcript.....	92
<b>Figure 12</b> Generating Initial Codes .....	94
<b>Figure 13</b> Assigning Codes.....	95
<b>Figure 14</b> Initial Codes on Family Transcripts.....	96
<b>Figure 15</b> Assigning Themes .....	97
<b>Figure 16</b> Fairclough’s 3D Model .....	101
<b>Figure 17</b> A Night Tour at Yalong’s Agritourism Farm .....	115
<b>Figure 18</b> Participants’ Places of Origin before Migration .....	119
<b>Figure 19</b> Codes, Subthemes, and Key Themes Refined After CDA.....	121
<b>Figure 20</b> Thematic Framework of the Central and Key Themes .....	124
<b>Figure 21</b> Entrepreneur Qizi’s model .....	136
<b>Figure 22</b> Key Theme: Lifestyle and Amenity Migration.....	142
<b>Figure 23</b> The Model Made by the Grandmother in Yalong’s Family .....	143
<b>Figure 24</b> Desire for Settlement Models .....	144
<b>Figure 25</b> Key Theme: Moderate Work-life Balance .....	146
<b>Figure 26</b> The Haitang Family’s Shared Model .....	148
<b>Figure 27</b> Key Theme: Aspirational Lifestyle.....	149
<b>Figure 28</b> Yalong’s Model .....	151
<b>Figure 29</b> The Shimei Family’s Shared Model .....	152

<b>Figure 30</b>	The Zoo Model .....	153
<b>Figure 31</b>	The Zoo with a Hainan Gibbon .....	154
<b>Figure 32</b>	Flower Model.....	155
<b>Figure 33</b>	The Future Entrepreneur.....	156
<b>Figure 34</b>	Key Theme: Family Togetherness .....	157
<b>Figure 35</b>	Family Togetherness .....	158
<b>Figure 36</b>	Key Theme: Shared Migration Experience.....	159
<b>Figure 37</b>	Haitang’s Wife’s Model .....	161
<b>Figure 38</b>	Key Theme: Shared Migration Experience.....	162
<b>Figure 39</b>	The Model Made by the Grandfather in Qizi’s Family.....	163
<b>Figure 40</b>	Bo’ao’s Husband’s Model.....	168
<b>Figure 41</b>	The Model by the Grandfather in Yalong’s family .....	170
<b>Figure 42</b>	Sanya’s Wife’s Model .....	171
<b>Figure 43</b>	Shared Model Madeby Qingshui’s Family: Shared Migration Experience .....	174
<b>Figure 44</b>	Characteristics of LMTE in Hainan.....	179
<b>Figure 45</b>	LMTE Motivations .....	187

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1</b>	Gaps Identified in this Research Project.....	16
<b>Table 2</b>	Initial Code Example .....	93
<b>Table 3</b>	Strategies for Establishing Trustworthiness.....	105
<b>Table 4</b>	Participants’ Profiles .....	113
<b>Table 5</b>	Subcodes, Codes and Subthemes Derived from the Children’s Voices .....	120
<b>Table 6</b>	Research Questions and Findings.....	183
<b>Table 7</b>	LMTE Experience in Hainan.....	243

## List of Abbreviations

The following terms and abbreviations were used in this research.

LMTE .....	Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship
LMTEr.....	Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneur
LSP .....	Lego® Serious Play®
HFTP.....	Hainan Free Trade Port
SME.....	Small to Medium-sized Enterprises
BFA.....	Boao Forum for Asia
CDA.....	Critical Discourse Analysis
EIT .....	Enterprise Income Tax
SDGs .....	Sustainable Development Goals

## Chinese Terms

The following Chinese terms were used in this research.

Laobacha (老爸茶) .....	similarly to Western afternoon tea but cheaper
Fengguan (封关) .....	customs term that refers to designating the entire Hainan Island as a special region where it can enjoy various preferential policies, including zero tariffs
Daigou (代购) .....	purchasing on behalf of others
Neijuan (内卷).....	excessive competition or rat race
Tangping (躺平) .....	escaping from the rat race
Hejiatuan (阖家团员) ...	gathering of the whole family
Zhaocaijinbao (招财进宝) ...	attract wealth and bring in treasures
Moyu (摸鱼).....	treating the overloaded working culture negatively
Xiao (孝) .....	filial piety
Tong (同) .....	togetherness
Fangtan (访谈) .....	interview
Jia (家).....	home
Gaokao (高考) .....	The Nationwide Unified Examination for Admissions to General Universities and Colleges in China
Junpo Festival (军坡节) .....	also known as Gongqi (公期), a local cultural custom in Hainan, which is an annual regional ritual to worship gods, usually be celebrated in lunar February or March

## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature:

# **Chapter 1 Introduction**

In recent years, Hainan Island has emerged as a major destination for both tourists and aspiring entrepreneurs, offering a unique blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage and economic opportunities. The island provides an intriguing case study for exploring the dynamics of lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship (LMTE), which refers to the group of people who migrate for lifestyle reasons and enter the tourism industry. In this context, this research investigates the phenomenon of lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurs (LMTEr) and their families on Hainan Island. The introductory chapter commences by providing insight into the author's background and motivations for researching tourism entrepreneurs and their families. It then introduces the phenomenon of LMTE on islands and the influence of family embeddedness on LMTE ventures; followed by an introduction of Hainan Island as the chosen case study site. This chapter then outlines the key research questions and research design pertaining to LMTEr and LMTE families. In addition, it highlights gaps in existing literature, particularly within the realm of tourism entrepreneurship on Chinese islands. The chapter concludes with an overview of subsequent chapters with an emphasis on the potential contributions of this research project.

## **1.1 Personal Background**

I was born in a small city in northern China. When my parents changed jobs, we relocated to a coastal town in the north. After graduation from university, I lived and worked in Beijing for 3 years until I married. Following the birth of my daughter, my husband started a venture in agricultural tourism on Hainan Island. I accompanied him, along with our daughter when she was just a few months old, and we have now lived in Hainan since 2017. We settled initially in a small city called Qionghai, and I found life inconvenient there because of the limited amenities, with only one supermarket serving the entire area. Despite this, and while supporting my husband's endeavours, I sought to establish roots and provide opportunities for growth and development for both my daughter and me. Subsequently, because of the limitations of

Qionghai, I reintegrated into society by relocating to Haikou, the provincial capital of Hainan Island. There, I secured a position at Hainan University's joint international tourism college, where I assumed the dual responsibilities of employment and childcare.

Over the span of 6 years, I have had the privilege of encountering numerous scholars and acquaintances, both residents and migrants from diverse origins. Through introductions from friends, I have had the opportunity to connect with many families sharing similar backgrounds of migration and entrepreneurship, bonded by common aspirations. As these social circles expanded through mutual acquaintances, I became increasingly aware of the varied narratives and experiences families bring to life on this island. Motivated by these encounters, I decided to conduct this research project, which seeks to shed light on the untold stories of migrant families venturing into tourism entrepreneurship on Hainan Island. I aim to unravel the motivations behind their choice to relocate here, understand the unfolding narratives post-arrival, the intricacies of establishing themselves and their businesses in this setting, and the delicate balance they strike between professional pursuits and familial responsibilities. I am intrigued by the challenges they face during the entrepreneurial journey and their strategies for overcoming them. Moreover, I am curious about family embeddedness and the potential shifts in family dynamics throughout the migration and entrepreneurial process. These questions have sparked my curiosity and a drive to dive deeper into the realm of Chinese lifestyle tourism entrepreneurship and its impact on family dynamics, propelling me towards this research endeavour.

As a woman and mother, I am acutely attuned to the pivotal role of women in society and deeply intrigued by the perspectives of children, especially given my personal experiences caring for my daughter. Recognising gaps in the existing literature, I was driven to investigate the intricate dynamics of migrant families engaged in tourism entrepreneurship on Hainan Island. Thus, in this research project, I found immense value in conducting comprehensive family interviews including children, as they provide a multifaceted understanding of familial interactions and invaluable insights into the experiences of children.

As a woman who balances work and childcare responsibilities, I am inherently driven to delve into the experiences and challenges women entrepreneurs face within the entrepreneurial landscape. Having personally navigated the intricate dynamics of entrepreneurship while balancing the demands of motherhood, I am deeply fascinated by the different perspectives, strategies, and hurdles women encounter in this domain. I am particularly intrigued by the journey of women who transition into becoming Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurs (LMTErs) after migrating to this island, and how their familial influences shape their decisions throughout the entrepreneurial process. Furthermore, driven by a steadfast desire to empower and uplift fellow women entrepreneurs, I am committed to advocating for increased recognition, support, and opportunities within the business arena. Through this research, I endeavour to shed light on both the triumphs and the tribulations experienced by women entrepreneurs, aiming to foster a more inclusive and equitable entrepreneurial environment.

Moreover, my aspiration extends beyond scholarly pursuits; I am driven to elevate the visibility of these migrant families and amplify their narratives to a broader audience. By shedding light on the experiences and challenges they faced before, during, and after migration, I endeavour to foster greater understanding and empathy while advocating for the recognition and inclusion of their voices within broader societal discourses. Through this research, I aim to catalyse meaningful conversations and spur positive change, ultimately contributing to the empowerment and empowerment of migrant families involved in tourism entrepreneurship.

## **1.2 Tourism Migrant Entrepreneurship**

The relationship between lifestyle migration and entrepreneurship is complex, with migrants often seeking career paths that align with their desire for a meaningful lifestyle. Lifestyle migrants prioritise jobs that allow them to embrace fulfilling lifestyles in distinctive environments, rather than focusing primarily on high salaries (Benson, 2011). Entrepreneurship is typically the preferred option for migrants who have difficulties finding employment (El Bouk et al., 2022). There is extensive research on the nexus between tourism and migration, especially on migrants settling in Europe as tourism entrepreneurs (Eimmermann et al., 2019;

Iversen & Jacobsen, 2016; Ria-Maria, 2023), and Chinese tourism entrepreneurs migrating for lifestyle reasons such as climate stress (Liu & Browne, 2023; Xu & Wu, 2016). However, research has mainly focused on Chinese migrant entrepreneurs who migrate to developed countries like Italy (Guercini et al., 2017) and the United States of America (Zhou & Liu, 2017), and little attention has been paid to Chinese migrant tourism entrepreneurs settling within China.

A considerable body of entrepreneurship literature has examined the motivations of migrants for establishing tourism businesses in new locations (Sarı & Uygur, 2024; Guercini & Ceccarelli, 2020; Freitas, 2024). The tourism industry's low entry requirements offer opportunities for individuals to start small-scale, niche businesses with relatively modest investments and resources. Beside economic motivations, people make broader lifestyle choices in pursuing a fulfilling life, and it is noteworthy that the investigation of non-economic motivations is lacking in the literature. Benson and O'Reilly (2016) differentiate *lifestyle migrants* from other migrants by highlighting their pursuit of a "better way of life" (p. 3). However, the allure of a destination's distinctiveness is only one of the many factors that attract migrants to certain areas, and what distinguishes the tourism sector from others is its unique characteristic known as place attachment, as highlighted by Dwyer et al. (2019). Consequently, lifestyle migrants are motivated to become tourism entrepreneurs, seeking to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the tourism industry while also satisfying their personal and lifestyle preferences.

Although there is research into Chinese entrepreneurs migrating and establishing businesses for lifestyle reasons, the current literature emphasises regions in Mainland China, such as Dali, Lijiang (e.g., Su et al., 2020; Su & Xu, 2017; Sun et al., 2020; Xu & Ma, 2014; Zhou & Chan, 2019) and Yunnan (I-chieh, 2010), neglecting the importance of other regions of China as prominent tourist destinations and hubs for entrepreneurs, such as Hainan Island. Widening the focus to include other regions of China is important due to the regional economic disparities, differing government prioritization policies and diverse socioeconomic and cultural contexts in different regions. For example, Hainan's business dynamics differ from those of Guangxi, which is a mountainous region. Also, the establishment of the Hainan Free Trade Port policy is

one of the most significant steps in making the island an international tourism and business hub, to serve as a model for other regions.

In previous studies on Chinese lifestyle migrants, the term “lifestyle migrants” primarily describes individuals who have reached a certain age (e.g., retirement age) and relocated to sunny places in the south (Chen & Bao, 2021). Eimermann (2015) further suggests that lifestyle migrants should be studied in the context of social rather than economic motivations for moving. This research project extends the scope of lifestyle migrants to include all family members, ranging from grandparents and parents to children. The selected Chinese families in this research project exhibit similar mobility patterns as in Chen and Bao’s (2021) study, they migrate from mainland China and settle on Hainan Island. Upon moving to Hainan Island, they opt to start tourism businesses as a means of establishing themselves and adjusting to their new lifestyle, as there is a consensus among researchers that islands tend to depend on the tourism industry to promote their economies (Eduardo & José Alberto, 2018). For example, the Caribbean Islands rely on the tourism industry for economic growth (Peterson, 2023). This dependence brings economic opportunities and benefits, which attract entrepreneurs.

### **1.3 Family Embeddedness in Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship (LMTE)**

Family signifies a bond that plays a crucial role in guiding the behaviour of its members in particular directions (Abe & Abe, 2024). Family members include the entrepreneur and his or her spouse, parents, children, siblings, and other relatives (Abe & Abe, 2024). The role of family and its importance in the tourism industry has attracted the attention of researchers, and previous studies have examined the demand for family tourism (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015). However, research is lacking on the supply side of lifestyle migrant entrepreneurship destinations for families, such as Hainan Island, one of the most popular migration destinations for families in China. Despite Hainan’s significance, this area has been largely neglected in tourism entrepreneurship studies. While the phenomenon of lifestyle migration has been extensively researched, the specific focus on family-oriented migration to destinations like

Hainan remains underexplored (Carson & Carson, 2018; Greenwood et al., 1990; Zhang, Yan, Lee and Yang, 2020). Moreover, investigation of lifestyle migrant entrepreneurship has been limited to individual entrepreneurs' behaviours linked to company performance without considering the experiences of their families who migrate with them, especially children who are absent from discussions of the lifestyle tourism entrepreneurial families (Canosa & Schänzel, 2021).

The bulk of tourism entrepreneurship research has focused on business performance (Fadda & Sørensen, 2017; Kallmuenzer et al., 2019) rather than analysing the family's role during the entrepreneurial process (Canosa & Schänzel, 2021; Getz & Carlsen, 2005) since not all tourism businesses are family enterprises. The role of family in the lifestyle entrepreneurial process is often overlooked, especially when considering factors beyond the economic, social, and political frameworks (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Hack-Polay et al., 2020), and the positioning of the emerging LMTE is ambiguous. Based on Zhang, Tucker and Albrecht (2020), the lifestyle embraced by lifestyle entrepreneurial migrants should not be assumed to be an automatic choice but needs to be recognised as a deliberate selection from among several available alternatives. However, family-oriented alternatives have been largely overlooked in the literature. Therefore, this research project explores the phenomenon of entrepreneurial migration of lifestyle family tourism in China to contribute to existing tourism entrepreneurship and family studies.

In recent years, tourism scholars have increasingly studied children's involvement in tourism from three main aspects: children's roles, needs, and experiences (Canosa & Schänzel, 2021), the impact of children on tourist destinations and activities (Koščak et al., 2023; Séraphin & Chaney, 2023), and the effects of tourism on children (Li et al., 2023). Koščak et al. (2018) state that children are important family members in entrepreneur families, and their lives are influenced by the community they live in, especially where tourism is the primary industry. The tourism industry consists mainly of family businesses (Lin & Wen, 2021), and children can play a significant role as insiders during the entrepreneurial process. Children are important social agents, and their experiences should not be neglected (Canosa & Graham, 2022).

Understanding family lifestyle migration experiences, including children's voices, in this context is a valuable area for tourism research exploration.

Children in tourism studies have been examined in three ways: from an adult perspective, from an adult and children perspective, and from a children's perspective (Feng & Li, 2016). Children's voices are increasingly acknowledged in tourism research; however, children in tourism studies are often linked to childhood travel with their family (Schänzel & Jenkins, 2017), and Western-based tourism scholars define this phenomenon as a "family vacation" or "family holiday" (Carr, 2011). Although family vacation and family entrepreneurship topics have been studied in the past decade (Canosa et al., 2016), research amplifying children's voices and their lived experiences in tourist destinations predominantly emerges from Western countries (Košćak et al., 2023). Childhood study in tourism has been overlooked (Small, 2008). Tourism scholars have conducted some research in South and Southeast Asia, including the voices of children (Yang et al., 2020). However, children in East Asia remain underresearched in the context of LMTE. Concerted efforts by governments, tourism industry stakeholders, local communities and tourism researchers are needed to ensure the inclusion of children in consideration of tourism in all parts of the world.

This research project takes place on Hainan Island, China, focusing on families participating in LMTE. The one-child policy, which was in effect from 1979 to 2015, has led to children in China receiving considerable attention and pressure from their families. As a result, the dynamics within these families are unique, with parents often investing heavily in their only child's education and future (Wu & Wall, 2016), and their family significantly influencing their motivations and decisions regarding lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship. Not only do parents centre their lives around their lone child; but grandparents also dedicate significant attention to the sole child within their family. Understanding family lifestyle migration experiences, including children's experiences, within this sole child context is a valuable area for exploration for tourism research.

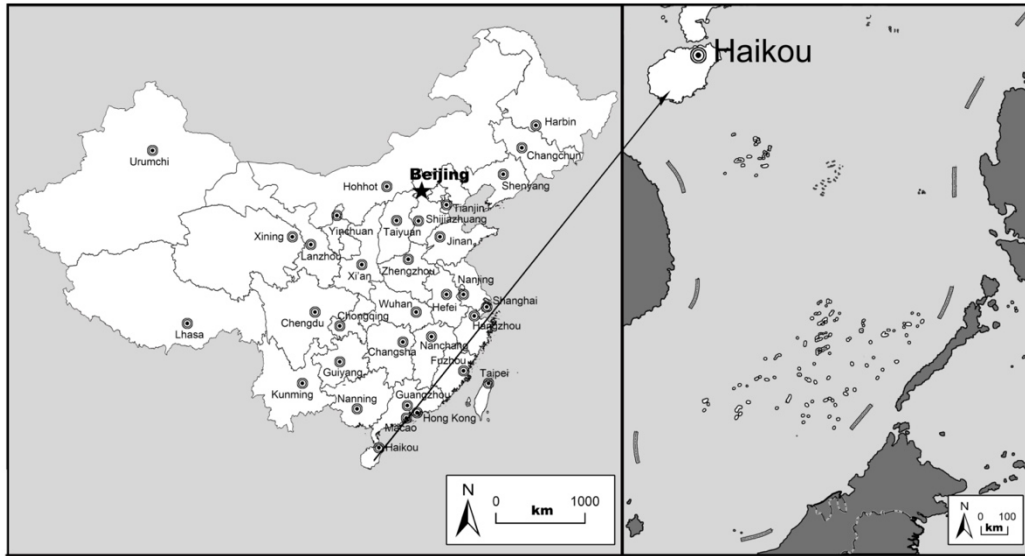
## **1.4 Case Study: Hainan Island, China**

### **1.4.1 Hainan Island, China**

Place matters, since it provides an opportunity for entrepreneurship (Koh, 2006) and is crucial for understanding tourism entrepreneurship (Aquino et al., 2024). Hainan Island was chosen for study for its vital tourism attributes and LMTE phenomenon. Chinese mainland families migrate to Hainan, which is considered a desirable destination, to start tourism-related businesses. This movement is typically driven by the desire for a better quality of life rather than purely economic motivations. Hainan Island is located in southern China (see Figure 1).

Hainan has had a complex history of shifting political control and regional affiliations in history. During the Yuan Dynasty, the island became an independent province named “Hainan.” However, in 1369, during the early part of the Ming Dynasty, control of the island reverted to the mainland, specifically to the Guangdong Province (Falkenheim, 2023), and after 1988, Hainan was once again an independent province, and Haikou became the capital. The island is known as the largest tropical region in China. The land area is 35,400 square kilometres, with a resident population of 10.43 million by 2023 (World Population Review, 2024).

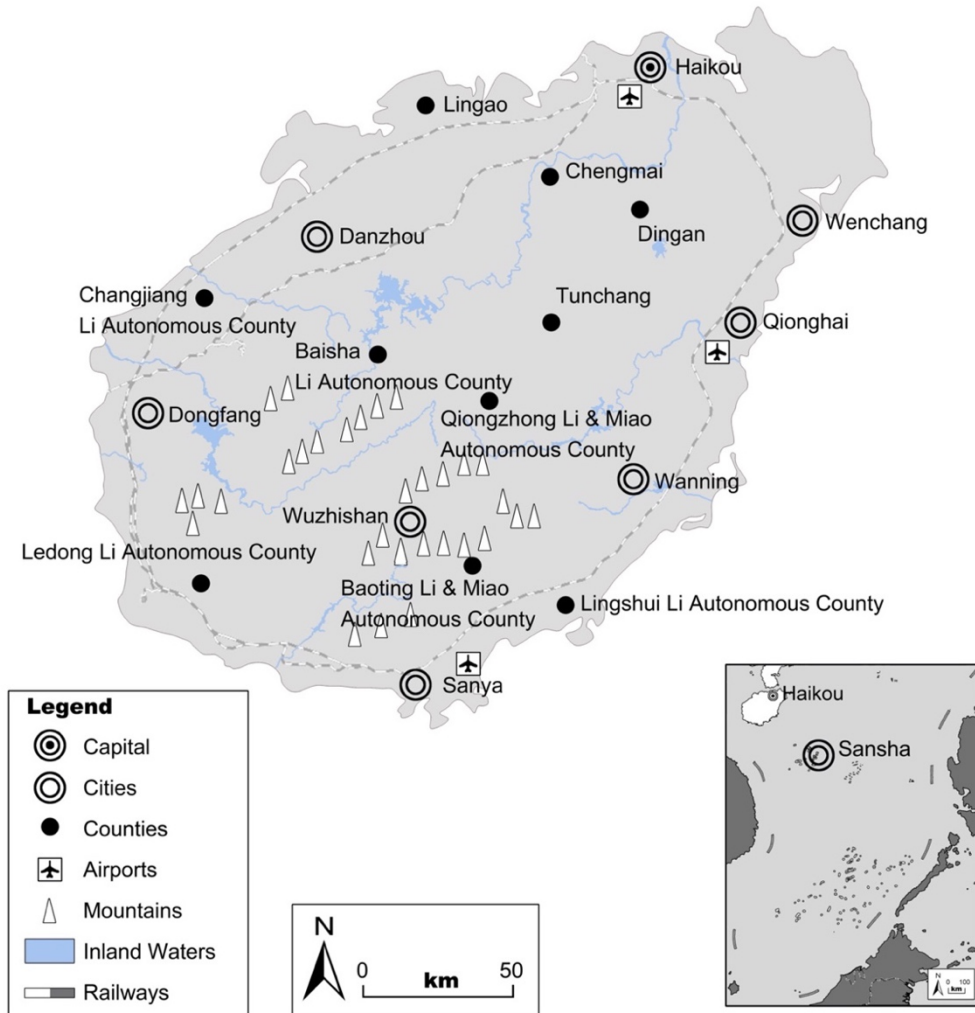
**Figure 1**  
*Location of Hainan Island*



(Source: author generated)

Hainan is well known as a premier tourist destination and is the home of one of the world's most endangered primates, Hainan gibbons, with only about thirty individuals still roaming the earth (Garrod, 2022). From a geographical perspective, Hainan Island is one of China's largest islands, exhibiting numerous exotic landscapes, and it is a significant hub for economic development. Hainan Island has four prefecture-level cities. Among the four cities, Haikou is the provincial capital in the northern part of this island, and Sanya is the southernmost city on Hainan Island, which is famous for its tropical climate (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2**  
*Map of Hainan Island*



(Source: author generated)

Hainan holds an increasingly prominent position in China’s tourism landscape (Chu et al., 2020). Renowned for its pleasant climate, beautiful beaches, and distinctive culture, Hainan Island attracts many tourists due to its abundant natural resources (Zhang & Ju, 2021), positioning itself as a leading destination for leisure and vacation. The island has been designated as a “national sports tourism pilot zone” (Ma, 2020) signifying the government’s intention to develop it into an international tourism hub, enhancing its competitiveness on the global tourism stage. The province’s natural landscapes, unique ethnic cultures, and hot spring resources contribute to a diversified tourism industry. As Hainan continues to evolve as a

premier tourism destination, it serves as a critical case study for understanding the interplay between tourism development, lifestyle migration, and regional entrepreneurial opportunities.

Tourism studies in Hainan have focused on tourism management, especially government participation in tourism development (Xie, 2003), and improving tourism management (Li, 2003; Lin et al., 2020), such as tour guide management (Hu & Wall, 2013), and regional tourism management to build Hainan into an international tourist island (Lin et al., 2020; Stone & Wall, 2004). Hainan has both physical and geopolitical advantages in developing its tourism industry (Zhang & Ju, 2021), and it receives strong local and central government support, which attracts entrepreneurs to the island.

In the past four decades, the business environment in China has changed hugely (Shaffer & Gao, 2020). Before 2015, most Chinese mainlanders preferred settling in top-tier cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen (Xu & Wu, 2016; Gu et al., 2023). However, despite not being one of these top-tier cities, Hainan Island has developed rapidly in the last decade and has seen an influx of Chinese mainlanders migrating to the island and starting a business in the tourism industry.

Hainan's geographical advantages and government-supportive policies have opened the door to high-quality growth in the tourism sector. In recent years, China has been extensively promoting Hainan Island through its tourism development and the establishment of a free trade port as part of its economic growth strategies. Hainan is the only province in China explicitly designated by the government for the transformation of its tourism sector into a pivotal industry (Yu, 2011). Hainan province is poised to function as a testing zone for China's tourism reform and innovation initiatives, positioning itself at the forefront of advancing the tourism sector and related industries. Hainan's tourism industry has experienced rapid development since implementing the international tourism island strategy released by the Chinese central government in 2009 (Zhang & Ju, 2021).

The Chinese central government also initiated a series of favourable tourism policies on Hainan Island, including tax rebate policies (Zhang & Yan, 2012), electric vehicle promotion policies

(Xiao et al., 2020), international tourism island policies (Yamori et al., 2017), and free trade zone policies (Matthew et al., 2019). China's central government also implemented policies to develop Hainan Island. For example, Hainan is going to 封关 (*Fengguan*) by the end of 2025. “封关” is a customs term that refers to designating the entire Hainan Island as a special region where it can enjoy various preferential policies, including zero tariffs (Xu, 2023). This means that under the “封关” policy, goods within Hainan Island can be imported and exported duty-free or at reduced tariff rates to promote trade, investment, and economic development. Hainan has become a duty-free destination for 代购 (*Daigou*, buying agent), such that the duty-free sales on the island saw a 25.4% year-on-year increase in 2023, reaching an impressive total of 43.76 billion RMB (\$6.2 billion) (Jing Daily, 2024). The implementation of this policy is typically aimed at attracting more international businesses, investments, and tourism activities to drive local economic growth and development. In addition to the building of the Free Trade Port, the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA)'s permanent annual conference hosting location has been in Boao City, Hainan, since 2002 (BFA, 2024). BFA, frequently called the “Asian Davos,” is a non-profit organisation that convenes high-level gatherings for government, business and academic leaders across Asia and beyond.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 constrained overseas tourism, promoting an increased focus on developing domestic tourism within China. As a result, Hainan Island, already attractive for tourists, became the nation's top tourist destination under these favourable policies, with tourist numbers even exceeding pre-pandemic levels (China News Service, 2022). Recent figures show that Hainan Island is still experiencing strong growth in tourism. In 2023, Hainan welcomed approximately 110 million visitors (Xinhua News, 2023). This figure is expected to grow even further in the coming years, generating significant revenue for its local economy, with a projection of 245 billion yuan (\$34.5 billion) (eHainan, 2021).

Besides being recognised as a key island tourism destination in China, Hainan Island also offers entrepreneurial opportunities to businesspeople (Huaxia, 2021). The island's popularity as a tourist destination has led to tourism becoming its primary industry. Tourism has always been crucial for the economies of both developed and developing islands (Figuerola & Rotarou, 2016),

and many studies have highlighted its importance for island development (e.g., Cole, 2007; Eduardo & José Alberto, 2018). Since 2018, Hainan has shown an above-average increase in long-term household settlements and newly registered enterprises, with tourism being a cornerstone of its top four pillar industries (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the PRC, 2024). Therefore, many residents from mainland China have migrated to Hainan to become tourism entrepreneurs.

According to the Asian Development Bank Institute Report on Migration in the People's Republic of China from 2000 to 2010 (Lu & Xia, 2016), Haikou, the capital city of Hainan, ranked 50<sup>th</sup> in terms of its migrant population, making it the smallest among the top migrant cities in China in 2010, and it was not listed in 2000. Within a month after the Chinese Lunar New Year 2021, the number of residential migrants (hukou) from mainland China to Hainan reached 8118, which was a 148.64% increase compared to the same month in the previous year (eHainan, 2022). More people are pursuing long-term residence qualifications in Hainan. By the end of 2023, the province's resident population had increased by 160,000 individuals compared to the previous year (Xinhuanet, 2024). In February 2021, the number of newly registered enterprises in Hainan was 6468, which was 255.19% higher than that in the same month the previous year, reflecting a growth in new migrants in Hainan who prefer to start businesses on the island instead of looking for employment. According to the Hainan Daily (2023), in 2022, Hainan Province experienced 963,300 new market entities, including individual entrepreneurs, maintaining the top growth rate nationwide for thirty-four consecutive months. The 2024 data is not yet available.

According to these data, the economy of Hainan, especially the tourism industry, has not been significantly affected by the pandemic. This could be attributed to government policy and the unique geographical location of this island. Therefore, choosing Hainan Island as the case study site provides a valuable opportunity to explore the intricate relationship between migration and the development of tourism entrepreneurial activity on the island, providing insight into this dynamic and evolving phenomenon.

### **1.4.2 Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship (LMTE) on Hainan Island**

The phenomenon of lifestyle migrant entrepreneurship in low-density areas has garnered attention from researchers (Dinis, 2021). Previous studies on entrepreneurship have focused predominantly on international immigrants and argue that this migration pattern is shifting to a counter-urbanisation process (Akgun et al., 2011; Bosworth & Farrell, 2011). This is the demographic and social process whereby urban areas lose population to rural or less densely populated areas (Champion, 2002). However, studies on tourism entrepreneurs in the context of islands have been conducted worldwide, especially in Europe and in Asian regions (Booth et al., 2020). Eduardo and José Alberto's (2018) study on island tourism among different countries concluded that studies of island tourism in China are missing.

Despite being a low-density area and a tourism island, exploration of the relationship between tourism entrepreneurship and migration in Hainan is limited. Like other islands, Hainan possesses unique tourism resources, including special natural features such as coral reefs, distinctive plant and animal life, and a diverse minority culture (Zhang & Ju, 2021). Scholars have also studied the management of natural resources on Hainan Island (Dong et al., 2019). The evaluation of these tourism resources is a prominent area of research in island tourism in other locations. Besides the studies on the natural resources of Hainan tourism (e.g. biodiversity), scholars have also paid attention to the cultural tourism development of Hainan, in particular the study on ethnic minorities in Hainan (Xie, 2001; Xing & Heaton, 2021). Other scholars have studied the impact of tourism in Hainan (Wang & Wall, 2005), including on community development (Stone & Wall, 2005), the environment (Wang & Liu, 2013); lifestyle migrants (snowbirds) in Hainan (Zhang, Yan, Lee and Yang, 2020) and residential perception of tourism in Hainan (Wu et al., 2020).

Previous studies on tourism entrepreneurship have highlighted the impact of policies on tourism development (Abdelfattah et al., 2023; Thomas et al., 2011), including the influence of culture and government policies on island entrepreneurs (Burnett & Danson, 2017). Recent research has emphasised the role of policy in residents' decisions to migrate (Su et al., 2020), indicating that the policies promoted by the Hainan government have successfully attracted entrepreneurs

to establish tourism-related businesses there. Hainan Island, with its strategic location, appealing natural environment, and favourable tourism policies, attracts mainland Chinese residents who wish to migrate with their families and establish tourism businesses (Ma & Xu, 2016). Community, as defined in existing literature, encompasses territorial and non-territorial aspects (Aquino et al., 2024). ('Territorial' refers to a geographic boundary (Theodori & Theodori, 2005)). In the case of LMTEs in Hainan, the territorial dimension is evident as these entrepreneurs form a geographically bound community within the island, creating a distinct sense of place and belonging.

This research project aims to illuminate the LMTE phenomenon in China's island tourism destination, focusing on the case study of Hainan Island. The project was set up to elucidate the motivations and experiences of LMTEs and their families who have chosen to embark on a transformative journey by settling on this island. By delving into the intricate dynamics of their decision-making processes and examining the unique challenges and opportunities presented by Hainan's tourism landscape, this research project seeks to contribute valuable insights into the phenomenon of lifestyle migrant entrepreneurship in the context of China's island destinations. Through a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted aspects of this phenomenon, including socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental considerations, the research seeks to shed light on the complex interplay of factors that drive entrepreneurs and their families to choose Hainan as their preferred destination for life and business enterprises.

The family embeddedness perspective is adopted in this research project to explore LMTE family lifestyle migration experiences, family resilience, and their influence on entrepreneurship survival. This approach provides a novel lens for examining the entrepreneurial phenomenon and the families involved. This research project enriches the definition of *family entrepreneurship* by adding the lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship concept, identifying how family members can influence migration and entrepreneurial behaviours, and exploring the experiences gained by the family (including women and children) through the entrepreneurial process. In particular, gender plays a crucial role in shaping these experiences, as men and women navigate migration and entrepreneurship differently within

LMTE families. Women often take on dual responsibilities, managing both business operations and domestic duties, while men are usually in developing countries from a Chinese cultural perspective and enriches tourism theory. The findings contribute to family entrepreneurship scholarship in a developing country from a Chinese cultural perspective and to tourism theory by providing insights into the experiences of LMTEs and their families.

## 1.5 Gaps Identified for this Research Project

Within the dynamic landscape of tourism entrepreneurship research, several notable gaps emerge, each representing critical avenues for further investigation. These gaps encompass areas such as conceptualising tourism entrepreneurship (Hallak & Lee, 2024), exploring Chinese island tourism development (Chi & Liu, 2023), understanding family dynamics in tourism entrepreneurship (Li et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2022; Yan & Zhang, 2024), and integrating the perspectives of children within entrepreneurial families (Bakas, 2018; Canosa & Schänzel, 2021). Addressing these gaps is essential for advancing our understanding of tourism entrepreneurship and its broader implications. This research project aims to delve into these unresolved issues by clarifying their significance in theoretical and practical contexts.

**Table 1**

*Gaps Identified in this Research Project*

Gap 1	Conceptualisation of the definition of LMTEr and LMTE families
Gap 2	Lack of research in the field of Chinese island tourism
Gap 3	Lack of research to identify LMTE in tourism entrepreneurship studies
Gap 4	Lack of research acknowledging the significance of family in lifestyle migration and entrepreneurial processes
Gap 5	Lack of research incorporating the perspectives of the children directly involved in families engaged in tourism entrepreneurship
Gap 6	Lack of research in the examination of Chinese tourism entrepreneurship with a focus on Hainan as the case study
Gap 7	Lack of research to identify gender differences among LMTEs
Gap 8	Inadequate studies in tourism linking migration, lifestyle entrepreneurship, families, and islands together

## 1.6 Research Aim and Questions

**Main Aim:** Explore family embeddedness in lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship and understand the entrepreneurial process and family lifestyle migration experiences on Hainan Island.

Subquestions

- 1: What motivates lifestyle migrants to settle on an island as tourism entrepreneurs?
- 2: What is the meaning of family within LMTE?
- 3: How does family resilience shape the entrepreneurial process?
- 4: What are the lifestyle migration experiences of LMTEs and their families within the tourism entrepreneurial process?

This research project aims to explore family embeddedness in lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship and to understand the entrepreneurial process and family lifestyle migration experiences on Hainan Island. This investigation seeks to uncover the motivations behind why lifestyle migrants (including women), choose to establish themselves on an island as tourism entrepreneurs; providing insights into the driving forces that lead to this significant decision.

To achieve this, several subquestions will guide the inquiry. First, the research project will examine what motivates lifestyle migrants to settle on Hainan Island and engage in tourism entrepreneurship. Understanding these motivations is crucial for grasping the broader implications of LMTE. Next, it will delve into the meaning of family within the context of LMTE. Families often play a pivotal role in the entrepreneurial journey, and exploring their influence will shed light on the dynamics that shape lifestyle migration.

The research project will also investigate how family resilience shapes the entrepreneurial process. Resilience is a key factor in navigating challenges, and understanding its impact on tourism entrepreneurship will be essential for comprehending the complexities involved. Finally, it will explore the lifestyle migration experiences of LMTE participants and their families throughout the tourism entrepreneurial process. This aspect will provide a holistic view

of the interplay between family dynamics, migration experiences, and entrepreneurial activities, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of LMTE on Hainan Island.

## 1.7 Overview of the Study Design

Constructivism forms the basis for the methodological framework for this research. The project's sampling strategy was a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques to gain insight into the phenomena rather than draw generalisations, leading to a small sample size that provided rich qualitative data (Hack-Polay et al., 2020; Wilson-Youlden & Bosworth, 2019). This qualitative research explored LMTEs and their family members' behaviours and experiences on Hainan Island based on eight entrepreneurs and their families.

This research project explores the lifestyle tourism family entrepreneurial migration phenomenon in China to contribute to existing studies on family tourism entrepreneurship and family studies. Aiming to gain insights directly from children rather than relying solely on their parents' perspectives (Bakas, 2018; Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2018; Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2015), this research project employed an innovative and culturally appropriate method—Lego Serious Play® (LSP) at Old Dad Teahouses (*Laobacha* 老爸茶 in Chinese) to provide children with a channel to reflect on their lived experiences as part of a lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurial family (Ju et al., 2024). This research project aims to position Chinese children in family tourism entrepreneurship and LMTE discourse and facilitate their active engagement in the research process.

The Old Dad Teahouse phenomenon represents a distinctive social and cultural space in Hainan. It is a symbol of Hainan identity which is deeply embedded in the island's local traditions. Unlike commercialised teahouses in other parts of China, Old Dad Teahouses serve as grassroots communal hubs where social interactions unfold organically. They function as intergenerational gathering spaces, fostering informal discussions on everyday life, migration, and entrepreneurship. Old Dad Teahouses provide a localised setting that contrasts with the high-intensity entrepreneurial environments seen in mainland Chinese tourism hubs like Lijiang or Dali. Migrants to Hainan frequent the teahouses as part of their integration into local

culture. This distinction is key to understanding how lifestyle migrants in Hainan integrate into local society.

Data was collected in two stages: initially, eight individual interviews were conducted with LMTEs at their workplaces (four women and four men), and subsequently, eight LMTE families participated in workshops at Old Dad Teahouses. The LSP visual research method was chosen to ensure methodological alignment and to incorporate children's perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in both rounds to explore all family members' experiences regarding migration and tourism entrepreneurship, providing a comprehensive understanding of LMTE families.

## **1.8 Research Project Contributions**

This research project addresses several critical gaps in the literature on LMTE and its connection to family dynamics, particularly within the context of Chinese island tourism. It tackles the conceptualisation of LMTEr and LMTE families, providing a clear definition and framework lacking in previous studies. By doing so, it addresses the gap in understanding of how Chinese LMTEs navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship and family life, while also amplifying the voices of all family members, including children. This focus on family dynamics addresses the inadequacy of research acknowledging the significance of family in lifestyle migration and entrepreneurial processes.

The lack of research in Chinese island tourism is highlighted, explicitly focusing on Hainan as a case study. By examining the motivations, challenges and experiences of individuals and families engaged in lifestyle tourism entrepreneurship, the research enriches our understanding of China's tourism industry and offers valuable insights into the dynamics of LMTE in Hainan. This research contribution addresses a gap in the literature and encourages sustainable tourism development in China and beyond.

In addition, the research project underscores the importance of incorporating the perspectives of children in families engaged in tourism entrepreneurship, addressing a significant gap in the

literature. Adapting the LSP method by using Chinese Lego® figures and situating the research at the Old Dad Teahouse, provides a move beyond Western methodologies, allowing for the inclusion of Chinese children's viewpoints that enhance our understanding of family dynamics within entrepreneurial ventures. Recognising the role of children and their experiences provides a more holistic view of LMTE families, further supplementing existing concepts with insights from family embeddedness and entrepreneurial family frameworks.

Discussions on gender roles emphasise women's contributions to tourism entrepreneurship, fostering cooperation between LMTEs and local communities for harmonious development. Overall, these contributions pave the way for the development of inclusive and vibrant tourism practices, informed by comprehensive research and actionable recommendations that address the identified gaps and enhance our understanding of the interplay between migration, lifestyle entrepreneurship, families and island contexts.

## **1.9 Chapter Overview**

This thesis comprises seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of the research project and discusses the concept of LMTE, focusing on the phenomenon of mainland Chinese residents migrating with their families to Hainan Island and becoming tourism entrepreneurs. Chapter 2 critically reviews the literature on topics related to entrepreneurship, including tourism entrepreneurship, lifestyle entrepreneurship, migrant entrepreneurship, and integration of family within entrepreneurship. It explores the role of family in lifestyle migration and resilience during entrepreneurial life. The literature review delves into Chinese families, including women entrepreneurs and children within LMTE families, and examines the relationship between Chinese families and migration. The section further reviews islands as destination locations for LMTE families and introduces the LSP study method. The literature review chapter concludes with an analysis establishing the conceptual framework for the research.

Chapter 3 outlines the research process to explore LMTEs and their family experience of migration and entrepreneurial processes on Hainan Island. It explains the research paradigm,

discusses the researcher's positionality, and provides details on research approaches, design, data collection, sampling method, interview procedures and data analysis. The chapter also discusses the trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents findings from the world of LMTE families in Hainan, providing an in-depth exploration of various aspects, from the laid-back lifestyle of the residents to the diverse cultures on the island. The researcher explores the attractiveness of Hainan Island through the lens of LMTE, revealing a tapestry of experiences that depict the essence of this tourism destination. The chapter navigates the landscapes, cultures and narratives characterising the LMTE phenomenon, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the island's unique dynamics in tourism entrepreneurship. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the dynamics of LMTE including the drive to engage in entrepreneurial activities within the tourism sector, and post migration experience of LMTE families, including gender differences and children's experiences. Finally, Chapter 7 synthesises the discussion on the contributions and limitations of the research project, provides recommendations for further research, and concludes with a final reflection.

# **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

## **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a critical review of the literature related to the topics explored, concurrently establishing a conceptual framework for this investigation. This research aimed to explore family embeddedness in lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship, understand the entrepreneurial process, and examine family lifestyle migration experiences on Hainan Island while also addressing the four subquestions:

- 1: What motivates lifestyle migrants to settle on an island as tourism entrepreneurs?
- 2: What is the meaning of family within LMTE?
- 3: How does family resilience shape the entrepreneurial process?
- 4: What are the lifestyle migration experiences of LMTEs and their families within the tourism entrepreneurial process?

The initial focus will be on the positioning of LMTE. A detailed discussion of the literature related to tourism entrepreneurship will follow, encompassing definitions of tourism entrepreneurship, lifestyle entrepreneur, and migrant entrepreneur. Subsequently, this chapter will examine the integration of family within entrepreneurship, considering its role in the lifestyle migration process, and resilience during entrepreneurship. This will be followed by an exploration of Chinese families, examining the relationship between them and their migration destination, and encompassing all family members, including women entrepreneurs and children within LMTE families. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a synthesis by establishing the conceptual framework guiding the research project.

## **2.2 Defining Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship (LMTE)**

The trend of lifestyle entrepreneurial migration, characterised by individuals relocating to new locales to pursue entrepreneurial ventures that align with their desired lifestyle, has been observed for some time (Iversen & Jacobsen, 2016; Ria-Maria, 2023). The middle class tends

to migrate to places with lower living costs and better climates (Korpela, 2020). Especially in recent years, entrepreneurs are migrating together with their families to relatively low-amenity areas rather than to well-developed communities (Vuin et al., 2016). This phenomenon reflects a growing inclination among entrepreneurs to seek environments that offer economic opportunities and a good quality of life. Although the specific motivations and dynamics driving this migration may vary, the overarching trend underscores the importance of lifestyle considerations in shaping migration and entrepreneurial decisions.

Entrepreneurship research has evolved over the years, driven by its role in boosting local economies and creating job opportunities. However, defining entrepreneurship as a research field is complex; no universal concept of entrepreneurship has been accepted (Bolzani, 2020) because it varies across disciplines (Solvoll et al., 2015). The definition of entrepreneurship (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000) usually refers to a new process small businesses use to improve competition and productivity in a particular area (Arthur, 1946; Komppula, 2014). This definition was developed from economic theories that describe entrepreneurial activities as a critical factor and dynamic element in economic performance. However, the precise definition of entrepreneurship remains debated. This research project adopts the concise concept of entrepreneurship developed in 1950 by Schumpeter, who defined entrepreneurship as the creation and growth of small business start-ups, emphasising the role of innovation and the entrepreneur's ability to drive economic development through "creative destruction" (p. 105). According to Schumpeter, entrepreneurs are not merely business owners but visionaries who introduce new products, processes or services that disrupt existing markets and create new ones. They can play a critical role in transforming industries and stimulating economic progress by continuously challenging the status quo and fostering change. Applying Schumpeter's definition, this research explores how LMTErs embody these entrepreneurial qualities on Hainan Island, innovating within the tourism sector and contributing to the region's economic and social development.

Previous entrepreneurship studies have defined two types of entrepreneurs based on motivation: opportunity and necessity, with accidental entrepreneurs classified as opportunity-driven

entrepreneurs (Kumar et al., 2023). Individuals become entrepreneurs either because of their inner drive of passion or dissatisfaction with their current work. However, little attention has been paid to entrepreneurs who reflect both attributes simultaneously. For example, the key driving factors behind foreigners relocating to a remote rural area in northern Sweden and establishing a tourism business are both the search for a counter-urban lifestyle and the desire to live a balanced lifestyle with less pressure (Carson et al., 2018). However, the motivations of these lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs are more complex than previous scholars have suggested. Therefore, recognising these entrepreneurs' positions is significant for both entrepreneurs and policymakers, facilitating the development of entrepreneurial and support programmes (Fairlie & Fossen, 2020).

The experiences of these entrepreneurs are also important both for the individuals and for the wider society. Researchers have been gaining insight into the idea that entrepreneurship has the potential to bring fulfilment and improve overall well-being (e.g. Kato, 2013; Wiklund et al., 2019). However, it can also be a source of significant stress and can detract from well-being (Stephan et al., 2023). The well-being of entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial process have caught the attention of researchers in recent years (see Bahsri et al., 2023; Liang et al., 2023; Saleem et al., 2023; Wiklund et al., 2020). For example, Wiklund et al. (2018) discovered, counterintuitively, that mental disorders can contribute to entrepreneurship development. Their research suggests that certain mental health conditions may enhance entrepreneurial capabilities by fostering traits like creativity, risk-taking, and resilience. These conditions can lead to unconventional thinking and a heightened ability to recognise opportunities others might overlook. Individuals with mental disorders often develop strong coping mechanisms and adaptability, which are valuable skills in the unpredictable and challenging world of entrepreneurship.

As Miyakawa and Oguchi (2022) have demonstrated, family tourism entrepreneurship can improve both parents' well-being and children's generic skills. Moreover, Hatak and Zhou (2021) argue that the well-being of entrepreneurs and their spouses directly impacts the financial and non-financial aspects of entrepreneurial success. The general health status of

spouses represents a vital aspect of entrepreneurs' human capital, exerting influence on their entrepreneurial achievements. Koomson et al. (2024) continued Stephan et al.'s (2023) work on the relationship between entrepreneurship and well-being; they reveal that engaging in entrepreneurship contributes to higher levels of subjective well-being than not being an entrepreneur in China. In a similar vein, Liang et al. (2023) discovered that in China's Lijiang and Dali regions, social inclusion impacts the well-being of lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs significantly.

Convergent and divergent approaches have been identified through research on tourism entrepreneurship (Hjalager, 2010). The convergent approach views tourism entrepreneurship primarily as an industry, focusing on economic indicators such as job creation, revenue generation, and market competitiveness. The divergent approach conceptualises tourism entrepreneurship as a broader social, cultural and environmental phenomenon. This perspective recognises the diverse motivations, experiences and impacts of tourism entrepreneurs beyond purely economic measures. Following Hjalager's (2010) framework, this research project adopts the divergent approach, which views tourism entrepreneurship as a multifaceted phenomenon intertwined with various social, cultural, and environmental factors. In this context, the study seeks to explore tourism entrepreneurs on Hainan Island both as economic actors and as individuals and families embedded within complex sociocultural contexts. By embracing this divergent angle, this research project aims to uncover the diverse motivations, challenges, and contributions of tourism entrepreneurs and their families, offering a more holistic understanding of their roles and impacts within the tourism landscape of Hainan Island.

### **2.2.1 Tourism Entrepreneur**

Tourism is considered a "technologically laggard sector" that does not require previous work experience in related areas (Rodriguez-Sanchez et al., 2019, p.888), and the entry requirements are considered low for business ventures (Carson & Carson, 2018). Thus, the tourism industry has attracted many entrepreneurs. Tourism entrepreneurship is a dynamic study involving diverse tourism issues (Ratten, 2020). Tourism entrepreneurs can provide local communities with more opportunities to achieve economic success and increase community development

progress (Nordin et al., 2014). Although the tourism entrepreneurship literature has tried to conceptualise the term tourism entrepreneur, it is considered too complex to be embedded within one definition. Tourism entrepreneurs are usually defined as creators who start a tourist enterprise to pursue profits (Koh & Hatten, 2002). However, these definitions cannot adequately represent all entrepreneurs in tourism.

Studies on tourism entrepreneurship have experienced development for over 75 years (Ratten, 2020), beginning with early studies on lifestyle sector entrepreneurship (Nikraftar & Hosseini, 2016) and extending to research on small and medium-sized businesses in the last decade (Verreynne et al., 2019), regional development (Viken & Aarsaether, 2013), and heritage and religious tourism (Chianeh et al., 2020). This diversity highlights the extensive range of tourism sectors where entrepreneurship is relevant (Solvoll et al., 2015). With the continuous advancement of technological innovation, novel iterations of the tourism service industry emerge, providing people with more significant opportunities to venture into the field of tourism services (Wang, Li and Xu, 2019). Studies on tourism entrepreneurship increased in the 2010s, but the area remains understudied.

Tourism has always been considered a crucial sector for economic growth; thus, the main issues studied in tourism entrepreneurship are economics, such as economic performance, impacts, and economic cost benefits (Williams & Shaw, 2011). Tourism entrepreneurship has the potential to significantly influence the social and economic well-being of communities residing in tourist destinations (Aquino et al., 2024). Research on tourism entrepreneurship is an evolving area of study that intersects with various disciplines, such as business, sociology, and geography. Key characteristics such as a distinct type of entrepreneurship distinguish it from studies of entrepreneurship in other industries (Solvoll et al., 2015). However, the agenda for entrepreneurship research has shifted its focus in recent years to issues perceived as softer, such as work-family balance, personal networks, and other related non-financial issues beyond the economic perspective that emphasises economic growth, profit margins, and market performance as primary indicators of entrepreneurial success (Surangi, 2018). Greater attention should be given to other dimensions of entrepreneurs beyond just the economic outcomes of

their ventures—specifically, a deeper exploration and categorization of their personal needs and self-concept.

Intensive research on entrepreneurs has highlighted that tourism entrepreneurs are not homogeneous (Bastida et al., 2020; Ratten, 2020; Wang, Hung and Huang, 2019). Some are more concerned about profits (Jaafar et al., 2011), while other tourism entrepreneurs do not view organisational growth as one of their principal objectives. Tourism allows lifestyle business owners to pursue their lifestyle goals (Carson & Carson, 2018) by choosing ‘passion over profit’ (Dominici et al., 2019). These tourism entrepreneurs are defined as ***lifestyle entrepreneurs*** due to their characteristic of pursuing a better life through starting a tourism business that is not necessarily driven solely by economic motives (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000; Marchant & Mottiar, 2011).

### **2.2.2 Lifestyle Entrepreneur**

The intertwining of tourism and lifestyle is evident in different areas, reflecting a complex relationship that shapes various social and economic patterns (Zhang et al., 2021). This relationship is particularly significant in the context of mobility patterns, where the interaction between lifestyle and tourism has led to the emergence of new phenomena, such as lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship (Dias & Silva, 2021; Morrison et al., 2008). These phenomena highlight how individuals and families relocate or travel not only for leisure, but to achieve a desired way of life that prioritises personal fulfilment, quality of life, and unique experiences.

Lifestyle entrepreneurs who establish and operate businesses aligned with their personal values and preferred way of life are influential in this dynamic. They comprise a significant portion of small businesses, often in sectors such as hospitality, wellness, and creative industries, where they can integrate their lifestyle preferences into their professional endeavours (Ivanycheva et al., 2023; Thomas et al., 2011). These entrepreneurs are not primarily driven by profit maximisation, but by the desire to create a harmonious balance between work and life, often also contributing to local communities and sustainable practices.

The motivations for lifestyle entrepreneurship have been studied intensively, providing insights into the various factors that drive individuals to pursue this path. For example, Benson and O'Reilly (2009) explore how lifestyle migration is the motivation for individuals to seek new environments that offer a better quality of life. Chang and Chen (2020) examine how personal and family well-being influence the decision to start a lifestyle business. Wang, Li and Xu (2019) investigate the role of self-fulfilment and the pursuit of passion in motivating lifestyle entrepreneurs. These studies collectively highlight the diverse and multifaceted reasons behind lifestyle entrepreneurship, emphasising the importance of personal values, aspirations, and the desire for a meaningful and satisfying life.

The concepts of lifestyle entrepreneurs and tourism entrepreneurs are sometimes used interchangeably. According to Bredvold and Skålén (2016), lifestyle entrepreneurs launch their tourism businesses to achieve their lifestyle goals rather than economic growth and can nonetheless be considered a type of tourism entrepreneur. Similarly, Ivanycheva et al. (2023) argued that lifestyle entrepreneurs' motivations are not about wealth or social values. Instead, they are intrinsically motivated, seeking their preferred activities or life at specific locations. According to Wallis et al. (2020), there are three definitions of a lifestyle entrepreneur. The first definition is from the perspective of a lack of growth aspiration. The second definition focuses on the interests of entrepreneurs' motivations and lifestyle choice. The third definition comes from the boundaries between work, life, and other social settings, reflecting the complexity of lifestyle entrepreneurs. In general, no consensus has been reached on what a lifestyle entrepreneur is or entails (Wallis et al., 2020). However, the literature remains fragmented because there is no widely agreed-upon definition.

Lifestyle entrepreneurs usually have the advantage of long-term networks and ecosystems in the tourism industry, as they have more sustainable concerns and manage their enterprises more sustainably than others (Cunha et al., 2020). For example, tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs have shown their ability to acquire local knowledge through entrepreneurial communication skills and to transform that knowledge into innovation and self-efficacy (Dias et al., 2023). However, they present unique characteristics that differ from other tourism entrepreneurs, such as non-

profit-driven motivations (Cederholm, 2015), low financial assets (Fadda & Sorensen, 2017), and fewer managerial skills.

For example, a study on lifestyle entrepreneurs in Sardinia found that personal drivers such as hobbies are the most crucial reasons lifestyle entrepreneurs start a business (Fadda & Sorensen, 2017). These are not profit-driven entrepreneurs, and they tend to start with small tourism ventures, such as crafts, adventure tourism, hospitality and brewing (Chu, 2016; Furunes & Mykletun, 2012; Thurnell-Read, 2020). Lifestyle entrepreneurs tend to have low financial assets—their funding usually comes from their families and friends (Zhang & Reay, 2018). Stone and Stubbs (2007) conducted an exploratory study, highlighting that most entrepreneurs have no related work experience before they start their businesses in new places, and entrepreneurial behaviour becomes an outcome of the migration process. Thus, lifestyle entrepreneurs, unlike other tourism entrepreneurs who use knowledge and networking to deal with uncertainty and risk, rely on their intuition and/or family support.

Ivanycheva et al. (2023) conducted an in-depth examination of lifestyle entrepreneurship, meticulously reviewing its definition, motivations, behaviours, and outcomes; identifying a gap in the theoretical framework for studying it. They recommend integrating the concept of lifestyle entrepreneurship more comprehensively within the broader entrepreneurship framework. Therefore, instead of borrowing the previous definition of lifestyle entrepreneurs, in this research project, the definition of these lifestyle entrepreneurs who migrate to Hainan with their families is scrutinised closely to characterise this specific group of entrepreneurs. In addition to being defined as lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs, these individuals also fall under the category of migrant entrepreneurs who relocate to Hainan Island to establish new ventures.

### **2.2.3 Migrant Entrepreneur**

Migrant entrepreneurship has been extensively studied in various countries. Research began in the USA in the 1970s (Nazareno et al., 2019), and later expanded to other immigration hubs, including Western European countries and the United Kingdom (Ülker, 2019; De Lange, 2018). Migrant entrepreneurship has played a significant role in developed countries since World War

II (Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2009). Migrant entrepreneurs have also been studied in developing countries, such as South Africa (Ngota et al., 2019; Solna, 2019), Ukraine (Andrejuk, 2019), India (Azmat & Fujimoto, 2016), China (Wei et al., 2019), and Malaysia (Thompson, 2003). Past studies have researched migrant entrepreneurialism in sociology, migration and entrepreneurship (Ram et al., 2017). Migrant entrepreneurs often outperform their native-born counterparts financially and contribute more significantly to the success of the local community. (Nandram & Samsom, 2006; Huete et al., 2013). The relationship between migration and tourism has been widely studied over the past two decades (Coniglio & Brzozowski, 2018; Munkejord, 2017; Naude et al., 2017; Ngota et al., 2019). Recent migrants can create a new social environment for the local community and provide novel opportunities (Akgun et al., 2011). Sari and Meydan Uygur (2024) believed that employment opportunities, particularly in the tourism industry, motivate people to migrate. Among these, lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurs are particularly notable for their unique contributions. However, migration and tourism has been relatively underexplored in the literature.

Mainstream tourism entrepreneurship research has acknowledged the migrant background of tourism entrepreneurs; however, the definition of migrant entrepreneurs is different (Egorova, 2021; Hadri et al., 2024). Hadri et al. (2024) reviewed migrant entrepreneurs who migrate to run existing companies, which differs from the current study. Destination significantly influences entrepreneurs' migration decisions by shaping access to resources, social networks, and economic opportunities (Aquino et al., 2024). This research project defines migrant entrepreneurs who first migrate to Hainan and then decide to start a tourism-related business venture. Their motivation for migration is not simply to run a business for basic survival. Instead, they are lifestyle migrants who migrate for lifestyle reasons. However, previous research on migrant entrepreneurs generally focuses on their business performance, success, and personal motivations; research into the experiences of migrant entrepreneurs as they adjust to a new place, and their resilience, is missing from the literature.

Migrant entrepreneurs who enter the tourism industry may have two significant motivations: they may be economically driven or life quality driven (William & Hall, 2002). These authors,

however, note that business motivations are not the primary concern of migrants. Starting a business in a new environment is likely not to be their first choice, but a result of not finding suitable jobs, which means that they were not tourism entrepreneurs before their migration. However, these authors did not consider the family factor as a dimension of migration motivation. Migrant entrepreneurs are increasingly focusing on how their businesses affect both the migrant community and the local destination community, considering the long-term social and economic impacts (Carson & Carson, 2018). Scholars have neglected the relationship between migrant entrepreneurs and their families and how they survive in a new environment.

Lifestyle drives are not the only motivation for migrant entrepreneurs to migrate to a new area and start a tourism business. The development of migrant entrepreneurs has expanded beyond just economic motives and business performance to include non-profit aspects, such as family-related priorities (De Luca & Ambrosini, 2019), resources (Matarrita-Cascante & Sues, 2020), and policy (Eimermann, 2016; Williams, 2020). A considerable body of entrepreneurship literature has examined migration across countries, urbanisation, or counter urbanisation, mainly focused on developed countries (Hedlund et al., 2017; Hopp & Martin, 2017; Räuchle & Nuissl, 2019).

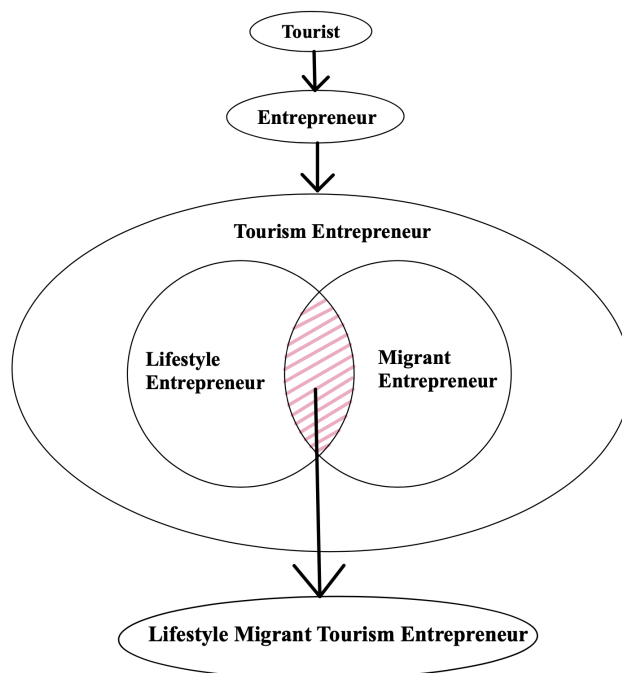
However, little is known about migration to islands in China. Akgun et al. (2011) have found that although the primary trend for migration is urbanisation, counter-flow still occurs in many countries. For example, Carson et al. (2018) have shown a similar trend in their study exploring the motivation of international migrant tourism entrepreneurs in northern Sweden who migrate to a low-amenity area. They adopted the framework previously proposed by Carlsen et al. (2008) to explore motivations that included five dimensions: personal factors, locational factors, consumptive and experiential, business and temporal factors. Carson et al. (2008) interviewed international tourism entrepreneurs and found that their primary migration motivation was “counter-urban lifestyle motives” (p. 234). Their subjects were seeking demographic and economic rejuvenation (Carson & Carson, 2018), and some had migrated to relatively remote areas even though local employment opportunities were limited.

Many examples can be found in developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom of lifestyle migrants who are willing to move to villages or the countryside to embrace nature and connect with their communities and families (Hoey, 2010). This trend reflects a desire to escape the pressures of urban life and find personal fulfilment in a more tranquil, supportive environment. These choices highlight the importance of community and family in achieving a balanced and meaningful lifestyle.

#### **2.2.4 Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneur**

The phenomenon of migration has been a constant aspect of human civilisation throughout history (Koser, 2007), and it is influenced by a multitude of factors, including economic, social and personal motivations (Parkins, 2010). The pursuit of a good life encompasses elements such as escaping from stress, embracing new challenges, and achieving freedom and happiness (Gundersen, 2017). LMTE families migrate based on pursuing a better quality of life (Hall & Williams, 2002), and to escape societal pressures (Stone & Stubbs, 2007). The journeys of individuals transitioning into tourism entrepreneurs in Hainan, encompassing lifestyle and migrant entrepreneurs, is illustrated in Figure 3. It begins with tourists visiting the island, attracted by its natural beauty and attractions. Over time, some of these tourists develop aspirations to become entrepreneurs, drawn to the opportunities they perceive within Hainan's tourism industry. As they explore further, individuals may identify themselves as either lifestyle entrepreneurs, seeking to align their business ventures with their personal interests and values, or migrant entrepreneurs, who have relocated to Hainan to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. Lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurs (LMTEs) represent the intersection of these two categories, blending aspects of lifestyle entrepreneurship with the migration experience. This progression highlights the diverse pathways and motivations that individuals navigate as they transition from being tourists to becoming integral contributors to Hainan's entrepreneurial landscape.

**Figure 3**  
*Positioning the LMTEr*



(Source: author generated)

Lifestyle entrepreneurs and migrant entrepreneurs are not isolated, their motivations and entrepreneurial approaches often overlap. According to a recent study by Zhang et al. (2021), tourism researchers consider lifestyle and tourism from two aspects. First, they treat tourism as part of their lifestyle, believing that tourism is a component of the modern lifestyle. Second, in tourism marketing, incorporating lifestyle aspects into business practices helps enhance the quality of entrepreneurship services offered and contributes to increased profitability. However, lifestyle and tourism are intertwined and not isolated issues. This research project considers lifestyle and tourism beyond these aspects and provides an interconnection of the overall phenomenon of lifestyle entrepreneurs in Hainan.

Growing research attention has identified LMTEr and their families as a topic of interest (e.g., Chen et al., 2019; Matarrita-Cascante & Suess, 2020; Zhang & Su, 2020; Zhang & Reay, 2018). Most of the studies have focused either on lifestyle entrepreneurs (Carson et al., 2018; Ribeiro & Krakauer, 2016) or migrant entrepreneurs (Bird & Wennberg, 2016; Schmiz, 2016; Shan et

al., 2016; Ülker, 2019). Lifestyle entrepreneurs migrate to a destination driven exclusively by the desire to establish a new enterprise and adopt a different lifestyle (Fu et al., 2019). Similarly, Vaugeois and Rollins (2007) discussed lifestyle migrants, noting that these entrepreneurs pursue lifestyle goals and choose to migrate to tourism destinations in order to achieve them. Some lifestyle entrepreneurs are also migrant entrepreneurs, where lifestyle is one of the motivations for migrant entrepreneurs, as in the previous example.

To gain a more nuanced understanding of LMTEs that differs from previous lifestyle migrant concepts or migrant entrepreneurship, the phenomenon is underlined here from an entrepreneurship perspective that considers their families and lifestyle migration experiences. Based on the theoretical framework of Carson and Carson (2018), *LMTEs are lifestyle-orientated/driven migrant entrepreneurs who stimulate local innovation through networks of interaction and collaboration. LMTEs share attributes of both lifestyle and migrant entrepreneurs, but not all lifestyle entrepreneurs are migrant entrepreneurs, and vice versa.* LMTEs share the characteristics of entrepreneurs in lifestyle tourism because economic goals tend not to be their main desire; instead, they may prefer to migrate to a new place to start their ventures as migrant entrepreneurs. Many LMTE examples can be found in developed countries, such as the US and UK, where lifestyle entrepreneurial migrants move to the countryside to embrace nature and connect with themselves, their communities, and their families (Hoey, 2010). However, research is limited in developing countries, and the motivations and experiences of LMTE are complex and require further exploration.

Benson and O'Reilly (2009) conceptualised lifestyle migrants and summarised them as individuals looking for a better way of life. Most lifestyle migrants become entrepreneurs after migration, even without previous work experience, and begin working primarily in the tourism industry. These people are called “lifestyle entrepreneurial migrants” and constitute part of the phenomenon of “lifestyle entrepreneurial migration” (Zhang, Tucker and Albrecht, 2020). However, the current lifestyle migration phenomenon is no longer an individual movement but includes migration with the whole family. Lifestyle entrepreneurial migration concepts have

neglected the role of family as a driving force of this phenomenon and have not considered family members as migrants.

The motivations of lifestyle migrants have been widely studied. For example, a recent study conducted by Guercini and Ceccarelli (2020) found that passion is the critical reason for lifestyle entrepreneurs to migrate. However, it would be improper to apply this finding to represent the broader lifestyle migrant entrepreneurial phenomenon, where the family often plays a leading role in the migration decision. For these migrant entrepreneurs, the primary goal is to improve the quality of life for themselves and their family members. As Morrison et al. (2008) note, the key motivation for lifestyle entrepreneurs to migrate is to pursue a better quality of life, with earning income being a secondary concern after migration.

Entrepreneurial motivations are frequently categorised as either “push” or “pull” factors (Kirkwood, 2009). For example, Vaugeois and Rollins (2007) illustrate a push factor on Vancouver Island, Canada, that the tourism labour market, attracting individuals from various sectors including declining resource-based industries, is primarily driven by lifestyle and entrepreneurship motivations. Getz and Carlsen (2005) identify a pull factor for family businesses in tourism, which is the opportunity to escape urban life and enjoy a high-quality amenity environment. A case of mixed push and pull factors can be found in a study in the Alto Alentejo region of Southern Portugal. Cunha et al. (2020) reveal that the motivations to enter rural tourism entrepreneurship here, particularly lifestyle motivations, play a crucial role in driving rural economic revival and sustainable development, as well as fulfilling the social and cultural responsibilities of family roles.

Researchers have separately examined gender differences in entrepreneurial motivations, highlighting how men and women may be driven by different factors (Ahmetaj et al., 2023; Yan & Zhang, 2024). However, what remains underexplored is a comparative analysis of these motivators within the context of family roles and responsibilities. Understanding how men and women navigate entrepreneurship differently, especially in relation to their familial obligations, could provide deeper insights into the broader push-pull factors that drive them toward entrepreneurial ventures. Such an analysis would not only enrich our understanding of gender

dynamics in entrepreneurship but also offer valuable perspectives into the ways societal expectations and family structures influence entrepreneurial decision-making. By integrating these considerations, researchers could contribute to refining push-pull theory, making it more inclusive of the diverse experiences of male and female entrepreneurs.

Some studies of migrant entrepreneurship in sociology, migration, and entrepreneurship have highlighted the importance of understanding the broader social and economic impacts of migrant entrepreneurs (Ram et al., 2017). Migrant entrepreneurs perform better and contribute more to the success of the local community than their local counterparts (Huete et al., 2013); similarly, Akgun et al. (2011) argue that newcomers can generate a new social environment for the local community and bring new opportunities. Migration, once considered primarily an individual behaviour, is now increasingly seen as a family-based effort or team endeavour. The role of the family has not been thoroughly examined in the research on the entrepreneurial process of migrant entrepreneurs and the local community. Families must be considered not only as a driving force, but also as a contributing factor, and a more holistic understanding of the LMTE phenomenon is needed.

In addition to understanding where LMTEr sits in entrepreneurship research, Aldrich and Cliff (2003) mentioned that the family system facilitates an opportunity for emergence and recognition. The family role is considered in this LMTE research project since these LMTEr migrate with families to Hainan. Likewise, LMTE provides opportunities to LMTE family members, but research has not established this phenomenon. Opportunities provided by entrepreneurs are not limited to tangible assets but also include intangible resources; for instance, opportunities for family members to make new friends, experience different lifestyles, and strengthen family cohesion. Further, in addition to exploring the motivations, the post migration and entrepreneurial experience are also worthy of research.

This research project reinvents Wallis et al.'s (2020) definition of lifestyle entrepreneurship in the context of family lifestyle migration by including the family relationship of the entrepreneur in the definition of lifestyle tourism entrepreneurship. It explores the value of LMTEr in

relation to family involvement, considering factors such as family members' roles, family resilience, and cultural influences.

### **2.3 LMTE Family Embeddedness**

Research in hospitality and tourism has predominantly concentrated on four key aspects of tourism entrepreneurship (Fu et al., 2019), including the individual characteristics of entrepreneurs, such as their motivations, skills, and personal traits (Bredvold & Skålén, 2016; Jaafar et al., 2011). The other three aspects are the destination environment, business performance, and destination development. However, their systematic review has neglected family business in tourism. Family-owned businesses in the tourism sector have played a pivotal role in ushering in innovation and fostering economic expansion (Kallmuenzer & Peters, 2018) and have operated successfully for decades (Shekhar et al., 2022).

Every individual's journey begins within the framework of a family unit. The family serves as a microcosm of society (Abe & Abe, 2024), embodying its dynamics, norms and complexities on a smaller scale. Within the family, individuals first encounter the principles of cooperation, communication, and mutual support, which lay the foundation for their interactions within the broader social context. Statistics indicate that more than 80% of corporations and small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are under the ownership and/or management of families (Chu, 2009). The relationship between family and entrepreneurship has garnered growing recognition. A recent bibliometric overview of tourism family business postulates previous research focused on market oriented performance related issues, such as innovation, competitive and economic performance (Forés et al., 2021). The authors point out that future researchers could delve into different types of tourism family businesses, such as LMTE.

Families and businesses are strongly connected rather than two separate systems (Uzzi, 1997). The concept of family embeddedness was further developed by Aldrich and Cliff (2003), who state that the family significantly influences the entrepreneurial business. Here, "family" means every family member, and their family relationships. Families influence entrepreneurship business decisions (Hack-Polay et al., 2020), but research has neglected this relationship.

Families offer opportunities and crucial emotional support throughout the entrepreneurial journey, simultaneously introducing conflicts and challenges (Hadri et al., 2024). By exploring family interactions through a cultural lens, entrepreneurship studies using a family embeddedness perspective can enhance understanding of entrepreneurship by providing a more holistic picture.

### **2.3.1 Family Embeddedness in Lifestyle Migration**

Family remains a crucial factor when making decisions about migration (Kok, 2010). Crespi (2020) argues that family plays a central role in the migration process, which includes decisions, plans, and strategies. Every family member influences migration decisions; for example, children's age directly affects family migration decisions (Ryan & Sales, 2013). First, the family is one of the main reasons for migration. Migration involves individual and multigenerational family members (Aybek & Milewski, 2019). Second, the family decides on human and financial resources during the migration process, which provides strategies and support for survival in the new environment. Third, the changes in family life before and during migration affect subsequent changes in social relationships, economic change, and cultural exchanges. Fourth, since the family is part of the social system, a migrant family can create a new network system and community at its destination.

Within the “mobility paradigm”, tourists, business people, and families—the whole world—are considered to be on the move and mobile, and social sciences are increasingly recognising the movement of people for work and family life (Sheller & Urry, 2006). As a result, lifestyle-driven migration has attracted researchers' attention. Lifestyle migration research has concluded that passion is the critical driver for entrepreneurs to migrate (Guercini & Ceccarelli, 2020), but has neglected the family role in the migration process. The existing literature has also primarily examined lifestyle migration on the mainland and across developed countries (Porter, 2020; Solano et al., 2020). The phenomenon of counterflow in China, such as migration movements away from Beijing and Shanghai, warrants further investigation. The link between family embeddedness and lifestyle migration processes must be studied, and the definition of migration destinations must be widened to include a developing island.

Previous entrepreneurship researchers have made inconsistent findings. Family embeddedness is closely related to entrepreneurs' well-being and entrepreneurial stressors (Xu et al., 2020). Stephan (2018) believed that entrepreneurial well-being indicates business performance. Family embeddedness constitutes entrepreneur well-being and performance (Hatak & Zhou, 2021). A recent study observed a positive correlation between entrepreneurs' satisfaction with work-life balance and subjective well-being, with the latter mediating the relationship between satisfaction with work-life balance and business growth. Subjective well-being serves as a crucial metric of business performance, in addition to conventional economic indicators (Drnovšek et al., 2024). However, the role of the family is two-sided; the family may add pressure on entrepreneurship and lead to a lack of success (Hadri et al., 2024). This research project adopts the concept of family support from Xu et al. (2020), which views the interactions between entrepreneurs and their family members as social exchanges, with the concept of family support being a crucial element in these relationships. Hence, to gain a better understanding of the family's influence on entrepreneurship, it is essential to explore how these social exchanges impact entrepreneurial activities. Xu et al. (2020) find that the level of perceived family support among entrepreneurs can have varying impacts on their well-being, depending on the nature of their social exchange relationships, whether primarily economic or social. However, these authors studied only the positive actions that families contribute to entrepreneurs. Negative actions were not considered.

Exploring family embeddedness in lifestyle migration uncovers how profoundly it impacts individuals' decisions, experiences, and outcomes. Through the lens of familial relationships, we gain insight into the intricate dynamics that shape the migration process, including motivations, adaptation strategies, and the overall well-being of migrants. Families serve as anchors and catalysts in the migration journey, providing emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of belonging in new environments. The reciprocal influence between family dynamics and migration highlights the interconnectedness of personal and relational spheres in shaping lifestyle migration trajectories. As scholars and practitioners continue to explore this multidimensional phenomenon, acknowledging and understanding the role of family embeddedness remains essential to developing comprehensive frameworks and policies

that support the diverse needs of migrants and their families in pursuit of a fulfilling lifestyle migration experience.

### **2.3.2 Family embeddedness and resilience during the entrepreneurial process**

Family is the original unit of the social economy and essential for socioeconomic development (Thwing, 1887; Abe & Abe, 2024), and economic activity connects tightly with family (Steier, 2007). Family units participate in the entrepreneurial process, stimulating and supporting entrepreneurs (Morrison et al., 1999). The family acts as an essential informal source of support for aspiring entrepreneurial behaviour (Heck et al., 2008). As Nordqvist and Melin (2010) claim, the family is an entrepreneurial actor which engages in entrepreneurial activities. According to Rimmington et al. (2009), not only does the family affect the venture-creation process, but changes in the family composition and family member roles also directly affect the founder entrepreneur. Family is considered the internal driver of entrepreneurship development (Kallmuenzer, 2018). Entrepreneurs and families are mutually essential to fostering resilience, achieving success, and ensuring sustainability in a constantly evolving and challenging business environment (Abe & Abe, 2024).

Family can provide entrepreneurs with emotional support and networking resources, with women playing an even more significant role than other family members (Habbershon & Pistrui, 2002). Kotha and George (2012) found that families play a crucial role in social networking, supporting entrepreneurs and ensuring the success of their businesses. Thus, family resilience can be a suitable index indicating a tourism business's success (Engeset, 2020). Family resilience can be assessed through family networks and communications because entrepreneurs are usually embedded in networks, places, and communities (Wallis et al., 2020). Despite their importance, few studies on tourism entrepreneurship have explored resilience and family involvement.

Over the past two decades, in recognition of the emergence of entrepreneurship and family businesses, scholars have developed the concept of *family entrepreneurship* (Heck et al., 2008; Heck & Mishra, 2008; López-Fernández et al., 2016; Nordqvist & Melin, 2010). Aldrich and

Cliff (2003) recognised the importance of family and claimed that entrepreneurial business is embedded within the family. Their findings of different types of family relations that affect business performance were later confirmed by Randerson et al. (2015), Bakas (2017), and Adjei et al. (2018). Nordqvist and Melin (2010) further developed the concept of *entrepreneurial families* to understand better the family's unique role in the entrepreneurial process. They coined the term *entrepreneurial family businesses* to explore the influence of entrepreneurs in family businesses. This research project adopts the concept of entrepreneurial families to describe LMTE families. This research is not about "family businesses," but about the operation of individual entrepreneurs embedded within their family units.

Family business in tourism has been studied by scholars actively in the past decades (e.g., Engeset, 2020; Getz & Carlsen, 2005; Kallmuenzer, 2018). Family businesses are different from other businesses. However, the definition has not been commonly agreed upon by different disciplines. Berrone et al. (2012) developed a new socioemotional wealth paradigm to distinguish family businesses from other businesses. The focus of entrepreneurship studies during the 2010s was comparing business performance between family and non-family businesses. López-Fernández et al. (2016) highlighted that family businesses and entrepreneurship are emerging research areas and should be treated as one field. Rimmington et al. (2009) revealed that lifestyle entrepreneurs' key issue is their survival and viability. Rodriguez-Sanchez et al. (2019) summarised how entrepreneurs respond to risks in different ways. None of these studies, however, considered the role of the family. Past research has shown that family involvement correlates with a business's success and survival (Chrisman et al., 2012). For example, Löhde et al. (2020) found that when family businesses are more willing to learn, the business can exist longer, and the chance of the business's success is higher. According to a recent study in Yunnan, China, small family businesses in tourism have shown resilience and strong entrepreneurship during the pandemic (Lin & Wen, 2021). Family entrepreneurship has performed differently than other businesses in this case.

To ensure sustained success in entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs must be resilient in overcoming obstacles and rebounding from failures and setbacks. A unified definition of resilience is still

lacking in the literature. Many studies from different research perspectives have applied resilience in the context of the environment and people's reactions when encountering natural disasters and from an economic perspective (Bakas, 2017). The concept of resilience originated from ecological literature (Holling, 1973). Business studies have adopted the resilience concept through a recognition that complex business systems exhibit comparable characteristics as they progress through phases of growth, maturity, decline, and restructuring, similar to an ecological system (Holling, 2001; Salvia & Quaranta, 2015). However, it is still a diverse conceptual definition (Yilmaz et al., 2024). Entrepreneurial resilience entails the ability to undergo personal and relational development and positive transformation in response to adversity (Schaefer et al., 2022). Based on Benard's (2002) definition of resilience, family resilience can be understood as changes within the entrepreneurial family system in response to challenges. It is also necessary to explore how the family process contributes to business survival (Bird & Wennberg, 2016) and how this type of business performs differently due to differing levels of family resilience. According to Chen et al. (2020), LMTE families share similar characteristics, live in similar geographical areas, and are influenced by similar government plans and interventions. In this context, the territorial dimension is evident, as these families, bound by geography, draw strength from their shared environment and community ties, which are key to their resilience. Abe and Abe (2024) define family resilience as the "ability to bounce back from crisis and challenges" (p. 70).

The year 2020 unquestionably stands out as one of the most significant moments in history. It marked a period in which our bustling societies came to an unexpected halt, thrusting us into unfamiliar territory. A silent threat, manifested in the form of an unfamiliar pandemic disease, spread worldwide, bringing economic, resource, social and institutional activities to a sudden halt, and offered an enormous challenge (Buhalis et al., 2023). Governments implemented drastic measures to contain its spread, directing millions to remain indoors for what felt like an indefinite period. In the last 5 years since the pandemic, researchers have been focusing on the impact of COVID-19 on family tourism businesses and the resilience of these businesses, because of an urgent need for both theoretical frameworks and practical strategies to navigate through crises (Lin & Wen, 2021; Wu et al., 2022). Unlike other businesses, family tourism

businesses are embedded with family resources. Family provides entrepreneurs with three major sources, including human, organisational, and process resources (Irava & Moores, 2010). Gaining insight into the dynamics of families and resources could enhance comprehension of entrepreneurship resilience (Calabrò et al., 2021). Thus, family tourism companies demonstrated a distinct type of resilience and competitive edge during the pandemic, compared to other businesses (Lin & Wen, 2021).

Entrepreneurial resilience has gained much attention in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some scholars have found that entrepreneurial businesses demonstrate varying levels of resilience, even when facing significant challenges. Wu et al. (2022) argue that ethnic tourism in Vietnam has its advantages when faced with a crisis, although it was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, Lin and Wen (2021) offer valuable insights into the strategies adopted by tourism entrepreneurship in Yunnan, China, as the businesses involved continued to pursue ethnic tourism despite the challenges posed by lockdowns that limited tourism activities. Veliverronena et al. (2023) reflect that coastal entrepreneurs have a great capacity to adapt tourism services by transitioning to touchless, digital solutions. They demonstrated their ability to generate innovative service concepts amidst the challenges posed by the pandemic. Zapalska and McCutcheon (2024) studied ten Polish female tourism entrepreneurs who cultivated their communities and natural resources with better tourism products and services in challenging economic periods.

Family embeddedness influences the entrepreneurial process and entrepreneurship outcomes (Xu et al., 2020). Most recent studies on family entrepreneurship focus on results, such as business performance and success. Calabrò et al. (2023) conclude that family resources of human, social, and financial capital, along with the degree of entrepreneurial orientation, significantly influence transgenerational entrepreneurship and family business performance. Moreno-Menéndez et al. (2022) investigated entrepreneurial activities pre- and post-COVID, revealing that entrepreneurship has seen a boost following COVID-19.

The concept of family embeddedness and resilience plays a pivotal role throughout the entrepreneurial process. While business growth, development, and resilience have been

extensively studied (Leopizzi et al., 2021; Memili et al., 2020), the literature often overlooks the crucial role that family members' support, resources, and emotional sustenance play throughout the various stages of venture creation and development. This familial embeddedness fosters resilience in the face of challenges and enhances the likelihood of entrepreneurial success. Moreover, understanding and harnessing the dynamics of family relationships can lead to more sustainable and fulfilling entrepreneurial endeavours (López-Fernández et al., 2016). As we navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship, recognising the significance of family support and resilience proves indispensable in achieving personal and professional fulfilment on the entrepreneurial journey. This research acknowledges the significance of family embeddedness by recognising the integral role families play in entrepreneurship. Understanding family dynamics is not a passive process; it actively shapes and influences the entrepreneurial journey of LMTE families.

## **2.4 Chinese Families and Their Migration Destinations**

Research on family embeddedness in the entrepreneurial process has largely focused on Western countries, with much of the collaboration occurring among scholars from these regions (Shekhar et al., 2022). However, there is a need to develop stronger research networks among scholars from developing countries, as cultural differences in family dynamics and entrepreneurship still require further study. The Chinese context offers a new angle to examine how family embeddedness influences entrepreneurship, presenting opportunities for broader generalisability in research (Xu et al., 2020).

Existing research on Chinese migrant entrepreneurs focuses predominantly on those who pursue a countercultural lifestyle. For example, studies have examined rural migrant entrepreneurs in China's Shanxi Province, highlighting their unique approaches to business and community integration (Ma et al., 2022). These entrepreneurs often challenge traditional business norms and seek alternative pathways to success, distinct from urban or mainstream entrepreneurial activities. Significant attention has also been given to Chinese immigrants who have established businesses abroad. For instance, Dobler (2009) explores how Chinese

entrepreneurs navigate the complexities of starting and sustaining businesses in foreign markets, often leveraging their cultural heritage and networks. Ceccagno (2015) further elaborates on the strategies employed by Chinese migrants in Italy, emphasising their adaptability and resilience in the face of economic and social challenges.

Research has also delved into the experiences of returnee migrants who start businesses upon returning to China. Lin and Zhou (2021) investigate how these individuals utilise their international exposure and acquired skills to innovate and compete in the domestic market. Their entrepreneurial ventures are often characterised by a blend of global insights and local practices, contributing to the dynamic landscape of Chinese entrepreneurship. These studies collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the diverse trajectories and strategies of Chinese migrant entrepreneurs, whether they operate within rural China, in international contexts, or upon their return to their homeland.

Before 2015, Chinese families were heavily influenced by the Chinese government's one-child policy (Mu & Yuan, 2017). Unlike people living in developed countries, Chinese families may choose to migrate for their only child's education, due to the uneven allocation of educational resources (Igarashi, 2015). Previous Chinese migration research has found that families traditionally preferred to migrate to larger cities like Beijing or abroad to access better educational resources for their children, often prioritizing this over other considerations such as cost of living or job opportunities (Mu & Yuan, 2017). This migration phenomenon has changed since October 2015, when China released the two-child policy, and further in 2021, when it announced the three-child policy, influencing a structural change within Chinese families and in their migration trends (Gao & Wang, 2020). Well-developed cities are no longer their first choice of migration destinations. The underlying reasons for Chinese families to migrate have changed, and researchers have caught this shift (Xu & Wu, 2016).

A complex migration process occurred in China from 2015 to 2020, when Chinese people moved from central and western regions to eastern regions of China, such as Hainan (Gu et al., 2023). Previous scholars have summarised their motivations for entering the tourism business from European perspectives (Morrison, 2006). Chinese entrepreneurs are widely recognised in

entrepreneurial activities worldwide (Lin & Zhou, 2021). Chinese entrepreneurs place a high value on family and friends, which strongly influences their entrepreneurial activities, but this close involvement can sometimes lead to conflicts between personal relationships and business interests (Au & Kwan, 2009). Previous scholars have highlighted that Chinese lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs' work and lives are closely related and cannot be separated (Zhou & Chan, 2019; Su et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2020) and that they usually migrate for lifestyle reasons. However, the lifestyle migrant entrepreneur study in China refers mainly to the Dali and Lijiang areas and merely touches upon other parts of China (Su et al., 2021). Consideration of the family role is lacking in lifestyle migration and entrepreneurial processes.

Thus, while studies have shown the influence of the family on the creation of new ventures, they have yet to consider the migration factor in entrepreneurial processes or to explore the role of every family member. Moreover, previous studies have shown that most prior theories are based on business success and the benefits derived from family resources, but “entrepreneurs are embedded in a social context that includes a family dimension” (Steier, 2007, p. 1106). The family entrepreneurship literature in tourism lacks an examination of how children influence the entrepreneurship discourse. The proposed study adopts family embeddedness as a framework by adding lifestyle migration to the entrepreneurship study. It explores the motivations and experiences of women entrepreneurs and children within the family during migration and the entrepreneurial process.

Chinese families are increasingly exploring alternative migration destinations beyond the traditional scope of international relocation (Friedman, 2023). One such emerging destination is Hainan Island, which has become particularly popular among Chinese families seeking a different lifestyle and development of children. Friedman argued in a recent study that a group of China's middle class who initially inhabited major urban cities with rapid economic development has become disenchanted with the economic growth that compromises significant human values and personal relationships. They oppose the intense competition in both children's education and their careers. Instead, they seek a lifestyle emphasising a slower pace of family life, promoting happiness, personal development, and close connections with their

children. Despite its growing popularity, Hainan Island remains under researched in the context of internal migration and lifestyle changes among Chinese families.

The role of tourism as a critical economic driver cannot be overstated, especially when considering developed and developing regions. This is particularly true for islands, where tourism is often a cornerstone of economic activity (Figueroa & Rotarou, 2016). Islands frequently rely on tourism as a primary industry to sustain development and provide livelihoods for local populations (Cole, 2007; Booth et al., 2020). The tourism industry on islands encompasses a wide range of activities, including hospitality, leisure, and cultural exchange, making it a versatile and robust sector.

Entrepreneurs are instrumental in the development of island economies, acting as a crucial link between islands and the mainland (Burnett & Danson, 2017). These entrepreneurs bring a wealth of experience, resources, and innovative ideas, vital for fostering economic growth and development. Their courage to venture into new markets and their ability to leverage previous business experiences significantly enhances the connection between islands and the broader national economy. These entrepreneurial efforts contribute to the diversification of the local economy, providing new opportunities for employment and economic resilience (Williams & Vorley, 2014).

According to past studies, entrepreneurship is fundamental to the success of a destination's tourism and hospitality development (Russell & Faulkner, 2004; King & Pearce, 2010; Booth et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs are one reason for island tourism to develop (García-Almeida & Hormiga, 2017), and entrepreneurship provides a boost for economic, social and environmental development (Hall et al., 2010). According to Hall et al. (2010), entrepreneurs tend to form strong connections or relationships when they encounter new business opportunities. Still, it is unclear how entrepreneurs discover and seize these opportunities and how families are involved in this process. According to Booth et al.'s (2020) systematic review of entrepreneurs in island tourism and hospitality, islands are different from the mainland for four primary reasons. First, the disadvantages and constraints of islands, including the limited network of transportation, education segregation, climate extremes, language barriers, cultural conflict, and others.

Second, islands have many advantages over the mainland. Islands have more rural areas and a relaxed atmosphere compared to the mainland. Tourism is considered a good opportunity for islands to develop the local economy. Third, as tourism grows, islands need more people to work there, attracting non-residents seeking employment opportunities from the mainland. The fourth factor is political independence. Islands often benefit from a degree of political autonomy due to their geographical distance from central governing authorities. For example, Hong Kong and Macau are located far from China's power centre Beijing and are under the "One Country, Two Systems" policy but do not follow the same system as mainland China (Li, 2017; Tu, 2020). Booth concluded that all these factors affect the success of island entrepreneurs, including the role of the state, community, women and resilience. This study noted that investigation of islands' vulnerabilities and resilience are lacking in the literature (Biggs, 2011; Booth et al., 2020).

China has diverse family structures and traditional cultures, providing abundant resources for family research. According to Chu et al. (2011), Chinese families tend to have multigenerational living arrangements. The essence of multigenerational living in China lies in its fundamental purpose: to provide a convenient environment that fosters collaborative care for children within the familial setting, and there is empirical evidence that a third of Chinese live in multigenerational families (Xu et al., 2014). Historically, families play a crucial role in Chinese society; strong family ties and roots are considered the most critical responsibilities of a family (Raymo et al., 2015). However, Chinese families are impacted by globalisation and are transitioning under the rapid modernisation of social changes (Xu et al., 2014; Whyte, 2020). As the attention of tourism scholars has shifted towards entrepreneurial families, consideration of Chinese families should also be considered within tourism entrepreneurship scholarship. However, previous studies have focused mainly on the issues raised by tourism development on islands. Little previous research has linked tourism, migration, lifestyle entrepreneurs, families and islands (Stone & Stubbs, 2007), as this research project does.

## 2.5 Women LMTErs

A gender gap exists in tourism entrepreneurship. Despite extensive research on tourism entrepreneurship, gender issues remain relatively underexplored (Valeri & Katsoni, 2021). Gender is used in this research project to refer to women and men (Ahl, 2006). This research project aligns with Tajeddini et al. (2017)'s definition of women entrepreneurs, which refers to women who made their own business decisions for their tourism ventures. Tourism is not a simple employment for women entrepreneurs, but "an empowerment decision" (Hallak & Lee, 2024, p. 120).

Considering the potential of women's entrepreneurship in tourism to enhance both social and economic well-being, it is imperative to comprehensively understand the gender dynamics inherent in entrepreneurial activities (Hallak & Lee, 2024). Family-owned tourism businesses have unique resources to empower women in remote island destinations (Dan & Shimizu, 2022); a family business approach creates unique and synergistic resources, and relatively low entry requirements contribute to women's entrepreneurship in tourism (Zellweger et al., 2010). Women's role has changed dramatically since the twentieth century (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003), and entrepreneurship scholars have progressively included gender issues across countries in recent years (Chen et al., 2017; Wolf & Frese, 2018). Women entrepreneurs are the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs in the world (Ali, 2018) since they are no longer homemakers, but have recognised entrepreneurial opportunities and are increasingly becoming entrepreneurs. Therefore, it is necessary to include women entrepreneurs when studying LMTErs.

Several studies have suggested that the role of women and children must be addressed in entrepreneurial enterprises, especially in family businesses (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2011; Welsh et al., 2014; Wolf & Frese, 2018). Women as lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurs are a force to be reckoned with. Women entrepreneurs can start and run a business, achieve economic and social goals, and make the business successful (Celestine et al., 2013). Furthermore, women entrepreneurs significantly impact social development and comprise a high proportion of entrepreneurs, especially in countries with high entrepreneurship activity

rates (Ali, 2018). Moreover, women entrepreneurs tend to exert a positive influence on increasing community resilience levels compared to male entrepreneurs (Bakas, 2017). A recent study found that women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka have greater creativity and innovation than their male counterparts (Wijewardena et al., 2023).

Many studies on women entrepreneurs have studied rural or farming women in developed and developing countries (Kempster et al., 2023). Women entrepreneurs in developed countries have more possibilities and opportunities to start businesses than those in developing countries; since they experience fewer social and cultural pressures, and the opportunities for self-expression are not restricted (Solesvik et al., 2019). In developing countries, such as China, which is experiencing rapid economic growth and social transformation (Chhabra et al., 2020), women also contribute as entrepreneurs, albeit under different social conditions (Ali, 2018), with cultural norms and expectations—such as traditional gender roles, family responsibilities, and societal attitudes—playing the most crucial role in shaping their entrepreneurial opportunities. Starting tourism entrepreneurship in developing countries supports women’s development (Rindova et al., 2009).

Considering women’s social role as mothers, prior research has concluded that the motivations for women entrepreneurs tend to be based on their desires to consider the well-being of their children and the family (Moswete & Lacey, 2015); for example, they may want to cover their childcare duties and participate in self-improvement activities by shifting from being an employee to being an entrepreneur (Costa et al., 2016; Pettersson & Cassel, 2014). Thus, gender does not reflect any differences in entrepreneurial performance, but marital and family status do (Robb & Watson, 2012). Tillmar et al. (2022) highlight that the demands of marriage and family responsibilities can negatively affect women entrepreneurs’ performance.

Motivations for women to start tourism businesses have been intensively studied (Moswete & Lacey, 2015). Wilson-Youlden and Bosworth (2019) highlighted that women tourism entrepreneurs are motivated to combine their personal lives with their work, preferring self-employment over employment by others. Women entrepreneurs value the next generation more than other entrepreneurs, and this value is one of their standard financial drivers. For instance,

most tourism entrepreneurs who start an agriculture business are women, although the agricultural workforce is male dominated (McGehee et al., 2007; Pettersson & Cassel, 2014). Women entrepreneurs can combine family life with business, be more independent, and generate income. Another example is that women in Sweden become entrepreneurs not because they want to shift from farm employees to entrepreneurs but because they want to change their status from employee to entrepreneur (Pettersson & Cassel, 2014). Costa et al. (2016) found that women entrepreneurs can be more innovative than male entrepreneurs in Brazil, often supported by tourism programmes. As Ertac and Tanova (2020) discovered, tourism entrepreneurship in Cyprus allows women to integrate their lives with their economic and social goals. It helps these women gain self-reliance and empowerment (Ertac & Tanova, 2020). Thus, defining the motivations of women entrepreneurs is complex, considering that the norms of society where the women LMTErs exercise their businesses may influence them.

Despite women entrepreneurs having advantages in industries traditionally associated with women, such as fashion, beauty, and caregiving (Yacus et al., 2019), research highlights that male entrepreneurs are leading the tourism industry (Jaafar et al., 2011). Women entrepreneurs experience more challenges than men, such as balancing work and family (Russen et al., 2021; Sardeshmukh & Smith, 2024), even though women are participating more in the tourism industry (Jamhawi et al., 2015). Women entrepreneurs' work-family conflict has been studied intensively (Poggesi et al., 2019; Heilbrunn & Davidovitch, 2011), highlighting that women are more vulnerable when becoming entrepreneurs and experience more conflicts between their business and family responsibilities (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008).

The role of gender in entrepreneurial leadership has been a concern in recent years (Kimbu et al., 2021; Samkange et al., 2024). Tourism provides a unique context for studying the impact of gender on entrepreneurial leadership, highlighting the need for research that investigates the various ways gender influences leadership performance (Fu et al., 2019). A persistent gender bias has been identified, influencing entrepreneurial leadership (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2019). This bias not only limits opportunities for women entrepreneurs but also affects the overall diversity and innovation potential within the tourism sector.

Family embeddedness plays both enabling and constraining roles in entrepreneurial behaviour for women (Lent & Brown, 2013, p. 562). A recent study on women's tourism ventures reflected that the structure and composition of the family played a significant role in explaining the resilience of women entrepreneurs. In addition, the moral support from spouses and children bolstered women entrepreneurs' confidence and collaborative abilities (Makandwa & de Klerk, 2024).

The success factors for women entrepreneurs in hospitality and tourism have been summarised (Swart et al., 2024). These include motivations, barriers, strategies and government policies. Among the success factors, these authors identified financial, legal assistance, training opportunities, and political, social, and cultural support as the most important reasons for the success of women entrepreneurs. However, previous research is silent on the success of Chinese women entrepreneurs. This research project will address this gap in the literature.

## **2.6 Children in Tourism Entrepreneurial Families**

Children play a role in the decision-making process regarding family migration (Bushin, 2009). The existing tourism entrepreneurship studies have mentioned the importance of children's roles in the family process (Canosa & Schänzel, 2021). As Aldrich and Cliff (2003) have noted, relationships between women, children, and other family members affect the new venture creation process. In tourism entrepreneurial families, children can be motivators who are educated by their parents and who can transform their knowledge into potential tourism entrepreneurship of their own (Bakas, 2018). Adjei et al. (2018) found that the relationship between entrepreneurs and their children is the main factor in the context of business performance. Likewise, in an entrepreneurship case study in New Zealand, the researchers found that children's learning experiences are influenced by their societies and that they are "young budding entrepreneurs" who apply their learned skills to their future businesses (Kawharu et al., 2017, p. 30). Telling and Martin (2023) suggested that children working in a family hospitality business function is an "imprinting" mechanism and such children tend to recall their work experience negatively, which can have detrimental effects on parent-child

relationships. However, there is limited literature on the role of children in tourism entrepreneurship, and only a few studies have included children as research participants (Canosa & Schänzel, 2021). Moreover, studies examining children's lifestyle experiences within the entrepreneurial process are absent from the literature but are addressed in this research project.

Previous scholars have neglected children as research participants within a family and have approached family entrepreneurship from an adult-centric or "adultist" perspective (Canosa & Schänzel, 2021). Every child possesses a unique viewpoint that should be heard from themselves rather than enquiring from their parent or parents (Handel, 1997). Therefore, children should be included in a family entrepreneurship study in tourism as an essential part of the whole family perspective. Wall (2023) argues that "adultism" is a deeply ingrained and pervasive lens or prism from which we view the world and social realities.

Children in tourism research are often overlooked for four reasons (Séraphin & Chaney, 2023). First, there are ethical issues (Khoo-Lattimore, 2015), for example, child labour. There are few empirical studies covering this sensitive topic because the researcher needs to consider possible distress issues of children and other potential risks, such as ethical concerns and privacy issues. (Ju et al., 2024). Obtaining ethical approval can be challenging due to the increasing emphasis on child protection and safety, which has led to stricter regulations and heightened scrutiny in research involving children (Carr, 2006). The second issue is the vulnerability of children. Khoo-Lattimore (2015) argued that children lack the complete capability to function and effectively communicate their experiences that adults have. Children can be disadvantaged due to their age, social status, and lack of power (Monterrubio et al., 2016). Third, involving children in research requires a professional and suitable data collection method (Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2018; Séraphin & Chaney, 2023; M. J. H. Yang et al., 2020). In addition, the tourism framework is insufficient for conceptualising children's behaviours and experiences, as it lacks theoretical insights (Poria & Timothy, 2014). To conclude, children are not completely overlooked in tourism research but are often marginalised (Feng & Li, 2016), especially in family entrepreneurship studies. Innovative and creative research methods have

not been widely adopted in tourism research; interviews and observations remain as privileged approaches (Rakić & Chambers, 2010; Wilson et al., 2020). Including children's voices in research is considered challenging for researchers.

Children are included in this study for additional reasons beyond their role in the family dynamic, such as their unique perspectives on migration and entrepreneurship. First, moving for the next generation's education has been a common phenomenon in China since the Warring States period (475-221 BC). LMTErs commonly migrate with their children, especially when the entrepreneur is a single parent. Second, among Chinese entrepreneurial families, there are retirement entrepreneurs; that is, people who become entrepreneurs after they retire from their careers (Chen & Bao, 2021). These entrepreneurs prefer to bring their grandchildren to help their adult children. Therefore, children are included in this research project to learn about their feelings and experiences during the migration and entrepreneurial processes.

“Childism” has been emerging as a research stream in childhood studies (Séraphin & Chaney, 2023) for over a decade. According to Wall (2022), childism is different from childhood study; it is an approach similar to feminism, postgenderism, and environmentalism. It is a critical movement that calls for more attention to children's experiences and their interpretation of realities and lives (Canosa & Schänzel, 2021). Childism is now finding its place in various fields of study (Wall, 2022), including tourism. This study adopts the concept of childism used by Wall (2022), which argues that childism is an approach that tries to change the marginalised situation of vulnerable children in various disciplines.

Children form the heart of a family, the centre of their community and society, as active agents (Von Braun, 2017). Children have caught the attention of tourism academics, maintaining that children play an important role in tourism (Séraphin & Chaney, 2023). For example, researchers discovered the significant role of children involved in the travel decision-making process (Schänzel & Jenkins, 2017; Yang et al., 2020). As a result of increasing attention to childism and the position of children within a family, family tourism research has started to include children's voices. Previously, many scholars treated children as objects, with empirical data capturing indirect perceptions of children instead of their direct voices (Feng & Li, 2016).

Children's voices were collected indirectly during family interviews, and their parents or guardians communicated their perceptions (Canosa & Graham, 2016).

Bakas (2018) highlighted that children are significant social agents who play an essential role in the tourism industry as crucial members of their families. Although the children's voices in this study were not obtained directly from them, Bakas (2018) found that the children became "replacement entrepreneurs" (p. 220) who contributed to the survival of their family tourism business. Children are thus not only direct consumers as tourists but also influence consumers and future consumption. Family life is constructed by every family member—adults and children—and a single person cannot represent the whole family; making the roles played by each family member within tourism entrepreneurship significant (Wilson, 2007). However, family business in tourism has been understudied from children's perspectives. Lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurial processes impact children in their own way. Thus, children's experiences with these processes should be conceptualised by children themselves (Carr, 2011).

Whether about family tourism or family tourism entrepreneurship, tourism scholarship calls for the participation of children in research for the long-term benefit of everyone (S raphin & Chaney, 2023). Based on Canosa and Sch nzel's (2021) review, only nine studies have ever explored children's role in tourism entrepreneurial families in the tourism industry, with only one study from Asia. These studies focused on economy-related issues, such as child labour or children working as unpaid workers within the family (Bakas, 2018; Zhao, 2009), rather than on the lived experiences of children. A recent study on the psychological perspective of family tourism on parents and children showed that children obtain generic skills such as problem-solving, communication, and adaptability (Miyakawa & Oguchi, 2022). However, children are co-creating the tourism entrepreneurial experience with their family members. Within LMTE families, grandparents, parents, and children contribute to their family life, and the children's voices must be included.

Methodologies for studying children, such as LSP, have been developed, and have been applied to children to study their experiences and well-being (Henderson & Shipway, 2023). LSP has

been proven to be a powerful tool, as a tangible method that facilitates a more comprehensive connection between participants and researchers, enhancing the exploration of the entrepreneurial phenomena under investigation (Miller et al., 2021). Thus, a culturally adapted form of LSP is employed for this research.

## **2.7 Conceptual Framework for Understanding Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurs and Their Families on an Island**

Numerous definitions and theories of entrepreneurship have sought to conceptualise lifestyle entrepreneurs in various fields, but no clear definition has yet considered lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs from a tourism perspective. Limited literature has linked tourism entrepreneurship with lifestyle migration. LMTE is under researched, despite being a specific and growing group of entrepreneurs, especially in developing countries (Andrejuk, 2019; Walker et al., 2021). This research project aimed to develop understanding of the LMTE phenomenon in Hainan using an inductive approach. The conceptual framework of this study was derived from existing knowledge and identified gaps in understanding of LMTE (Varpio et al., 2020).

The number of LMTE families is increasing. Their motivations for migrating as LMTErs, along with the roles their families play in their business successes, are included in the conceptual framework. (see Figure 4). The first layer of the conceptual framework is the positioning of LMTE. Guided by a family embeddedness perspective (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003), this research project proposes that family and business are connected, rather than being two separate systems. In the model building process and the empirical investigation phase, entrepreneurship studies should consider families as the most important factor and as playing a fundamental role (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Unlike mixed embeddedness theory, which focuses on the embeddedness of socioeconomic and political factors affecting entrepreneurs (Kloosterman & Leun, 1999), the family embeddedness perspective encourages researchers to consider family factors within entrepreneurship models. This research adopts a family embeddedness perspective to explore LMTEr and LMTE family lifestyle migration experiences, family

resilience to entrepreneurship survival, and the influence of lifestyle migration and the entrepreneurial process on family embeddedness.

**Figure 4**

*Conceptual Framework: A Family Embeddedness Perspective on Lifestyle Migration and Tourism Entrepreneurship on an Island in China*

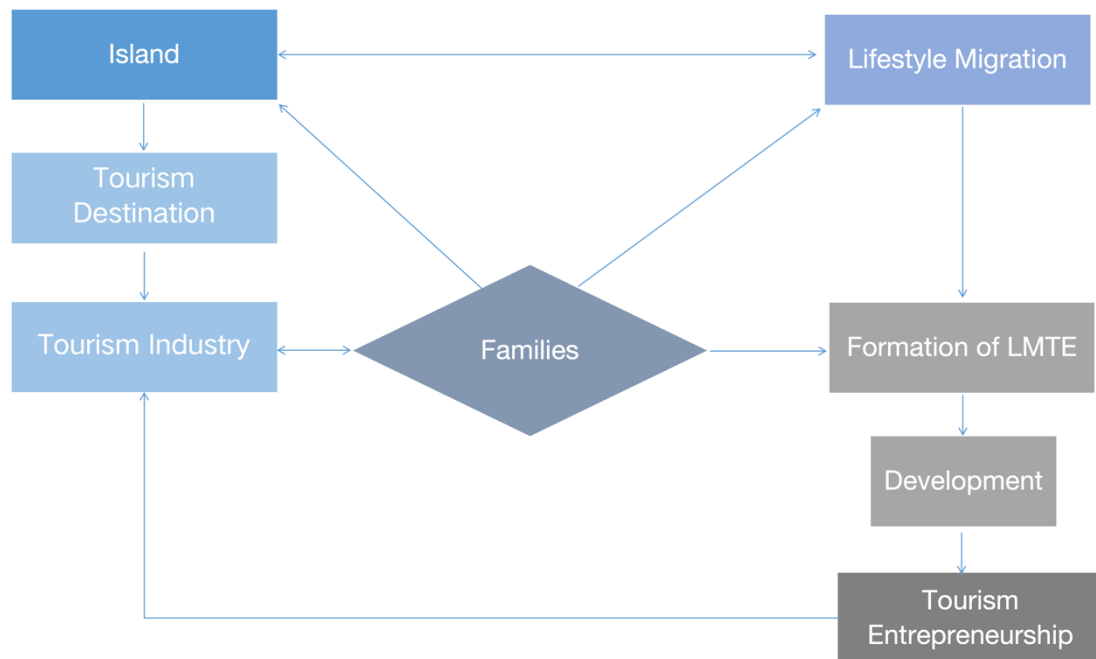


Figure 4 illustrates the conceptual framework, which incorporates the perspective of family embeddedness to facilitate an understanding of LMTE. This research adds lifestyle migration as a dimension of the entrepreneurial process and acknowledges the family as a factor driving lifestyle migration. The top left of the figure shows an island as a tourist destination that attracts migrants. The central part of the framework indicates that Chinese families influence the migration process (opportunity recognition and migration decision) and tourism entrepreneurship decisions, leading migrants to become part of a new community of LMTEs. The lower part illustrates the entrepreneurial process, which consists of the formation of LMTE and the development process. First, the migration process stimulates the formation of LMTEs and the development process. Second, the development process includes the adaptation of LMTEs and their families and their resilience in a new environment. The family factor is embedded within the entrepreneurial process, and that process changes within the family system (family structure, resources,

relationships, educational backgrounds, and so on). These Chinese families become entrepreneurial during this process and gain lifestyle experiences during the migration to and entrepreneurial process on the island.

This framework guides the response to the main question of how families are embedded within lifestyle migration and the tourism entrepreneurial process on an island. This research addresses research gaps in entrepreneurial tourism families, including women entrepreneurs and children, using in-depth interviews with family members who live together. It recognises the voices of children in the LMTE decision-making process and lifestyle experiences during the migration and entrepreneurial process of LMTEs, which are outlined in the methodology chapter.

## **2.8 Chapter Conclusion**

In conclusion, the literature review has highlighted several critical gaps and emerging themes within the field of LMTE. The conceptualisation of LMTEr and LMTE families remains underdeveloped, and there is a scarcity of research focusing on Chinese island tourism, particularly on Hainan Island. The intersection of family dynamics, lifestyle migration, and entrepreneurial processes is insufficiently explored, with a significant lack of studies incorporating the perspectives of children involved in tourism entrepreneurship. In addition, gender issues, particularly the roles and contributions of women entrepreneurs in LMTE, are often overlooked. Existing literature fails adequately to address the unique challenges and opportunities women face in this context. Furthermore, there is a broader need to link migration, lifestyle entrepreneurship, families, and island contexts in a comprehensive manner. By addressing these gaps, this research aims to advance our understanding of LMTE, offering insights that extend beyond the specific context of Hainan Island to inform global discussions on tourism entrepreneurship, migration, family dynamics, and gender issues. This holistic approach enriches theoretical frameworks and provides actionable recommendations for sustainable and inclusive tourism development and informs the methodological approach taken. The methodological approach is grounded in qualitative research, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences and perspectives of LMTE families. By employing

interviews and narrative analyses, the research captures the complexities of their journeys, emphasising the nuances of family interactions, entrepreneurial motivations, and the social contexts that shape their decisions and lives.

## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research process undertaken to explore LMTErs and their family experience of migration and entrepreneurial processes on Hainan Island and how they construct their realities. The research project is guided by several key questions: First, what motivates lifestyle migrants to settle on an island as tourism entrepreneurs? Second, what is the meaning of family within LMTE? Third, how does family resilience shape the entrepreneurial process? Forth, what are the lifestyle migration experiences of LMTErs and their families in the tourism entrepreneurial process? The main aim of this research project is to explore family embeddedness in lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship and understand the entrepreneurial process and family lifestyle migration experiences on Hainan Island.

The research paradigm implemented is first explained. Research approaches are further explained in detail, followed by the research design, data collection, sampling method, interview procedures, and data analysis. My positionality in this research will then be explained. Lastly, the trustworthiness of this research and ethical considerations are discussed.

### **3.2 Research Paradigm: Constructivism**

The paradigm represents the fundamental belief system in the realm of science (Hollinshead, 2006). This philosophical position or worldview consists of ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (nature of knowledge), and methodology (research strategy) (Creswell, 2013). In this research, constructivism was implemented, taking into account the intricate nature of lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship (LMTE), where meanings are shaped by subjective knowledge and personal experiences (Wengel et al., 2016). Constructivism is based on the belief that reality is built upon an individual's knowledge and experiences (Riegler, 2011). Subjectivity and reflexivity are highlighted under constructivism (Padgett, 2016). The tourism

research paradigm is shifting towards constructivism because tourism studies are a part of social studies (Hollinshead, 2006).

LMTE families' experiences are meaningful as they offer insights into individual entrepreneurs' day-to-day lives and the complexities of tourism entrepreneurship, which is a wide-ranging and elusive concept. During the 1980s and 1990s, the positivist paradigm dominated entrepreneurship research, with a focus on quantifiable variables and statistical methods to test hypotheses (Pittaway & Tunstall, 2016). At that time, researchers were trying to peel entrepreneurship apart, by means such as focusing on entrepreneurship leadership, management, innovation, or other aspects of entrepreneurship using positivistic approaches (e.g., Anderson & Starnawska, 2008; Bygrave, 1989; Ireland et al., 2005).

However, entrepreneurship cannot be analysed or understood as simply as assembling the puzzle pieces; it also needs an overall understanding of how all the aspects work together. Consequently, more interpretive and critical perspectives are needed to broaden the comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurship, emphasising the importance of context and subjective experiences in entrepreneurship (Geertz, 1973). Anderson and Starnawska (2008) pointed out that entrepreneurship is "a way of being" rather than a "thing" (p. 226). Entrepreneurship is not simply a tangible thing or a specific activity but a way of existing or being. It involves a particular mindset, approach, and set of behaviours that prioritise innovation, risk-taking, and creating value. Blackburn and Kovalainen (2009) encourage entrepreneurship researchers to explore alternative paradigms to better explain the social and economic mechanisms underlying entrepreneurial phenomena. Tourism entrepreneurship is complex and more diverse than other forms of entrepreneurship, spanning various boundaries, and cannot be fully explained by a positivistic approach alone. This research has accordingly embraced constructivism as a philosophical framework for understanding LMTE.

This research project studies entrepreneurship from a constructivist lens. This approach is valuable because it recognises the dynamic and context-dependent nature of entrepreneurial processes. Entrepreneurship involves complex interactions between individuals and their environments, shaped by social, cultural, and economic factors. A constructivist approach

emphasises that entrepreneurial phenomena are not static or universally defined but are constructed through the perceptions, interpretations, and actions of individuals within their unique contexts (Löbler, 2006).

By adopting a constructivist lens, researchers can better understand how entrepreneurs create meaning, interpret opportunities and challenges, and navigate their entrepreneurial journeys. This perspective acknowledges the diverse ways in which entrepreneurs construct their realities and the significance of subjective experiences in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes. It encourages the exploration of how social constructs, such as norms, beliefs and identities, influence entrepreneurial behaviour and decision-making, enabling a deeper comprehension of the intricate and multifaceted nature of entrepreneurial activities.

As a constructivist, I decided to focus on how individual entrepreneurs within a tourism entrepreneurial family construct their identities and lifestyles as they migrate and engage in tourism and entrepreneurial activities. I focused on understanding how LMTE family members perceive themselves, their roles, and their motivations for pursuing lifestyle migration and entrepreneurial endeavours. Further, this research explores how each family member positions themselves during these processes. Within the framework of constructivism, examining the family's interpretations of their experiences involves delving into the meanings ascribed to LMTE by its members. This exploration encompasses understanding how the family's perspectives on entrepreneurship and tourism shape their decision-making processes and influence the trajectory of their tourism business over the long term.

### **3.2.1 Ontology**

Anderson and Starnawska (2008) have argued that constructivism is most suitable for studying entrepreneurship, since the constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology and a subjectivist epistemology. The ontological stance of this study is that reality is multilayered and complex and cannot be reduced to a single objective truth. The relativist ontology of this research project acknowledges that individual entrepreneurs and families have diverse and subjective perceptions, interpretations, and constructions of reality, which are influenced by

their lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, and social contexts (Pittaway & Tunstall, 2016). The essence lies in our understanding of reality as being inseparable from our interpretations.

### **3.2.2 Epistemology**

Constructivism tries to depict reality with subjectivist epistemology. The epistemological perspective of constructivism emphasises the active engagement of the subject, social interaction, and individual experience in the construction of knowledge (Creswell, 2013). Knowledge is not simply acquired; it emerges through cognitive processes and is considered a collaborative construction. The epistemological stance of this research is that knowledge is constructed and contextual and is generated through an iterative and reflexive process of interpretation and understanding of qualitative data (Morse et al., 2021). This study examines social networks, both within the family and with external actors, and how these influence entrepreneurs' choices, perceptions, and strategies. Constructivism underscores the importance of social interactions in shaping individuals' knowledge.

### **3.2.3 Methodology**

The methodology of constructivism is adaptive (Doolittle, 2014), participatory (Cooper, 2001), and diverse (Keating, 2013). It enables the exploration of the construction of knowledge and acknowledges the subjectivity of participants and researchers (Mann & MacLeod, 2015). By adopting constructivism, I recognise the importance of participants' individual experiences, perspectives, and interpretations in the construction of knowledge, encouraging their active participation in the research process. Further, constructivist methodology emphasises the researcher's reflection and critical thinking. Researchers reflect on their own roles, positions, and influences, examining power dynamics and implicit assumptions within the research process. In addition, the constructivism methodology promotes the exploration of diverse data and perspectives through the utilisation of different methods and the involvement of various participants (Edelson et al., 1996). This comprehensive approach is intended to enhance the richness and accuracy of research (Panasuk & Lewis, 2012). Finally, the constructivist methodology aims at a more comprehensive and profound understanding of the phenomenon

(Schwandt, 1994). I am aware of the flexibility and complexity of research and adapt research designs and methods accordingly (Pratt, 2008).

Constructivism encourages researchers to consider the cultural and social contexts in which phenomena occur (Adom et al., 2016). Exploring a lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurial family would involve understanding how cultural norms, values and beliefs inform the family's choices and experiences, and how the family transitions to a new culture and forms a new identity.

This research does not aim to generate a general theory through participants' lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurial experiences but to present the existence of lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurs and their families' experiences during the migration and tourism entrepreneurial processes in Hainan Island and develop an integrative framework for LMTEr and their family relationships and their tourism business. Constructivism fits this research, as the knowledge on LMTE is constructed by the researcher with the participants and not discovered elsewhere, and by understanding the phenomenon through both individual and family experience. The purpose is to understand how their life experience and culture construct their knowledge. Finally, I adopt innovative and culturally appropriate research methods to suit the participants better.

### **3.3 Methodology**

Qualitative methodology, chosen for its appropriateness in addressing "how" and "why" questions (Riley & Love, 2000), enables an exploration of the complex and subjective experiences of LMTEr and their families (Daly, 2007). This approach embraces a theory-building process and involves investigating how families construct their experiences, identities, and meanings within the context of migration, tourism, and lifestyle entrepreneurship. It aligns with the constructivism paradigm's emphasis on subjectivity, social interactions, and the construction of reality through individual and collective interpretations.

This research is exploratory due to the limited research on LMTE from a family embeddedness perspective (e.g., Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Au & Kwan, 2009; Bird & Wennberg, 2014; Bird &

Wennberg, 2016; Chrisman et al., 2002; Löhde et al., 2020; Steier, 2007), none of which has focused on tourism. It examines tourism entrepreneurship through the experiences of individuals, using storytelling as a key method (Beskow, 2022). Therefore, a qualitative research approach is adopted.

The main research question focuses on exploring the role of the family in lifestyle migration and the tourism entrepreneurial process, including the families' lifestyle experiences during these processes. This research seeks to understand the formation of a new community of tourism entrepreneurs and their families. Notably, existing literature lacks comprehensive examinations of the family's role in the lifestyle migration process of tourism entrepreneurs, with an absence of insights into lifestyle experiences. Considering these gaps, the preceding paragraphs have introduced and elucidated the methodological research design and approaches adopted for this research project. The constructivist paradigm, as advocated by Wengel (2022), guides the adoption of a qualitative multimethod approach.

Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives, meanings, and lived experiences, as well as the social and cultural contexts in which they are situated. It is particularly well-suited for capturing the richness and diversity of human experiences and for exploring complex and multifaceted phenomena, such as the impacts of lifestyle migration on entrepreneurs and their families in a dynamic and changing tourism context (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). For these reasons, qualitative research was deemed the most appropriate approach for this study, to enable a nuanced and holistic understanding of the lived experiences of LMTErs and their families on Hainan Island, in line with constructivism's ontological and epistemological underpinnings.

Following a constructivist paradigm, to gain insights into LMTEr and their families adopting multimethod research, I focused on their subjective experiences and accepted multiple realities instead of pursuing one single truth. Thus, I adopted the narrative inquiry approach and collected data with multiple methods via semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs and LSP workshop at Old Dad Teahouses, combined with whole family interviews. Thematic analysis and narrative analysis underpinned by critical discourse analysis are to explicitly

understand the data collected. This section explains in detail how these approaches guide this study and help to understand and analyse the data.

### **3.3.1 Narrative Inquiry**

The constructivism paradigm inspired me to adopt the narrative inquiry approach for this study. Narrative research collects stories from individuals recounting their life experiences related to a particular phenomenon (Rahman et al., 2022). The narratives individuals share with others can provide insights into their personal experiences concerning a specific phenomenon (Haydon & van der Riet, 2017). Dewey (1958) pointed out that experience is vital, since knowledge is derived from real-life experiences, which are influenced by relationships, time, space, and specific situations. I acknowledge every family's stories, by comparing their stories, considering family member relationships within each family, and understanding what they have encountered, adapted to, and their likes and dislikes about the new place after migration and during the entrepreneurial process.

Constructivism views the research process as a collaborative effort between the researcher and participants, with the latter sharing experiences relevant to the study. The narrative inquiry approach is advantageous in this context because individuals often enjoy telling stories about themselves (Riessman, 2008). Narrative inquiry allowed me to see how the participants constructed their reality through storytelling. According to Connelly and Clandinin (2000), narrative inquiry studies how people experience the world through storytelling. Narrative is storytelling and how the story is told to transform experience into meaning. A coherent story usually has a beginning, middle, and end (Berger & Quinney, 2005). The narrative inquiry approach has been employed as a valuable methodology in different fields, such as linguistics, sociology, psychology, and education (Clandinin, 2007; Mura & Sharif, 2017). The narrative inquiry also provides a platform for individuals without power or with little power within the social structure, such as children (Beskow, 2022; Tsai, 2007).

Some scholars distinguish between narrative and story since they believe narrative is a method researchers use to carry out participants' experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). However,

other scholars, such as Frank (2002), believe it is hard to distinguish between narrative and story since all stories are narratives. Thus, for this research project, “narrative” does not mean only written or oral forms; it could also mean other genres, such as metaphors used by an individual or a group within a story; it is “a methodological approach that goes beyond the mere analysis of texts as it is concerned with the scrutiny of the social phenomena that activate, produce, organise, and transmit stories” (Mura & Sharif, 2017, p. 195). Narrative inquiry allows the researcher to explore how individuals construct their understanding through their own belief systems while considering the social discourse, participants’ tones, and audience (Labov & Waletzky, 1997; Mura & Sharif, 2017). Narrative inquiry assists me in comprehending the narratives linked to participants’ personal and family experiences and keeping in mind all the time why a story is recalled from their memory, how they tell their story, and how the social discourse, their cultural backgrounds, and environment influence the story (Riessman, 2008).

Narrative inquiry gives more significant consideration to the researcher’s reflexivity during the data collection and analysis phases and allows for several methods of analysing stories and narratives (Mura & Sharif, 2017; Tomassini et al., 2021). The interaction between the researcher and participants is acknowledged since the researcher makes sense of this phenomenon not only based on their knowledge but also on their interactions with the participants (Beskow, 2022). Beskow (2022) and Clandinin (2007) pointed out that narrative inquiry is underpinned by constructivism, including researchers as sense makers through interaction with the participants (Lieblich et al., 1998). I am a member of an LMTE family. Thus, narrative inquiry allows me to listen to the stories of LMTEs and their families with whom I have shared experiences, as in this research.

I conducted two rounds of interviews to gather narratives from individual LMTEs and their families. The advantage of having two sets of interviews is that individuals may have different abilities to tell their experiences through stories (Gottlieb & Lasser, 2001). Having individual and family stories can help individuals who do not respond well in their individual interviews and give them a second chance to make their stories complete and enriching (Smythe & Murray,

2000). Another advantage is that I can better understand family relationships and obtain more details about the narrators with different perspectives.

The subjectivist epistemology believes reality can be expressed through language systems (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, entrepreneurial opportunities—such as language, signs, and symbols—spread within communities via language, and entrepreneurs acquire these opportunities based on their experience and knowledge (Thorpe et al., 2006). Second, through the entrepreneurial process, narratives between entrepreneurs and their families and co-workers shape their characters and those of their businesses. Narrative inquiry allows me to understand LMTE broadly by exploring the power of language and narrative between entrepreneurs and their family members' stories.

Narrative inquiry considers data collection and analysis to be a single process that allows the analysis to occur throughout the research process instead of after the data collection process (Anderson & Gehart, 2007). Individuals and groups use narratives differently because of their differing cultures (Bruner, 1991). For Chinese LMTEs and their families, the methods used in this research project were adjusted to consider Chinese family perspectives and cultural background. According to Mura and Sharif (2017), the narrative inquiry has not been widely used in tourism research in Asian contexts. Narrative inquiry has many advantages over other approaches, such as the content analysis approach. It is an effective and reliable method to document life experience inclusively, providing a comprehensive account of a particular situation or life event. The narrative inquiry approach is used here to better understand Asian tourism entrepreneurs.

Overall, narrative inquiry is well-suited for examining how individual entrepreneurs and their families construct meaning through their storytelling and how narratives shape their identities, experiences, and perspectives.

### **3.3.2 Whole-Family Research**

The meaning of family entrepreneurship for each family member was examined to achieve this research project's goals. This research employs a whole-family approach, a methodology that

examines the experiences, dynamics, and interactions of all family members collectively rather than focusing on individuals in isolation (Murray & Barnes, 2010). This approach considers the family as an interconnected unit where each member's actions and experiences influence and are influenced by others within the family system (Schermerhorn & Cummings, 2008). It recognises the complexity and interdependence of family relationships and aims to capture the holistic picture of family life (Morris et al., 2008). This means that the researcher should consider the viewpoint of each family member since each household is a cohesive unit (Handel, 1997). Thus, the whole-family methodology provides the best fit for this research project. This research interviewed every family member; thus, the whole-family approach was adopted in this tourism research (Schänzel, 2010), which includes children, women, and the parents of the entrepreneurs. Family scholars are encouraged to adopt holistically-oriented research methodologies (Roy et al., 2015).

Defining the concept of family is challenging due to the nature of the family structure and the societal values (Roy et al., 2015; Schänzel et al., 2012). As society has progressed and changed, the family has evolved into various forms, from the nuclear family in the early 20th century to the single-parent family, extended family, LGBTQI family, and so on. No matter the family type, tourism research should reflect the diversity of family features. In this research, based on Handel's (1997) argument, families are considered the social entity, in that all family members live in the same household and spend their time together for a certain period; they usually formulate their own family lifestyle, which influences every family member. Therefore, a single person cannot represent the entire family. Thus, in this study, I treat each LMTE family as an active unit of social agents. Within the LMTE family, grandparents, parents, and children contribute to constructing their family life regardless of their age and gender, and everyone's life and experience are influenced by it.

As they are members of the family, children's voices should be included. In recent years, childism has gained recognition as a research focus within childhood studies and has evolved over a decade (Séraphin & Chaney, 2023), which is a critical movement that calls for more attention to children's experiences and of their own interpretation of realities and lives (Canosa

& Schänzel, 2021). Childism is now finding its place in various fields of study (Wall, 2022), including tourism. Regardless of whether it is about family tourism or family tourism entrepreneurship, tourism scholarship calls for the participation of children for long-term benefit (Séraphin & Chaney, 2023).

Traditionally, children are recognised as a vulnerable group and researchers are involved in complicated ethics review processes when involving children as participants. However, the concept of vulnerability is ambiguous (Buchanan, 2023). The central idea of vulnerability in human subject research is to protect participants instead of excluding them (Gordon, 2020). “Vulnerable groups receive less attention from researchers, and there is no reason; however, why they should be excluded from any research” (van den Hoonaard, 2018, p. 4). Social researchers are encouraged to include children’s voices to reveal their lived experiences by protecting them from the assumption that they are too vulnerable to be interviewed.

This research project used the whole-family research approach, including all family members, especially children, to gain a holistic understanding of the LMTE family experience and how these families construct their world.

### **3.3.3 Case Study Approach**

A case study is an in-depth study of a unit of something in which research tries to find universal characteristics and apply them to similar, larger phenomena (Gerring, 2004). This research project is a study on a social phenomenon that explores the “how” and “why” questions regarding how LMTEs and their families adjust on Hainan Island and why they migrate to Hainan to start their tourism business in the first place. I studied eight families and treated each family as a unit, and each unit as a case (Handel, 1997). In each case, I aimed to understand each family’s experience and how each family member constructed their experience and lifestyle. Family case studies primarily rely on interviews and involve a small sample (Roy et al., 2015). Therefore, the case study methodology was appropriate for this investigation, with each family forming the case. As the nature of this study is qualitative, the case study here is embraced as a methodology over a method (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

Case studies have a reputation in qualitative research across disciplines as an effective methodology to explain complex phenomena (Mills, 2014). Case studies investigate individuals' lives and experiences, delving into their comprehension of the social and cultural environment that surrounds them. The goal was to gain a deeper understanding of how individuals interpreted their experiences, assigned significance to them, and shaped their own understanding (Helena et al., 2017). It is in line with the objective of this study to explore how individual entrepreneurs and their families experience migration and entrepreneurship and how each family experiences differently. Studying experience through a case study is based on descriptive or narrative inquiries (Merriam, 2009). Thus, the two approaches adopted in this study work well, guided by a narrative inquiry approach to understanding LMTE families' migration phenomenon and experiences of adapting to Hainan Island.

Case study has a long history in the scholarly world and has been used interchangeably within qualitative research (Merriam, 2016). This study adopted Merriam's definition of a case study, which involves an in-depth analysis of a specific unit, such as an individual, group, or event, to better understand a particular phenomenon. That means each family interviewed in this research project belongs to the phenomenon of LMTE, and I analysed them as a unit within the lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurial boundary. Both constructivism and interpretivism implement case studies in the research design.

Since the fundamental goal of a case study is to involve the researcher in the process of generating data, and it requires interactions between the researcher and participants (Helena et al., 2017). Cases are chosen according to the research's objective and for the insights they could provide into the phenomenon or subject of interest. In this research project, LMTE families are chosen to answer the question of their motivation for and lifestyle experience of starting a tourism business on Hainan Island. Methods should employ techniques that aid in interpreting, organising, and handling information, while also adjusting discoveries to ensure clear and practical presentation of the results (Merriam, 2016).

### **3.3.4 Lego Serious Play® Methodology**

The Lego Serious Play® (LSP) methodology is an innovative approach developed from the constructivism paradigm. Based on Creswell (2013), constructivist researchers and their participants co-construct the realities; therefore, the relationship between the researcher and the participants is essential, and the participants' perspectives are critical. This research project involves all family members, including seniors, middle-aged adults, and children. It is worth noting that all participants come from Chinese society. To emphasise this cultural background meant that the research design took significant time and effort. First, I established that the majority of tourism researchers in this field adopted qualitative methods (e.g., ethnography, focus group, interviews, and observations) and employed other visual methods when involving children (e.g., drawing, photography, and participatory film). However, previous scholars have concluded that Eurocentric ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies may be unsuitable within Asian contexts since Asia's economic and social culture differs from Western cultures (Mura & Khoo-Lattimore, 2018; Raymo et al., 2015). Thus, the LSP methodology was adopted to study LMTE families. The LSP methodology encourages using metaphors through building with Lego® bricks, and these reflect deeper meanings and enable a better understanding.

The LSP method is developed from psychology and behavioural science (Quinn et al., 2021). It draws from Piaget's theory of constructivism (Piaget, 1951) and was further developed by Papert, who extended it to constructionism (Papert & Harel, 1991). Constructivism illustrates that children acquire knowledge based on their own understanding and experience of the world rather than by believing what adults tell them. This means that their knowledge is constructed through their own experiences rather than imposed by adults. Children are considered active learners who are theory creators (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014). Papert further incorporated the constructionism theory, emphasising that knowledge is generated more efficiently and comprehensively when the learner is actively involved in learning with an external product (Papert & Harel, 1991). Hence, LSP borrowed these theories, which believe the learner (both children and adults) could transfer their internal emotions, feelings, experiences, and thoughts through a tangible objective such as Lego® bricks, subsequently enabling a deeper refinement

of ideas and construction of their reality (Quinn et al., 2021). In LSP, individuals employ Lego<sup>®</sup> bricks to create tangible three-dimensional models in response to open-ended questions presented by a facilitator. These models act as visual representations of the participants' ideas, feelings, and concepts. The LSP method aligns with constructivism, in which knowledge is seen as being actively constructed by individuals through their experiences. Each participant in the LSP workshop builds their own model with Lego<sup>®</sup> bricks based on their own understanding; thus, they construct their own reality.

In tourism and hospitality research, the task-based research method, in which participants are given specific tasks or activities, is often implemented when children participate in research (Demirdelen et al., 2019). Consequently, the creative visual research method of LSP was chosen as an appropriate data collection method to include children's voices. Wengel et al. (2021) described LSP as a workshop technique guided by constructionist epistemology, allowing participants to express their understandings creatively and metaphorically through hands-on construction and play. LSP is a visual method that provides richer and deeper insights regarding complex phenomena (Rakić & Chambers, 2010). It is an innovative research approach allowing researchers multiple interpretations rather than a traditional positivist approach, which separates the researcher from their research participants (Ateljevic et al., 2005). This creative method allows children to express their experiences with tangible Lego<sup>®</sup> bricks. Playing with Lego<sup>®</sup> "seriously" ensures that the researcher does not drive the thoughts of the participants and that the children can have the freedom to express their opinions in a playful, metaphorical, and meaningful way.

The LSP visual research method is engaging, and is suitable for conducting research with children (Pink, 2011). LSP has become a facilitated workshop, a group work tool that has been applied in different situations. For example, using LSP to improve autistic children's social interaction skills (Hu et al., 2018), to facilitate individual coaching (Quinn et al., 2021), make better business decisions (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014), and in teaching and learning (James, 2013; Kurkovsky, 2015). However, to my knowledge, no LSP workshop has been applied previously to Chinese families. LSP allows everyone to contribute to real-world problems and

to exchange opinions through tangible Lego® bricks. Therefore, the creative, co-constructive, artefact-based method of the LSP workshop was used in this research project (Wengel, 2020).

Lego® entered the Chinese market in the early 1990s. To position itself in China's market, Lego® made efforts to establish Lego® Education Activity Centres nationwide, conveying the educational philosophy of learning through doing, learning through playing, to Chinese consumers, and creating an image of Lego® as educational and beneficial for learning. At that time, China implemented the one-child policy, and families paid extensive attention to children's education. Lego® became a trendy educational toy that parents eagerly supported (Bloomberg, 2020). Lego® also produced minifigure themes based on actual locations, including China (Maciorowski & Maciorowski, 2016), and these minifigures align with Chinese culture. In research, LSP has become a powerful tool to break the ice, especially considering the Asian cultural trait of modesty, where people may hesitate to speak up, particularly at gatherings involving the entire family. Children's voices are often overshadowed by their parents' opinions in such situations.

Wu and Wall (2016) argued that researchers studying Chinese families in tourism should understand key cultural characteristics, such as the central role that children often play within the family structure (due to China's one-child policy), taken care of by parents and grandparents, the multigenerational structure of the family, and cultural traditions. Life experiences are linked to many aspects where the place of residence provides an essential family component (Butler & Sinclair, 2020). Families have different characteristics across countries due to different histories, cultures, and economic stances (Wu & Wall, 2016). The choice of any qualitative tool needs to be tailored to the participants, especially the children. Within a tourism study of participants' experiences, some qualitative methods may not be suitable for Chinese children. For instance, talk-based approaches, such as focus groups, have been criticised by Bosco and Herman (2010) in that opinions and biases within the group, such as from the facilitator, may affect other participants (Nyumba et al., 2018).

In some East Asian regions, such as China, families may be wary of external researchers. Conducting interviews with the entire family might be challenging, since young Chinese tend

to respect the opinions of older people. Adults tend to fulfil society's expectations and may not speak the truth under this pressure. Chinese can be conservative, usually keeping their family issues to themselves, and are shy about talking (Scroope & Evason, 2017). Thus, the talk-based approach may not be suitable for Chinese families. The writing-based approach may encounter difficulties if participants struggle with writing or drawing their experiences (Wengel et al., 2021). The use of drawing is influenced by individual skills and cultural factors (Restoy et al., 2022). Not everyone is proficient in drawing, and not every cultural background considers drawing a primary means of expression (Martikainen & Hakoköngäs, 2022). For these reasons, a suitable method and a suitable environment should be chosen, one with a relaxing atmosphere that allows families to speak freely without any pressure. Considering this, the Old Dad Teahouse was chosen as the study setting, tailored explicitly for researching families, including children, and suitable for Chinese culture.

The use of LSP in the teahouse setting further enhanced participants' engagement, by making the research experience more culturally appropriate and helping to reduce power imbalances between the researcher and participants. This approach aligns with indigenous and decolonial research methodologies (Robinson et al., 2024), by prioritizing participants' agency and storytelling in ways that standard academic methodologies may overlook.

### **3.3.5 Old Dad Teahouse**

Feng and Zhan (2006) described the teahouse culture in Hainan as a tea-drinking culture where people gather in the public sphere for leisure and social interaction. They concluded that this teahouse culture signified local rather than indigenous Hainan culture, since the native Li people adopted it from immigrant mainlanders in 1988 (Feng & Zhan, 2006; Wang, 2007). Over time, the locals transformed this immigrant activity known as Old Dad Tea into their own culture. Old Dad Tea represents the rich cultural heritage of Hainan Island, reflecting values of filial piety, kinship, and togetherness, and offers unique traditional beverages. By embedding research within the organic social structure of the teahouse, the study embraced local knowledge production, fostering a research environment that was conversational, fluid, and culturally relevant to the participants.

Old Dad Teahouses are distinctive spaces that blend nostalgia, community, and storytelling, setting them apart from conventional cafés, modern coffee shops, and traditional yum cha establishments in China. Unlike sleek, minimalist coffeehouses or the bustling, banquet-style dim sum restaurants, Old Dad Teahouses exude warm, lived-in charm, with wooden furniture, vintage decor, and walls adorned with old photographs, calligraphy, and memorabilia telling stories of past generations. The spaces are designed for lingering conversations rather than quick transactions, offering an intimate atmosphere where visitors can sip tea from hand-crafted clay cups while engaging in meaningful exchanges. What truly differentiates them is their role as gathering places for LMTErs and local residents alike—a hub where cultural narratives, entrepreneurial insights, and personal experiences are shared over tea. Here, tea drinking is more than a ritual; it is a medium for storytelling, connection, and reflection, making Old Dad Teahouses immersive cultural experiences rather than just places to grab a drink.

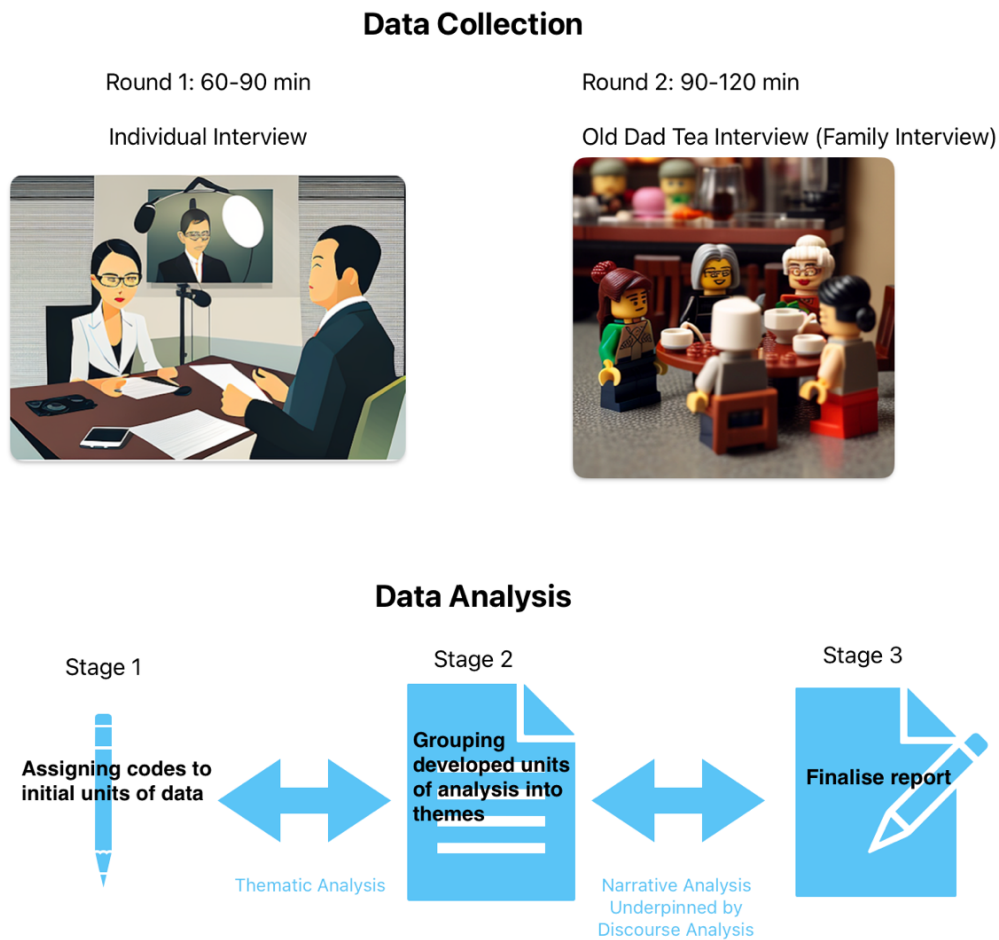
Chen (2012) described Hainan’s teahouse culture explicitly as ‘Old Dad Tea’ (老爸茶 Laobacha in Mandarin), noting that traditionally women are the main labour force in Hainan, while men enjoy more leisurely lifestyles. This historical privilege for Hainan men created the “Old Dad Tea” phenomenon. This activity occurs in open teahouses on the island that provide tea, coffee, and dim sum at low prices, similar to a pub in Western countries but more family friendly. Cummings (2022) conceptualised this activity as an “old dad” teahouse (lao ba cha). Locals and visitors often enjoy Old Dad Teahouses as a symbol of hospitality and warmth. Their family-friendly atmosphere makes them an ideal spot for parents and children alike, offering a welcoming environment where families can relax and bond over a shared cultural experience. This research project continues Chen’s (2012) description of this phenomenon as Old Dad Tea and adheres to Cummings’ (2022) terminology of Old Dad Teahouse for the location.

Considering these matters in the research design, the Old Dad Teahouse provides a perfect environment in which to hold an LSP workshop tailored specifically for this interview, with the whole family, including children, and suitable for Chinese culture. This research strategy will be introduced in detail in the next section.

### 3.4 Study Design

This section illustrates this research’s design process. It includes data collection and data analysis processes. Data were collected using two rounds of interviews: the first round of interviews with the individual entrepreneurs and the second round with the entrepreneurs and their family members. Data analysis consists of three stages, as shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**  
*Design of the Research Process*



#### 3.4.1 Sampling Approach and Process

A combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques was employed in this research. When using purposive sampling, the researcher usually has a target participant group.

The purposive sampling strategy allows for diversity among participants, facilitating the identification of common themes that may emerge from their experiences (Butina, 2015). For this research, I selected my participants based on their experiences and previous place of residence (mainland China) before moving to Hainan. To add confidence to this research, the sample included a comprehensive range of participants representing families with different structures (three generations of a family live together, single-parent family, blended family after divorce), different original places of residence, different durations of life in Hainan Island, and different ages. All of the participants recruited were Chinese, providing homogeneity within the sample, with the aim of contributing specifically to developing knowledge within the realm of Asian tourism entrepreneurship family research (Mura & Sharif, 2015). As Chu (2010) mentions, the co-residence of married couples with their parents and children is a common phenomenon in China but not necessarily in Western countries.

As constructivism forms the basis of this research's methodological framework, this research project's sampling strategy is to gain insights into the phenomena instead of drawing generalisations, which leads to a small sample size that provides rich qualitative data. Patton (2014) has stated that "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry" (p. 311). Sample size depends on the nature of the study and the theoretical framework adopted for the study (Butina, 2015; Patton, 2014). This qualitative research explored LMTEs and their family members' behaviours and experiences on Hainan Island. The nature of qualitative research necessitates a small sample (Hack-Polay et al., 2020; Wilson-Youlden & Bosworth, 2019). For example, a migrant tourism entrepreneur study in rural Norway was based on only four individual entrepreneurs and four partners, resulting in a sample of eight participants (Iversen & Jacobsen, 2016). Accordingly, this study set the sample size at eight families.

The research sample for this study included eight lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurial families who owned tourism businesses on Hainan Island and who had migrated from mainland China after 2013. All participants chosen for this study are families that migrated to Hainan with their close family members, including children, and who operated tourism-related businesses, such as agritourism, surf shops, hotels, and restaurants. Ethics approval was attained

through the AUT ethics committee (see Appendix J; the AUTEK reference number is 22/203), and ethical procedures were followed. Initially, two of the eight families were interviewed as part of a pilot study. These participants were chosen to help refine the interview questions and protocols based on their feedback (Abbasian, 2021). Interviews with the other six families then followed these two interviews. This resulted in 37 participants, including 15 children aged six to 17 (see Table 1).

The snowball sampling technique helped me identify potential participants who meet the research criteria. I first contacted the duty secretary at the Shanxi Chamber of Commerce of the Hainan Province Association. I explained all the details to the duty secretary and provided related documents, then instructed them to send the information sheet and recruitment poster via email to all association entrepreneurs. The duty secretary had no power to choose the participants and served only as a messenger. I wrote an email introducing myself and the research. Potential participants contacted me directly via email when they were willing to participate or had any questions. Consent forms were sent directly to the potential participants. Once they agreed to participate, consenting individuals informed other potential participants of the research project, who also contacted me directly and expressed their willingness to participate. I then emailed the consent forms and participant information sheets to them directly. Participants continued to refer new participants until there were eight families who had expressed interest in the study. The recruitment of LMTE families was completed on a first-come basis.

### **3.4.2 Participants' Information**

This study included four male LMTEs and four female LMTEs. One male entrepreneur ran the business with his wife. Eight LMTE families were included in the research project. The profile of the participants is summarised in Table 5 (see p. 110). All families had children between the ages of six and 17. This resulted in 37 participants in total, and each family had at least three family members. Specifically, there were seven males, nine females, six grandparents, and 15 children who participated (ages ranged from six to sixty-four) in this research project.

Each family was code named after Hainan's famous bays' names since the bays in Hainan are the most popular tourist attractions. For example, Riyue Bay (日月湾) is famous for surfing, Haitang Bay (海棠湾) is famous for luxury hotels and shopping, Qizi Bay (棋子湾) is famous for its natural stone landscape, and so on. Each family was listed with the LMTEr first, then their tourism business area, original home province, age, education background, and length of living in Hainan were provided. Then, their family members are identified, with their relationship to the LMTEr, as well as their age and occupation.

### 3.4.3 Interview Guides

The interview guides are presented in Appendices F and G. The interviews followed the interview guides during the procedure. All interviews were semi-structured, which encouraged participants to share more of their experiences. Also, the interviews were guided by a narrative inquiry framework, which consisted of open-ended questions. Both interview guides were tailored for individual LMTErs and their families, including child/children and their parents.

The interview questions consisted of four sections. Section 1 asked about the participants' demographic details, including their age, educational background, hometown, family structure, lengths of living in Hainan, and the occupation of the entrepreneur. Section 2 covered the detailed entrepreneurial experiences and life experiences of LMTE families after migration, the challenges they encountered, their coping strategies to adjust to the new environment, and their entrepreneurial process. For example, the open-ended questions are:

- *“How do you think your entrepreneurial process affects your family members?”*
- *“What were some of the difficulties adapting to a new lifestyle?”*
- *“How do you feel about living in Hainan?”*

The third section asked about family roles and every family member's relationship with others in the family after the migration. It was guided by questions such as the following:

- *“What kind of roles have your family members played during your entrepreneurial process?”*

- *“Tell me about your relationship with your family since the move?”*
- *“How can the negative experience you have become positive?”*

The fourth section inquired about the family’s future plans. It provided opportunities for participants to add comments on anything they could think of that may not have been raised during the interview. For example:

- *“Do you have any future plans? What are they? Does your family support your plan?”*
- *“Would you recommend your friends and relatives to move here?”*
- *“Do you have any other stories that you want to share with me today?”*

Interview questions were tailored slightly differently based on participants’ answers. Different questions were also asked based on different Lego® models that were built.

### **3.4.4 Data Collection Method**

Data collection started in October 2022 when China was still under COVID-19 lockdown. Research data were collected in two stages. The first round of data collection involved LMTErs at their workplace, where eight individual interviews were conducted. The second round of data collection took place with eight LMTE families at different Old Dad Teahouses with each family. Both rounds of data collection followed semi-structured interviewing.

#### **3.4.4.1 Individual Semi-Structured Interviews with LMTErs**

Individual interviews were conducted with entrepreneurs before the family interviews; the research included women’s voices on par with men’s. According to De Bruin and others (2006), women entrepreneurs can be classified into groups with different motivations for starting their businesses and holding different levels of resources. Adding women entrepreneurs’ voices can result in a better understanding of the complexity of the LMTE phenomenon and a more holistic picture of lifestyle entrepreneurship in Hainan.

Under the circumstances, while collecting data during the pandemic, some individual interviews were conducted through an online Tencent Meeting. Tencent is a powerful tool for

online interviews—the app does not require the participant’s prior knowledge of how to use or download it. It is convenient and can be used on mobile devices or laptops. Participants clicked on the researcher’s link and entered the online meeting room directly without registration.

#### **3.4.4.2 Family Interviews**

The family interview was applied to this study because individual interviews provide only a single perspective (Taylor et al., 2021). The LSP workshops were employed as the data collection method for face-to-face whole-family interviews was at Old Dad Teahouses. They allowed all participants within a family to have an equal voice in sharing their experiences.

As the interviews in this study focused on storytelling, I wanted to establish a welcoming environment that encouraged sharing among family participants. Choosing this localist perspective for the interview location provided me with additional insights and a better understanding, by considering the interviewees’ cultural background and linguistic complexities (Qu & Dumay, 2011). The Old Dad Teahouses provided a place the participants felt familiar with, and were then more willing to share their stories with me. For each family, a VIP room was booked before the group interview with a large round table that could comfortably seat ten people, and afternoon tea was served as a token of appreciation for their participation in the research, helping ease families into a more relaxed interview. Considering that children may get hungry during the interview, providing them with dim sum food before the workshop helped them feel more at ease and to participate (see Figure 6). During the interview, food and drinks were not allowed for adult participants.

**Figure 6**

*Family Interview at Old Dad Teahouse*



#### **3.4.4.3 Lego Serious Play® workshops**

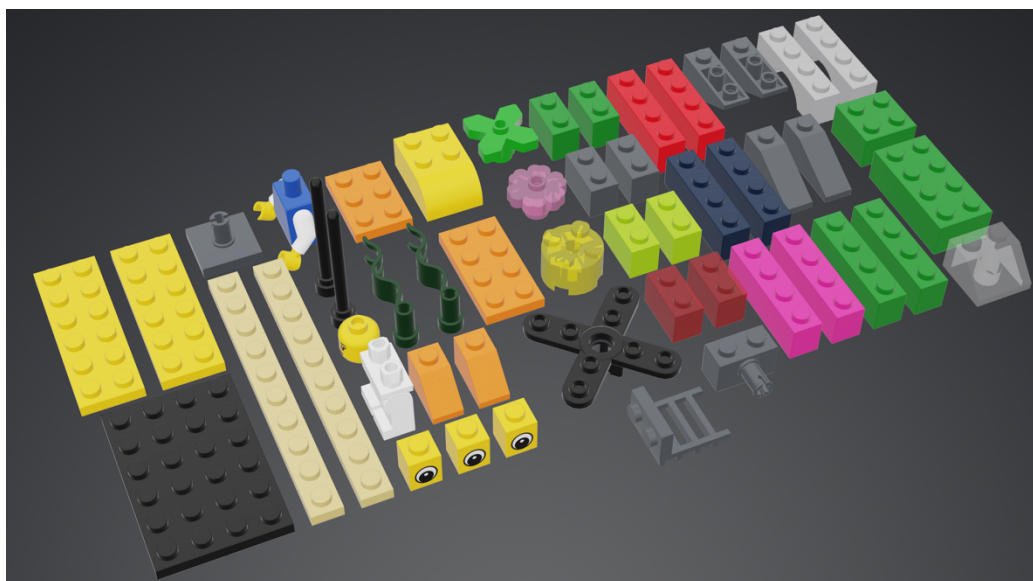
To my knowledge, I am the first to employ this method with Chinese children in tourism research. I facilitated the workshop at local Old Dad Teahouses to provide a relaxed atmosphere for a family, including children, to discuss their experiences freely. The workshop was held during the afternoon teatime based on the steps developed by Wengel (2020): posing the question, construction, sharing, and reflection. Each workshop implemented two building techniques: building individual models and stories and building shared models and stories (Wengel, 2020).

**Figure 7**  
*Shared Model from the Yalong Family*



LSP is an innovative, creative, and new method in Chinese tourism research. Before the workshops, I attended a facilitator training program to ensure that I applied this method correctly. I received the certificate as a certified facilitator through this training course and was supported by the trainer on my workshop design and interview questions. In addition, I prepared all the Lego® bricks—which included Chinese character minifigure bricks—needed for this research. For the warm-up stage, I received support from my mentor, who lent me 30 boxes of “Windows Exploration Bag”, as shown in Figure 8 below.

**Figure 8**  
*Windows Exploration Bag*



(Source: Mecabricks)

I also purchased additional Lego® bricks. Part of my kit included Lego® with Chinese minifigures from China’s official Lego® website. Then, my mentor helped me purchase bulk Lego® bricks with a variety of elements and Duplo® bricks from Europe that were in line with my workshop design.

Interview guides were circulated before the interview, and all participants received printed copies to refer to during the workshop sessions. Before each session started, the aim and procedure of the research and workshop were introduced to the participants. Then, the participants were asked to build a tower based individually on their exploration kit in sixty seconds to warm up. After the warm-up exercise, participants were asked to remove pieces and change their transportation tools, to highlight positive or negative experiences of living in Hainan—in two minutes. Then they were asked to build their model to describe their positive or negative family lifestyle migration experience on Hainan Island with custom Lego® bricks, in five minutes.

Lastly, they were asked to use individual models from stage three to build the final model in five minutes. During this step, they were asked to think about the relationship of each model

with the other models and to guide each model in relation to other models in a way that reflected their family’s lifestyle after they moved to Hainan Island. After each construction phase, each participant was given an equal amount of time to introduce their model and share their stories individually. Further questions were asked, such as, “What was the process of deciding to move to Hainan? What was the most impressive thing/story you could think of after migrating to Hainan?” Meanwhile, as the facilitator, I ensured that at each stage, every participant, especially children, was allowed to share their stories. Each workshop took, on average, 90 to 120 minutes.

**Figure 9**  
*Lego® Models Built During the Family Interviews*



After the interviews, food and drinks were offered to all participants as a token of thanks. During the interviews, I paid attention to the participants' language, tones, facial expressions, and interactions with other family members to catch as many details as possible, and I wrote those down in my field notebook. I maintained a friendly environment to make participants feel comfortable to share and encourage them to tell their stories, as suggested by Gubrium et al. (2012). It should be noted that I have two roles in this research: researcher and member of the LMTE family, which is aligned with the constructivism epistemology. As both insider and outsider, observations were not formally used as a research technique in this study but played a crucial role in validating and improving the data collected.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

This section introduces the data analysis in detail as an inductive study. The two major data analysis methods used were thematic and narrative analysis, underpinned by critical discourse analysis (see Figure 5). First, the data preparation process is introduced, followed by a detailed analysis procedure, and then the coding process is described in detail, including the formation of subthemes and themes.

#### **3.5.1 Data Preparation**

Data for the study were obtained through individual and family interviews. The collected data were in Chinese (the mother tongue of the participants and me) since all of the participants were Chinese. The transcriptions were analysed in Mandarin, and the initial codes, key themes and quotes were translated into English by me, familiar with all the transcripts. The transcripts were not translated until after the themes were identified. I went back and forth to the original audio and transcripts during the analysis. One of my supervisors (fluent in both Mandarin and English) checked the quote translations to ensure data consistency and reliability.

To start analysing the data, I first organised and prepared the information collected. Then, I gained a basic understanding of the data by reading and reviewing them multiple times. Finally, I conducted a thematic analysis followed by a narrative analysis underpinned by critical

discourse analysis. The individual interviews were analysed first, followed by the family interviews.

Transcription played a crucial role in the data analysis process, as it involved more than just converting audio or video recordings into text. I transcribed the data and engaged in sense-making activities, influencing how the data was interpreted and understood and allowing for a thorough understanding and interpretation of the information collected. By listening to the recordings multiple times, I ensured that I captured the content and nuances of the conversations accurately. This repeated exposure to the data helped me familiarise myself with the emerging themes and patterns. As I transcribed, I simultaneously annotated the text with initial thoughts, observations, and potential codes. This real-time coding facilitated a deeper understanding of the data and allowed for the identification of recurring themes and significant points. I engaged in reflective thinking throughout the transcription process, considering how the transcribed data related to the research questions and objectives. This reflection helped contextualise and link the data to the study's broader theoretical framework. After completing the transcription, I systematically reviewed the text to identify key themes and patterns. This thematic analysis involved grouping similar codes, developing categories, and creating a coherent narrative that accurately represented the participants' experiences and perspectives. I cross-referenced the transcribed data with field notes and other sources to ensure consistency. This step was crucial for validating the interpretations and enhancing the reliability of the analysis.

By integrating these sense-making activities into the transcription process, I was able to transform raw data into meaningful insights. This approach facilitated a comprehensive analysis and ensured that the participants' voices were accurately and respectfully represented in the study. Through transcription, the data were analysed more thoroughly and in greater detail, leading to a deeper understanding of the emerging themes and patterns. I listened to the audio recordings multiple times and transcribed them into Word format.

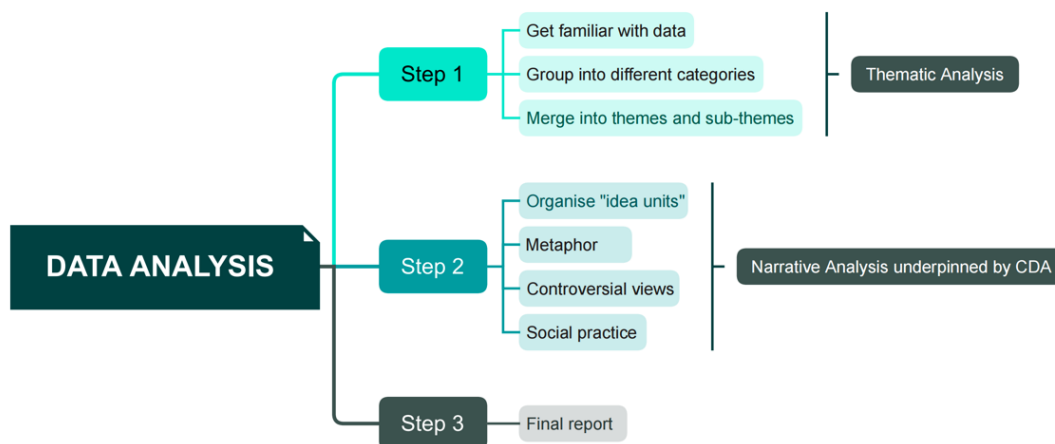
First, I transcribed each interview into an individual Word document. Then, I made two folders for individual and family interviews. I reviewed the transcriptions many times to ensure that all the details, including changes in the voices of the participants, and signs, changes in facial

expression, tones, and other notes made during the interviews, were captured. I noted each participant's age, background, education, previous residence, and so on, and recorded all of this. Finally, I uploaded all the files to NVivo 12 for further analysis.

### **3.5.2 Data Analysis Procedure**

Data analysis was performed in three main steps: thematic analysis, narrative analysis, and final reporting. In step one, I used thematic analysis through the inductive approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which was applied to analyse the raw data gathered from the interviews. They argued that thematic analyses are widely used in qualitative data analyses as they allow for flexibility and do not require the researcher to have pre-existing theories. Similarly, Mura and Sharif (2017) stated that most tourism researchers who adopted a narrative inquiry approach applied thematic analysis in their studies. In addition, themes do not simply emerge from the data or coding process in a passive manner. Instead, thematic analysis is aligned with narrative inquiry, as themes are dynamic and interpretive narratives about the data, crafted at the intersection of the researcher's theoretical assumptions, analytical tools, expertise, and the nature of the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This makes thematic analysis the best fit to reflect LMTEs and their families' actual experiences and meanings with a level of transparency. In Step Two, I followed and expanded on Tomassini et al.'s (2021) narrative analysis, supported by critical discourse analysis. I adopted a dual role and considered the changing nature of contemporary Chinese society to refine the themes. Finally, the final report emerged, based on the previous two steps.

**Figure 10**  
*Data Analysis Framework*



### 3.5.2.1 Thematic Analysis

For the first round of data analysis, I categorised all my data into seven categories, starting from my research aim and research questions (as outlined in Section 1.6), which included motivation, what lifestyle is, what “family” means; their experiences, environment, most memorable stories, and differing opinions or conflicts within the family. Further analysis was then applied to each category. However, I analysed the individual interview and the family interview separately. Through this first step of analysis, I could group my data into a few major categories, condensing the large amount of data for further analysis. Thematic analysis allowed me to organise similar themes among participants.

#### *Analysis of Individual Interviews*

Data from individual and family interviews were analysed separately in the first stage. For the eight individual interviews, I assigned codes to individual interview data, developed based on research questions and the previous literature. An example from one LMTEr interview is shown in Figure 11, and the initial codes are listed in Table 3. At this stage, I employed Nvivo 12 to help me to categorize the data and create and assign codes to it. I used the codes to categorize the data into different themes and subthemes which helped me to identify and analyse core concepts related to LMTE, such as “motivations,” “family resilience,” and “positive/negative

experience.” Nvivo also facilitated the conduct of thematic analysis, uncovering key patterns and trends within the data, especially in relation to participants’ discussions on entrepreneurial motivations, family roles, and social connections. Additionally, since this research project included multiple cases (different families), NVivo enabled me to compare these cases.

First, I used different colours to represent the associated themes manually. For example, blue represents the data related to motivations, orange represents the meaning of family and lifestyle, pink represents their migrant and entrepreneurial experiences, red represents conflicted perspectives, purple reflects the adults’ consideration about children, yellow represents other interesting findings that do not belong to other themes, and green represents how family resilience shapes the entrepreneurial process.

**Figure 11**  
Initial Codes on Individual Transcript

莎莎(00:20:00): 对, 还是有这个关系, 只是这一次的创业就相对会, 我觉得相对还是谨慎了  
 一点, 因为至少没有选择自己单打独斗。

晓 C(00:20:09): 嗯嗯嗯嗯。我个人觉得就是父母一直拼搏, 可能对小孩, 对未来讲还  
 是有蛮大影响。

莎莎(00:20:19): 嗯, 我觉得还是有的。

晓 C(00:20:21): 嗯, 我我我也, 我也觉得嗯。

莎莎(00:20:22): 就是因为。因为没有上班的时候, 其实孩子是。会有疑虑的, 他因为哥哥  
 是有老大, 是个男孩嘛, 然后哥哥之前是有问过我说那。我们白天都上学了。那你不上班,  
 那你干什么呢?

晓 C(00:20:39): 哦, 他会这样问。

莎莎(00:20:41): 就孩子孩子会有, 他会他会觉得说。因为我会跟他说学生的任务主要任务就  
 是要好好学习啊。因为他也有看到我上一些那个辅导课什么的, 他说那大人呢。我说大人就  
 是为了要好好工作。那孩子可是妈, 你没有工作呀? 那你为什么要学习? 就是他, 他会有  
 很奇怪或者现在的孩子, 我觉得。校园环境已经没有说我们小时候那么淳朴了。就是大家  
 接受新鲜东西, 然后包括电子产品都变得很频繁, 而且很早。像孩子我觉得。这个时候的孩  
 子就是你很难去跟他也沟通一个, 比如说金钱观的这个东西。

莎莎(00:21:27): 因为它没有概念。所以我就觉得创业其实是能就是甚至店里面有时候需要帮  
 忙搬东西, 我觉得就是如果哥哥力所能及, 我就会让他帮忙去一起做一下。创业过程中让孩子总体能  
 晓 C(00:21:31): 那你觉得就是。那你觉得就这个离异对? 对创业有没有什么大的影响?

莎莎(00:21:49): 我觉得离异这个事情是激发了你要去创业的这个决心。和想要做好这件事情  
 的决心, 因为你会发现, 嗯父母的出发点其实还是比较简单的, 觉得就是只要其实你只要  
 能过好自己的孩子, 能过好他其实不太在意说你的过程是怎么样的。→ 把认为小朋友不是在过程的,  
 只看结果。  
 那对孩子小孩在养吗?  
 很在养, 会小心照顾每天

**Table 2**  
*Initial Code Example*

	<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Initial codes</b>
1	What motivates lifestyle migrants to settle on an island as tourism entrepreneurs?	Flexible time Work-life balance Family structure change
2	What is the meaning of family within LMTE?	Companionship Support Stress
3	How does family resilience shape the entrepreneurial process?	Financial support Emotional support Causing complications
4	What are the lifestyle migration experiences of LMTEs and their families in the tourism entrepreneurial process?	Lifestyle experience Entrepreneurial experience

At this stage, I focused mainly on translating data into English, organising and categorising the data. I reviewed the interview transcripts and identified key phrases, words, and ideas related to the research questions. Next, I grouped similar ideas and created categories that represented different themes that emerged from the data. The following are the initial codes assigned to individual interviews.

**Stage 1: Generating Initial Codes**

After identifying the initial codes, I grouped them in the second stage and assigned them into themes, as shown below. The themes focused on the experience of tourism business opportunities, migration and adaptation, and the overall family experience of moving to a new city. I used paper sheets, sticky notes, and display boards manually to categorise the codes at this stage and look for patterns and themes that emerge throughout the narratives.

**Figure 12**  
*Generating Initial Codes*

Seeking improvement in ability  
Pressure from society  
Previous Failure      Work-life Balance  
Marriage      Supporting family expenses  
Family Structure Change      Become a support for family  
Hard to find a proper job  
Few work opportunities  
Suitable place for developing tourism  
Nice climate and weather, fresh air, outdoor activity

**Stage 2: Assigning codes to themes.**

After identifying the key themes and patterns, I refined and developed them further. I kept looking for evidence in my data to support these themes and explore how they related to my research questions. After all these procedures, the individual themes were formulated as “STRESS.” The details are discussed in Section 4.3.2.

**Figure 13**  
*Assigning Codes*



### ***Analysis of Family Interviews***

While analysing the family interview data, I considered the children's participation, who told their stories differently from the adults. For instance, children are recognised as vulnerable in expressing their internal feelings, and usually shift their ideas quickly, making it challenging to capture their main thoughts. For these reasons I analysed the children's data separately and then combined the children's analysis report with the whole family and formed family themes.

First, similar to assigning codes manually to individual transcripts, different colours were highlighted, and the notion of conflict experiences among family members presented, as shown in Figure 14 below.

**Figure 14**  
*Initial Codes on Family Transcripts*

大旺: 印象中的海南就是, 该冷的时候太热, 热的时候太冷。

儿童 | 女孩: 我拼的是海边的沙滩, 遮阳伞, 这个是旗帜和在划艇的小人。还有一个碉堡。

最喜欢的地方就是沙滩, 充满了对沙滩的回忆, 天天吹海风。

一位小朋友不知道, 但是家里别的小朋友写的日记。

不喜欢海南的就是学校。这边有一些大陆的货物, 是不邮寄这边的。例如, 上次我们要买个头饰, 但是找了好多家都是不送海南的。生活上有的东西没有很便利 Negative Experience

不喜欢海南 好热。 Conflicts

Experience before migration: 不喜欢以前的 lifestyle

生活方式: 就是上学睡觉, 上学睡觉。现在不喜欢这种生活方式。想要财富自由那种生活方式 Motivations

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Motivations

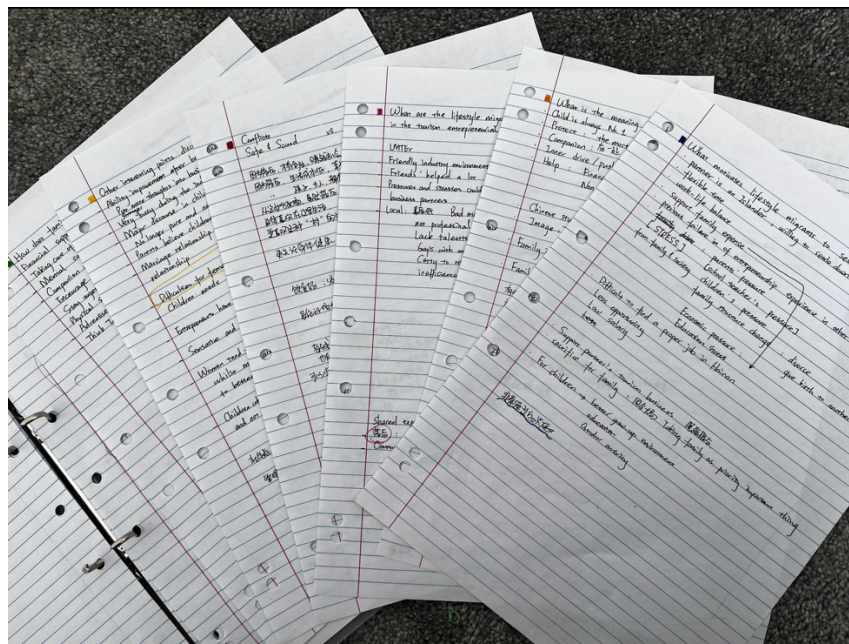
式, 想要很多很多的 money。现在很多东西都需要用钱解决。多么现实。我老是说我像地瓜, 也考不上清华北大。

妈妈: 我这个是钟楼。因为我觉得这个是海南最具特色的。海口的一个标志算是。也不算是最喜欢海南的地方, 就是对它印象深刻。不喜欢, 但是印象深刻 → ? 为什么

爸爸: 我这是北京天安门啊。听我说, 我就希望海南发展的像北京一样, 希望这边的孩子们都能考上北大清华。 对理想期许

Second, I gathered the same colour data and organised them in my notes. I then translated them into English. I returned to my original transcripts next, to compare and check whether the data were grouped and translated correctly.

**Figure 15**  
*Assigning Themes*



At the end of the thematic analysis, I had one theme formulated from individual interviews and seven themes emerging from the family interviews. To help me refine the themes, I applied narrative analysis underpinned by critical discourse analysis (CDA).

### 3.5.2.2 Narrative Analysis underpinned by CDA

After the thematic analysis process, narrative analysis was applied to refine the themes. At this stage, transcripts were broken up by narratives, which might have been destroyed during the thematic analysis. Narrative inquiry permits an analysis that extends beyond simply coding and transcribing the text, as it considers the narrative's social context and culture, language and metaphor, and audience. In other words, narrative considers details that go beyond text, including why people mention this story, particularly over another, how participants tell their stories, and how they describe the current social and cultural environment (Riessman, 2008).

At the same time, the LSP method introduced metaphors when participants described their Lego® models, with varying interpretations based on their cultures and experiences. The narrative analysis helped to identify core narratives and allowed me to find potential conflicts of opinion within LMTE families. Language, shaped by and influencing social contexts, is

crucial. In Chinese society, it is commonly believed that those leaving major cities seek simpler, less stressful lives, avoiding intense social status pursuits. This trend suggests fatigue from urban pressures and competition. However, my interview data challenges this stereotype by revealing that while some participants initially sought an escape from the urban grind, many found new forms of fulfilment and purpose in their entrepreneurial ventures, beyond simply seeking relief. For instance, one interviewee mentioned that starting a tourism business allowed their family to cultivate meaningful connections with locals and tourists alike, reshaping their understanding of success. Therefore, I applied narrative analysis, underpinned by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), to refine the themes, highlighting how these motivations were not solely driven by escapism but also by aspirations for personal growth and community involvement.

On this basis, the research aimed to delve deeply into the language used in narratives, to identify power dynamics and social constructs, and potentially challenge or deconstruct dominant discourses related to lifestyle migration, family dynamics, and societal perceptions. This approach aligns with using narrative analysis as a foundation and then employing CDA to scrutinise how language and discourse contribute to constructing and disseminating specific narratives and perceptions. In Step Two, I employed CDA during narrative analysis to refine the themes where contradicting opinions occur over the same core narrative, to decide the main themes.

CDA has been under development for several years, and it not only studies linguistics but, more importantly, investigates complex social phenomena (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). CDA explores a deeper connection between language and society. The integration of narrative inquiry and CDA allowed for a deep exploration of the narratives and discourses employed by LMTErs and their families, to make sense of their experiences and to construct their realities within the sociocultural context of Hainan Island. CDA can help to explain complex tourism phenomena that can vary according to different cultural backgrounds and languages (Hannam & Knox, 2015). In this research project, family migration and entrepreneurial processes were tourism phenomena that needed to be explained.

A wide range of research methodologies are associated with CDA. From inductive to deductive, CDA has been applied through six major strategies, which include discourse-historical approach (Wodak, 2015), corpus-linguistics approach (Hardt-Mautner, 1995), social actors' approach (Van Leeuwen, 2008), dispositive analysis (Jäger & Maier, 2009), the sociocognitive approach (Van Dijk, 1993), validity claims (the Habermasian approach) (Habermas, 1984), and the dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2010). Although CDA is closely related to linguistics, the choice of linguistic concepts is decided by the research questions and the researcher (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

CDA fits this research, which aims to analyse the narratives LMTE families told, and to try to analyse the complex phenomena of LMTE families living on Hainan Island, considering the social context. The interview with my participants was analysed using CDA as “a form of interaction” (Mautner et al., 2017, p. 145) of an ordinary conversation that occurred at an Old Dad Teahouse. Each family member took turns presenting themselves to the others, to make their points. All participants were treated equally, and insights were gained directly from children rather than relying solely on their parents' perspectives.

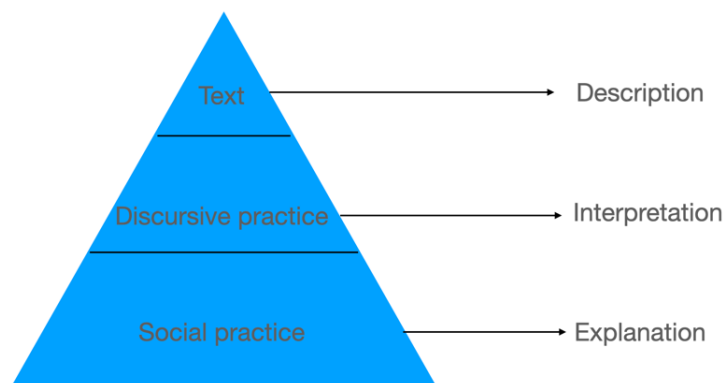
This research project performed a detailed analysis that went beyond simple data in the record, but considered how it was presented, its situation, and the broader historical and social context. I analysed the generational difference of my participants, their social status, original home cities, ethnicity, marriage status, length of time living in Hainan, Hainan government policy, and so on. The interactions between children and their parents were observed, documented, and considered during the data analysis in this research project; an area where traditional linguistic scholars may have needed to pay more attention is the role of language in shaping cultural identity and social dynamics within migrant communities.

I am not a linguistic expert, but I am a member of a LMTE family and a Chinese who is a certified Level 1 Mandarin speaker. I am familiar with the material the family participants talked about and their colloquialisms. Therefore, CDA was an appropriate approach that helped me to understand words and phrases that reflect the lifestyle experiences of LMTE families and was helpful in analysing communicative meanings (Qian et al., 2018).

I followed and expanded the steps of narrative analysis based on the linguistic approach of Tomassini et al. (2021) to identify the characteristics of LMTEs and their families' lifestyle migration experiences. First, I organised data into idea units (stanzas) based on discourse markers, such as connectives (“and,” “but,” and “so”), which might be separated during the thematic analysis phase. Further, I closely examined the metaphors used by my participants, where contradictory opinions arose during the individual interviews and workshops. Metaphor is acknowledged as one of the most crucial elements in rhetoric and meaning constitution within CDA (Musolff, 2012). This step examines controversial views closely, and further idea units are formulated. Lastly, social practice was employed to understand a holistic picture of LMTE phenomena.

In Fairclough's work, the dialectical-relational approach serves as a method for analysing social texts, emphasising the interplay between social practices, power relations, and texts. Fairclough (1992) introduces the concept of a “three-dimensional model” used to analyse different dimensions within social contexts. The 3D model was practiced via text (description), discursive (interpretation) practice, and social (explanation) practice (Fairclough, 1992). These dimensions are interconnected, providing a comprehensive framework for analysing social contexts through language. The dialectical-relational approach serves as a methodological foundation, and the three-dimensional model offers a specific framework for understanding the embeddedness of language use in shaping social practices. I adopted Fairclough's 3D model to analyse the idea units where controversial opinions occurred (see Figure 16). I paid attention to the metaphors used and connected them with the current social environment and norms.

**Figure 16**  
*Fairclough's 3D Model*



(Source: author generated)

I analysed the narratives by identifying how these dominant discourses are reproduced, challenged, or resisted in the narratives. For instance, there is a lot of data related to motivations, so I grouped them all into one category under “motivation” during the thematic analysis in step one. Then, I explored this category further and found different “idea units” within this group with different connectives. In Chinese, we use “嗯” (similar to well, hmm, yeah in English) frequently as a connective word during our speech. Also, “嘛, 呢, 啊” (similar to well, you know, so, in English) were selected as connectives to find different idea units. Thus, I organised my idea units based on the connective words “嗯, 嘛, 呢, 啊” (see Table 3. An asterisk represents the codes formulated as “idea units” under narrative analysis underpinned by CDA). Idea units that emerged included good investment opportunities, a poor investment environment, returning to society, and setting examples for children. CDA allowed me to look at the potential meaning of language and features, such as laughs, pauses, sighs, deep breaths, utterances, pitch of voices, intonation, metaphors, figurative language (Gee, 2018).

Nearly all qualitative studies contain information about the actions and voices of participants. The research collected narrative data from family participants which reflect their perceptions, aspirations, beliefs, or behaviours (Yin, 2015). Narrative research focuses on the lives of participants, which challenged me to understand the context of participants’ lives (Creswell, 2013). For instance, when I interviewed the Haitang family, I noticed the wife smiled often

when her husband answered my questions. The first question I asked him was how long he had been in Hainan. She smiled gently and gazed at her husband affectionately. This happened six times during the interview. She reflected when the workshop finished, that she had known what her husband was going to say. The wife is also an entrepreneur, and they have been supporting each other for 20 years. They appear as a perfectly harmonious couple. Although they were originally from different parts of China, they adapted well and were satisfied with their life here in Hainan. Thus, I concluded from their interview that their code is “Chinese spirit of sacrifice”.

### **3.6 Who am I: Insider and Outsider**

When a researcher belongs to the group sample population, they could be considered emic or an “insider” (Kanuha, 2000), meaning that the researcher is researching culture and society from the perspective of an insider as an emic researcher (Pike, 1967). I am an “insider” since I share the same language, ethnicity, and similar family migration experience with my participants, and I am one of the family members of the lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs. As a researcher who is an “insider,” I have two advantages: acceptance, and trust from my participants. I am responsible for gathering and analysing data. I believe that the process of collecting data was executed seamlessly, and my participants had a great deal of trust in me (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). They told me numerous fascinating anecdotes that they may not have shared even with their loved ones previously. The data collection process was carried out without any uncomfortable moments, and I was able to delve deeper into their experiences. The participants were enthusiastic about answering any additional questions I had after the interview and encouraged me to ask more questions.

Ateljevic et al. (2005) acknowledged the ‘critical turn’ in new tourism discourse, suggesting that researchers should connect their personal experiences throughout the research process and adopt a critical and reflexive approach to better understand and address the complexities of tourism phenomena., such as the lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship. Feighery (2008) defined reflexivity as the act of making oneself the object of one’s own observation, to highlight the assumptions embedded in one’s perspectives and descriptions of the world. Reflexivity

results in a more conscientious procedure and yields more conscientious knowledge (Wacquant & Bourdieu, 1992). This means, in social research, the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity should be considered in terms of better understanding and presenting a social phenomenon (Letherby, 2013). I belong to an LMTE family and am very curious about the reasons that brought other LMTE families to this island and how they have adapted to their new lives here. I am an insider of LMTE who migrated to Hainan with my family in 2017.

Over the research process, I remained open and receptive to my participants. I was happy to answer their questions and share my life stories. The participants were also interested in my experience of moving to Hainan, and we exchanged personal stories and insights. As a result, the atmosphere during the interviews was never tense, and participants felt comfortable speaking with me as a friend. They often opened up and shared more family stories with me, which provided me with a wealth of data and a deeper understanding of their experiences.

It is difficult to avoid the emic perspective during research, since it is an ongoing process in which the researcher is involved from the beginning to the end (Ramos-Tumanan & Ryan, 2019). At the same time, I was also considered etic or an “outsider” by all the families that I interviewed, since I was not one of their family members. As a researcher, I did not share all of the same experiences with my participants (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). I played the role of an “outsider” as well, which means that I am also an etic researcher who considers and explores social phenomena from a more objective point of view (Pike, 1967). For example, one of my female participants was a divorced mother who raised two children. I cannot relate to her situation, as I have not had the same experience. The awareness of being an “outsider” reminded me to be mindful of separating my personal experiences during the data collection and data analysis processes. I allowed my participants to explain their stories in detail instead of assuming that I already knew their answers or stories.

Maintaining my dual role as both an “insider” and an “outsider”, means viewing this research from emic-etic perspectives, which helps me to stay constantly aware of my biases and perspectives. I reflect and describe the phenomenon I have observed and participated in (Shafique, 2022). I always make sure to engage in reflexivity throughout the data collection

and data analysis processes. As a qualitative researcher, I do not believe it is necessary to categorise myself as either an “insider” or an “outsider”. What is important is my deep interest in my participants’ experiences and stories, as well as my willingness and ability to engage with their stories and experiences. I demand of myself to be an open, honest, trustworthy, and reliable researcher to represent their experiences.

I employed the reflexivity approach because I understand that we are all different people and that my ontologies are embedded within my knowledge and experiences. As a researcher, I am aware of my personal experiences and the language used in my research and reflected on them throughout the research process, including the research design, data collection, and data analysis (Dupuis, 1999). Because I am conducting a tourism study with qualitative methods, it can be challenging to maintain reflexivity during my research process, as I met different people with different backgrounds (gender, culture, education level, belief, and so on.) and conducted research at different entrepreneurial locations and different Old Dad Teahouses (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001). I kept all these complexities in mind and deployed suitable and acceptable methods, such as the LSP workshop at the Old Dad Tea interviews, to collect data.

To understand the context of the stories, especially when analysing the experiences of multiple participants simultaneously, the narrative method involves researcher reflexivity and collaboration between the researcher and participants. This is because the researcher collects the story and actively listens to it, emphasising the importance of considering the perspectives of all involved. Narrative inquiry recognises the influence of the researcher, as well as the stories. Therefore, the researcher’s reflexivity is concerned with better understanding participants’ stories, especially when interpreting the experiences among family members instead of one single participant’s experience. The participants’ experience and the researcher’s co-construct knowledge were considered throughout this study’s data collection and data analysis processes (Andrews et al., 2013).

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my own experience as a member of a LMTE family and an insider of this community. For family interviews, I brought my 6-year-old daughter with me for two interviews where the participating children were about the same age as my daughter.

By introducing my own family and letting my daughter join their Lego® workshop, I hoped to break the ice. Fortunately, interviewing the children was not as difficult as I had imagined, for this research. The Lego® workshops went well, and the participating child/children were open and excited to share their stories with my daughter while building their Lego® models. Other participants said they felt relaxed at the Old Dad Teahouse and had no other concerns about sharing their opinions with me since I am not a local island person, and they could talk about negative experiences in Hainan with me without worry. Most interviews ended with casual conversations about plans for children, families, and wishes for Hainan to become a better place. With all of this in mind, the conversations between my participants and me were honest, in-depth, and connected. It was a very detailed and enjoyable data collection and discussion process.

### 3.7 Trustworthiness

This research applied Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) four qualitative research trustworthiness criteria to establish the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings. Confirmability focuses on the ability to obtain findings from the data, which could then be corroborated or verified by other researchers. Thus, confirmability can be established when all other criteria have been met. This study focused on the other three criteria to reflect the trustworthiness of this study. As universal criteria for examining trustworthiness have not yet been set to assess trustworthiness in qualitative research, I tried to validate my research findings through different quality indicators in qualitative studies.

**Table 3**  
*Strategies for Establishing Trustworthiness*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
<b>Credibility</b>	Thick description	Tacit knowledge
	Crystallisation	LSP workshop
		Prolonged engagement
Multivocality	Member reflection	
<b>Transferability</b>	Thick data description	
<b>Dependability</b>	Transparent reporting	

## *Credibility*

Credibility in qualitative research means the extent to which the researcher's presentation of results is a faithful and accurate reflection of the participants' viewpoints and experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Tracy (2010) argued that credibility in qualitative research can be achieved through thick description, crystallisation, and multivocality. First, to meet the thick description requirement, I tried to provide as much detail as possible to readers, since the goal was to show the complex data and let them think instead of telling them what I think. For example, I applied my tacit knowledge when analysing the data. I understood the participants' metaphors and jokes.

In addition, crystallisation encourages researchers to employ various forms of analysis and methods of knowledge production (Ellingson, 2009; Tracy, 2010). Crystallisation is ensured in this study through various methods that were applied, such as interviewing, LSP workshops, and setting the study at different Old Dad Teahouses. This allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the complex LMTE phenomena by facilitating a deeper and more detailed understanding of the matter. I kept prolonged engagement with the research to become integrated into the participants' views, raising the probability that the activities observed in the researcher's presence remained consistent with those that happened in the absence of the researcher (Dado et al., 2023).

Closely aligned with crystallisation, multivocality in this research provided multiple voices to understand the LMTE phenomena. All family members were included in the whole family interviews, and I ensured that all their voices were included in the analysis, including the children's. I received special training on LSP through a facilitator programme and received the facilitator certificate before data collection to ensure that the data collection procedure was professional (see Appendix K). Meanwhile, I am aware that I may differ from my participants in gender, minority group, and age, so I kept this in mind and formulated a nuanced analysis. At the end of each LSP workshop, I applied a member reflection, and I let my participants reflect on the workshop; the aim was to make sure I had captured all the information correctly,

and their reflections provided further data, which added credibility to the data analysis process (Harper & Cole, 2012).

### ***Transferability***

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other settings or groups (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To achieve transferability, I applied the thick data description technique, which involved an in-depth illustration of this research (Greetz, 1973). I provided a clear description of the research design and detailed data collection and analysis procedures. Others can follow my instructions and descriptions to transfer this research easily. In addition, the interview guides and participants' profiles are provided with detailed information, including the occupations of the participants, their age, family structures, educational background, and so on.

### ***Dependability***

Dependability refers to the stability and consistency of the research findings over time, while confirmability refers to the objectivity and neutrality of the research process and findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I have provided a detailed description of all my research steps and adopted the transparent reporting technique by (Korstjens & Moser, 2018), and the analysis I adopted—both thematic and narrative analysis underpinned by critical discourse analysis—was tailored to the specific characteristics of the Asian participants to increase the reliability of my findings.

A summary of the strategies applied within this study to establish trustworthiness is provided in Table 3 above. The main criteria to improve the reliability of this study are credibility, transferability, and dependability. Credibility was accessed through four major indicators: thick description, crystallisation, and multivocality. The strategies involved tacit knowledge, prolonged engagement, LSP workshops, and member reflection. Transferability was ensured by using thick data descriptions. Dependability was achieved through a transparent reporting strategy.

### **3.8 Ethics**

Ethical considerations have played a pivotal role in guiding the research process. Ethical considerations involve ensuring the safety and well-being of the research subjects and conducting the study according to ethical guidelines (Pietilä et al., 2020). One of the main ethical concerns has been ensuring the research participants' privacy and confidentiality (Grinyer, 2009). Given the sensitive nature of involving children in this study, I paid close attention to the ethical procedure and study design to protect participants involved in this study. Participants are respected and are considered to be active collaborators in the research process (Carpenter, 2018). I closely followed the university's guidance in these matters. Approval to conduct the research was requested from the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTECH). The research received approval from AUTECH on 3rd October 2022 (see Appendix H ethics approval acceptance letter). The four ethical principles considered in the research by Beauchamp and Childress (2013) are: autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice. I followed these four principles throughout this research.

#### ***Autonomy***

I respected the autonomy of all the research participants. Participants were informed about the nature of this research, its purpose, and potential risks, and had the right to decide whether to participate voluntarily. They also had the right to withdraw from the research at any time without any pressure or penalty. I made it clear to all participants that a family interview session would be held at an Old Dad Teahouse before each workshop. I explained the study's objectives and procedures in detail at the beginning of each workshop. Informed consent forms were obtained from all participants, including children. Pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity.

#### ***Non-maleficence***

I made sure that the entire research process did not harm the participants. I strived to establish a trusting and transparent relationship with the participants, fostering an environment where

they felt comfortable sharing their experiences openly. I provided complementary Old Dad Tea to my participants to ensure that they would not go hungry during the extended session. I also brought my daughter to two workshops to relax the atmosphere and introduce myself and my family to my participants, and to gain their trust and break the ice.

### ***Beneficence***

This research adds value to children's voices in tourism research and conceptualised the migration of mainlanders to Hainan as tourism entrepreneurs. Further, the methodological toolbox adds a culturally sensitive lens beyond Western methodologies. In addition, this study reflects the current Chinese society through research conducted in Hainan. I discuss the trends of migration and entrepreneurship, family lifestyles, the socioeconomic impact of LMTE families in local society and economy, their contributions to Hainan, and cultural integration and diversity. The LSP workshop allowed each family to gather and exchange their thoughts, getting to know each other better.

### ***Justice***

By adopting the LSP workshop technique, I ensured that all participants were treated equally and I spent time reflecting on their stories, including children's voices. None have been discriminated against during the process. Further ethical considerations included responsible use of data, accurate representation of findings, and acknowledgement of potential biases. These ethical principles have been fundamental in upholding the integrity of the research, respecting the rights and dignity of my participants, and contributing to the credibility of the study's outcomes.

Tracy (2010) pointed out that the intensive engagement of the researcher and participants may result in friendship through specific approaches. I am passionate about this research and eventually became friends with four female entrepreneurs. After the original individual interviews, the female entrepreneurs contacted me frequently to discuss their daily lives. We met a few times in person after the interviews and remain in touch.

### **3.9 Chapter Conclusion**

This methodology chapter presents a detailed research process to meet research objectives. First, the research aims and objectives were explained in detail. This research project aims to conceptualise LMTE from current tourism entrepreneurship and gain insights into the families' experiences. Constructivism was chosen as the most appropriate paradigm for this research to reveal the complex phenomenon of LMTE and family experience, recognising that multiple realities exist. The research questions were clearly stated, and the research approach was justified based on the objective of the research project.

The research approaches were introduced under the constructivism paradigm. Narrative inquiry, whole-family research, case study, and LSP methodology were explained in detail. This chapter has also provided a detailed account of the research design and the data collection methods employed. This research project used a rigorous and well-defined methodology that included two rounds of interviews, individual interviews, and a whole family interview approach with the LSP workshops. Data analysis techniques were described in detail. In this research project, thematic analysis and narrative analysis backed up by critical discourse analysis were used to make sense of the data and identify patterns and themes considering the participants' character and cultural backgrounds.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research project, measures were taken to establish credibility, transferability, and dependability. These measures included thick description, crystallisation and multivocality, tacit knowledge, prolonged engagement, LSP workshops, member reflection, thick data description, and a transparent reporting strategy. Ethics considerations are achieved in four main ways: autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice, to enhance the overall credibility of the research. This methodology chapter provides a solid foundation for the rest of the thesis, ensuring that the findings are reliable and relevant to the research questions and aim.

## Chapter 4 Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This research project aimed to conceptualise the families involved in LMTE in Hainan and to understand their motivations to migrate and establish themselves in the tourism industry. This chapter presents the findings from LMTEs and their families in Hainan. During these processes, their family's role is essential, stimulating LMTEs to work hard and pursue a work-life balance in their lifestyle. Regarding the experience of living in Hainan, different families and individuals may have varying perspectives, but some common points of view and experiences stood out. Meanwhile, the analysis revealed that men and women approached the decision to migrate and the entrepreneurial process from different perspectives, highlighting gender differences in motivations and resilience. This emergent finding adds a new layer of complexity to the understanding of LMTE, revealing how migration and entrepreneurship are not merely economic decisions but are intertwined with familial and cultural expectations.

This research project conceptualised the phenomenon of LMTEs and their families on Hainan Island. It aimed to explore the family embeddedness within LMTE and develop understanding of the entrepreneurial process and family lifestyle migration experiences on Hainan Island. In the key findings presented in the previous chapter from individual entrepreneurs and their families, seven themes emerged: the individual entrepreneur's theme of STRESS; the motivation-related themes of Lifestyle and Amenity Migration, Moderate Work-Life Balance, and Aspirational Lifestyle; and the family-embeddedness-related themes of Family Togetherness, Family Resilience, and Shared Migration Experience. Collectively these themes offer insights into the complex interplay between tourism, migration, entrepreneurship, and familial dynamics.

This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of various aspects, including the residents' laid-back lifestyle and entrepreneurial experience on the island. I analysed the distinctive characteristics of LMTE within Hainan Island, exploring the diverse landscapes, cultures, and

narratives that define this phenomenon. This investigation provided a comprehensive understanding of the unique dynamics of LMTE in the context of Hainan Island. First, participant information covering the entrepreneurs' backgrounds, business ventures, and family dynamics is provided. Subsequently, beginning with central themes derived from individual interviews and followed by key themes emerging from the families, key themes are explored from families' perspectives that included children's perspectives, substantiated by direct participant quotations.

## **4.2 Introducing the Participants**

This section introduces the research participants, starting with the individual entrepreneurs and ending with the families of the entrepreneurs. This detailed information is provided to allow a better understanding of the participants within the research project, enabling deeper comprehension of the background behind the research findings. This contributes to ensuring the transparency and scientific credibility of the research project. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants to ensure anonymity (Saunders et al., 2015).

In total, eight LMTEs participated in the individual interviews and LSP workshops. Overall, 37 participants were interviewed in this research project during eight LSP workshops. Their ages, educational backgrounds, occupations, and other details are described in Table 4. Each participating family was assigned a code to protect their confidentiality. The Hainan local bay names were used as pseudonyms, since assigning a Chinese name is complicated, and the names of local bays are well known and distinctive.

**Table 4**

*Participants' Profiles*

								Family member(s)'details				
#	Code	Tourism business	Place of origin	Age	Gender	Educational background	Year of arrival in Hainan	Relationship to the entrepreneur	Age	Gender	Occupation	Notes
1	Yalong	Agritourism	Guangdong	34	M	Master's, UK	2014	Son	10	M	Student	
								Daughter	6	F	Student	
								Spouse	34	F	Housewife	
								Father-in-law	61	M	Retired	
								Mother-in-law	60	F	Retired	
2	Sanya	Agritourism	Hebei	44	M	Bachelor's, CHN	2006	Daughter	17	F	Student	
								Son	15	M	Student	
								Spouse	42	F	Housewife	
3	Haitang	Duty-free business owner	Shanxi	43	M	Bachelor's, CHN	2003	Daughter	16	F	Student	Spouse is Hainanese
								Son	12	M	Student	
								Daughter	6	F	Student	
								Spouse	45	F	Entrepreneur	
4	Riyue	Accommodation	Beijing	65	M	PhD, CHN	2015	Son	10	M	Student	Husband and wife operate the business together
								Spouse	41	F	Entrepreneur	
5	Qizi	Tourism Influencer	Inner Mongolia	36	F	Bachelor's, Russia	2016	Daughter	6	F	Student	Spouse does not live with the family all the time
								Spouse	50	M	Entrepreneur	
								Father	64	M	Retired	
								Mother	63	F	Retired	

								Family member(s)'details					
#	Code	Tourism business	Place of origin	Age	Gender	Educational background	Year of arrival in Hainan	Relationship to the entrepreneur	Age	Gender	Occupation	Notes	
6	Bo'ao	Tourism agency	Xi'An	34	F	High school	2016	Daughter	8	F	Student	Husband and wife operate the business together	
								Spouse	35	M	Entrepreneur		
7	Shimei	Tourism social media CEO	Shandong	36	F	Master's, Korea	2018	Son	12	M	Student	Spouse is Hainanese	
								Daughter	8	F	Student		
								Daughter	6	F	Student		
								Spouse	37	M	Entrepreneur		
								Mother-in-law	61	F	Retired		
Father-in-law	62	M	Retired										
8	Qingshui	Restaurant & bar	Jiangxi	32	F	Bachelor's, CHN	2016	Son	14	M	Student	Divorced and lives with brother's family	
								Daughter	8	F	Student		
								Brother	36	M	Government Official		

#### 4.2.1 LMTErs and Their Families

**Yalong** has been running an agritourism business in Hainan for 9 years. He was originally from Shenzhen in Guangdong province, recognised as a top-tier city in China. He started his business in Hainan because he had previous failures in other industries in his hometown. However, he believed that Hainan's climate was the best for the agritourism business in China. His agritourism business includes restaurants and hotels, and offers fishing, barbecues, and fruit picking. It is a family-friendly attraction, especially famous for night orchard tours. His parents arranged his marriage with a woman from Xinjiang province, who had previously worked as a jewellery designer in Shenzhen and now had a conventional domestic role. After getting married, she quit her job and came to Hainan to support Yalong after their first son was born, so the family could stay together. Yalong's mother and father-in-law moved to Hainan with them since they were both retired and could help care for their son. Yalong's first daughter was born in Hainan after his wife moved there. Yalong is responsible for all the family's expenses. His two children are now in primary school.

**Figure 17**

*A Night Tour at Yalong's Agritourism Farm*



**Sanya** is a friend of Yalong and runs an agritourism business. He was part of the first generation of agritourism entrepreneurs in Hainan and was originally from the Hebei province. He migrated to Hainan 17 years ago and had a successful financial entrepreneurial experience in Hainan. In 2015, after 10 years in finance, he believed it was time to start a new business, as he had already earned enough for the initial funding. His wife quit her hometown government job to support his business and brought her daughter to Hainan soon after he had settled there. They had their second child in Hainan. Sanya and his wife struggled for a long time to adapt to living on this island. Sanya's parents did not migrate with them to Hainan due to health problems. His wife never tried to re-enter the workforce. Sanya's daughter is now in high school, and his son is in middle school.

**Haitang** currently runs a duty-free e-commerce service since Hainan is the only duty-free island. He was originally from Shanxi Province. He met his wife at college and worked in Fujian province after graduation. His wife, who was his college classmate, was from Hainan. His wife got pregnant and expressed her wish to return to her hometown. Therefore, they quit their jobs in Fujian, migrated to Hainan, and started their business as entrepreneurs. He had many other entrepreneurial experiences before starting this duty-free e-commerce business in Hainan. He opened his business due to the government's duty-free policy. His wife is an entrepreneur in the real estate industry. They have three children, and his wife is responsible for caring for them. Although her parents are in Hainan, they prefer to live separately in their own place. Haitang's eldest daughter is in high school, his son is in middle school, and his youngest daughter is in primary school.

**Riyue** is an Airbnb owner who migrated to Hainan 8 years ago. Riyue's current wife is his second wife. He divorced 10 years ago. His second wife is much younger than him, and they had their son when he was in his 50s. He is already at retirement age and had lived in Beijing for most of his life. His young wife wanted to change her lifestyle and live in a place with a blue sky. They had travelled to many countries and places in China and finally chose Hainan as their destination. They purchased more than 30 apartments in 2016; after 2016, the Hainan government announced a policy of restrictions on residential purchases in which only locals

with the Hainan Hukou (household registration system in China) can buy real estate there. Riyue and his wife worked together and converted their property into an Airbnb. His wife was an accountant before marrying him and can assist him now. Riyue's son is now at primary school.

**Qizi** is a tourist destination influencer. Influencers can strongly affect the popularity and perception of a travel location, influencing tourists' choices and shaping the destination's image. A composer from Inner Mongolia, she graduated from a university in Russia and migrated to Hainan 7 years ago while pregnant, seeking a better environment. She is her husband's second wife. Her husband is an entrepreneur who lives in Beijing and has no desire to migrate here, visiting them twice a year. Her mother and father migrated with her to take care of her. She has 45,000 followers on Little Red Book (a Chinese social media and e-commerce platform). She mainly makes short videos for hotels and Airbnb on Hainan Island. Qizi's daughter is now at primary school.

**Bo'ao** runs a tourism agency with her husband. The couple came from Xi'an province and migrated to Hainan 7 years ago. She met her husband in high school, marrying him at the legal age of 20. Without a college education and with limited job opportunities in her hometown, her decision to move was influenced by her cousin, the first in their family to migrate to Hainan, who shared extensive information about the island and its opportunities. Thus, they decided to move here. Their company now has 20 employees. Bo'ao is mainly responsible for the business operations, and her husband is responsible for expanding the customer base and collecting payments. Bo'ao's daughter is at primary school.

**Shimei** is the CEO of a tourism social media company. She was originally from Shandong province and migrated to Hainan 5 years ago. She migrated to Hainan because she met her local Hainanese husband through a paid online matchmaking platform. She was in a conventional domestic role for a few years in Guangxi province, where her husband's main business was based. Then, she started her business to support her husband's tourism business. Since the cost to promote her husband's tourism business in the media was high, she decided to do it herself.

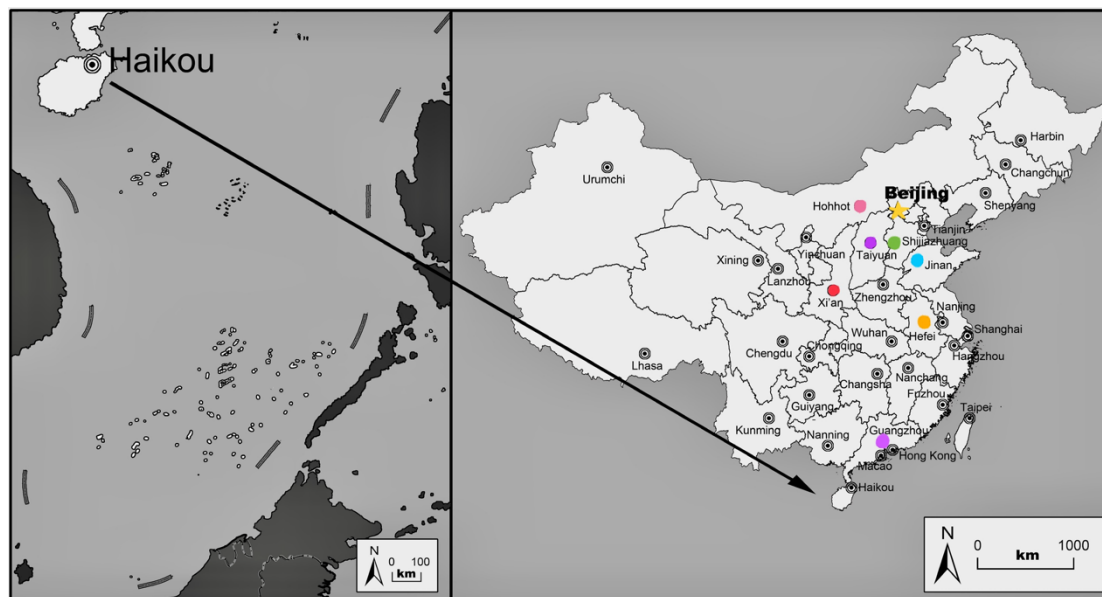
Her company now has many partners, including the Hainan government tourism department, for which they have filmed many Hainan tourism promotion videos. She has a son and two daughters. They live with her husband's parents. However, they barely communicate due to the language barrier. Her in-laws speak Hainanese, which she does not understand. Her son is in middle school, and her two daughters are in primary school.

**Qingshui** owns a restaurant and is one of the shareholders in a bar in Hainan. She migrated to Hainan straight after she graduated from university in Nanjing. She originally grew up in Yunnan. She had been through a divorce, unhappy experiences at work, and failure in her entrepreneurial endeavours in the last 7 years. She has two children, and they live with her brother who is single. Her brother works in a government department and supports her and the business. Her bank job before she started the hospitality business was too stressful and left no time for her children. Running the restaurant and bar usually takes place at night. Therefore, she started tourism enterprises in restaurants and bars, which allowed her to spend more time with her children. Her parents still live in Shanxi but visit her yearly during the Chinese Lunar New Year. Her son is in middle school, and her daughter is in primary school.

Figure 18 shows the provinces in China where the participants originally lived before they migrated to Hainan. Most of the families were from the northern part of China, and only one family was from the southern part of China (Guangdong Province).

**Figure 18**

*Participants' Places of Origin before Migration*



### 4.3 Central and Key Themes

The analysis of interviews conducted in this research project produced significant insights into the embeddedness in family of LMTE in island tourism and revealed themes that marked the journeys of LMTEs and their families forged through diverse experiences. The collected data demonstrates LMTE's embeddedness in family from two perspectives: that of the individual LMTEs and those of the LMTE families. One central theme, "STRESS," was formulated from the perspectives of the individual entrepreneurs. STRESS is an abbreviation for six subthemes: Shift in Work Mentality, Trouble, Relationship, Environment, Self-Improvement, and Support.

The study extended beyond the experiences of the tourism entrepreneurs themselves to encompass the experiences of all family members, including parents, grandparents, children, and spouses. The analysis delved further into the relevant themes using an adaption of Aldrich and Cliff's (2003) family embeddedness perspective which included the dimension of lifestyle migration. The LSP family workshops sought insights from all family members, including the children, on LMTE experiences. The emphasis was on the voices of the children in these workshops, which revealed five key subthemes: Desire for Settlement, Aspirational Lifestyle,

Shared Migration Experience, Family Togetherness, and The Future Entrepreneur (See Table 5 below). The subthemes developed from the interviews with the children are marked with asterisks\* in Figure 20. Finally, more than 40 codes were used to formulate six key themes from the family interviews. Figure 19 below contains the codes, subthemes, and themes refined after CDA.

The central themes and key themes do not stand alone; they have internal relationships as listed below (and as shown in Figure 20):

1. Lifestyle and Amenity Migration (Environment)
2. Moderate Work-Life Balance (Shift in Work Mentality)
3. Aspirational Lifestyle (Self-Improvement)
4. Family Togetherness (Relationship)
5. Family Resilience (Support)
6. Shared Migration Experience (Trouble)

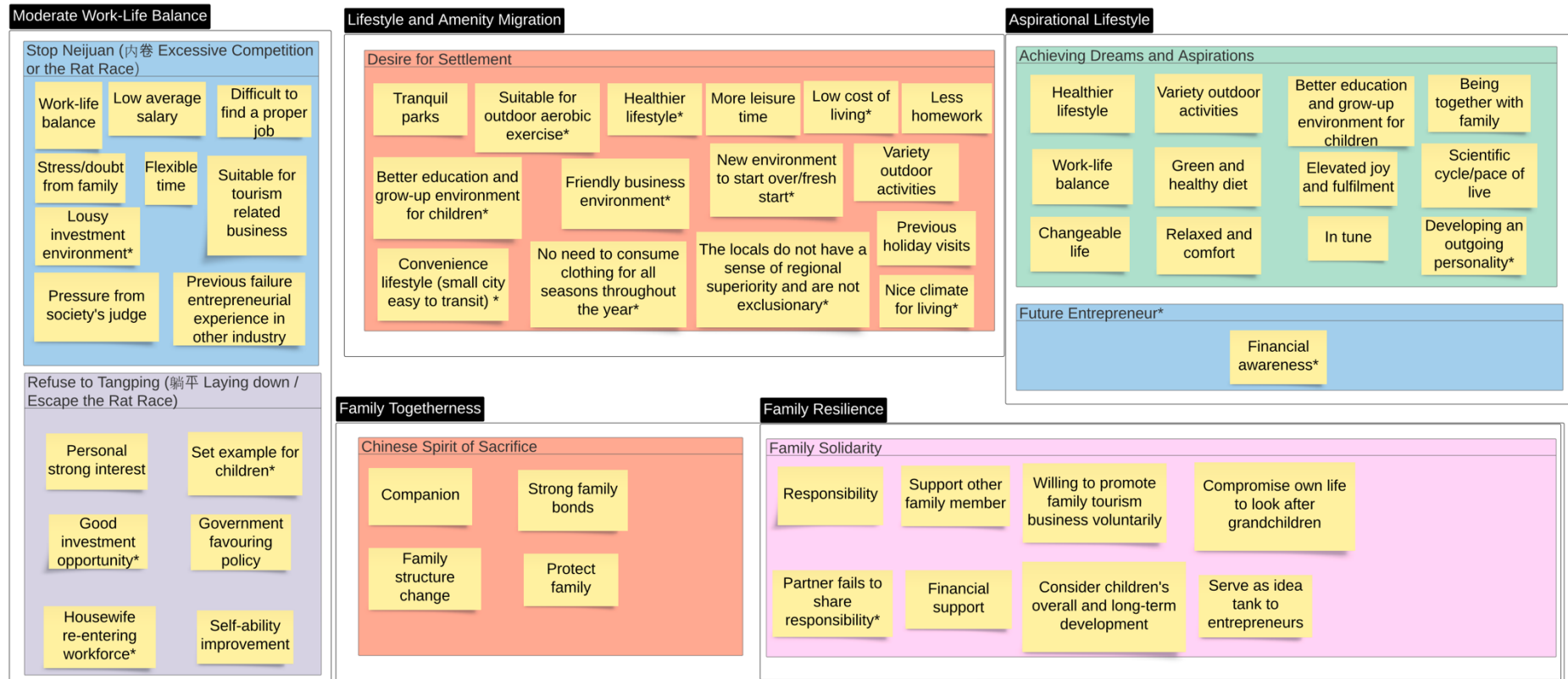
**Table 5**

*Subcodes, Codes and Subthemes Derived from the Children's Voices*

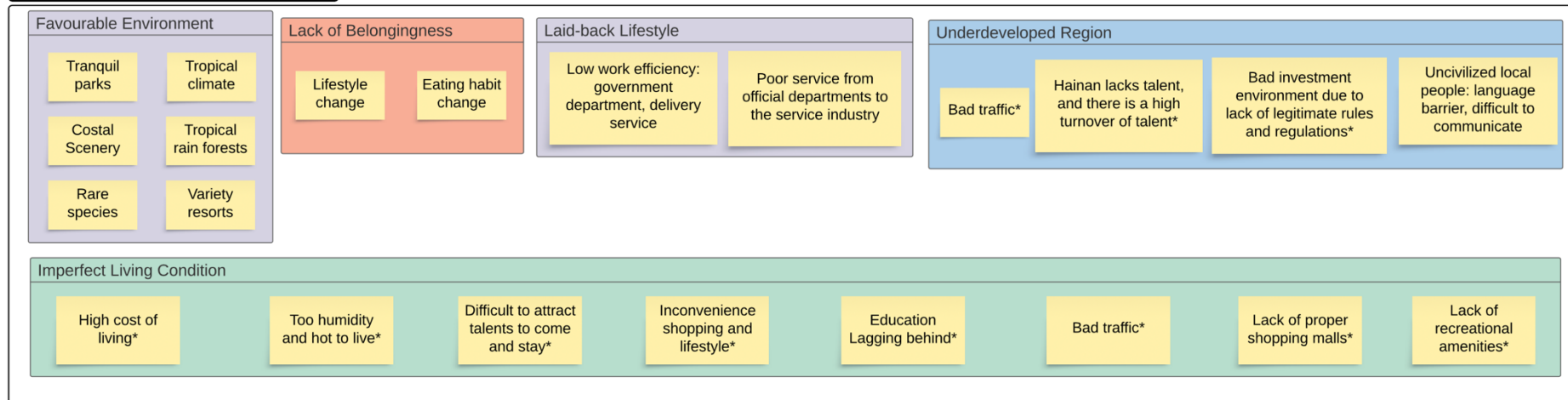
<b>Subcodes</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>
Studying is boring, but school is a lot of fun Study stress is lower than in hometown	Flourishing environment	<b>Desire for Settlement</b>
Social butterfly Enjoyment playing with friends in the community Outgoing personality	Personality change	
The zoo as a joyful place Flowers all year round Slow-paced life School is fun A lot of leisure time and activities Changed eating habits	Joyful lifestyle	<b>Aspirational Lifestyle</b>
Future earning potential	Financial awareness	<b>The Future Entrepreneur</b>
Family is important Importance of family togetherness	Strong family bonds	<b>Family Togetherness</b>
Hainan is remote Public security is not good	Underdeveloped island	<b>Shared Migration Experience</b>

**Figure 19**

*Codes, Subthemes, and Key Themes Refined After CDA*



## Shared Migration Experience



## Key Themes

Sub-themes

Codes

\* Represents codes formulated as 'idea units' at step two by narrative analysis underpinned by CDA

### **4.3.1 Thematic Framework of the Central and Key Themes**

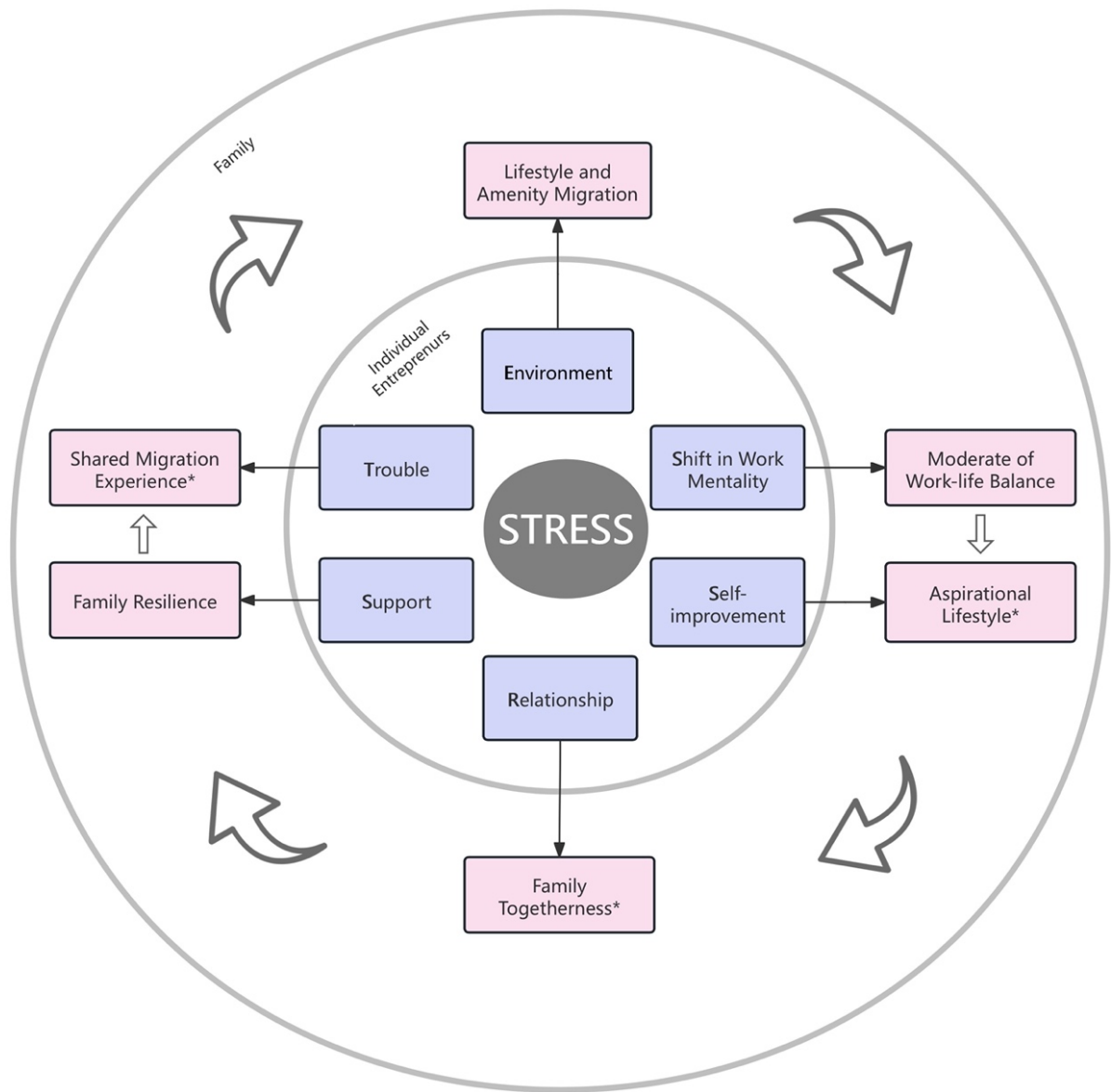
The thematic framework is shown in Figure 20 below. The theme of STRESS among the individual entrepreneurs is central to this framework, which is further divided into six subthemes, each denoted by a specific abbreviation. The detailed findings regarding STRESS are presented in Section 4.3.2. These subthemes collectively contribute to a nuanced exploration of STRESS-related phenomena.

The five key themes developed out of data from the family interviews are located at the outer layer of the framework as shown in Figure 20. The intricate interconnections with the key themes from the interviews with the individual entrepreneurs enhance our understanding. The sequence begins with the key theme Lifestyle and Amenity Migration situated in the upper-middle section of Figure 20. It proceeds clockwise through the remaining four key themes, following the chronological order of events.

Figure 20 below models the key themes and internal dynamics of the individual entrepreneurs and their families before and after migrating to Hainan Island. A key finding was the 'pivotal role of family in the LMTEr and LMTE families' experiences.

**Figure 20**

*Thematic Framework of the Central and Key Themes*



*Note.* \* Reflects themes developed from interviews with the children.

The inner circle in Figure 20 reflects the central theme formulated from individual interviews of STRESS and its six subthemes. STRESS emerged as the core driver for migration, and its impact is explored through six dimensions: Shift in Work Mentality, Trouble, Relationships, Environment, Self-Improvement and Support. These stress-related factors influenced the participants' decisions to migrate and engage in tourism entrepreneurship in Hainan. The small arrows from these six subthemes to the outer key themes illustrate the individual's alignment with family. For example, the subtheme "Relationship" in the inner circle, is linked to the key theme of "Family Togetherness" in the outer circle.

The outer circle represents the key themes identified from family interviews. Arranged in the chronological order in which they were experienced, they begin with Lifestyle and Amenity Migration, followed by Moderate Work-Life Balance, Aspirational Lifestyle, Family Togetherness, Family Resilience, and finally, Shared Migration Experience. The larger arrows reflect the evolving journey of LMTE families, illustrating how their motivations, challenges, and experiences change and develop in relation to each other over time.

**Lifestyle and Amenity Migration** relates to the allure of Hainan's natural beauty, cultural offerings, and lifestyle amenities that attracted these entrepreneurs, in alignment with their visions of an idyllic existence. It has a subtheme of Desire for Settlement. This key theme relates to how STRESS is connected to the environment and how Shift in Work Mentality led individuals to seek better lifestyle and amenity options in Hainan.

**Moderate Work-Life Balance** relates to how stress from work and life imbalance motivates the pursuit of a more balanced lifestyle through migration and entrepreneurship. Two subthemes, Stop *Neijuan* (stop competing in the rat race) and Refuse to *Tangping* (lying flat) relates to how LMTEs and their families balance their professional and personal lives in the new environment.

**Aspirational Lifestyle** relates to how LMTEs' desire for self-improvement and aspirational goals, driven by stress, led to migration. Two subthemes emerged: The Future Entrepreneur

and Achieving Dreams and Aspirations, which relate to the intertwining of professional aspirations with the desire for an improved lifestyle for all family members.

**Family Togetherness** stands out as the cornerstone of the LMTE experience, shaping key decisions around migration, entrepreneurship, and lifestyle choices, while fostering resilience and a shared sense of purpose among family members. Personal aspirations are intertwined with the inherent need for family cohesion. This theme has a subtheme, Chinese Spirit of Sacrifice, reflecting Chinese family embeddedness. Under this main theme, the exploration of how stress related to family dynamics and support systems motivates migration and findings on the role of family cohesion in the decision-making process and subsequent experiences are presented.

**Shared Migration Experience** reflects the postmigration lifestyle and amenity changes experienced by all family members. Five subthemes are included under this key theme: Favourable Environment, Underdeveloped Region, Laid-Back Lifestyle, Lack of Belongingness, and Imperfect Living Conditions. These shared experiences among family members were shown to reduce stress and enhance family bonds.

Chronologically, the dimension of family embeddedness centred around STRESS, highlights the rich tapestry of motivations driving individuals and families to migrate to Hainan Island, and embark on tourism entrepreneurship. Central to these motivations are three key themes: Lifestyle and Amenity Migration, the pursuit of Moderate Work-life Balance, and the drive for an Aspirational Lifestyle. These themes merged as a central force, intertwining personal aspirations with professional endeavours to achieve a harmonious balance between work and life.

A desire to escape the rat race encourages LMTE families to migrate to a place where they can fulfil their lifestyle aspirations. Beyond these motivations, within the theoretical framework of the main themes, Family Togetherness stands out as the cornerstone. It intertwines personal aspirations with the inherent need for family cohesion, fostering a Shared Migration Experience. These Shared Migration Experiences in Hainan are pivotal in nurturing LMTE Family

Togetherness by creating bonds and shared memories that strengthen familial connections. The findings are presented clockwise in relation to their depiction in Figure 20, starting from STRESS, followed by the outer layer of Family Togetherness.

### **4.3.2 Central Theme: STRESS**

The motivations to become an entrepreneur are complex. However, for this research project, the key themes obtained from the individual interviews, which focused on family embeddedness, entrepreneurial experiences, and migration experiences, can be summarised as the central theme of STRESS.

One of the central themes emerging from the findings is STRESS, which affects different generations in distinct ways. Entrepreneurs face the pressures of sustaining their businesses in a competitive tourism market, while their partners often juggle the dual burdens of work and family responsibilities. Older generations, particularly those who migrate with their families, experience stress as they adjust to a new environment and redefine their roles. Children, though often seen as beneficiaries of lifestyle migration, also encounter stress related to social adaptation, education, and changing family dynamics. This section examines how stress is experienced by different family members and how it shapes their migration and entrepreneurial journeys. The acronym STRESS was derived from different dimensions that emerged from the analysis of the collected data. None of the participants mentioned the word “stress,” but after analysing the data, my interpretation was that they were overwhelmed by the weight of the current Chinese shift in work mentality. Hence, the participants experienced different levels of stress, which led them to start new lifestyle tourism businesses in Hainan.

#### **4.3.2.1 Shift in Work Mentality**

The Shift in Work Mentality theme fits within the key theme of Moderate Work-Life Balance. And relates to central theme STRESS in LMTE families as it reflects the tension between traditional work expectations and the desire for a more balanced lifestyle. Many LMTEs move to Hainan seeking a slower, more fulfilling way of working, but they still face the pressures of

running a business. This contradiction—between idealised work-life balance and the reality of entrepreneurship—creates stress, particularly when financial instability or high competition in the tourism market comes into play. Additionally, adapting to a new work culture and adjusting personal and professional roles within the family can be stressful.

The work mentality in the cities of origin of many LMTErs is characterised by intense competition and pressure, a phenomenon often described as “neijuan” (内卷). This highly competitive environment leads to a fast-paced and stressful lifestyle. In contrast, Hainan offers a more relaxed social environment with many favourable government policies that support and reduce pressure on entrepreneurs. These policies create a more welcoming atmosphere, encouraging LMTErs to settle and thrive in Hainan.

According to the “Overall Plan for the Construction of Hainan Free-Trade Port” (HKTDC Research, 2021), a strategic initiative by Chinese central government to transform Hainan into a globally influential free-trade port, preparations should be completed by 2025, with the actual implementation to begin at an appropriate time. The aims are to establish a comprehensive, high-level open economic system, deepen market-oriented reforms, and create a regulated and facilitative international business environment. These measures have been designed to support Hainan’s development priorities, which include tourism, through practical actions. For instance, trade and investment liberalization reduces tariffs and other barriers, attracting more entrepreneurs to invest on the island.

Several participants mentioned the investment environment in Hainan. Some found the tourism entrepreneurial process challenging. They perceived the competitive pressures in contemporary society as intense. Meanwhile, others found Hainan to be a suitable location for investment and tourism entrepreneurship under the current government policy, and that the competitive pressure was less than it was in their cities of origin. Entrepreneurs consistently expressed the view that Hainan would develop quickly under favourable government policies like the Free-Trade Port and Duty-Free City policies. Haitang emphasised that the reason he chose agritourism was based on previous entrepreneurial experience. “I transitioned from my power bank sharing business to a duty-free retail business is because I aim to capitalise on the policies

of the Hainan Free-Trade Port and Duty-Free City”.

Although Hainan operates under several favourable government policies, it is still underdeveloped compared to larger cities. The subtheme of underdevelopment is presented in Section 4.3.4.2. Riyue pointed out that Hainan is still underdeveloped, and even government policies favouring Hainan becoming a developed city in China will take years. He expressed dissatisfaction with the local government officials’ knowledge and perspectives:

The scope, level, vision, knowledge, ability, and mindset of personnel in Hainan are all at the “level of Hainan”...Traditionally, Hainan has had three major industries: real estate, tourism, and automobiles. Tourism has been affected by the pandemic, and real estate is subject to purchase restrictions. The automobile industry has been hit by policies. (Riyue, entrepreneur)

While the environment in Hainan presents as more relaxed and supportive for tourism entrepreneurs compared to the highly competitive atmosphere in major cities, there are still challenges to be addressed. The favourable government policies offer significant advantages and opportunities for growth. However, the island’s overall development lags behind that of larger cities, and issues such as higher petrol prices can pose difficulties for newcomers. The challenges LMTErs face are presented in Section 4.3.2.2 as the subtheme Trouble. As Hainan continues to develop, it will be crucial to balance these favourable policies with efforts to overcome existing societal and infrastructural challenges.

#### **4.3.2.2 Trouble**

The subtheme of Trouble aligns with the key theme of Shared Migration Experience. Trouble contributes to the central theme STRESS and often arises from challenges such as family conflicts, adaptation issues, and unexpected crises which also contribute to stress. This subtheme encompasses the challenges faced in establishing the tourism business after migrating to Hainan, as well as the obstacles encountered during the settlement process. Initially, finding suitable employment in Hainan posed difficulties due to various factors. These included the

remote geographical location away from major cities, the cultural and language barriers, the cost of living, and educational disparities. Consequently, many of the LMTEs opted to embark on entrepreneurial ventures. Since tourism serves as Hainan's primary industry, many entrepreneurs are engaged in tourism-related endeavours.

Lifestyle migrants may have trouble finding suitable jobs in Hainan. For example, Bo'ao decided to migrate to Hainan based on the recommendation of her cousin, a thriving tourism entrepreneur in the area. Aware of the potential challenges due to her middle school level of education, Bo'ao anticipated difficulties securing employment in Hainan. However, influenced by her cousin's insights and belief in the greater opportunities offered by Hainan's tourism industry compared to her hometown, she realised that her education and prior experience were not as problematic. Bo'ao decided to relocate along with her husband and child.

All participants expressed their struggles stemming from the local dialects. Hainan has its own unique culture and dialects, which create language and cultural barriers for people outside the region. However, the tourism industry typically caters to people from different regions, so the local language and culture are not necessarily barriers to LMTE's entrepreneurship. However, LMTEs may still experience challenges in their daily lives and work due to these factors. Shimei shared her unforgettable stories about this communication issue after migrating there. She spent a long time trying to get used to the family dinners and gave up at last; being a Northern citizen, where Mandarin is the primary language used, she expressed her frustration with the language differences, which she failed to overcome. She stated, "If you can't understand, you might feel isolated". She thought this was not because she had no talent in language, since she had studied in Korea for a few years.

Other than the language barrier, Shimei experienced brain drain at work. Hainan does not have enough young talent. Those who had been working for her company tended to quit without warning, leaving her to deal with the many problems left behind by these young workers. "There are already very limited available workers in the market, and when you consider those who are both available and qualified, the number becomes even smaller".

Another difficulty LMTErs experienced during the entrepreneurial process was the challenge of collecting payment. Both Bo'ao and Shimei commented on these financial issues for entrepreneurs and provided examples. Bo'ao mentioned that the only difficulty he had experienced during the entrepreneurial process so far was that it is “very difficult to receive payments”. He had to appeal to the court to receive payment. Similarly, Shimei shared her unhappy experience in collecting payment:

We signed a contract for a tourism promotional video with a major tourism group celebrating its 25th anniversary. This company had diverse interests in horse racing, real estate, microfinance, small-amount loans, and the financial sector. While we successfully signed the contract, they consistently delayed the payment even after completing the project. (Shimei, entrepreneur)

In addition to the language barriers and talent shortage, adjusting to the local working style in Hainan presented a significant challenge for the entrepreneurs. Yalong shared two examples which related to his daily life and work:

Government officials typically finish work by 11 in the morning, allowing us to buy necessary materials during their lunch break. We'd often dine at local eateries, enjoying freshly prepared dishes. However, government departments and administrative places in Hainan can be inefficient. They were supposed to start at 3 in the afternoon, but often arrived around 3:30. Applying for government subsidies was also cumbersome, requiring multiple visits to obtain the necessary documents and facing a lack of templates for reference, which appeared unprofessional. (Yalong, entrepreneur)

The entrepreneurial environment in Hainan presents several unique challenges, as evidenced by Yalong's experiences. Beyond the commonly recognised issues of language barriers and the shortage of skilled talent, entrepreneurs must also navigate the local working style, which can be markedly different from other regions. Yalong's observations highlight significant inefficiencies within government departments and administrative processes. For instance, the tendencies by government workers to stop work late morning and delay their afternoon start

times, often until as late as 3:30 p.m., disrupt the workflow and complicate business operations. Moreover, the cumbersome process of applying for government subsidies, characterised by the need for multiple visits and the absence of standardised template forms, underscores a lack of professionalism and systemic inefficiency. These factors collectively hinder the smooth execution of entrepreneurial activities and demand a high degree of adaptability and patience from entrepreneurs. Yalong's experiences illustrate the broader systemic issues that can impact the success and sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures in Hainan, emphasising the need for improved administrative efficiency and support structures.

Based on the above quotes, the journey of LMTErs in Hainan underscores the intricate balance between opportunity and challenge in the realm of lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship. The LMTErs experienced difficulties finding proper employment opportunities as newcomers to the island for several reasons, leading them to choose tourism entrepreneurship. However, they faced various challenges, such as language barriers, a shortage of workers, and other difficulties in the entrepreneurial process. Their experiences reveal the multifaceted nature of adaptation, where overcoming initial barriers is crucial for long-term success and integration into the local economy. These insights provide valuable information for policymakers and support organisations aiming to foster a conducive environment for migrant entrepreneurs in the tourism industry.

#### **4.3.2.3 Relationship**

Relationship fits into the key theme of Family Togetherness. Family and social relationships can either alleviate or amplify the central theme of STRESS. Strong family bonds and support networks help manage stress, while tensions between partners, intergenerational conflicts, or isolation from extended family can exacerbate it. Entrepreneurship is not solely an individual pursuit but a journey that involves transmitting family values and managing familial relationships and friendships. This intricate interplay of personal and familial elements holds profound significance for entire families. The term "relationship" is used to encompass LMTErs' connections with their family members and friends and includes changes in family structure, such as the arrival of a new family member, divorce, or moving in with close relatives.

The participants in this research project started businesses in Hainan not solely for financial gain but primarily because they prioritised the nurturing and strengthening of their relationships with family members.

Qingshui opened a restaurant following an unsuccessful marriage which left her under significant economic pressure to raise two children independently. The challenges she faced in her relationship with her ex-husband propelled her to become an LMTEr, while her sense of responsibility towards her children strengthened her resolve and resilience. The support and encouragement of her parents played a crucial role in her personal growth and independence. Reflecting on her journey, Qingshui remarked, “Divorce ignited my resolve to succeed in business. As a single parent, the realisation of the need to provide for my child and secure their future became paramount”.

After the divorce, Qingshui prioritised income and a balance between family and work, prompting her shift to entrepreneurship. Prioritising time with her children, she realised the significance of family. Despite following unsuccessful attempts to find work, she felt the importance of financial support and the need for more quality family time, driving her entrepreneurial decision.

It’s not just about immediate income, but the ability to support the family in any unforeseen circumstances or future financial needs. I’ve calculated that working part-time allows me less than 1 ½ hours per day to spend with my children. (Qingshui, entrepreneur)

Qizi was distinct among female entrepreneurs in LMTE families and rejected traditional norms favouring male dominance. During her pregnancy, she relocated to Hainan to create a stable environment for her child, diverging from the traditional norm of residing with her husband and choosing to live with her parents instead. The new baby’s impending arrival altered her family arrangement, shifting from a traditional husband-wife structure to a three-generation household, albeit without her spouse.

I've lived in Beijing and Kunming with my husband before, but I eventually settled here. The primary reason for this choice was the well-being of my child. I wanted to offer him a stable environment for her upbringing and avoid constant relocation. (Qizi, entrepreneur)

Shimei had a good relationship with her husband, which motivated her to start her own business. She recalled, "We relocated to Hainan due to my husband's Hainan ties and the promising business opportunities. I entered this industry at his urging, recognising the significance of self-media promotion, and it aligns well with my husband's business in tourism". Shimei maintained a good relationship with her husband and children; "I always come home after finishing work at the company. Well, I spend time with my children when needed as much as possible". She further described how she explained to her children that she was going to start her own business:

I encouraged my children to take on responsibilities, telling them that it would make them feel capable and independent, allowing me to pursue other things while they gain confidence and a sense of responsibility. (Shimei, entrepreneur)

The participants mentioned that their relationships with friends have helped them greatly in their daily lives, as well as in their careers. Bo'ao and Qizi were positive that their friends and families would "introduce potential customers and introduce their business to others". Riyue emphasised that he had had a positive experience, "The first time here in Hainan, was when one of my friends drove his car to show us the whole city voluntarily for half a month until we found a proper place to live". He believed this was an important reason for settling in Hainan; this local friend showed him great hospitality, leaving his whole family with good impressions of Hainan.

#### **4.3.2.4 Environment**

The subtheme Environment fits within the key theme of Lifestyle and Amenity Migration and captures the natural and social settings. Environment represents the challenges and pressures LMTE families face in their new setting. It includes climate-related difficulties, regulatory uncertainty, competition, and resource constraints that create stress in their entrepreneurial and

family life and highlight the discrepancies between expectations for a favourable environment and the realities of adaptation and survival in business.. Thus, the subtheme Environment is linked to the key theme of Lifestyle and Amenity Migration. Adapting to a new cultural, economic, and regulatory environment can be stressful, especially for older generations and children. Changes in climate, infrastructure, and social norms also contribute to central theme STRESS.

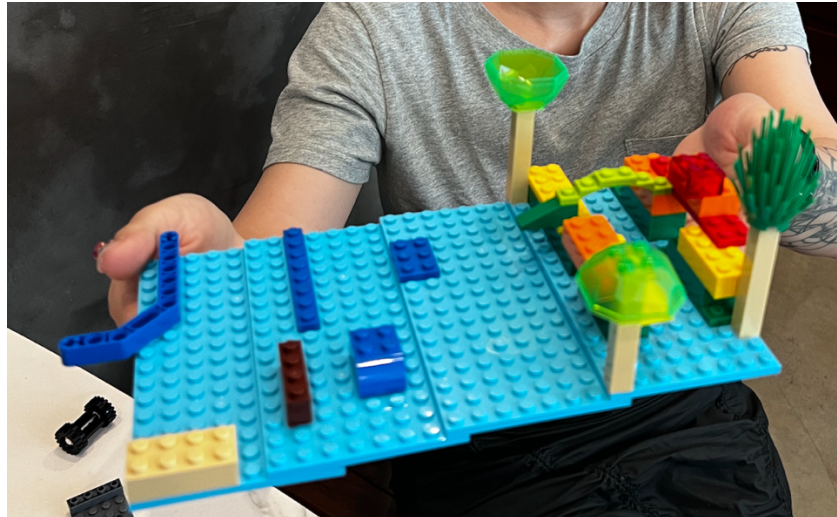
The interviews revealed the stressful experiences of LMTE families in their places of origin due to a lack of access to nature, high work pressures, and educational stresses. They were escaping from their previous lifestyles and trying to create new ones in Hainan. Hainan is considered a liveable place, depending on individual preferences and priorities, qualifying it as a lifestyle and amenity destination. Entrepreneur Qizi remarked, “Upon arriving in Hainan, I experienced a breath of fresh air... with the most memorable feature being the road along the airport lined with lush trees and flowers on both sides”. For those who enjoy warm weather, outdoor activities, and a relaxed pace of life, Hainan is an ideal place to live. The LMTEs preferred Hainan mainly because of its natural environment and welcoming atmosphere. For example, Yalong considered several places before migrating to Hainan; “Places like Yunnan, Guangxi, and Hainan were the three options for starting agritourism back then. Hainan had the most advantageous climate conditions, so we chose to come here”.

Seven LMTEs out of eight mentioned that their original cities are facing environmental challenges, particularly climate stress, and they described Hainan as having a much better environment than their hometowns. In China, many large cities and industrial regions suffer from pollution and environmental stress, leading to degraded air quality, which raised concerns about the families’ health and children’s future development. Qizi shared her experience in Beijing; “During autumn and winter, the air feels extremely dry and smoggy”. They all agreed that the natural environment of Hainan is advantageous for their health. Riyue passionately stated, “The air is quite good, and there’s not much stress in life! It’s quite suitable for living”. Bo’ao added, “I don’t need to wash my husband and child’s clothes [so] frequently after migrating here”, due to the fresh and clean air. Even Yalong, who grew up in Zhanjiang,

Guangdong—a province known for its good environment—praised Hainan’s natural environment.

**Figure 21**

*Entrepreneur Qizi’s model*



Qizi’s model in Figure 21 depicts a colourful and imaginative scene on a blue baseplate, suggesting her overall impression of Hainan. On the left is a small blue curved piece representing a slide or a water feature, along with a few smaller blue and brown bricks representing the sports facilities. The right-hand side features several vibrant elements, including yellow, green, and orange pieces. Transparent green dome-like pieces are placed top of on beige supports to represent coconut trees in Hainan, and green foliage pieces add to the natural, outdoor theme. The red and orange bricks represent the warm weather of Hainan. Her model suggests a playful, leisurely environment with various features representing Hainan’s recreation and relaxation opportunities.

In addition to the natural environment, the social environment in Hainan is considered pleasant. The friendly disposition of the locals remains a distinctive aspect of Hainan’s culture. Their willingness to share and embrace others contributes to the island’s welcoming atmosphere and makes interactions with Hainanese locals a positive experience. The local people have positive and warm attitudes toward newcomers. Bo’ao proudly stated, “The competition in tourism is friendly, the local competitors even introduce potential customers to us if they think our travel

plan is more suitable for customers”. Yalong believed that the local people were more open to becoming friends than other migrants were, since he experienced rivalry among LMTErs. Newcomers may not exhibit the same warmth and hospitality as the locals.

#### **4.3.2.5 Self-Improvement**

The subtheme of Self-Improvement reflects the central idea of becoming an entrepreneur, which includes the accomplishment of personal goals such as marriage, skill development, and business success. It fits with the key theme of Aspirational Lifestyle. While striving for personal and professional growth can be motivating, it can also be a source of STRESS. LMTErs may feel constant pressure to learn, adapt, and innovate, leading to burnout or feelings of inadequacy. The LMTErs in this study started their tourism businesses to enhance their overall personal capabilities; here, capabilities refer to comprehensive personal abilities which would be difficult to attain through regular employment. These LMTErs held aspirations for themselves, their work, and their lives. They were not escaping from stress; instead, they were seeking a more balanced lifestyle. Gender differences emerged regarding the motivations for pursuing LMTE, with men and women often driven by distinct aspirations, priorities, and roles within both the family and the business.

The majority of LMTErs emphasised that their motivations for starting tourism businesses in Hainan came from their desire for self-improvement and their determination to devote themselves to achieving success. As articulated by participant Sanya, “I’ve accumulated a certain amount of funds and gained some experience. Ah, when it comes to this project, it aligns with my personal abilities. From my perspective, I also hope to achieve success through such entrepreneurship opportunity”. Haitang, who had been unsuccessful in other industries, had made a fresh start in Hainan with a commitment to self-improvement and a strong belief in his potential in the tourism business.

For the women entrepreneurs starting their own businesses, their focus was primarily on self-improvement and setting an example for their children. Their children pressured them with career-related questions like “Mom, what do you do? Where is your workplace? Can I come

and see?” as in Qizi’s recounting of her conversations with her daughter during the interview. “Thus, I am particularly determined and resolute. The reason I want to pursue this endeavour is that I firmly believe I must excel in my role as a mother and do this job well”. Qingshui had a similar conversation with her son:

I often remind my son that a student’s main task is to study. He’s seen me attending coaching classes and once asked, “What about adults?” I replied, “Adults work hard to make a living.” Then he inquired, “Mom, you don’t have a job, why do you study?” He has his moments of curiosity. (Qingshui, entrepreneur)

Improving their personal skills and earning more money were desires of the women entrepreneurs. They wanted to give their children a better life and be good parents. Similarly, Qizi stated:

My daughter looks up to me as an artist and aspires to be one, too, when she grows up. It motivates me to excel in this role. Balancing caring for my child with pursuing my career is essential. That’s why I believe becoming a social media influencer suits my current situation perfectly. (Qizi, entrepreneur)

As a means for self-improvement, the entrepreneurial journey for women encompasses personal growth and family-related factors such as setting an example for one’s children. Throughout the process of entrepreneurship, this journey extends beyond individual advancement to include the transmission of family values. Meanwhile, both men and women LMTEs often aspire to establish positive role models for their children through their efforts and successes, teaching them to strive forward and passionately pursue their own goals.

The interviews revealed how the women entrepreneurs often integrated their personal and family lives into their business decisions. This holistic approach allowed them to balance their professional and parental responsibilities while reflecting a broader perspective on success which included their children’s well-being and development. They effectively managed their time and prioritised work and family by aligning their business hours with their children’s school schedules and dedicating time for work after their kids had gone to bed.

The male LMTErs often emphasised entrepreneurial ambition and the pursuit of business opportunities in Hainan, while the female LMTErs placed a greater emphasis on family cohesion and the well-being of their children. This difference in focus reflected distinct approaches to self-improvement. For the men, self-improvement was often tied to their entrepreneurial success and the desire to create financial stability, which they saw as key to fulfilling personal and family goals. The migration to Hainan represented an opportunity for them to challenge themselves, grow professionally, and expand their business acumen in a less competitive yet opportunity-rich environment.

For the women, self-improvement was closely linked to the enhancement of family life. They viewed the performance of their role in supporting the family's emotional well-being and the children's education as a form of personal growth. By cultivating a nurturing and cohesive family environment, women LMTErs contributed significantly to family resilience, which in turn supported the entrepreneurial ambitions of their husbands and themselves. Their focus on self-improvement manifested through the development of strong interpersonal relationships, caregiving skills, and the capacity to manage migration challenges.

In summary, LMTErs encountered STRESS across six dimensions, in their places of origin and in Hainan, positioning STRESS at the core of the thematic framework. This reflects the LMTErs' motivations to migrate and their entrepreneurial experiences, and demonstrated their resilience amid the difficulties of adapting to new economic environments. The entrepreneurial process itself was shaped by the complementary roles played by men and women, where the men primarily engaged in outward-facing business tasks, while the women played a crucial role in maintaining family resilience. This division of labour underscores how self-improvement was achieved through different, but equally important, channels. The male LMTErs focused on enhancing their entrepreneurial skills and financial stability, while the female LMTErs improved the family's emotional and social well-being. Together, these contributions created a balanced dynamic, allowing the families to thrive in their home lives and professionally.

#### 4.3.2.6 Support

The subtheme Support plays a dual role in the framework and links closely with the subtheme Relationship. Support comes from families, friends, and society, while LMTErs strive to become a source of support for their friends and families. This subtheme fits within the key theme of Family Togetherness and central theme STRESS. For example, access to social, financial, and emotional support can reduce STRESS, while a lack of support networks—such as reliable childcare, community connections, or government assistance—can heighten it. After the LMTErs settled down in Hainan, their families usually joined them. In China, close family members across generations commonly support each other in various ways, both financially and through different forms of assistance. Parents often live with their children to help care for grandchildren, wives may quit their jobs to support their husbands' careers, and siblings look after each other.

An example can be found in entrepreneur Sanya's story. He migrated to Hainan without family for the first few years. His wife did not understand his decision to start over in Hainan and refused to quit her stable job at a government media company. However, during a visit at the end of the year, his wife and daughter saw the harsh conditions he was enduring. He was living with all the workers on the farm in a simple dwelling without windows in the wintertime. This experience opened their eyes to his dedication despite the challenges, which led them to appreciate his efforts, and they eventually agreed to join him. His wife eloquently expressed, "At the time I saw his room with other 20 workers, I was extremely surprised and felt so bad for not coming with him to accompany his entrepreneurship journey". After this visit, she was determined to give up her career and migrate to Hainan to support her husband's entrepreneurship journey.

Qizi and her husband live in two different cities, but her husband spends time listening to the troubles she encounters during the entrepreneurial process. His emotional support and willingness to stay connected despite the physical distance provide Qizi with the encouragement and strength she needs to continue pursuing her entrepreneurial goals. Qizi enthusiastically shared, "We talk on the phone almost every day, and whenever there's

something I can't figure out, he'll give me advice. I feel like it's really helpful when I'm feeling lost".

Riyue commented that he had a good relationship with his wife, who encouraged him to move to Hainan and start tourism entrepreneurship: "She dislikes the air quality in Beijing, considering her preference, we visited many southern cities and ended up settling down at Hainan". This is his second marriage, and he respects and understands his wife's thoughts and strives to fulfil her dream to the best of his ability. They have been a harmonious couple for years. As Riyue's wife said:

We can't just sit idle, right? We need to explore income sources, and the opportunity to invest in properties and transform them into hotels has arisen. My husband will manage operations and maintenance, and I'll handle the accounting. (Riyue's wife)

Qingshui has an excellent relationship with her brother. Qingshui's brother has been supportive since her divorce. She stated:

My brother (still single), a government official with flexible hours, invited my children and me to live with him. He plays a significant role in looking after the kids, picking them up from school, and taking them on outings. His support has been invaluable to me, especially after the challenging divorce. (Qingshui, entrepreneur)

Sanya's wife has demonstrated remarkable courage by embracing a new life in an unfamiliar city to support her husband. Despite her age, she is also willing to have another child to fulfil the wishes of elderly members of her family, who desire more than one grandchild. While she never explicitly stated that family is her top priority, her actions reflect a deep commitment and willingness to make significant sacrifices for their well-being. Furthermore, as illustrated in the earlier story about their children, the notion of family togetherness is profoundly ingrained in their family dynamics.

Qizi and Yalong receive support from their parents and parents-in-law who assist in caring for their children. This intergenerational support allows them to focus on their entrepreneurial

endeavours while ensuring their children are well cared for. Qizi gracefully articulated, “Usually, my mum is here with me to take care of my daughter, while my dad stays in my hometown with my older sister to help her with her son”. Without the support of her parents, she would be preoccupied with taking care of her daughter and would have no opportunity to become an LMTEr.

### 4.3.3 Lifestyle and Amenity Migration

The key theme Lifestyle and Amenity Migration emerged from the subthemes of Desire for Settlement and Environment. The push factors from their cities of origin included stress, polluted air, and the rat-race lifestyle. For the LMTEr as migrant tourism entrepreneurs these push factors led these LMTE families to relocate.

#### Figure 22

*Key Theme: Lifestyle and Amenity Migration*



Hainan is a desired settlement destination for numerous reasons. Different family members and participants had varying perceptions about the desirability of settling in Hainan. For some seniors, like the grandmother in Qizi’s family, the leisure activities in Hainan are enjoyable but they would not recommend long-term stays. She stated, “I would recommend my relatives and friends to come as a tourist, but not living here for a long period of time”. This was due to the humid climate and differences in the healthcare system, which she believed made life for seniors difficult in Hainan.

Other senior participants demonstrated that Hainan was conducive to their health. Two grandfathers, originally from northern China, particularly liked Evergreen Park due to its lovely environment. They relocated to Hainan to help their families, particularly their grandchildren,

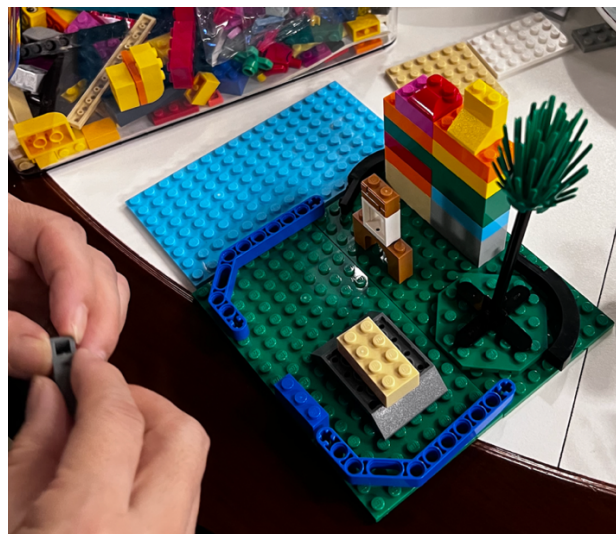
who lived there. They believed Hainan offered ideal living conditions for their health, as articulated by the grandfather in Yalong's family:

I was impressed by the greenery, clean air, beautiful trees, the beach, the ocean, and places like Evergreen Park for leisurely strolls. The environment and conditions are excellent and complement the rapid development of nature. (Yalong's family, grandfather)

The grandmother in Yalong's family excitedly stated, "When it comes to transportation, you have the Hainan Island high-speed railway, which can take you wherever you want to go and let[s] you tour the entire island". She liked the transportation on Hainan. She believed the Hainan Island high-speed railway was an advanced transportation system she had not experienced when she was young. She highly recommended Hainan and this high-speed railway to her friends and relatives to experience.

**Figure 23**

*The Model Made by the Grandmother in Yalong's Family*



The grandmother in Yalong's family built a model of Hainan Island with the Hainan Island high-speed railway circling Haikou's signature scenery. The large section of pale blue brick symbolises the ocean, and the high-speed rail runs above it in a circle that can reach every corner of Hainan Island.

Most of the child participants were from mainland China, which is highly urbanised, which influenced their perspectives on lifestyle migration and their adaptation to the new

environments as part of the LMTE experience. In the mainland cities where they originally lived there are more skyscrapers than green plants. The children's desire to settle in Hainan was reflected in their models. Countless blue bricks were used to indicate the sea around Hainan Island, with yellow bricks for the beach and green bricks to represent the green environment of Hainan (see Figures 24).

**Figure 24**

*Desire for Settlement Models*



The model by the son in Haitang's family is shown in Figure 32. He expressed his joy; "I have spent most of my (leisure) at the sea. I love sand and sunshine. I can spend all day on the beach downstairs from our home". Another boy from the Riyue family enjoyed the beach and the sand and made a similar comment:

I visit the beach after school every day with my classmates from class who are also my neighbours. Playing with the sand is my favourite activity...after living here, I seem to have a "social butterfly" special ability.... (Riyue's family, son)

The environment in Hainan fosters enhanced social interactions and community engagement among children. Children improve their social skills and ability to form connections with peers, becoming so-called "social butterflies". This suggests that Hainan's education system is different from that in mainland China. Students do not feel the same pressure and instead enjoy

more free time. The children's personalities changed after migrating to Hainan, and they became more open and outgoing.

Middle-aged newcomers shared that they had saved a lot of money on daily expenses, including clothing and transportation. This made them feel that the lifestyle there was comfortable, and they were willing to live there.

Variation in perceptions among family members extended to areas like food, weather, and shopping centres. Some participants complained about the food, the humidity, and the lack of shopping centres. In contrast, others found that Hainan's food, climate, and limited shopping options were beneficial for their personal health, the pursuit of outdoor activities, and saved time and money.

Riyue's wife demonstrated a firm belief in the advantages of living in Hainan:

Hainan offers good air quality and a lower cost of living, making it a more suitable place to reside. Unlike Beijing's winter, which confines people indoors due to harsh weather, Hainan allows for unrestricted outdoor activities throughout the year. (Riyue's wife)

Hainan is considered an attractive and liveable destination for mainlanders for several reasons. The pleasant climate, beautiful beaches, and tropical rainforests offer abundant leisure and tourism opportunities, driving the growth of the tourism industry. This diverse range of attractions supports businesses such as dining, accommodation, and entertainment. Hainan's rich cultural diversity with its multiple ethnicities and traditions provides tourism entrepreneurs with various opportunities, from cultural arts to specialty cuisines. The government's policies support Hainan as a free trade port, with tax incentives and business assistance attracting further investment and entrepreneurs. The lower cost of living compared to first- and second-tier cities in China makes Hainan an appealing place for entrepreneurial families to settle down.

#### 4.3.4 Moderate Work-Life Balance

The key theme of Moderate Work-Life balance encompasses the subthemes of Stop Neijuan (内卷; excessive competition or the rat race) and Refuse to Tangping (躺平; laying down or escaping the rat race). These subthemes address the cultural and social pressures in contemporary Chinese society and the emerging counter-movements advocating for more balanced and fulfilling lifestyles. By exploring these concepts, the research shed light on how individuals navigate and resist societal expectations to achieve a healthier work-life balance.

**Figure 25**

*Key Theme: Moderate Work-life Balance*



The phenomenon of neijuan is evident in work and daily life in large cities and refers to situations in Chinese society where societal competition has become excessively intense, leading to overwhelming pressure on individuals and social collectives, without necessarily providing more opportunities or improving the quality of life. It affects all aspects of daily life, including what you eat, wear, and where you live, the type of school your children attend, and how many extracurricular classes they take. Individuals across all age groups experience pressure to excel and outperform their peers. This social environment leads middle-aged parents to consider retraining in Hong Kong to obtain Hong Kong residency, all in the pursuit of providing better futures for their children and families. The requirements for Hong Kong residency are relatively strict. Thus, Hainan has become a more practical destination for pursuing an alternative lifestyle. The LMTEs chose to withdraw from the intense competition in big cities but did not want a completely passive lifestyle. Therefore, they came to Hainan, considering it the most optimal choice for their ideal way of life.

**Education:** All the participating LMTE families interviewed in this research had children, and education was one of the most important triggers for them to migrate. As Shimei's husband

recalled, they finally decided to migrate to Hainan, “When our child was 3 years old, and we needed to decide that it was time for them to go to school, to attend kindergarten”. Riyue’s wife noted, “Hainan offers a strong education system and abundant outdoor activities, which contribute to children’s overall health and well-being, including eye development”. This more holistic approach to child development aligned with the family’s priorities for their children’s education and physical health.

**Competitive Workplace:** In the professional sphere, participants had experienced intense competition in their original home cities. As the Haitang’s wife articulated, “Many are willing to work long hours or even overtime to secure their jobs or achieve promotions”. This leads to work-life balance issues and physical and mental health problems. LMTE families escaped from their previous intense lifestyle and sought work-life balance; Hainan has an island style of life in which they rarely need to work long hours to secure their job positions.

In contrast to other Chinese cities, Hainan observes a unique 3-hour lunch break from 12 to 3 p.m. During this time, some people leave work to have lunch and spend time with their children, who enjoy this extended break. They return to work in the afternoon after their children have gone back to school. Hainan is known for its more relaxed work environment compared to other cities in China. The locals embrace a slower paced lifestyle and prioritise freshness in their daily lives. Sanya’s wife said, “It’s common for locals to provide fresh meat, and restaurants typically serve meals with fresh ingredients. Even something as simple as coconut water is freshly cut and served upon ordering”. This emphasis on freshness underscores the commitment to quality and local sourcing that characterises dining experiences in Hainan.

**Real Estate Market Pressure:** The real estate market in China is a significant aspect of the involution (Neijuan) phenomenon. Due to soaring property prices, many young people feel pressured to strive their entire lives to buy a home. This also concentrates societal resources excessively in the real estate sector. Bo’ao’s family struggled to purchase their own house in their hometown but successfully bought their first home in Hainan. Bo’ao’s husband noted, “Although the distance between my house to the city centre is far away, we have our own yard, and my daughter loves the big yard”. Riyue’s wife commented:

In 2016, we made a fortunate investment in Hainan’ real estate, which formed the basis for our accommodation business. The properties we acquired have greatly appreciated in value, a level of return we couldn’t have achieved in Beijing. (Riyue’s wife)

This strategic investment secured their financial future and positioned the Riyue family to actively contribute to the local economy.

**Figure 26**

*The Haitang Family’s Shared Model*



The Haitang family placed their home at the centre of their shared model (Figure 26). They prioritised both work and family, occasionally valuing family over work. During leisure time, they engaged in family activities such as trips to the beach or the park, aiming to create a balanced lifestyle with a focus on spending more time together.

**Marriage and Family Pressures:** The rat race extends to marriage and family life. Many individuals feel pressured in their marriages because they feel they must meet societal and familial expectations, including home ownership and having children. This can lead to marital instability and demographic challenges. Among the participants, two female entrepreneurs were divorced, one female entrepreneur lives in Hainan with her daughter and parents, and one male entrepreneur was in his second marriage. As Riyue’s wife, who is her husband’s second wife reflected, they wanted a “fresh start”, Hainan is located in the most southern part of China, and “no one knows us”. They did not want to be judged by their family and society.

Moderate Work-life Balance is aligned with the main theme of STRESS and the subtheme of Shift in Work Mentality. It reflects the current phenomenon of the rat race (内卷; neijuan) in Chinese society. In addition, it reflects the highly competitive and high-pressure social environment which poses numerous challenges for individuals and families. LMTE families were trying to escape the rat race (躺平; tangping) in a constructive way; unlike other young people who choose to Tangping by doing nothing, they sought their way out in Hainan and started their new journeys within the tourism industry.

### 4.3.5 Aspirational Lifestyle

The key theme of an Aspirational Lifestyle emerged from two subthemes, The Future Entrepreneur and Achieving Dreams and Aspirations. Pursuing these dreams led migrants to Hainan, where they actively worked towards realising their goals. Their journeys involved navigating the tourism entrepreneurship landscape, overcoming challenges, and leveraging opportunities within the industry. Their passion fuelled their endeavours, and their success now contributes to community development.

**Figure 27**

*Key Theme: Aspirational Lifestyle*



While first-tier cities boast a wide range of cultural and social activities, Hainan provides unique cultural experiences such as Old Dad Tea culture, coconut culture, minority group traditions, beaches and water sports, hot springs, traditional festivals like *Junpo* Festival or *Gongqi* (an annual ritual in Hainan to worship the gods), and vibrant night markets.

The participating LMTE families felt they could achieve their dreams and aspirations in Hainan. Family gatherings and spending time with loved ones were significant aspects of their aspirational life, often involving family gatherings and celebrating traditional holidays. Health was paramount, focusing on outdoor activities and organic foods, in contrast with the fast-paced

lifestyle and reliance on food delivery in mainland cities. Haitang's wife remarked, "We are tired of the fast pace and prefer enjoying our own time here". Yalong's wife shared with joy:

Being busy all day in a constant cycle, our children are often taken care of by my parents, leaving little time for the family to be together. However, after coming to this place (Hainan), we have weekly family group activities. (Yalong's wife)

Yalong's wife strongly recommended that others migrate to Hainan and settle down, despite the limited number of shopping centres, as "Nothing else is as important as one's health". She prioritises healthy food and outdoor activities, which she thinks are crucial for her family's well-being. Her child's development was also a top priority, making education available in Hainan the second most important factor in their decision to settle down.

Many people find that after coming to Hainan they have more opportunities to be together and enjoy family gatherings and activities. Hainan offers unique activities rarely found in other parts of China. The advantage of living in Hainan for family trips was highlighted by Haitang's wife, who expressed, "We always travel within the island, very convenient". Bo'ao's husband shared that his most memorable experiences in Hainan were the trips he took with his wife and child"

We are vegetarians, and when we travel, we don't travel outside the island. Whenever my wife, daughter, and I have a vacation, we go to Nanshan Temple, stay there for a few days, and have vegetarian meals during our stay. (Bo'ao's husband)

Buddhists and vegetarians can enjoy pleasant trips in Hainan due to the continuing development of Buddhist tourism on the island. Yalong's father-in-law recalled an unforgettable moment when he watched a rocket launch at Wenchang, Hainan. Yalong built a model of the rocket launch (see Figure 28), commemorating his father-in-law's impressive experience. His father-in-law shared excitedly:

I can't believe it. Our country's technology is so advanced. In my lifetime, I can witness it with my own eyes. I am so excited. Thanks to my son-in-law for arranging this activity. It will be an unforgettable experience in my life. (Yalong's father-in-law)

**Figure 28**  
*Yalong's Model*



Weekly family group activities can promote intimacy, enhance communication among family members, and provide more opportunities for children to interact with their parents and grandparents. These activities can be diverse and unique. Hainan offers activities such as watching rocket launches and sailing, allowing family members to participate and share in the experiences. This experience of family gatherings is often considered valuable, creating memories and strengthening family bonds.

Hainan offers a wide range of diverse activities on the water, land, in nature, and so on, as eloquently expressed by the grandmother in Qizi's family:

Participating in the annual family sailing race left me with a profound experience. What stood out to me was the ample time for post lunch outdoor activities in Hainan, unlike

other cities. I recall a sailing mishap during which the boat capsized, and I fell into the water. However, our coach had previously instructed us in water rescues, self-rescue, and evacuation techniques. It turned out to be quite enjoyable, and I even made an appearance on CCTV. (The grandmother in Qizi's family)

The lifestyle in Hainan allows LMTE families to spend more time together and enjoy a variety of family activities. This opportunity for enhanced family life attracts many people to Hainan, which offers a more balanced and happier lifestyle than on the mainland.

**Figure 29**

*The Shimei Family's Shared Model*



The Shimei family created a model representing their aspirational lifestyle (see Figure 29). In this scene, at noon as indicated by the time brick, that grandmother cooks in the kitchen while others sit around the table, waiting for lunch. They enjoy lunch together as a family. The tall yellow tower in the right-hand corner represented the entrepreneur's workplace, which is very close to their home. Shimei's son said, "My mom always takes a nap at noon and then goes back to work, it was so close, only took her five minutes to drive there".

For the LMTE families, moving to Hainan was about realising life aspirations and seeking a more liveable environment. Unlike the busier, more competitive first-tier cities, Hainan offered a slower, more tranquil pace of life. All members of Bo’ao’s family expressed their happiness. Her husband happily shared, “This is exactly what I’ve been dreaming of my life is”. Bo’ao expressed joyfully, “I enjoy the time working with my husband, we barely quarrel, and our daughter has been like an angel”. Her daughter smiled, “I love our big yard here, I love being with my parents every day.” Their relocation to Hainan has brought them joy and contentment in their new surroundings.

The participating children used a lot of animal minifigures in their models. They argued that the variety of animals in Hainan made them happy (see Figure 30):

You know, the zoos here are fantastic, animals walk side by side with you, you can touch them. See, our house is this white and blue building, which is very close to a zoo. It only takes 10 minutes from my home to the zoo. (Qizi’s daughter)

**Figure 30**  
*The Zoo Model*



Yalong's daughter built a zoo with Hainan's emblematic species, the Hainan gibbon. She believed that "It is very special and that only living in Hainan I can have a chance to frequently see the gibbon which I never saw before elsewhere; thus, I like Hainan more than my hometown" (see Figure 31 below).

**Figure 31**

*The Zoo with a Hainan Gibbon*



In addition to zoos, the children mentioned that the flowers in Hainan could be seen all year long (see Figure 32).

I love flowers, this is my home's flower garden which is at the entrance of my house. This is me sitting there taking care of my flowers. In the future, my home will look like this exactly have all different kinds of flowers around me, I will stay in Hainan, thus my flowers can always bloom. (Qingshui's daughter)

**Figure 32**

*Flower Model*



The verdant environment of Hainan, including its zoos, beaches, and sea, was much preferred by the young children who aspired to grow up in such an environment. Hainan offered the children more opportunities to have profound experiences with nature. The Riyue's son mentioned that he desperately wanted money to buy things he liked and to become an entrepreneur like his father. The best thing about his school was that he could discuss his business ideas with his classmates. Other children supported these sentiments. Qingshui's son created a model of a vault and placed several yellow bricks in it to represent wealth. He believes his family can make a good living here (see Figure 42). Bo'ao's 7-year-old daughter used the brick 招财进宝 (*zhao cai jin bao*; to attract wealth and treasures) and put it in front of her model's door (see Figure 33). The 招财进宝 brick was used in four models. It is an idiom used in China frequently, especially during Lunar New Year and celebratory events, which means attracting wealth and bringing in treasure. It expresses the hope of attracting good fortune by welcoming wealth home. Children from Chinese tourism entrepreneurial families showed their strong recognition of the value of money and wished to become rich in the future.

**Figure 33**  
*The Future Entrepreneur*



Attract wealth and treasure(招财进宝)  
was put in front of their door

These family LSP workshops helped me to understand how children saw, experienced, and co-constructed their lived experiences on Hainan Island. LSP allowed me to better understand the lifestyle experiences of the children and other family members after they migrated to Hainan Island, their aspirational lifestyles, and how they felt about living there.

In summary, the aspirational life in Hainan combines natural beauty, health, family, and culture. It represents the pursuit of a high quality of life, attracting those searching for balance and happiness. Whether spending a day on the beach, unwinding in hot springs, indulging in culinary delights, or engaging in community activities, Hainan offers various opportunities for people to enjoy a vibrant and fulfilling lifestyle.

#### **4.3.6 Family Togetherness**

Family Togetherness emerged as a compelling aspect of LMTE. The emotional feeling of being together is in the blood of Chinese people. The Chinese “spirit of sacrifice” is a common idiom in Chinese culture which expresses how family members are willing to make sacrifices and put

in effort for the benefit and happiness of the family. This value system, deeply rooted in Chinese culture, emphasises the importance and priority of family in one's life.

**Figure 34**

*Key Theme: Family Togetherness*

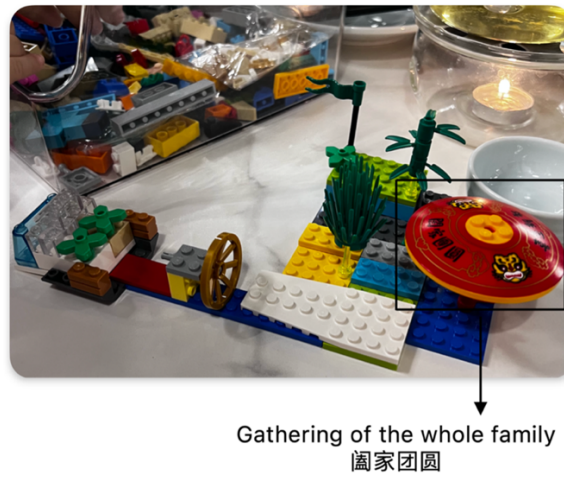


The desire to be together as a family is a powerful and cherished ideal. Family reunions during important holidays, such as Chinese New Year, are of great significance. People make great efforts to travel long distances to be with their families during these times, reinforcing the sense of unity and familial love. As the grandfather in Qizi family recalled, the most valuable experiences during these years, especially given the impact of the pandemic, were the Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations with his two daughters, wife, two grandchildren, and some friends of his daughter. He would like to have such a family event every year.

Elements of traditional Chinese culture could be seen in the children's models (see Figure 35), representing their togetherness as family. They believed that the family should always stay together. Sanya's daughter shared her memory of one special Chinese Lunar New Year.

One year, during the Chinese Lunar New Year, my dad got sick and had to be in a hospital. On New Year's Eve, we couldn't celebrate together as a family. It left a deep impression on me as my mom took care of him in the hospital and they couldn't come home. My younger brother and I stayed with our grandmother that night, and the feeling of the empty home without them was quite profound. (Sanya's, daughter)

**Figure 35**  
*Family Togetherness*



She put a 阖家团员 (*hejiatuantyuan*; gathering of the whole family) brick like an umbrella in her model to show her feelings for her family and that she wished they could always be together. Hejiatuantyuan refers to family members gathering to spend time together, especially during significant holidays or occasions, and symbolises harmonious and happy family relationships. She used this brick to express her good wishes for family togetherness and a joyful life.

In summary, the Chinese concept of sacrifice and the importance placed on staying together as a family reflect a deeply rooted cultural ethos that emphasises the collective welfare and harmony of the family unit above individual desires or ambitions. This cultural value and perspective continue to influence the choices and behaviours of many Chinese people in their daily lives.

#### **4.3.7 Family Resilience**

Family resilience in the context of LMTE refers to the ability of family members to adapt to and overcome challenges that arise during their entrepreneurial journeys in response to their family aspirations. It involves not only individual coping mechanisms but also the collective strength of the family unit in maintaining a sense of cohesion, mutual support, and flexibility. This resilience enables families to navigate the complexities of migration, entrepreneurship, and the tourism industry, fostering a sustainable entrepreneurial experience despite external

pressures or adversities. Resilient families in LMTE often demonstrate an adaptive mindset, balancing personal and professional challenges while preserving family values and unity.

**Figure 36**

*Key Theme: Shared Migration Experience*



Chinese have a strong sense of the value of family. The concept of family in China extends beyond one's spouse and children to include one's parents, grandparents, siblings, and cousins. The bonds are strong between family members, and they always provide mutual support and care. Thus, family responsibility is vital in the sense of supporting each other. Children are often expected to be responsible for caring for and supporting older family members. The older family members provide support by caring for younger generations, such as by picking up grandchildren from school and cooking for them. For example, in Qizi's family, the grandparents dedicated their time to caring for their grandchildren, one at each of their daughters' homes, coming together only during major holidays.

Similarly, Yalong the entrepreneur had support from his in-laws for several years following the birth of their first child. His mother-in-law came to Hainan first, and when his father-in-law retired, he joined them in Hainan. Yalong's father-in-law noted, "We handle household responsibilities, enabling him to concentrate on advancing his career, which has seen significant success and growth. He intends to further expand his business". They have a clear division of responsibility: the mother-in-law oversees daily cooking, the father-in-law is responsible for driving the children to school and picking them up, the entrepreneur is accountable for providing for their living expenses, and his wife is responsible for helping with the children's education-related issues. The grandfather in Shimei's family shared, "Since we live together, we usually cover their expenses as well, at our age, we don't spend much on ourselves, instead, we are investing in our children and grandchildren".

Individuals strive to maintain family cohesion. The notion of sacrificing personal desires or comfort for the family is deeply ingrained. Many Chinese individuals are willing to put aside their own needs and preferences in favour of the collective well-being of the family unit. This can extend to financial sacrifices, career choices, and lifestyle decisions. Sanya's wife believed Hainan was not a suitable place to live, but she still came to support her husband's career. Such sacrifice is characteristic of the Chinese way of preserving family togetherness. Other participants expressed the significant role family plays in their lives:

I left my government job in my hometown to support my husband's work. While working as a government official, I couldn't have more than one child, but my husband desired two. So, I made the decision to resign from a 10-year career and start a new life in a new place, which I believed would be a wonderful adventure for the family. (Sanya's wife)

I prioritise everything around my family, I'm deeply fond of my family, and I love it above all else. (Shimei, entrepreneur)

These quotes exemplify how family values profoundly influenced the decisions and sacrifices of the LMTE families, highlighting the importance of family cohesion and support in their migration experiences. These are reflected in Haitang's wife's model (Figure 37).

**Figure 37**

*Haitang's Wife's Model*



Haitang's wife made a traditional Chinese quadrangle courtyard with a small gate and a big gate constructed of stacked red bricks, surrounded by high walls and plants. She believed this is how Chinese families live; the surrounding walls and trees protect the family's intimacy, and the two doors add a sense of security. She believed the most important thing in her life was "family should always stay together". She dreamt that someday their family could all live in a quadrangle courtyard with her grandchildren.

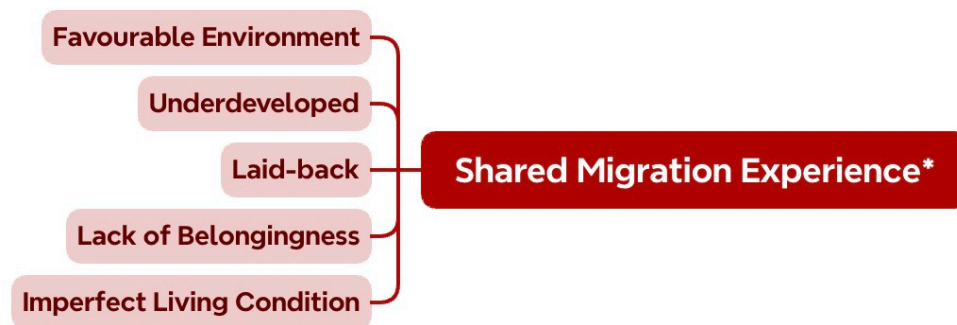
#### **4.3.8 Shared Migration Experience**

Interviews with the LMTE families who had relocated from the mainland to Hainan revealed a spectrum of advantages and disadvantages associated with settling in this new location. Each family brought a distinctive set of immigration and entrepreneurial experiences, which created diverse understandings of various aspects of life in Hainan. Despite these differences, participants unanimously acknowledged common challenges such as the perceived inefficiencies in local systems and the prevalent language barrier, with locals favouring

Hainanese over Mandarin—as discussed in Section 4.3.2.2. These insights underscore the complex nature of the Shared Migration Experience, a key theme emerging from the narratives expressed through five subthemes.

**Figure 38**

*Key Theme: Shared Migration Experience*



#### **4.3.8.1 Favourable Environment**

Individuals’ unique experiences and backgrounds shape their different perceptions of the same city. Overall, participants expressed a favourable view of life in Hainan, attributing it to the region’s favourable natural environment and lifestyle. Favourable Environment refers to the positive aspects of the migration destination that attract LMTE families. In this study, it included factors such as Hainan’s tourism appeal, climate, government policies, business opportunities, and lifestyle benefits that support entrepreneurship and family life. A favourable environment is a key motivator for migration and business establishment. For instance, the Riyue’s wife shared her particularly positive experience in Hainan’s natural environment:

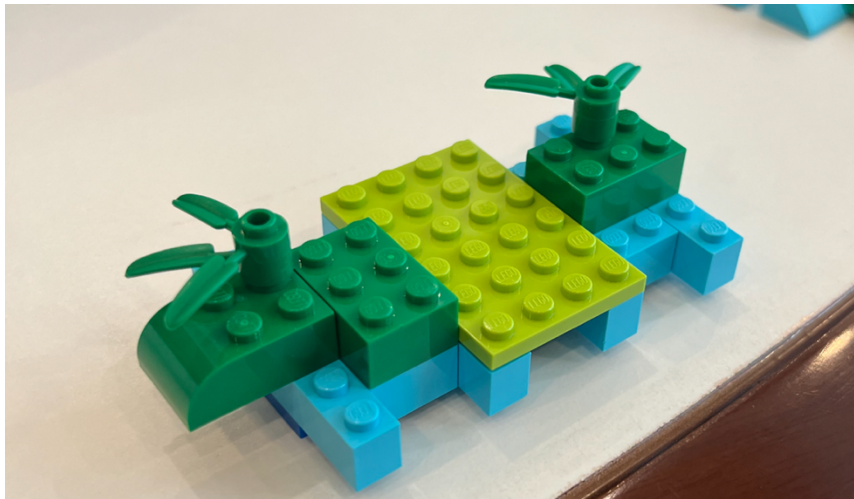
During the summer, the increased sweating feels like a detoxification process, enhancing our metabolism and overall well-being. My husband even expressed concerns about not sweating when returning to Beijing, as sweating makes us feel healthy...I like it here because the air quality and climate are better. And now, I walk or do yoga, and I don’t even drive anymore. I think this way of life is both environmentally friendly and good for my health... (Riyue’s wife)

For people from provinces with significantly different climates, such as the grandfather in Yalong's family from cold, dry Xinjiang, Hainan was perceived as an inviting destination with a warm climate. It offers a leisurely lifestyle and fresh cuisine and welcomes the traditions of ethnic minorities such as those of Xinjiang. Similarly, the grandfather in Qizi's family, who came from an ethnic minority group in Inner Mongolia, was drawn to Hainan's natural environment and reminisced about it:

Upon arriving in Hainan, I was captivated by the subtropical climate, a stark contrast to my northern upbringing. Despite occasional challenges, the lush vegetation and pleasant humidity define the tropical environment. Hainan's abundance of plants and birds, with birdsong in every corner, provides ample opportunities to immerse in nature. (Grandfather in Qizi's family)

**Figure 39**

*The Model Made by the Grandfather in Qizi's Family*



The model made by the grandfather in Qizi's family reflects his feelings about Hainan (Figure 39). He used green, dark green, blue, dark blue, and leaves to represent the natural environment of Hainan, which he enjoys.

For the older generation, spending their winters in Hainan was considered a dream come true. This was a unique migration trigger for older generations within the LMTE families. For other

family members, Hainan was an ideal place to live for many different reasons, such as a healthy lifestyle with many outdoor activities.

The sense of community in Hainan is strong. Unlike other big and busy cities in China, Hainan still preserves community life. The children live within the same community and go to the same school. Children who live in the same community can generally play together safely without guardians. Children who live in larger cities in mainland China generally have less opportunity to bond since the pace of life is faster and children have many after-school classes. Unlike the Hainan community, no playgrounds were available in their cities of origin. Riyue's son stated:

My best friend in Beijing usually chats with me every weekend in his parent's car, he is so busy, he sleeps and eats in the car because he has many different courses to take, and there is no time for him to sleep and eat, I don't like that kind of life. I have only one golfing course here already, which keeps me very busy. (Riyue's son)

The interviews highlighted the numerous advantages associated with residing on this tropical island, drawn by the region's favourable environment and sought-after amenities. One prominent aspect emphasised by the participants is the region's natural beauty, clean air, and eco-conscious ethos, which epitomise the aspirational lifestyle they aspired to.

The abundance of lush greenery and pristine beaches creates an idyllic backdrop for daily living and aligned with their vision of an ideal lifestyle. The mild climate and ample sunshine contribute to a relaxed and comfortable way of life, perfect for outdoor activities and leisure pursuits—an essential element of amenity migration.

After migrating, the LMTE families achieved a healthier lifestyle, and an overwhelming majority of participants expressed satisfaction with life in Hainan, regardless of their income level or educational background, and despite their divergent opinions on weather, education, transportation, and future development. Satisfaction included three aspects. First, they could have organic food in Hainan at lower prices. Second, they spent less on clothes since Hainan is always warm, and a T-shirt, the most frequently worn item of clothing, is cheaper than a jacket. Houses and apartments are cheaper in Hainan, and rental and purchase fees are much lower

than in top-tier cities. Transportation in Hainan is notably more convenient due to the high-speed railway that connects various parts of the island. Additionally, since the cities in Hainan are smaller than major urban centres like Beijing and Shanghai, residents can easily walk to essential destinations such as supermarkets, schools, workplaces, and gyms. They also enjoy less stress at school and have more leisure time. All of these advantages make Hainan a favourable environment to live in.

#### **4.3.8.2 Underdeveloped Region**

Like any other place, Hainan may not be a perfect fit for everyone. In addition to positive experiences, participants encountered some less-than-ideal situations. Some of the subthemes which emerged were Underdeveloped Region, Laid-Back Lifestyle, and Lack of Belongingness. Few participants felt that Hainan was a difficult place to live. Some challenges the LMTE families faced in Hainan included the language barrier (as local people may not speak Mandarin), high humidity levels, and limited job opportunities in specific industries.

LMTE families in Hainan had similar experiences of the region being less economically developed than major metropolitan areas. While Hainan has made significant progress in the tourism industry, there may still be some areas of development which are deficient compared to first-tier cities. These include issues related to healthcare, education, transportation, and other aspects of infrastructure and public services.

The grandmother in Qizi's family experienced health problems in the middle of the night. She could not be treated in Hainan since the healthcare system would not allow her to use her healthcare insurance in any region other than her hometown. She had to fly back to her hometown for surgery and then return to Hainan when she had recovered. This process was very complicated, and she risked her condition worsening if any step had gone wrong during the lengthy procedure. Thus, if senior migrants living in Hainan got sick, it was an unpleasant experience, as articulated by Sanya:

My employee of over 7 years suffered a sudden stroke and lost consciousness. Without healthcare coverage in Hainan, I ended up paying nearly three times the hospital fees. Pandemic restrictions prevented moving him out of Hainan initially. I covered his hospital costs for 2 months until regulations were lifted, then arranged an air ticket to send him back home. (Sanya)

All the LMTE families treated their children's education seriously but participants held different opinions on education. Some, like Yalong's wife thought education in Hainan was lagging behind mainland top-tier cities; "Students are not learning enough from school". She had thought about moving back to Shenzhen, considering the education issue.

Textbooks used are the same across China, but the quality of education and available resources, particularly in larger cities like Beijing, is considerably superior. In big cities, there is a wide array of after-school tutoring and enrichment programmes, making it challenging for smaller cities like Hainan to compete in this aspect. (Yalong's wife)

However, Riyue's wife held a different perspective:

...education is much cheaper here. In Beijing, a private school can cost over 20,000 yuan a month, and you still have to pay for transportation, meals, and accommodation. Here, the best private school costs less than 40,000 yuan for the whole year, with meals and accommodation included. (Riyue's wife)

The Shimei family held a similar opinion; the textbook content was similar, but beliefs about how to educate children depended on the parents. Since the LMTE families had already settled in Hainan, the parents should design their children's study routines carefully, focusing on academic and extracurricular activities. Shimei arranged different after-school programmes for her children, which included outdoor activities like basketball and indoor skills such as coding.

The main concern in the LMTE families was the children's education. Riyue's wife said: "If we can find suitable educational options without returning to Beijing, then our entire family would prefer to stay away from Beijing". There was awareness among the participating families

that educational resources in Hainan were lagging. However, they were still willing to migrate because a Hainan Hukou provides benefits in China's national university entrance system. The Riyue family may consider returning to Beijing if Hainan's education system does not improve in the coming years. However, others expressed their intention to remain in Hainan due to the Hukou advantage for their children's *Gaokao* (The Nationwide Unified Examination for Admissions to General Universities and Colleges).

Another commonly shared perception among the LMTE families was that one of the reasons for Hainan's relative underdevelopment is the language barrier. Although Mandarin Chinese is used predominantly in Hainan, local dialects prevail in specific communities or rural areas. Bo'ao's husband expressed his frustration in his experience of the language barrier:

Once, I consumed too much alcohol, and I grabbed a taxi to take me home. However, the taxi driver drove me around in circles for a long period of time. The problem is I couldn't communicate with him because I couldn't speak and understand the Hainanese dialect. So, I confronted him, and as a result, we ended up in the police station and I spent the whole night at the police station. (Bo'ao's husband)

In addition to education and communication issues, other underdeveloped aspects include the inadequate transportation, lack of museums, and shortage of talent. Entrepreneur Qizi expressed her disappointment that although Hainan has many activities every month, there is no convenient place where she could collect all the relevant information about them. "In Beijing, I join all kinds of activities every month, but here, I always miss interesting activities, I don't know how to find out info about these activities". She enjoyed novel experiences and felt that, in this aspect, Hainan was still in a developmental stage, and not as developed as some major cities.

However, the relative lack of development could be a factor influencing some people's decisions to relocate to Hainan. Hainan offers a lower cost of living, pleasant natural surroundings, and a quieter community atmosphere. Everyone's experience varies based on their individual needs and expectations, with some placing higher emphasis on the quality of

life and leisure rather than a bustling urban environment.

**Figure 40**

*Bo'ao's Husband's Model*



Bo'ao's husband feels the speed of Hainan's development is relatively fast, so he put a construction of yellow bricks at the edge of his model of a park (Figure 40). The trees here grow well; thus, the tree is tall in his model. He believed the natural environment here makes the best place he has ever visited. Although his first impression of Hainan was that it was laid-back and inefficient, he thought the development has been dramatic and everything was improving. He believed that, under the government and the country's policies, Hainan would grow faster and better, and he recommended that his friends and relatives migrate there.

In summary, while Hainan has made significant progress in the tourism industry and specific areas, there may still be areas of underdevelopment compared to more developed cities. This could impact residents' experiences and adaptability. Individuals have different views and experiences based on their own unique needs and priorities.

#### **4.3.8.3 Laid-Back Lifestyle**

Riyue's wife's daily routine embodied Hainan's laid-back lifestyle. She typically began her day with a morning yoga class, then returned home to prepare lunch for her son, followed by a nap. She attended a Pilates class in the afternoon before picking up her son from school. She

described this as “a perfect and healthy lifestyle” that was different from what she experienced in Beijing. Everything was within walking distance, allowing her to breathe fresh air in Hainan.

Hainan’s laid-back lifestyle experienced by LMTE families was primarily reflected in two ways: inefficiency and a lack of services. Some examples are provided in Section 4.3.2.2. Hainan’s work culture leans towards more flexible working hours compared to first-tier cities. This flexibility allows employees to adjust their schedules to accommodate leisure and entertainment needs, potentially resulting in decreased work efficiency. The LMTEs encountered challenges with local inefficiencies, as presented earlier.

Riyue’s child complained, “All the parcels arrived at Hainan too slow, and the delivery men always delivered to the wrong place”. He used to live in Beijing, where all the parcels arrive fast, usually within 3 days. He could not understand why the delivery man always sent the parcels to the wrong places. This was a common experience among the participants.

Yalong’s wife complained about one of their trips to Sanya during the Chinese Lunar New Year which left her strong impression of inadequate service:

During our month-long stay in Sanya, we lodged in various hotels, including locally owned ones. I often observed that these hotels treated our stay as a one-time transaction. Their service attitude, especially when we sought information about local attractions, was notably poor. It seemed like they assumed we wouldn’t return, and the experience felt transactional and unwelcoming.

All participants reflected that Hainan had the worst service they had ever experienced. Haitang had had several negative experiences at the local restaurants where the service was not good; “Most of the cases, there is no one take the order when [you] first enter a restaurant, and the waiters and waitresses always push you to finish your meal soon to spare the place for next customer”. Yalong stated, “The restaurant owner always argues with me, which I couldn’t understand”.

**Figure 41**

*The Model by the Grandfather in Yalong's family*



The grandfather in Yalong's family made a model of a waiter from a restaurant (Figure 41), who had left him with a strong impression of Hainan's service. He explained his model:

The minifigure is the waiter, he raised his arm and asked me for money. But I hadn't finished my meal, it made me feel like Guan Gong wielded a big knife and demanded toll money from me. It seemed that if I didn't pay a sufficient amount, there might be consequences or penalties. (The grandfather in Yalong's family)

However, although the LMTE families experienced inefficiency and deficient service in Hainan, they still thought the local residents were warm and willing to share. Riyue's wife shared, "Local residents are open-hearted towards strangers; I always feel comfortable and welcome here". These sentiments highlight the importance of social connections and the positive impact of local hospitality on the overall experiences of LMTE families in Hainan.

#### **4.3.8.4 Lack of Belongingness**

Some participants experienced homesickness due to the change of location. They had a hard time adjusting to the local food and lifestyle. Culinary perceptions were quite different. Sanya's family shared their difficulties in adapting to the local cuisine. The entrepreneur and his daughter both reflected on the change in eating habits:

For instance, if my friends are from the southern regions, Hainan, or Guangdong, their eating habits are quite different from ours. They tend to have a milder taste, including their main courses. For example, they prefer plain flavours, while we might consume more wheat-based foods. For instance, we might use steamed buns as our main course, but they wouldn't understand that. They typically eat rice and porridge, but their rice doesn't have the same taste; it's more dry and less sticky, and not tasty at all. (Sanya's daughter)

The tall tree is the Hainan coconut tree. Here, it is always bright, always daytime, no rest period. It always feels hot in Hainan, with no distinct seasons... The bottom big round brick represents Cloudspace Library (a famous building in Hainan), I put it here because I believe the locals are very good at enjoying life; instead of going to work, they sit here at the library doing nothing. They are different from us. The locals usually do not have concerns or plans for tomorrow. For example, they could live without tomorrow. They earn 20 bucks today, they will spend 25. (Sanya's wife)

**Figure 42**

*Sanya's Wife's Model*



Sanya's wife used the red bricks to reflect her feeling that it is always daytime in Hainan, which she does not like (Figure 42). She described the local's attitudes towards their own lives. The lifestyle change may make LMTE families homesick. She had had difficulty adjusting to life here and always missed her hometown.

Other families originally from the northern part of China experienced difficulties adapting to local cuisine. For example, the grandmother in Qizi's family noted, "Many local foods were challenging to get used to, but now, I cook for the whole family, or we will dine out, and I feel comfortable. Once you adapt, everything becomes manageable, and there's not much difficulty in adjusting".

As discussed earlier, not all participants experienced homesickness upon relocating to Hainan. Some individuals found that they adapted remarkably well to their new environment, integrating smoothly into the local way of life. These participants often reported a sense of comfort and satisfaction with various aspects of their daily lives, including the food, clothing, housing, and transportation.

#### **4.3.8.5 Imperfect Living Condition**

Participants from the same household experienced Hainan differently. Some of the participants experienced high costs of living. For example, the Bo'ao family believed that the cost of living in Hainan was high, so they moved to a remote area where the real estate prices were affordable. "I'm tired of driving for over an hour to meet my friends". Bo'ao's husband stated, "We are saving [for a deposit] to move closer to our friends". Living far away has limited their socialising with friends.

Some participants argued that living expenses were high, especially when purchasing food, drinks, and medicines, which are twice as expensive as on the mainland. The grandmother in Qingshui family complained, "the same medicine, such as kids' fever pills, Hainan charges three times the mainland's price". The grandmother in Qizi family thinks the daily fruit and vegetable prices are high in Hainan; "[Shouldn't] the fruit prices should be lower here? Hainan grows so many kinds of fruits on the island, but I [have] found it even more expensive than Inner Mongolia". Entrepreneur Riyue complained about transportation, "...I have to go to Xuwen (another city in Guangdong Province) to refuel my car when the gasoline is running low since Hainan's gasoline price is extremely high". Meanwhile, Riyue's wife and the grandmother from Yalong's family believed that transportation was good in Hainan. Hainan

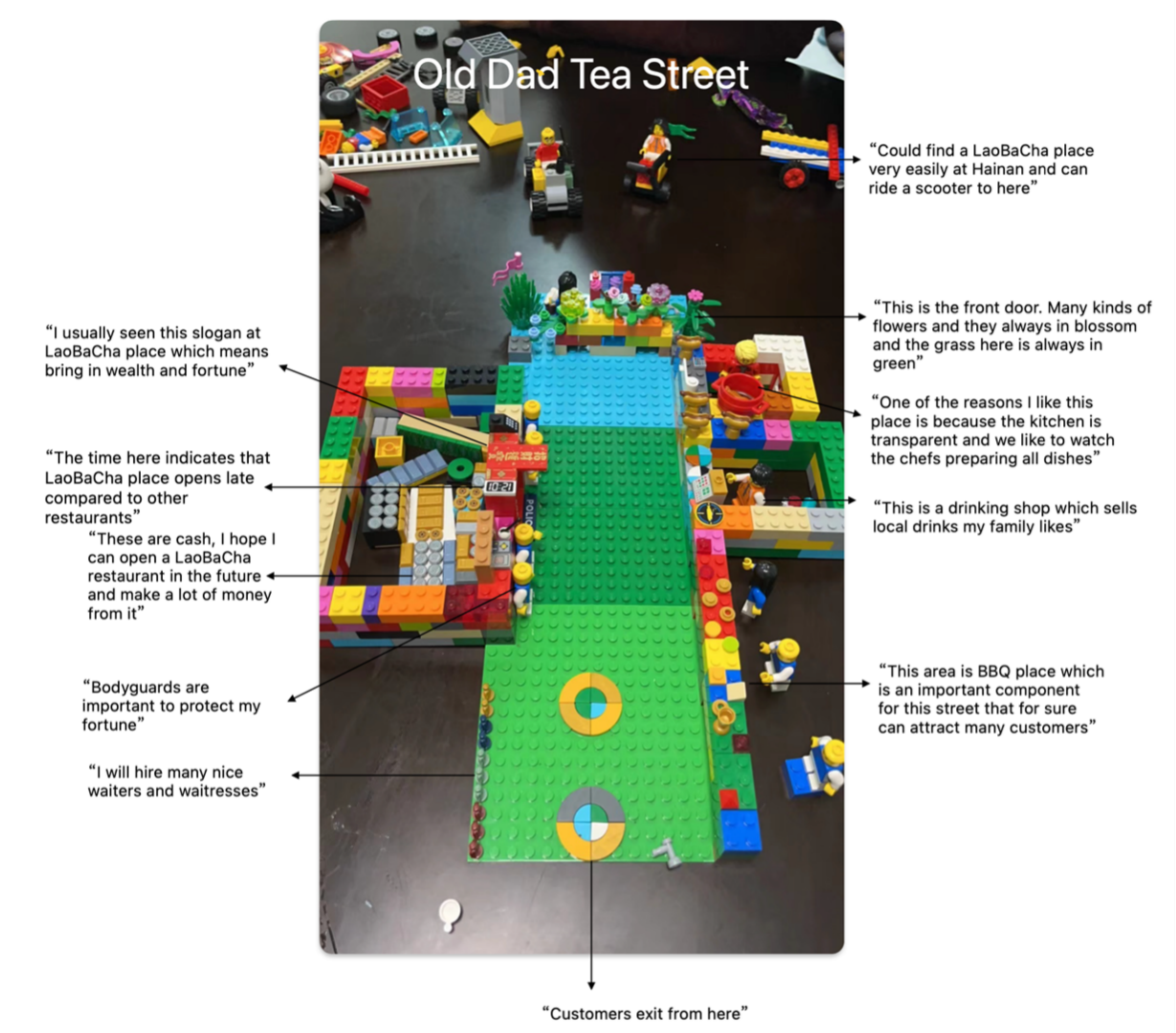
may not be a perfect fit for those who prefer a more cosmopolitan or urban lifestyle, despite its favourable environment; other factors could influence their living experience in the region.

A few participants found it challenging to live in Hainan due to the humid weather. The grandfather in Qizi family described how he liked the humidity in Hainan. However, the grandmother from Qizi's family disliked the humidity; "Clothes are never dry, it feels weird to wear wet clothes", she continued, "It's too humid, even the bedding is damp. Sleeping is very uncomfortable here". Similarly, Haitang believed Hainan was too hot, but his wife found the weather pleasant, and it did not feel excessively hot living there.

All members of the Qingshui family enjoyed their lives in Hainan and believed it is better than their original home city. They built a shared model of Old Dad Tea Street, which reflected their Shared Migration Experiences after migrating here (See Figure 43). Their model resembles a real Old Dad Teahouse where the kitchen is always open and visible to all customers, and people can order directly from the chef.

**Figure 43**

*Shared Model Madeby Qingshui's Family: Shared Migration Experience*



The daughter used a lot of flowers in various colours to express her happiness that she could always see flowers at any time of the year and enjoy outdoor activities. The son showed he enjoyed life there by building a model of a BBQ place with customers, highlighting Hainan's variety of nightlife. He perceived life here as more colourful and never dull. He put two bodyguards in front of their store to protect their wealth. He believed money was essential for daily life and should be protected (Van Hear et al., 2020)

While most families indicated a willingness to continue residing in Hainan, two exceptions emerged: the entrepreneur Riyue and the grandmother in Qizi family' both wanted to return to their cities of origin. However, Riyue faced limitations in his ability to influence family

decisions, as his wife had assumed the decision-making role. Riyue wanted to go back to Beijing or move abroad due to his frustration with adapting to Hainan, but Riyue's wife professed a deep affection for Hainan, signalling a commitment to long-term residency; the welfare of the children and family interests were paramount for her.

In summary, each family and family member are unique, and their life experiences after immigrating to Hainan could have varied due to their individual characteristics and circumstances. Understanding and respecting the feelings and needs of each family member was essential to ensuring that the entire family adapted well to the new environment.

Participants vividly portrayed their experiences of life in Hainan, which reflected their aspirational lifestyle and amenity migration. Hainan's commitment to environmental sustainability and preservation resonated with many participants, further enhancing its appeal as a destination for aspirational living. Overall, their experiences in Hainan embodied the fusion of aspirational lifestyle aspirations and amenity migration, enriching their lives and shaping their vision of an ideal living environment.

#### **4.4 Chapter Conclusion**

First and foremost, Hainan's pleasant climate and beautiful natural environment are what many people in China dream of. The warm weather and scenic landscapes make it easy for people to embrace outdoor living, basking in the sunshine and nature. Beaches, oceans, tropical rainforests, and other natural environments are favourites of residents and tourists alike, allowing them to explore and relax freely.

Secondly, Hainan's cultural traditions and social activities provide rich life experiences. Local festivals, cultural celebrations, and traditional events offer excellent opportunities for social interaction, allowing people to celebrate life and make new friends. These events are often vibrant and full of warmth, adding a unique charm to the atmosphere of life in Hainan. However, some challenges need to be overcome. Language barriers can affect communication with residents, especially when seeking information or advice. Some aspects of the local service

industry may require improvement to provide a better customer experience, particularly in the hotel and tourism sectors. Hainan is known for its mild climate, attractive natural scenery, cultural traditions, and relaxed lifestyle. While experiences vary between families and individuals, the island provides a distinctive living environment. The relaxed atmosphere and welcoming community facilitate the integration and enjoyment of this coastal location.

This chapter has introduced LMTE families as a significant tourism phenomenon in Hainan, providing a detailed exploration of the key themes uncovered (as depicted in Figure 20). Examining this phenomenon from various perspectives offers a more comprehensive understanding and a holistic view of the subject. The personal factors driving LMTE families to migrate to Hainan were rooted in their aspirations for a better quality of life and a desire to realign their personal and family values. One significant factor was the pursuit of a better work-life balance. Many of these families sought to escape the high-pressure urban environments in mainland China, where social phenomena like *neijuan* and *tangping* dominate. Migration to Hainan offered a way to break free from these societal pressures, allowing families to adopt a slower, more fulfilling pace of life that prioritises personal well-being over constant professional striving.

Another key motivation was the desire for greater family togetherness and solidarity. LMTE families often placed a high value on strengthening family bonds and creating an environment that fosters closer relationships. For these families, migrating to Hainan was seen as an opportunity to provide their children with a better upbringing, focused not just on education but also on their overall well-being. The ability to spend more time together in a less stressful environment helped reinforce their family unit and supported their goal of living in alignment with their core values.

In addition to family dynamics, many of the LMTE families were driven by the aspiration to live a lifestyle that aligned with their personal ideals. The natural beauty of Hainan, its tropical climate, and its slower pace of life were all factors that appealed to families seeking a more aspirational way of living. Hainan's environment allowed them to step away from the rigid social expectations of urban life and enjoy the lifestyle benefits that come with living in a

destination known for wellness and relaxation. This sense of escape from societal pressures was a common thread among these families, who viewed migration as a way to seek personal freedom and fulfilment.

Finally, entrepreneurial ambitions played a significant role in motivating the LMTE families to move to Hainan. Many families saw the island's growing tourism industry as an ideal platform for launching tourism-related businesses. The prospect of entering a less saturated market, coupled with Hainan's reputation as an emerging tourism hub, created opportunities for families to combine their lifestyle aspirations with entrepreneurial ventures. This entrepreneurial spirit, tied closely to their desire for personal and family well-being, further underscored their motivation to migrate.

The next two chapters discuss the LMTE families' specific reasons for relocation, their involvement in entrepreneurial activities in the tourism sector, and their detailed experiences following their migration and business ventures. These experiences are linked to the literature and the differences from the existing knowledge are highlighted.

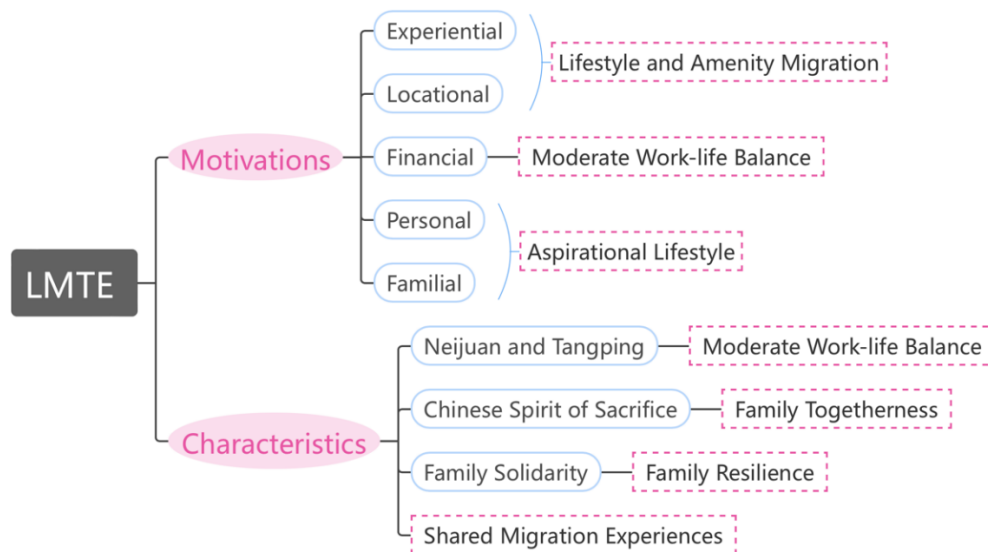
# **Chapter 5 Dynamics of LMTE: Motivations and Characteristics**

## **5.1 Introduction**

The discussion of the findings is structured into two distinct yet interconnected chapters, each designed to explore different facets of the LMTE phenomenon. In contemporary China, the motivations driving people to migrate to Hainan Island are intriguing and multifaceted. Chapter 5 critically examines these motivations, offering an in-depth analysis of the various factors that compel individuals and their families to pursue LMTE in Hainan.

Focusing on key characteristics of LMTE, such as neijuan and tangping, the Chinese spirit of sacrifice, family solidarity, and shared migration experiences, Chapter 5 discusses the complex and multifaceted dynamics of LMTE. It highlights how LMTE motivations and characteristics relate to the key themes, illustrating how personal aspirations, familial considerations, and cultural contexts intrinsically shape entrepreneurial migration decisions (as shown in Figure 44). This analysis provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and challenges existing paradigms by revealing how contemporary social dynamics in China are transforming the entrepreneurial landscape. This chapter contributes new insights into the motivations behind LMTEs, offering a fresh perspective that advances the study of tourism entrepreneurship and lifestyle migration.

**Figure 44**  
*Characteristics of LMTE in Hainan*



One of the most significant emergent findings in this study is the role of gender in shaping both the motivations behind lifestyle migration and the resilience that supported the entrepreneurial process in LMTE families. These gender differences provide critical insights into how the pursuit of lifestyle migration is not just an individual decision but one deeply embedded in family dynamics and cultural expectations. Understanding these gendered motivations and resilience strategies allows for a more nuanced analysis of LMTE in Hainan, illustrating how men and women contribute differently to the migration and entrepreneurial experience.

Chapter 6 focuses on exploring the gender dynamics, children’s roles, and family experiences within LMTE families. Chapter 6 examines how gender roles are negotiated, how children influence and are influenced by the migration and entrepreneurial processes, and how family life is restructured in the context of lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship. By highlighting these aspects, this chapter adds an essential dimension to the understanding of LMTEs, emphasising the importance of family dynamics and the lived experiences of all family members in shaping the outcomes of lifestyle migration and entrepreneurship.

These two discussion chapters provide a holistic view of LMTE life and experience in Hainan. The first discussion chapter lays the groundwork by exploring broader motivations and

contextual factors, while the second delves into the intimate relational dynamics within LMTE families. This dual approach allows for a nuanced and comprehensive exploration of the LMTE phenomenon, addressing both the external factors that drive migration and the internal dynamics that sustain it. The discussion chapters explore two critical aspects of this migration trend: the motivations behind the decision to relocate and engage in entrepreneurial activities within the tourism sector, and the postmigration and entrepreneurial experiences that shape family life.

These findings uncover the complex reasons why LMTEs and their families relocate to Hainan and embark on entrepreneurial paths within the tourism industry. Motivations play a crucial role in understanding the collective experiences of an entire family before, during, and after migration and embarking on entrepreneurial activities, offering insights into the daily lives of LMTE families. However, these key themes are interconnected rather than isolated. In Chapter 5, I delve into the detailed relationship between these themes, their alignment with prior research, and their significance in advancing the study of tourism entrepreneurship.

## **5.2 Revisiting the Key Findings**

This section revisits the research questions guiding this research project. Table 6 provides a summary of the research questions and corresponding findings. The primary research inquiry sought to elucidate the motivations driving LMTEs to settle on an island as tourism entrepreneurs and relocate their families. The findings revealed that the decisions of the LMTEs and their families to migrate were influenced by push and pull factors. This finding aligns with that of Van Hear et al. (2020), who suggested that various sets of drivers can complicate the nature of migration.

Migration triggers include aspects of the natural and social environments aspects that encourage whole families to settle down, such as clean air, leisure activities, local residents, scenic attributes, and bigger houses (Iversen & Jacobsen, 2016). These LMTE families were predominantly motivated by a desire to escape the pressures of the competitive urban environment in their original places of residence. They sought refuge in locales that prioritise

lifestyle and amenities. The impetus to embark on a career in the tourism sector stemmed from a sustained optimism about life. As an alluring island, Hainan boasts an attractive natural environment, government policies favourable to tourism, and a promising long-term developmental outlook. These factors collectively attracted the lifestyle migrants to open their tourism businesses in the region. Slight gender differences in motivations for pursuing lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship were found among the LMTEs.

The second research question aimed to investigate family integration within the entrepreneurship context. The literature highlights that family is the cornerstone of Chinese culture, with individuals ready to make sacrifices to ensure familial unity (Xu et al., 2007). For the LMTE families, preserving the family unit was the highest priority.

The third research question explored how family resilience influences the entrepreneurial journey within the LMTE process. The findings revealed both positive and negative impacts. Consistent with prior research on Chinese immigrants (Zhang & Reay, 2018), the families provided crucial support and stability for entrepreneurship. Families offer financial and emotional support and help entrepreneurs adapt to new environments through personal sacrifices, such as adjusting work commitments and making lifestyle changes. However, the family's role is complex, particularly for women entrepreneurs (Dewitt et al., 2023). Adverse effects included family-related stress, personal pressures, economic uncertainties, and conflicts in time allocation, leading to loneliness among family members.

Gender differences in how family resilience shaped the entrepreneurial process became evident, in alignment with findings by previous scholars. Women often took on central roles in managing families' adaptation to new environments, balancing the challenges of family caregiving with the entrepreneurial aspirations of their husbands or themselves (Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008). The emotional labour performed by women helped maintain family stability, which in turn supported the entrepreneurial success of the family unit (McGowan et al., 2012). On the other hand, the men tended to focus on external business challenges and financial responsibilities (Walker & Webster, 2004). Meanwhile, women contributed to the overall resilience of the family by providing internal support mechanisms (Bagheri et al., 2023). This

division of roles showcases how family resilience is deeply influenced by gender dynamics, where both genders contribute differently but in complementary ways to the entrepreneurial process.

The fourth research question was designed to delve into the postmigration experiences of LMTE families and to examine their experiences during the entrepreneurial process. Family members had diverse experiences, but overall, they acknowledged Hainan as a location abundant in amenities, making it an attractive place to reside. Additionally, a noteworthy finding was that the children from the LMTE families expressed a willingness to pursue entrepreneurship in the future, which aligns with previous research (Anderson & Drakopoulou, 2009).

The findings of this research project provide a comprehensive conceptualisation of LMTE families in Hainan Island, from the perspectives of individual entrepreneurs and their families and children (as depicted in Table 6 below). Through an analysis of family embeddedness and experiences, shared family experiences were identified. Notably, while there were similarities in the experiences of the entrepreneurs, their families, and their children, slight variations were observed among these groups. This nuanced understanding explicates the intricacies of LMTE family dynamics and highlights the importance of considering multiple perspectives in research.

**Table 6**

*Research Questions and Findings*

Research Questions	Findings
<p>1: What motivates lifestyle migrants to settle on an island as tourism entrepreneurs?</p>	<p>1a: Motivation to migrate Lifestyle and amenity migration from relatively developed areas to an amenity rich area. Escape from neijuan (see Section 5.4.1) <b>Lifestyle and Amenity Migration*</b></p> <p>1b: Motivation to start a tourism business A refusal to tangping attitude (see Section 5.4.1), combined with the advantages of Hainan, acts as a strong attractant in the tourism industry. Pursuit of personal success and a balanced work style. <b>Moderate Work-Life Balance* &amp; Aspirational Lifestyle</b></p> <p>1c: Gender differences Women entrepreneurs consider family responsibilities, particularly time flexibility to allow them to care for their children. Men often focus on entrepreneurial opportunities and career growth, seeing migration as a path to establishing a business in a less competitive and more amenity-rich environment like Hainan. <b>Moderate Work-Life Balance*</b></p>
<p>2: What is the meaning of family within LMTE?</p>	<p>Family is core to Chinese culture. Chinese people are willing to sacrifice themselves to maintain family togetherness, and the family takes priority over everything else. <b>Family Togetherness*</b></p>
<p>3: How does family resilience shape the entrepreneurial process?</p>	<p>3a: Support and stability Family resilience allows for a stable, supportive environment which provides emotional, financial, and practical assistance for entrepreneurs that helps them navigate business challenges and uncertainties. Families contribute resources for entrepreneurial opportunities and development and support the entrepreneurs' well-being. <b>Family Togetherness*</b></p> <p>3b: Adaptability and sacrifice Families often adapt and make sacrifices for each other despite the discomfort of a new environment. <b>Family Resilience*</b></p>

	<p>3c: Conflict resolution LMTE families demonstrated their ability to address and resolve conflicts and challenges encountered throughout the entrepreneurial journey. <b>Family Resilience*</b></p> <p>3d: Gender difference Women entrepreneurs consider their children to be one of their entrepreneurial motivations and experience more family pressure than male entrepreneurs. <b>Family Togetherness*</b></p>
<p>4: What are the lifestyle migration experiences of LMTEs and their families in the tourism entrepreneurial process?</p>	<p>4a: <b>Shared Migration Experience</b> All family members experience Hainan differently, but they recognise it as an amenity-rich place to live due to its natural environment and suitability for children’s mental and physical development. However, Hainan is still underdeveloped, and people experience discomfort in their daily lives. Shared Migration Experience*</p> <p>4b: <b>The Future Entrepreneur</b> During the entrepreneurial process, children reflect on their willingness to become entrepreneurs in the future; they have witnessed their family’s change and growth, which makes them strongly believe that they want to become like their parents. <b>Aspirational Lifestyle*</b></p>

Note: **Bold\*** reflects the connection of findings with the key themes

### **5.3 LMTE Motivations**

The examination of the intriguing phenomenon of LMTE starts with an exploration of their motivations. Their specific triggers for migrating and starting out in the tourism business were explored in this research project, including the factors that prompted these individuals to migrate and embark on entrepreneurial endeavours within the tourism sector. The findings resonate with key themes identified in previous research on lifestyle migration, lifestyle entrepreneurs, and migrant tourism entrepreneurs (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016; Carson et al., 2018; Iversen & Jacobsen, 2016). However, this research project also revealed unique findings specific to Chinese LMTE families, distinguishing them from patterns observed in studies conducted in Western countries.

Considering the various forms of family migration described in migration studies, the migration patterns of LMTE families are intricate and encompass a variety of motivations and migration types. These migrants are inclined to be captivated by the positive characteristics they associate with the tourism industry and actively pursue a distinct lifestyle, making them “lifestyle migrants”(Vaugeois & Rollins, 2007) or “amenity migrants” (Moss, 2006). This blend of personal fulfilment and entrepreneurial endeavour distinguishes LMTE families from other types of migrants, as their migration is not solely driven by economic necessity but also by a deep desire to craft a life that embodies their ideal balance between work, leisure, and family. Understanding this complex interplay of motivations is crucial for grasping the unique dynamics that drive LMTE families and how they contribute to the evolving landscape of migration and tourism entrepreneurship.

Previous research on Chinese lifestyle entrepreneurs has indicated that they tend to follow a unique migration pattern, preferring to relocate from developed cities to remote areas within the country rather than move abroad (Sun & Xu, 2017). This pattern is also evident among LMTEs, who adhere to this unique form of internal migration. However, the LMTEs in this study differed from their counterparts, who typically migrate to popular destinations like Dali and Lijiang. Instead, they chose to move to Hainan, a less traditional destination for lifestyle

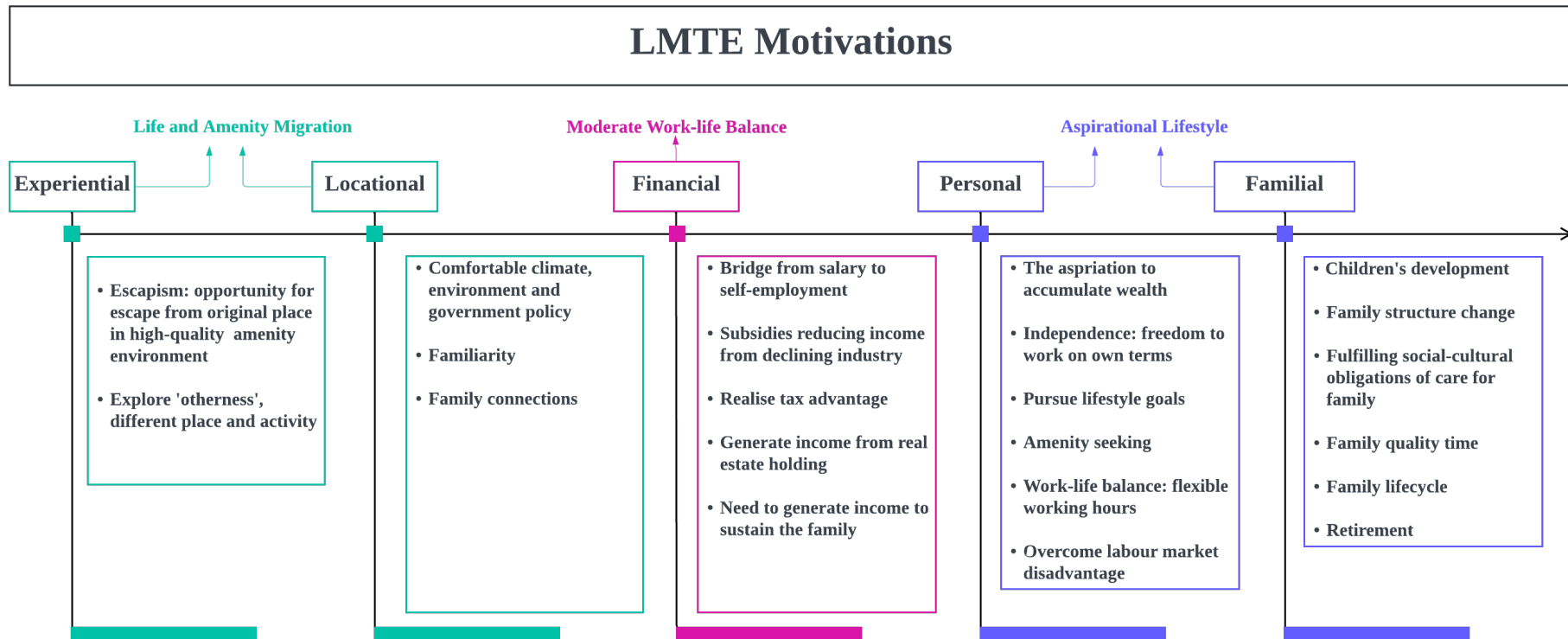
migration. What makes LMTEs in Hainan particularly distinctive is their tendency to migrate with their entire families, signalling a deeper commitment to integrating their personal and professional lives in a new environment. This family-oriented approach to migration underscores the importance of familial bonds and collective well-being in their decision-making process, setting them apart from other Chinese lifestyle migrants.

Drawing from the frameworks of Morrison et al. (2008), Abe and Abe (2024), and Hall and Williams (2013), LMTE motivations can be categorised into five key aspects: experiential, locational, financial, personal, and familial. The relationships of these five motivations to the key themes are illustrated in Figure 45. While these categories offer a structured approach, it is important to recognise that motivations are complex and often overlap, reflecting the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurial lifestyle migration.

In the context of Chinese LMTEs, these motivations are explored in depth, beginning with personal factors and followed by familial influences, financial considerations, experiential desires, and, finally, locational preferences. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the driving forces behind their migration decisions, emphasising how these factors interconnect and influence one another.

Figure 45

LMTE Motivations



### 5.3.1 Experiential

The concept of stress has been studied and defined differently in various academic disciplines, including psychology, medicine, biology, and sociology (Koolhaas et al., 2011). From a psychological perspective, Subramaniam (2010), stress is the strain our bodies undergo while adapting to constantly shifting environments; it affects us both physically and emotionally, giving rise to either positive or negative emotions. In sociology, stress can be seen as a response to societal pressures or stressors related to work, societal expectations, health, social inequality, family expectations, and responsibility (Väänänen et al., 2012). In this research project, STRESS emerged as a central theme in all individual interviews, even if the word itself was not explicitly mentioned. Stress is a key factor in explaining why the LMTErs decided to migrate and start their tourism businesses specifically on Hainan Island.

The LMTErs had experienced stress related to work, family, relationships, and societal expectations (González-Serrano et al., 2020). One of the foremost and most prevalent challenges identified was work-related stress. The competitive nature of the job market and the pursuit of professional success have increased stress and anxiety among Chinese workers. For entrepreneurs like Bo'ao, there are no opportunities for her to enter the job market since she does not hold a bachelor's degree; the looming threat of unemployment was the final trigger for her to migrate and start a tourism business (Carson et al., 2018). Others, even with bachelor's degrees, found their work environments too stressful, and their incomes were insufficient to support their daily lives.

Hainan has increasingly become a popular migration destination for many families, due to its remote location and unique island lifestyle. Compared to China's bustling top-tier cities, Hainan offers several appealing advantages that attract families seeking a change of pace and an improved quality of life. One of the primary drawcards is the relatively lower cost of living. In contrast to the exorbitant housing prices, expensive education systems, and high day-to-day expenses in major urban centres like Beijing, Shanghai, or Shenzhen, Hainan presents a more affordable alternative. This economic advantage allows families to enjoy a comfortable lifestyle

without the financial strain often associated with big city living (Zollet & Qu, 2023), making it appealing to those seeking to escape the pressures of big cities and pursue a better quality of life.

### **5.3.1.1 Escapism**

As discussed in previous chapters, rapid development in recent years and rapid urban development in China's major cities have led to an accelerated pace of life, increased work pressures, and exacerbated environmental pollution, sparking a new migration trend. Top-tier cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, despite offering abundant employment opportunities and convenient living facilities, also come with high living costs, severe air pollution, and crowded living conditions. These challenges have prompted many families to seek new lifestyles and environments to escape the hectic and stressful urban life.

Escapism in the tourism context could refer to travellers distancing themselves from their places of origin for a period (Irimiás et al., 2021). For LMTE families, escaping a high-pressure environment represents a significant lifestyle change (Persson, 2019). The growing number of families relocating to Hainan signals a significant transformation in China's social and economic landscape. Recent studies, such as that by Friedman (2023), suggest a shift in values among the urban middle class, who are increasingly seeking out environments that promote well-being and family togetherness over mere economic prosperity. This migration to Hainan also reflects changing attitudes towards work-life balance, as families opt for settings that allow them to spend more quality time together and engage in leisurely, restorative activities.

As revealed in the theme Lifestyle and Amenity Migration, the participants expressed a desire to escape their original, stressful lifestyles characterised by high-pressure work environments, urban congestion, and the fast pace of modern city life. Pursuing a less stressful existence was a significant motivator behind their decision to migrate to Hainan. With its more relaxed lifestyle, natural beauty, and slower pace, Hainan offered these families a refuge and more equal opportunities to reset and redefine their ways of life (Fleurbay, 2017). This form of escapism

not only impacts mental and emotional well-being but also plays a crucial role in shaping family dynamics and integration processes in new communities.

This research contributes to the growing body of community entrepreneurship scholarship by providing new insights into the dual dimensions of community among LMTE families. However, this study also revealed a significant nonspatial dimension: the strong sense of belonging and identity LMTE families develop as newcomers. This dual sense of community rooted in both location and shared identity underscores the unique social dynamics at play in LMTE communities, enriching our understanding of how entrepreneurial communities form and evolve in new environments.

The substantial lifestyle change had a profound impact on the LMTE families, often inducing a sense of homesickness. Some family members found it difficult to adapt to a new community and did not feel a sense of belonging, although others found a strong sense of belonging in the LMTE community in Hainan. For some like Riyue's son, who became a social butterfly after migration, even their personalities changed. Feelings of homesickness by others highlight the broader emotional and psychological challenges faced by families relocating to pursue tourism entrepreneurship in Hainan (Stroebe et al., 2015). The stark differences in daily life and shifts in work mentality can be jarring, leading some to feel deep-seated yearning for the comfort and familiarity of their former homes. This longing for home underscores the importance of considering not just the economic and logistical aspects of relocation, but also the profound emotional and cultural adjustments such a move entails. As argued by Mandrysz (2020), community well-being significantly influences individual, group, and economic development. It enhances personal health and growth, strengthens social cohesion, and boosts local economic productivity by fostering a supportive and connected environment. This holistic improvement in the social environment attracts businesses and residents, driving further economic growth.

A pivotal finding in this context was the prevalence of stress among LMTE families original home cities. The subsequent sections amalgamate the primary findings and provide an in-depth analysis of the challenges and prospects, particularly stress, inherent in the work-life balance landscape within contemporary China, as viewed through the lens of LMTE families.

Further insights into LMTE development in Hainan can be achieved by taking a social capital perspective. Hainan has a strong sense of community, which is another pull factor for families seeking a more connected and supportive social environment. Different kinds of resources are embedded in social relationships that support the development of entrepreneurship. Social capital is a key factor that can significantly impact the level and effectiveness of community participation in local tourism development (Zhao et al., 2011). Unlike the often impersonal and fragmented social structures of large cities, Hainan's communities tend to be close-knit, with residents forming strong bonds and naturally creating resources that support one another. A robust social network provides a sense of community, enhancing the social capital and resilience of families (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015). It fosters a sense of belonging and security, which is particularly valuable for those relocating from distant competitive urban settings.

The combination of affordable living costs, a slower pace of life, access to natural surroundings, and a strong sense of community makes Hainan an attractive destination for families desiring to escape to a new environment for a better quality of life. This migration trend reflects a broader societal shift towards valuing well-being, family time, and community connections over the traditional markers of success found in first-tier cities. As more families relocate to Hainan, the island continues to develop as a hub for lifestyle migration, offering a unique blend of economic, environmental, and social benefits. This shared journey of escapism naturally fosters a strong sense of family solidarity, as members rely on one another to navigate the challenges of a new environment.

### **5.3.1.2 Otherness**

According to Benson et al. (2009):

Lifestyle [migration] is about escape, escape from somewhere and something, while simultaneously an escape to self-fulfilment and a new life [of] recreation, restoration or rediscovery of oneself, of personal potential or one's 'true' desires. (p. 3)

This experiential aspect of lifestyle migration was evident among the LMTEs, who were actively seeking new environments and activities to enrich their lives and redefine their

identities. Experiential motivations refer to the desire to actively engage in new and meaningful experiences that enhance personal and family life. For the LMTE families, this meant seeking out opportunities that allowed them to explore new environments, engage in leisure activities, and pursue personal growth and self-discovery. These motivations were not merely about escaping their previous lives but embracing the potential for transformation and fulfilment in a new setting. By immersing themselves in different cultures, climates, and activities, the LMTE families aimed to redefine their identities and create a more enriching and satisfying life for themselves and their loved ones.

As discussed in Section 5.3.1.1, escapism drives these entrepreneurs to seek new experiences that offer both contrast and enrichment to their previous lives, fulfilling their desire for a more meaningful and fulfilling existence. Carson et al. (2018) concluded that escapism and “pl” are consumptive motivations for lifestyle entrepreneurs (p.185). The notion of “otherness” plays a crucial role in this escapism. LMTEs often seek different experiences in different places, activities, climates, and others communities that contrast with their previous environments (Cederholm, 2015). For example, LMTEs like Qizi are attracted to Hainan’s recreational activities, such as outdoor sports and leisure pursuits, which starkly contrast with what was available in their previous, more monotonous environments. Similarly, Riyue’s son benefitted from affordable golf training in Hainan, an opportunity that would be prohibitively expensive elsewhere. Qizi’s motivation to migrate motivation was aligned with leisure migration (Sánchez, 2019), as she was drawn to the various leisure activities Hainan offers. Furthermore, the LMTE families engaged in local festivals such as Gongqi; adapted to new lifestyles, including dietary changes; and chose to live in apartments with sea views instead of urban scenes. These activities provided a stark contrast to their previous environments and contributed to a sense of self-discovery and personal growth. Their choices to experience something vastly different reinforces the idea of migration as a pursuit of “otherness.” All these examples link to the key theme of Aspirational Lifestyle.

The desire to escape, therefore, is deeply intertwined with the pursuit of new, enriching experiences to enhance personal and family well-being. These new experiences and

environments play a critical role in helping LMTEs explore and redefine their personal and professional lives. Engaging with different settings and activities fosters a sense of self-discovery and personal growth, in alignment with Kato's (2013) assertion that adapting to new contexts contributes to a deeper sense of self-fulfilment. By embracing the "otherness" of their new surroundings, LMTEs can restore and rediscover their personal potential and desires, leading to greater satisfaction and purpose.

The lower cost of living in Hainan alleviates the economic pressures prevalent in larger cities, making the pursuit of tourism entrepreneurship more feasible. Although the LMTEs in this study may have lacked prior experience in the tourism business, the opportunity cost of starting such ventures in Hainan was notably lower. While they acknowledged the challenges of entrepreneurship, they remained resolute and eager to continue their ventures. Unlike the entrepreneurs in a study by Sun and Xu (2017) who were unsure how long they would stay in the migration destination, the entrepreneurs in my study had clearer intentions regarding their long-term settlement. Other studies have found that entrepreneurs may return to their places of origin (Yu et al., 2017). As discussed in relation to the key theme of Lifestyle and Amenity Migration, the participants in this study expressed a clear commitment to their new life in Hainan, often viewing it as a permanent change. This commitment was rooted in the experiential value they found in Hainan's environment, which aligned with their aspirations for personal and family well-being. The emphasis on family well-being and development underscores the experiential nature of their motivations, as the LMTEs prioritised creating a fulfilling life for themselves and their loved ones in their new environment.

In this way, escapism can serve as the initial spark that propels LMTE families toward new experiences, driving their motivations to create fulfilling lives in Hainan. The lower cost of living and the opportunities for leisure and personal growth reinforce this experiential motivation, making their migration not just an escape but a deliberate move toward a better life.

### 5.3.2 Locational

Previous entrepreneurship scholars have summarised the motivations for entrepreneurial lifestyle migration as passion (Guercini & Ceccarelli, 2020). This was evident in the case of Sanya, who was driven by his aspirations and dreams to pursue agritourism in Hainan (Sulfia & Kamaruddin, 2024). Having accumulated experience and capital in his previous job, Sanya's passion for agritourism propelled him to start a new venture. He specifically chose Hainan as his location due to its favourable conditions for agritourism, which aligned with his business goals.

This finding resonates with earlier studies that have highlighted the importance of passion in motivating lifestyle entrepreneurs, particularly their passion for a specific product or location (Ivanycheva et al., 2023). However, this research extends the understanding of entrepreneurial passion by illustrating how it intertwines with practical considerations, such as the entrepreneur's previous experience and the suitability of the chosen location. Sanya's case underscores the complex interplay between emotional drivers and strategic decision making in migration and lifestyle entrepreneurship, contributing to a deeper understanding of how passion influences entrepreneurial choices.

Passion is not the only driving force behind LMTEs' migration decisions. Research by Shaw and Williams (1992) has demonstrated that many migrating tourism entrepreneurs are initially tourists who become familiar with the host location before settling there. This familiarity with the destination plays a significant role in motivating LMTEs to migrate. For example, Riyue's family chose Hainan as their new home and business location based on their positive experiences during a previous holiday visit. Despite exploring many different cities, they were drawn to Hainan's coastal environment, which aligned with their vision of an aspirational lifestyle. This decision reflects a pattern identified in previous studies on lifestyle migration. In the UK, migrants have shown a preference for coastal cities due to personal preferences (Shaw & Williams, 2004), and similarly, surf lifestyle entrepreneurs in Ireland often choose their settlement locations based on their prior travel experiences (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011). This study adds to the existing literature by highlighting how familiarity with a destination gained

through tourism can be a crucial factor in migration decisions. It underscores that for LMTEs, prior positive experiences with a location can be just as influential as their passion for a particular lifestyle or business venture.

Family connections with the destination location can also be a motivation. Paniagua (2002) found that if tourism entrepreneurs have friends or family at the location, they are more likely to migrate there. The motivations of the entrepreneurs Haitang and Shimei were similar; their partners were originally from Hainan, and they moved to the island for family reasons (Morrison et al., 2008). Davidsson and Honig (2003) stated that “encouragement from friends and family was strongly associated with the probability of entry” (p. 322). In line with this finding, Bo’ao’s family is reflected that they migrated to Hainan because one of their relatives, who is also their best friend, lived in Hainan and had taught them much about Hainan and the tourism business.

Another significant motivator for LMTEs to migrate to Hainan is the opportunity for entrepreneurship in the tourism industry. Hainan’s natural beauty and status as China’s tropical island province make it a prime location for tourism development. Seniors from the LMTE families in this study expressed their profound satisfaction with the variety of local activities in Hainan and the accessibility of nearby parks for daily recreation. This sentiment resonates with the findings of Shaw and Williams (2004), who have suggested that recreational interests play a pivotal role in initiating the migration process. These elderly people who had already retired considered both natural and recreational reasons before migration.

Findings reveal that LMTE families are driven by a strong desire for experiential living, seeking personal fulfilment through immersive cultural experiences and meaningful entrepreneurial engagement. Additionally, locational preferences play a significant role, as families are drawn to destinations that align with their envisioned lifestyle. These motivations directly correspond to the key theme of Lifestyle and Amenity Migration, demonstrating how destination-specific attributes influence not only migration decisions but also the long-term sustainability of LMTE ventures.

### 5.3.3 Financial

The LMTEs in this study reflected on their aspirations to accumulate wealth, although Ivanycheva et al. (2023) have stressed that lifestyle entrepreneurs do not consider financial factors as their primary motivation. This research project highlighted that participants in tourism entrepreneurship can be significantly driven by personal aspirations related to their lifestyle goals and individual nonmonetary success in a departure from previous findings and the prevailing assumption that the desire for financial independence is the primary driver of entrepreneurial endeavours in the tourism sector. In contrast, most of the LMTEs were already financially stable or had adequate funding to start their tourism businesses. Financial independence, it appears, did not rank highly on their list of motivations for embarking on the LMTE journey.

The LMTEs in this study benefitted from Hainan's tax incentives and government policy, a distinctive finding not prevalent in prior studies. Previous scholars have argued that government policies directly affect the development of entrepreneurship and that policymakers provide suitable support programmes (Fairlie & Fossen, 2020), as motivators for entrepreneurs to start ventures. In recent years, the government has vigorously promoted the construction of the Hainan Free-Trade Port, attracting significant investment and talent. On 13 April 2018, the central government of China extended its support to Hainan Island to establish a pilot free-trade zone (China Daily, 2018). In addition, it provided significant support for the progressive development of a free-trade port in Hainan. Distinguished as China's largest special economic zone, the foremost free-trade pilot zone, and the only free-trade port characterised by distinctive Chinese attributes, Hainan has committed itself to evolving into a comprehensive pilot zone for deepening reform and fostering openness. Simultaneously, it aspires to serve as a national pilot zone dedicated to ecologically sustainable development. Hainan aspires to emerge as an international epicentre for tourism and a pivotal strategic service hub (Feifan, 2023).

Other financial motivations were discovered in alignment with previous studies. Among the LMTEs, some had prior entrepreneurial experience but had seen declines in other industries, prompting them to move into the tourism industry (Murnieks et al., 2020). This transition

underscores their adaptability and willingness to embrace new opportunities in response to changing market conditions. For other LMTEs, the need to generate income to support their families financially served as a primary motivation for migrating and starting businesses in Hainan. The financial demands of family life can be significant, and entrepreneurship in the tourism industry can present a viable way to meet these needs (Odoardi et al., 2018). By examining these financial motivations, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the economic factors driving lifestyle migration among LMTE families. It highlights that while the pursuit of a desirable lifestyle is often emphasised, practical financial considerations are equally significant in shaping their entrepreneurial journeys, including budgeting and resource management.

While financial stability remains an essential consideration for LMTE families, their approach to work diverges from conventional entrepreneurial pursuits. Rather than maximizing profits, they seek a moderate work-life balance, prioritizing flexibility over economic gain. This aligns with the key theme of Moderate Work-life Balance, as financial motivations drive families to establish businesses that sustain their livelihoods without compromising their desired lifestyle.

#### **5.3.4 Personal**

The migration motivations identified in this research align with those documented in previous studies, yet they also offer nuanced insights specific to the LMTEs in this research project. First, personal motivation stood out as a key driver. Like other lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs and amenity migrants, the LMTEs in this study were primarily motivated by the pursuit of an excellent lifestyle, although financial considerations are significant, income is generally viewed as less important than lifestyle goals for entrepreneurs (Moss, 2006). What distinguishes lifestyle mobility, particularly among LMTEs, is its unique blend of leisure and work, setting it apart from other forms of mobility. Unlike working tourists who often take on temporary jobs, LMTEs migrate with the intention of establishing their own businesses, seeking the autonomy to shape their work-life balance according to their own values and aspirations (Sun & Xu, 2017). This desire for entrepreneurial freedom and lifestyle integration is a defining characteristic of LMTEs, emphasising their distinct approach to migration.

Prior research has traditionally minimised the role of noneconomic motivations in entrepreneurial ventures, particularly in tourism (Iversen & Jacobsen, 2016). Thus, the LMTErs' personal mobility and entrepreneurial motivations can be understood through Ryan and Deci's (2000) motivational framework as intrinsic and extrinsic, based on their various reasons and goals. Intrinsic motivations include sense of self and the "enjoyment of the activity itself" (p. 60). For example, self-employment allowed them to experience greater happiness through flexible time and independence, in alignment with findings by Benz and Frey (2008) and Stone and Stubbs (2007).

The LMTErs in this study were motivated to start tourism businesses not just for economic gain but to achieve a lifestyle that offers flexible working hours and the ability to work remotely. This flexibility gave them greater control over their schedules, enabling them to spend more time with their children and engage in leisure activities. This finding aligns with previous studies on entrepreneurship (Benson & O'Reily, 2009). However, it also underscores the importance of intrinsic motivations, such as personal happiness and family well-being, which have been underrepresented in earlier research on tourism entrepreneurship. By highlighting these intrinsic factors, this research challenges the traditional focus on extrinsic, economic motivations and offers a more holistic understanding of what drives LMTErs.

One key finding from this research is that personal hobbies can evolve into successful businesses. For instance, many agritourism entrepreneurs initially developed a deep interest in agriculture and tourism, regardless of their academic background or formal training (O'Neill et al., 2022). According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivations are driven by personal satisfaction and the enjoyment of the activity itself. For these entrepreneurs, their passion for agriculture and tourism naturally led them to turn their hobbies into businesses.

Extrinsic motivations involve being driven by external factors, such as the need to make a living or achieve social recognition. Ryan and Deci have described extrinsic motivation as a "sense of volition" created by external pressures or rewards (p. 55). In the case of agritourism entrepreneurs, while their initial interest may have been personally fulfilling, the decision to transform that interest into a business is often influenced by external factors—such as the

potential for financial gain, market demand, or the desire to create a sustainable livelihood. This combination of intrinsic passion and extrinsic incentives is crucial for understanding why these entrepreneurs turn personal hobbies into business ventures.

Other extrinsic motivations were found in this research project. Migration is one of the attributes of a “lifestyle” especially for tourism entrepreneurs (Morrison et al., 2008). Labour migration refers to the movement of people from one place to another for the purpose of finding employment. It typically involves relocation to areas where there are better job opportunities or working conditions (Baas, 2018). Tourism entrepreneurs also migrate to pursue a better quality of life (Hall & Williams, 2000) and achieve their lifestyle goals (Abe & Abe, 2024). Pursuing an enhanced standard of living can motivate entrepreneurial endeavour, as families seek to benefit from the opportunities presented by migration. During the decision-making process, place is an important factor in tourism entrepreneurial decision making (Fu et al., 2019). For example, Bo’ao’s motivation to start a tourism business in Hainan was driven by necessity rather than personal passion or interest. In her city of origin, there was a lack of alternative work opportunities, which forced her to seek new avenues for income and stability (Kumar et al., 2023). This situation highlights how external circumstances, such as economic constraints and limited job prospects, can compel individuals to embark on entrepreneurial ventures. In Bo’ao’s case, the decision to move to Hainan and start a tourism business was not just a choice but a necessary response to the lack of viable employment options in her hometown. This underscores the role of extrinsic motivations—where external pressures, rather than personal desires, drive entrepreneurial decisions.

In developed countries such as Europe, the UK, and Canada, migrants often seek refuge from urban lifestyles and opt to initiate ventures in rural areas (Mitchell & Shannon, 2018; Stockdale, 2014; Stone & Stubbs, 2007). A similar theme has emerged in Hainan, where LMTE families desire long-term settlement and stability. They aim to escape the high-pressure urban lifestyle characterised by long working hours, congested commutes, and elevated expectations, seeking a more relaxed, balanced existence closer to nature (Herrity, 2024). This pursuit reflects a

growing recognition among these families of the importance of well-being and quality of life, which they believe can be achieved through lifestyle migration to Hainan.

While this aligns with the concept of lifestyle and amenity migration outlined by Vuin et al. (2016), this research project contributes to new knowledge by highlighting the specific motivations and experiences of LMTE families in Hainan. Unlike previous studies focused primarily on urban-to-rural migration in places like Dali (Sun & Xu, 2017, 2020), this research project delves deeper into the unique cultural and social contexts that shape LMTE families' migration decisions in Hainan. This includes the integration of familial values and community ties, which have played crucial roles in their entrepreneurial ventures and lifestyle choices. By examining these factors, the research project uncovers the intricate dynamics of how LMTE families not only escape urban pressures but actively engage in building a sustainable and fulfilling life in a new environment. This perspective enriches the existing literature on lifestyle migration by providing a localised understanding of how cultural and familial elements influence the migration process.

### **5.3.5 Familial**

Mobility should be understood within the context of various relational systems, particularly the family unit (Courgeau, 2014). The decision to engage in lifestyle migration was not made in isolation by the entrepreneurs in this study; instead, it required careful consideration of its impact on their families. This research highlights that migration and entrepreneurial decisions can yield benefits for LMTE families as a whole, rather than solely for the individual entrepreneur.

To deepen our understanding of this decision-making process, the family life-cycle framework which posits that different stages of family life lead to distinct migration patterns (Zhang et al., 2024) can be applied. For example, families with young children may prioritise stability and educational opportunities in their new location, while empty-nester families might seek adventure and new experiences. By examining how family life-cycle stages influence migration decisions, this study offers valuable insights into the relational dynamics that shape lifestyle

migration. This perspective contributes to the existing literature by emphasising the collective nature of migration decisions and the importance of family considerations in the entrepreneurial journey. In doing so, it challenges the traditional view that positions the individual entrepreneur at the centre of migration narratives, highlighting the interconnectedness of family experiences and migration outcomes instead.

First, relocating can benefit children's development. The LMTE families emphasised child development, particularly education and a supportive environment, which significantly influenced their collective decisions to migrate. Li (2023) has addressed China's current education rat race, in which parents have experienced education anxiety. The LMTE families in this study experienced this social pressure and chose to escape it, setting them apart from the families who participated in previous tourism entrepreneurship studies in China, which have tended to neglect children's perspectives. House prices in school zones in top-tier cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen are exceptionally high. Instead, Hainan's relatively lower living and education costs attract LMTE families to migrate.

Second, changes in family structure can be a significant motivation for LMTE families to migrate. For example, divorce often serves as a powerful impetus for individuals to relocate and seek new opportunities. Paniagua (2002) found that divorce can trigger tourism entrepreneurs to migrate and establish new businesses, reinforcing the findings of Benson and O'Reilly (2009), who identified divorce as a critical push factor toward entrepreneurship. Furthermore, Gundersen's (2017) study has highlighted that women frequently migrate to escape personal relationship issues or challenging work environments, seeking autonomy and a fresh start.

In the context of Hainan, migration represents not just a physical relocation but also an opportunity for these individuals to embark on a new chapter in their lives. For the LMTE families in this study, moving to Hainan offered a chance to rebuild and redefine their identities, free from the constraints of their past. This aligns with the notion of migration as a transformative experience, allowing individuals to reshape their personal and professional lives in supportive and conducive environments (Karisto, 2005). By focusing on the impact of family

structure changes on migration decisions, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the motivations behind LMTE family relocation, highlighting the role of personal circumstances in shaping entrepreneurial endeavours and lifestyle choices.

The overall family embeddedness within LMTE is complex. Family does not always play a positive role; there are also constraints (Chan & Chan, 2011), such as “rivalry and conflicts among family members” (p. 26). This is especially true when an LMTEr experiences a failed marriage, which puts financial stress on families. My findings indicate that some LMTErs who do not receive parental support face the challenge of raising their children independently. These entrepreneurs must develop their own strategies for balancing childcare with business responsibilities, highlighting the importance of resourcefulness and resilience in navigating family and entrepreneurial life.

LMTErs and their families are often looking for more quality family time. This research project found that LMTE families enjoyed the pandemic period, which differs from previous studies suggesting that more chaos occurred during the pandemic (Cassinat et al., 2021). With more family time together and relief from the usual stresses of work, school, and business, LMTE families noted an increase in the frequency of family activities during the pandemic, which they have maintained.

The elderly participants in this research provided novel and significant insights into retirement migration, contributing to the existing body of knowledge in this field. Like other retirement migrants internationally, the older members of LMTE families embarked on retirement migration (Stockdale, 2014) and relocated to Hainan for its slower pace of life and lower living costs (Sunil et al., 2007). However, this research project’s findings highlight a distinct motivation for retirement migration compared to previous research in developed countries. For example, in their study of American lifestyle entrepreneurs, Marcketti et al. (2006) found that retirement lifestyle entrepreneurs start tourism businesses to achieve financial goals. The retired migrant elders in Haian were pursuing continued social interactions with others and better living conditions, such as larger houses.

For many elderly LMTE family members, particularly those from northern and western China, migrating to Hainan fulfilled a long-held aspiration. They had long been captivated by the allure of the southern cities of South China (Shen & Kee, 2017). After dedicating their earlier years to work and family responsibilities, they now viewed retirement not just as a break from work but as a prime opportunity to explore and embrace the unique qualities that Hainan has to offer.

This migration to Hainan allowed them to pursue a lifestyle characterised by leisure, natural beauty, and a more relaxed pace of life, aligning with their dreams of enjoying their retirement years to the fullest. Furthermore, sharing stories of their new life in Hainan with friends and family filled them with pride and a sense of accomplishment. It served as a validation of their hard work and sacrifices throughout their lives, reinforcing their identities as lifestyle migrants who had successfully transitioned into this new phase of life.

By highlighting the aspirations and motivations of elderly LMTE family members, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how lifestyle migration is not just about economic factors but also about fulfilling personal dreams and enhancing quality of life in later years.

LMTE families often migrate with dual foci: fulfilling personal aspirations and fostering family well-being. Entrepreneurs envision a lifestyle that aligns with their values, seeking autonomy, creativity, and meaningful engagement in their ventures. Simultaneously, familial considerations play a central role, as migration decisions are shaped by desires to enhance children's education, strengthen family bonds, and cultivate collective visions of a better life. These aspirations are deeply embedded in the key theme of Aspirational Life, demonstrating how individual and family goals intersect within the LMTE context.

One of the most defining characteristics of entrepreneurs, particularly within the context of Chinese LMTEs, is their relentless pursuit of opportunities. This trait is often what distinguishes successful entrepreneurs from those who are less effective in navigating the challenges of starting and sustaining a business (Fairlie & Fossen, 2020). Pursuing opportunities involves recognising potential avenues for growth, and having the courage and resourcefulness to act on them, often in the face of uncertainty and risk.

For the LMTErs, the pursuit of opportunities was intrinsically linked to their decision to migrate in the first place. These individuals and families were not merely relocating for lifestyle benefits; they were also actively seeking out new business prospects in tourism and related sectors. Their moves were often motivated by a desire to capitalise on the unique advantages offered by their new environment—whether it was the untapped market potential of a tourist destination like Hainan Island, the availability of natural resources, or the appeal of a particular cultural or historical setting that could be leveraged for business purposes.

In the context of this research, the characteristic of pursuing opportunities among Chinese LMTErs was further nuanced by cultural values such as the Chinese Spirit of Sacrifice and Neijuan. While the pursuit of new opportunities was undoubtedly driving these entrepreneurs, their approach was deeply informed by a sense of responsibility towards their families and the collective well-being. This created a unique entrepreneurial ethos where the pursuit of business success was intertwined with personal and familial sacrifices, cultural preservation, and a long-term commitment to their new communities.

The LMTErs' entrepreneurial pursuit of opportunities was characterised by several key behaviours:

- 1. Adaptability and Innovation:** LMTErs often exhibited a high degree of adaptability. They quickly adjusted their business strategies in response to changing market conditions, consumer preferences, and regulatory environments. This flexibility is crucial in the dynamic tourism industry, where trends can shift rapidly (Ratten, 2023). The LMTErs were particularly adept at innovating by integrating local culture, traditions, and resources into their business models, creating unique offerings that differentiated them from competitors (Kumar et al., 2023).
- 2. Risk-Taking:** Pursuing opportunities in a new and unfamiliar location inherently involves significant risk. The LMTErs often faced considerable uncertainties, including navigating a different regulatory landscape, understanding local market demands, and managing financial investments in an unpredictable economic climate. However,

successful entrepreneurs were willing to take these risks, underpinned by a calculated optimism that the potential rewards would outweigh the dangers.

3. **Proactive Networking:** Pursuing opportunities also requires building and leveraging social networks. Entrepreneurs often rely on these networks to gain insights, secure resources, and establish partnerships essential for business success. In the context of the Chinese LMTEs, the concept of *guanxi* (关系) played a crucial role in this process. *Guanxi*, or the cultivation of personal relationships, is a vital tool for navigating the business environment, accessing local knowledge, and gaining the trust of local communities and stakeholders.
4. **Opportunity Recognition and Exploitation:** Successful entrepreneurs possess a keen ability to recognise opportunities that others might overlook (Fairlie & Fossen, 2020). This could involve identifying a gap in the market, such as a niche in the tourism industry that has not yet been fully explored. Once these opportunities are identified, entrepreneurs move swiftly to exploit them, often using their unique skills, knowledge, and resources to gain a competitive edge.
5. **Long-Term Vision:** While pursuing immediate opportunities is important, effective entrepreneurs also maintain a long-term vision for their businesses. This means that they are not just focused on short-term gains but are also thinking about sustainability, growth, and how their businesses can evolve over time to remain competitive (Sibeko & Barnard, 2020). For the LMTEs, this long-term perspective often included considerations of how their businesses could be passed down to the next generation, integrating entrepreneurial and family legacies.

By focusing on the entrepreneurial characteristic of pursuing opportunities, this research contributes to a broader understanding of how lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship intersect, particularly within the context of Chinese cultural values. It highlights the complex motivations and strategies that drive LMTEs, offering insights that can inform academic scholarship and practical applications in entrepreneurship and tourism development.

## **5.4 Characteristics of Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship in Hainan**

Eight LMTE families were interviewed for this research project. Each family had at least one child in the family. A variety of configurations ranging from a typical Chinese family structure to new types of family structures that reflect the changing dynamics of modern society were observed. Lifestyle entrepreneurs in China differ from their Western counterparts by choosing to relocate within China instead of overseas (Sun & Xu, 2017). What is clear to see is the increasing trend for more families to migrate to Hainan seeking better opportunities and a higher quality of life. This migration pattern is supported by economic and social factors discussed in Chapter 2. These observations form the basis for the subsequent discussion exploring the broader implications of LMTE patterns on Hainan and their impact on migrating families and local communities.

The LMTE framework encompasses four dimensions: Neijuan (内卷) and Tangping (躺平) (discussed in Section 5.4.1), Chinese Spirit of Sacrifice, Family Solidarity, and Shared Migration Experience. It incorporates personal reasons, relational dynamics, and broader cultural contexts, to provide a holistic understanding of LMTE. It spans the journey from a shift in work mentality to individual behaviours, transitioning from society to family, and returning to society. This cyclical process emphasises the interconnectedness of societal and individual dynamics, reflecting the holistic nature of LMTE. LMTE can be better supported and further developed in Hainan with an understanding of these dimensions.

### **5.4.1 Neijuan and Tangping**

Increasing relocation from mainland China to Hainan is a pervasive phenomenon affecting various aspects of LMTE families' lives, including work, daily routines, and child development. This tourism-migration trend is not limited to major metropolises (Castilla-Polo et al., 2023) but is also common in less developed cities. The phenomenon is encapsulated in the buzzwords “neijuan” and “tangping,” which gained prominence in 2020 and reflect distinct responses to

the pressures of contemporary Chinese society, particularly survival anxiety (Li, 2021). Originating in agricultural economics, *Neijuan*, was originally used to describe diminishing returns on labour and other inputs but has evolved to symbolise intense competition and self-imposed pressure, akin to the academic concept of “involution” (Chen & Hong, 2023). The word “*Tangping*” appeared 6 months later to express the weariness and desire to escape the ‘*neijuan*’ phenomenon. These two buzzwords went mainstream in 2020 and represent two different ways of responding to life and manifesting various anxieties and pressures (Pei, 2022). Overall, the concepts of *neijuan* and *tangping* are succinct expressions of individual responses to intense survival pressures which have widespread emotional resonance, as mentioned in previous chapters.

The concept of work-life balance has garnered widespread discussion and attention because the boundaries are becoming blurry (Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). Amidst China’s swift economic growth and hastened urbanisation, many individuals face the challenges of increased work-related and family-related stresses due to factors such as the 996 work culture in China, meaning people work from 9 am to 9 pm, 6 days a week (Bao, 2022). While these long hours contribute to economic growth, they often come at the cost of personal time and well-being, eventually triggering social survival anxiety.

LMTE, as part of the global entrepreneurial landscape, has challenges and opportunities. When LMTE families migrate to Hainan to escape the pressures of *neijuan*, they do not opt for *tangping*. Instead, their migration represents a desire to pursue a meaningful and fulfilling life. This type of movement falls within the broader category of lifestyle migration, but it is not an act of surrender or withdrawal. Instead, it is driven by the superior amenities of Hainan, which offer a higher quality of life, family-oriented benefits, and promising entrepreneurial opportunities.

In this new setting, these families aim to create a balanced and fulfilling lifestyle, ensuring a supportive environment for elderly family members to enjoy retirement, providing wholesome educational experiences for their children, and immersing themselves in a harmonious, tourism-driven atmosphere. Their behaviour can be seen as a new form of *Tangping*—escaping societal

pressure—while still working towards their aspirational future. Hainan’s lifestyle opportunities and attractive amenity-rich environment are the primary pull factors motivating LMTE families to migrate.

This finding is different from previous studies of young Chinese who have chosen Tangping which is an “unambitious and carefree lifestyle” to escape from neijuan (Zhou, 2022, p. 741). Instead, LMTEs remain hopeful and determined to pursue their life goals, experiencing the same everyday stresses as younger Chinese but shouldering broader responsibilities within the family unit. Despite differences in age, life stage, or other circumstances, the everyday pressures faced by LMTEs and Chinese youth—such as work, financial concerns, and societal expectations—are considered to be alike.

However, LMTE families also shoulder broader responsibilities, particularly as caregivers and providers. This adds complexity to their experience, setting them apart from others facing similar societal pressures. Unlike the Tangping mindset, which embraces withdrawal, LMTE families in Hainan actively choose a path that seeks to balance entrepreneurial ambitions with family life. Their decision to migrate reflects a commitment to their goals and values, demonstrating a proactive approach to escaping neijuan without abandoning societal expectations. Rather than stepping away from challenges, these families are creating a new environment where they can thrive professionally while maintaining strong family bonds.

This rejection of Tangping shapes their entrepreneurial choices in several ways. First, it fuels a determination to succeed in their tourism businesses despite the challenges they may face. Moving to Hainan is driven by a desire to find a better work-life balance, but this does not mean abandoning their ambitions. Instead, they see Hainan as a place where they can redefine success to include professional fulfilment without sacrificing family well-being. Second, this mindset influences the lifestyle choices they make in Hainan. The decision to embrace the island’s slower pace of life, engage in community activities, and invest in family-oriented endeavours reflects their belief in an integrated approach to life. They are not merely seeking to escape the rat race but to find a sustainable way to live that supports their long-term goals.

In essence, LMTE families' rejection of Tangping is a statement of resilience and adaptability. They recognise the pressures of modern life but choose to navigate them by creating a balanced lifestyle that aligns with their values. This approach not only shapes their success in Hainan but also positions them as exemplars of a new way of living that prioritises personal and professional well-being.

The transformation of traditional family structures in China has introduced new dynamics to work-life balance. Younger Chinese may refuse to get married (Zhou, 2022) and choose *moyu* (摸鱼), rejecting the pressured work culture (Tan, 2022), or Tangping. In this context, "moyu" represents a coping mechanism where young Chinese, feeling overwhelmed by work pressures, choose to disengage or do the bare minimum rather than fully committing to the demanding work culture. This attitude contrasts with traditional expectations for hard work and dedication. For example, a young office worker might intentionally slow their pace, take extended breaks, or distract themselves with nonwork activities during office hours to push back against unrealistic work demands. Moyu is emblematic of a broader disillusionment with the relentless pursuit of success, where individuals, particularly from the younger generation, choose to preserve their well-being by withdrawing from the traditional expectations of hard work and dedication.

In contrast, the LMTEs were now grappling with the dual responsibilities of caring for elderly parents and raising their children. This highlights the significant caregiving burden on the middle-aged (Železná, 2018). The LMTE families embodied a different response to these societal pressures. While they shared a common desire to escape the exhausting demands of Neijuan, their approach diverged significantly from the moyu mentality. Instead of quietly resisting by minimising their effort, the LMTE families were channelling their energy into entrepreneurial ventures in Hainan, actively seeking to create a balanced and fulfilling lifestyle. Their decision to engage in tourism entrepreneurship represented a proactive strategy to reshape their lives rather than coping with stress by merely disengaging.

This distinction highlights a critical difference in coping strategies. While moyu is about withdrawal and self-preservation in the face of overwhelming pressures, the entrepreneurial

actions of LMTE families represent a forward-looking, constructive approach. By relocating to Hainan and investing in their businesses, these families rejected the passive stance of moyu in favour of a path that allows them to pursue personal and familial well-being through active participation in their new community.

This pursuit of entrepreneurship in Hainan is not just about escaping the pressures of urban life but also about embracing new opportunities for growth and development. It underscores the resilience and adaptability of LMTE families who, rather than retreating from challenges, have confronted them head-on by building a life that aligns with their values and aspirations. In this way, their entrepreneurial spirit serves as a counterpoint to the passive resistance of moyu, demonstrating their commitment to creating a sustainable and harmonious lifestyle in their new environment.

It is crucial to emphasise that the LMTE families' migration to Hainan was more than just a relocation; it represented a conscious decision to seek a better quality of life and resist the societal pressures that have become pervasive in mainland China. These families were not simply retreating from the challenges of Neijuan or opting for the passive approach of Tangping. Instead, they were redefining the concept of success by balancing entrepreneurial ambitions with family well-being, thereby forging a new path that aligned with their values.

This shift in priorities among LMTE families reflects a broader transformation in Chinese society, where traditional markers of success—such as wealth accumulation and professional advancement—are increasingly being reevaluated in favour of well-being, family cohesion, and sustainable living. As more families make similar choices, this trend could have far-reaching implications for China's socioeconomic landscape, potentially leading to a more balanced approach to work, life, and entrepreneurship. The movement of LMTE families to Hainan thus serves as both a microcosm of and a catalyst for this evolving paradigm, signalling a shift towards a more holistic and human-centred development model in contemporary China.

This broader implication highlights the significance of LMTE families' choices for their own lives and for the ongoing redefinition of success and well-being in China's rapidly changing

society. Their actions underscore the potential for lifestyle migration to influence and reshape work mentality, economic structures, and community dynamics, offering valuable insights into the future trajectory of China's socioeconomic development. For LMTE families, stopping Neijuan and refusing to Tangping enhances Family Togetherness. The shared experience of opting out of the competitive cycle allows family members to reconnect, focus on mutual support, and prioritise their relationships over external success.

#### **5.4.2 Chinese Spirit of Sacrifice**

Family lies at the heart of Chinese culture, serving as the nucleus of daily life and the foundation of societal values (Su, 2022). Chinese families generally prioritise maintaining strong bonds between family members and generations (Qi, 2016). In the context of LMTEs, many saw their ventures as means to provide for and contribute to the well-being of their families (Mohamoud & Formson-Lorist, 2014). The LMTE families in Hainan were deeply influenced by the traditional Chinese beliefs in family togetherness and intergenerational bonds (Li & Chan, 2018). These beliefs prioritise maintaining strong connections between parents and children, as well as between generations, and often manifest in significant personal sacrifices to ensure the collective well-being of the family unit (Xiao et al., 2024). Thus, the concept of family togetherness and sacrifice runs deep. These sacrifices include parents providing the best possible opportunities for their children, and adult children taking on the responsibility of caring for their ageing parents, known as 孝(*xiao*), or filial piety.

Filial piety (孝; *xiao*) in Chinese culture emphasises children's respect and obedience to their parents (Bifarin et al., 2022). This value extends to strong family bonds, including between siblings. Consequently, many Chinese people make sacrifices for family reunions and undertake care responsibilities for their children and elderly parents (Pei, 2023). Chinese people emphasise mutual support and assistance among family members. A study on the logic of 同 (*Tong*; togetherness) in China has noted that related individuals are expected to provide emotional and financial assistance to each other when necessary (Yau & Wong, 2024).

For example, the entrepreneur Qingshui's family structure differs from that of the other LMTE families; as a single mother with two children, she and her children live with her brother, reflecting the close connections typical of Chinese families (Chu & Yu, 2010). Even as adults, people may still live with their siblings to support each other. The concept of family-centeredness is a traditional cultural belief deeply embedded in Chinese values and lifestyles. As Shimei expressed, "Family means my world".

Entrepreneurship studies have frequently highlighted the positive role of the family in supporting entrepreneurial ventures, with family members providing financial backing and free labour (Chan & Chan, 2011). Family encouragement and support are essential for many Chinese entrepreneurs, as family occupies the most critical place in their lives. This traditional family concept is deeply ingrained in the minds of generations. Chinese entrepreneurs strive to become reliable supports for their families, while their families simultaneously aim to be their harbour. Chinese people have a unique sense of being "at home." According to Su's (2022) study on lifestyle migration entrepreneurs in China, Chinese entrepreneurs believe being "at home" signifies not only having a fixed house but also a sense of inner peace and comfort.

The concept of "at home" is pivotal to understanding the migration behaviours of the LMTE families and their subsequent business activities in Hainan. In Chinese social perception, "home" refers to wherever family members are (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Consequently, the LMTE families prioritised maintaining strong family relationships and mutual support, which influenced their decision to migrate as a unit rather than as individuals. This shared decision fosters family togetherness as they collectively create a lifestyle that aligns with their values, free from the constraints of *neijuan*.

Hainan, with its promise of a fulfilling lifestyle, serves as a new "home" for the LMTE families, offering hope and a sense of belonging. Despite the challenges they faced, these families continued to support one another, often stepping in to manage the business when the entrepreneur was unable to do so. For example, when Yalong fell ill, his wife and brother-in-law took over the business, demonstrating the importance of family cohesion in overcoming obstacles.

Family members in Chinese households often have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and everyone is willing to support each other. The importance of family in the lives of Chinese entrepreneurs is crucial, as they provide the emotional and practical support needed to overcome obstacles and achieve success. Family support sometimes involves not only the parents but also the entrepreneur's spouse and children (Welsh et al., 2014). Based on findings by De Clercq et al. (2022), encouragement from family can support women entrepreneurs to achieve in their businesses; the entrepreneurs Shimei and Qizi both received support from their spouses, which affirms this finding.

This emphasis on family togetherness is further evidenced in the experiences of entrepreneurs like Shimei and Qizi, who received significant support from their spouses. These cases reinforce the finding that strong family support enhances entrepreneurs' well-being and resilience, enabling them to navigate work stresses and achieve business success (Xu et al., 2020). Family togetherness, deeply rooted in Chinese values, is not just a cultural ideal but a practical reality that plays a critical role in the success and sustainability of LMTE ventures.

Family togetherness also holds profound significance in Chinese culture, where the family is regarded as the fundamental social unit. Chinese values emphasise the collective welfare and harmony of the family, often prioritising the needs of the group over individual interests. This strong sense of togetherness is rooted in deep cultural traditions, where family members share strong emotional bonds and provide support to one another (Xu et al., 2007). This extends to various aspects of life, from familial obligations to joint decision-making, creating a cohesive and nurturing environment that reflects the importance of unity within the family. This enduring cultural belief continues to shape dynamics and relationships within Chinese families, fostering a sense of belonging and connection that transcends generations. In the context of the LMTE families in Hainan, this deep-rooted family cohesion played a critical role in their decisions to migrate and establish new ventures, and was important for maintaining familial support and unity throughout their entrepreneurial journey.

### 5.4.3 Family Solidarity

Migration has long been a defining feature of human history, as individuals and families venture across geographical and cultural borders for better opportunities, greater safety, or new beginnings. As De Haas (2021) has noted, migration serves as a function of aspirations and capabilities within perceived geographical opportunity structures. While much of the focus in entrepreneurship studies has traditionally been on premigration factors such as motivations and the initial journey, the postmigration experience is increasingly being recognised as an important phase that profoundly shapes the lives and identities of migrants (Stockdale et al., 2013). Whether driven by economic, political, or personal motives, migration is often marked by significant disruptions and a mix of anticipation, uncertainty, and hope, especially when transitioning to a new and unfamiliar environment.

Escapism served as the initial motivation for the families in this study to embark on LMTE. The desire to escape societal pressures (e.g., intense work culture, urban stress) pushed the families toward a lifestyle that prioritises well-being and togetherness. In this context, family solidarity becomes not just a consequence but a necessity. The decision to migrate is often made collectively, and the success of the move depends on the strength and support within the family unit. Thus, the act of escaping together reinforces bonds, as family members must rely on each other in an unfamiliar environment. For instance, a family might escape the urban “rat race” to find peace and a slower pace of life in Hainan. This move requires solidarity, as the family must navigate the challenges of a new setting together, which in turn strengthens their bonds.

Experiences of migration and entrepreneurship can be conceptualised as critical incidents (Stepney, 2006). Critical incidents are crucial events, whether positive or negative (Moore, 2017), that significantly impact lifestyles, decisions, or family life. Within these processes, the paramount concept in Chinese culture is the family, and the LMTE families experienced various impacts. For LMTE families in Hainan, balancing work and family life in a new environment presented unique challenges. Their decision to migrate and engage in tourism entrepreneurship was often motivated by the desire for a better lifestyle and greater autonomy, but this journey was fraught with obstacles. Adapting to a new location, managing business demands, and

fulfilling family responsibilities require careful navigation. Nonetheless, Hainan's supportive conditions, such as its favourable climate and tourism potential, provided opportunities for LMTE families to gain control over their lives. This transition often led to a positive shift for the entire family as they collectively engaged in this new venture and lifestyle.

Through in-depth analysis and reflection on critical incidents, families can cultivate resilience. The challenges of running a business can disrupt entrepreneurs' work-life balance (Annink et al., 2016). Family resilience is reflected in their ability to adapt to adversity and navigate life and entrepreneurial experiences through learning and growth. Analysing critical incidents deepens the family's understanding of their dynamics and strengths, offering constructive learning opportunities that enhance resilience. This resilience provides greater elasticity in the face of stress and change, enabling proactive and effective responses to future challenges (Yilmaz et al., 2024). LMTE family resilience is discussed below.

Acknowledging experiences of migration and entrepreneurship as critical incidents highlights that lifestyle migration, particularly to Asian islands like Hainan, is not a linear journey. It involves pivotal moments, challenges, and transformative events that shape the trajectory of tourism entrepreneurial families. These incidents offer a nuanced view of the dynamic interplay between lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship, emphasising the need to navigate unexpected turns and adapt to evolving circumstances (Spencer-Oatey, 2013). This complexity underscores that successful lifestyle migration requires more than just relocation—it demands ongoing adaptation and strategic responses to critical incidents.

Despite the numerous obstacles, the LMTEs typically exhibited qualities of resilience and the ability to innovate (Dias et al., 2022). They continually strived to overcome challenges, seek opportunities, and pursue their dreams, often relying on assistance from family and friends. Gradually, they integrated into their new environment and ultimately found success. Different cultures and communities recognise success in particular personal traits and properties according to the social and economic environment (Romney et al., 1979). The paths of migrant entrepreneurs may be fraught with challenges. However, with courage, determination, and ongoing learning they can build their businesses in new places and realise their dreams. These

journeys may be filled with twists and turns, but also offers opportunities for growth and development. For these LMTE families, this journey was successful in terms of overall family development.

Family support plays a crucial role in shaping family resilience. Family resilience in the LMTE context was evident in the unwavering support that family members provided to entrepreneurs. Key elements included emotional and financial support, shared responsibilities, and a sense of shared goals. Elders often played a vital role in nurturing entrepreneurial endeavours, using their social networks and wisdom to benefit the business (Volkman et al., 2009). Children also contributed, emphasising the multigenerational nature of LMTE resilience. For instance, the elders were enthusiastic about promoting the businesses among their friends, creating new business opportunities. Additionally, every family member offered to support the business and the family. Despite entrepreneur Qingshui's son's young age, he actively contributed in ways that matched his abilities. Furthermore, Qingshui's brother provided them with a place to live and assisted in picking up her children from school, offering valuable support for her entrepreneurial pursuits.

This research found that the family resilience exhibited by the LMTE families had a profound impact on their entrepreneurial ventures. It influenced their decision-making, risk-taking, and adaptability (Zehrer & Leiß, 2019). This support network helped mitigate challenges and provided a safety net, encouraging the entrepreneurs to be more daring in their business pursuits. The strong family foundation instilled a long-term perspective and a desire to create a legacy, thus influencing the direction and sustainability of their ventures.

In the past few years, LMTE families acknowledged that the pandemic significantly impacted their businesses, primarily due to city lockdowns restricting tourist travel to Hainan. However, unlike the findings of Wang et al. (2015), which suggest that entrepreneurs typically respond to business challenges by increasing their time commitment to their ventures, the LMTE families adopted a different strategy. Instead of intensifying their on-site efforts, they moved their business operations online. This shift not only highlights a distinct coping mechanism in

response to the pandemic but also underscores a significant change in entrepreneurial behaviour, emphasising adaptability and the use of digital platforms over increased labour input.

Support from family members is a valuable resource during the entrepreneurial journey (Zhu et al., 2020). They provide emotional, mental, and practical support, helping entrepreneurs overcome challenges and stay motivated, while celebrating their achievements together. Family members' understanding and encouragement can help entrepreneurs navigate setbacks, and their financial or logistical assistance can ease the burden, allowing entrepreneurs to focus more effectively on their businesses. Close relationships with family members serve as emotional support systems, helping entrepreneurs balance their careers and personal lives (Edelman et al., 2016). In conclusion, family support is integral to an entrepreneur's path to success, providing a solid foundation of companionship and encouragement.

Yalong's health crisis highlights the critical role of family dynamics during the entrepreneurial processes of LMTE families. Unlike the traditional entrepreneurial focus on individual resilience and dedication, Yalong's story underscores the significance of familial support and collective effort. Before his illness, Yalong led a hectic life due to his business commitments. However, following his health scare, he prioritised spending quality time with his family without disrupting his business operations. This smooth transition was facilitated by his family's unwavering support and cooperation. They collectively recognised the importance of a healthy lifestyle and made substantial changes, including shifts in dietary habits and a commitment to regular exercise, which aided in Yalong's recovery and enhanced their overall well-being.

This narrative contrasts with previous literature, such as Wang et al. (2015), which has emphasised increased individual effort in entrepreneurial responses. Yalong's case demonstrates how LMTE families leveraged their familial networks to maintain business stability and prioritise well-being, highlighting a unique coping mechanism within the entrepreneurial landscape. This account underscores the remarkable resilience and adaptability of Yalong and his family in the face of a life-altering event. It serves as a testament to the strength of family bonds and their ability to weather challenges together, emerging stronger and

more united. The support and cooperation among family members not only aided Yalong's recovery but also ensured the continued success of his business (Brewton et al., 2010). This example underscores the pivotal role of the family in both personal and professional spheres, showing that the success of tourism entrepreneurship in lifestyle migration is deeply intertwined with family support systems.

Nevertheless, the influence of family is not consistently beneficial, as evidenced in Qingshui's narrative. She grappled with expectations from her traditional parents, who consistently failed to offer their endorsement. What exacerbated the situation was their lack of support and attempts to sway her decisions, which occasionally left her feeling bewildered and anxious. This echoes findings in previous studies that families may have a negative influence on entrepreneurs throughout the entrepreneurial process; families of entrepreneurs offer valuable emotional support and opportunities, yet they also give rise to conflicts and challenges (Hadri et al., 2024; Zhang & Reay, 2018).

Amidst trials and tribulation, support emerges as a sustaining force. Family support, both financial and psychological; government policies; community initiatives; and support networks become indispensable pillars, providing comfort and direction and offering support and guidance during difficult times or when encountering challenges (Patterson, 2002). Through these avenues, migrant entrepreneurs cope with stress and overcome obstacles with determination (Tschirhart et al., 2019).

Overall, family resilience shapes the entrepreneurial process by providing a stable and supportive foundation, fostering adaptability, promoting risk-taking, enabling effective conflict resolution, maintaining a long-term perspective, facilitating resource pooling, enhancing emotional well-being, and ensuring continuity in entrepreneurship. Based on the findings, I propose family resilience as a novel index for assessing the likelihood of business success. This index would capture not only the traditional metrics of business performance but also the critical role of familial support and adaptability in sustaining and growing a business, particularly within the context of LMTE. By integrating family resilience into evaluations of

business success, stakeholders can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the resilience and sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures.

Hainan's superior amenities and opportunities provide the LMTEs with the environment they need to foster personal and family growth, contributing to a richer, more fulfilling life. By managing the dual responsibilities of entrepreneurship and caregiving, LMTE families exemplify a new model of resilience and adaptation, redefining the possibilities of work-life balance in a rapidly changing society. This approach not only challenges the traditional responses to work pressure in China but also highlights the potential for a more integrated and harmonious way of living that benefits individuals and their families and communities.

The presence of LMTE families contributes significantly to Hainan Island's economic and cultural landscape. By establishing businesses that cater to both locals and tourists, they create jobs and stimulate local economies. Additionally, their diverse backgrounds and experiences enrich the community, fostering cultural exchange and collaboration. This influx of entrepreneurial spirit not only boosts Hainan's reputation as a vibrant tourism destination but also enhances the island's social fabric, making it a more dynamic place to live and work.

The societal impact of these migrant entrepreneurs has been significant, catalysing economic growth and enriching the cultural and social fabric of Hainan Island (Friedman & Desivilya, 2010). As migrant entrepreneurs integrate into local society, their businesses become vital channels for exchange and innovation, facilitating cross-cultural interactions that enrich Hainan Island's social and cultural landscape and introduce new ideas and practices into the local economy. This integration fosters a dynamic environment where traditional and modern influences blend, creating opportunities for both local communities and migrant entrepreneurs to thrive together.

#### **5.4.4 Shared Migration Experience**

Migration is a collective experience, and how families navigate cultural adaptation and communication reflects their shared journey. In Asian cultures, the term “interview” might be perceived as a particularly sensitive and potentially anxiety-inducing word. The Chinese term

*fangtan* (访谈, interview) can sometimes evoke confusion and unease, as it may suggest that the person being interviewed is in trouble or has done something wrong. Unfortunately, no suitable alternative Chinese term that fully conveys the essence of an “interview” could be found. Some participants in this study project expressed that the term “interview” felt like an “investigation” in Chinese, which implies a negative connotation and may lead them to believe that something undesirable has occurred, prompting them to be reluctant to share their story (e.g., Bo’ao’s husband). This may have been due to their educational level. However, most importantly, this cultural difference highlights the significance of clear communication and cultural sensitivity when engaging in research with participants from varied backgrounds.

Family interviews revealed the varied perceptions of migration among family members, shaped by their roles, responsibilities, and personal aspirations. For children, migration often presents itself as adventure, with opportunities to explore new environments, make new friends, and experience different lifestyles. Their perspectives are driven by curiosity and the excitement of novelty, often focusing on immediate experiences such as attending a new school, engaging in outdoor activities, or trying different foods.

In contrast, parents tend to view migration through a more pragmatic lens, prioritizing economic stability, career opportunities, and long-term prospects for the family. For them, the move is often a strategic decision influenced by financial considerations, work-life balance, and the well-being of their children. While children embrace the present, parents are more concerned with securing a sustainable future—ensuring quality education, maintaining financial security, and integrating into the local community.

Despite these differing perspectives, the shared migration experiences foster a sense of interdependence within families. Parents, while focused on responsibilities, often draw energy from their children's enthusiasm and adaptability. Meanwhile, children, despite their initial excitement, may rely on their parents for emotional stability and reassurance when facing cultural and linguistic adjustments. These interconnected experiences shape the family's collective journey, reinforcing both resilience and unity as they navigate their new environment together.

Additionally, the variability in how participants narrated their stories underscores the need for nuanced analysis. For example, Qingshui spoke rapidly and paused significantly when discussing personal topics, while Riyue's wife often repeated herself, and children tended to lower their voices when discussing negative aspects. Such observations are critical for understanding the communication dynamics within Chinese families and the influence of cultural norms on their expressions.

Family values shape migration decisions, intergenerational interactions, and collective experiences in the new environment. The emphasis on education within Chinese families is a notable difference from Western societies. The intense focus on children's education, illustrated by the historical example of Mencius' mother, underscores the value placed on academic achievement and moral development (Waters, 2005). In the famous story from ancient China, "Mencius' Mother's Three Moves," a mother relocated her family three times to provide her child with a good education. Mencius became one of the renowned philosophers of ancient China, and his philosophical ideas have had a profound influence on Chinese philosophy and culture (Chan, 2013; Wong, 2001), underscoring the paramount role of school education in Chinese society of instilling moral values and ethical reasoning. This cultural priority impacted how the LMTE families approached their entrepreneurial ventures and family life.

I found that the LSP workshops encouraged all participants to express themselves effectively through the creation of physical models. This method went beyond verbal communication and acknowledged the importance of nonverbal communication, which captures visual and tactile expressions. Participants communicated through their choice of Lego® elements, spatial arrangements, and the ways in which they integrated individual models into shared family models. Furthermore, the use of Lego® bricks facilitated communication among family members. As they built and discussed their creations, they engaged in sensemaking and self-reflection, providing valuable insights into their own experiences and perspectives without any pressure.

Participants found it easier to articulate their thoughts and feelings through the creation of tangible representations, which led to more in-depth and nuanced responses, and facilitated

better communication and understanding among family members. This process of constructing models served as a powerful reflective tool, allowing participants to explore and express emotions that might otherwise have remained unspoken. For instance, after the interviews, entrepreneur Sanya and his wife were deeply moved to discover how strongly their daughter remembered his illness during one Lunar New Year. They were taken aback by the depth of her feelings, which surfaced during the research process, leading to a moment of shared emotional connection within the family.

The differing perspectives across generations influence how migration and entrepreneurship are experienced as a family. The Chinese Spirit of Sacrifice was particularly evident in the older generation of Chinese LMTEs who have been shaped by a cultural ethos that has emphasised endurance, hard work, and the subordination of individual needs to collective family goals. This cultural value is deeply intertwined with Confucian ideals (Bifarin et al., 2022), which place a strong emphasis on filial piety, family solidarity, and the responsibility to ensure the prosperity and stability of the family unit.

However, this research also revealed the nuanced tensions between this traditional value and the attitudes of the younger generation of Chinese LMTEs. While the older generation continues to embody the “forever tolerant and hard-working” ethos, the younger generation shows signs of divergence, influenced by contemporary social phenomena such as *neijuan* and *tangping*. These younger individuals are increasingly challenging the expectations for relentless sacrifice, seeking instead a balance between work, life, and personal fulfilment.

Chinese families have long been anchored in traditional values prioritising familial harmony, unity, and collective well-being. These values played a pivotal role in shaping the resilience of the LMTE families. The concept of *guanxi*, or social connections, is deeply ingrained, contributing to an extensive network that provides support and opportunities (Ruan & Ruan, 2017). This intricate web of relationships facilitates access to resources, information, and potential partnerships, allowing lifestyle migrants to navigate their entrepreneurial journeys more effectively. The Chinese concept of *jia* (家), which signifies home and family, was central to the LMTE experiences. It fostered a strong sense of belonging and motivated families to

venture into entrepreneurship collectively. It underscored the importance of familial bonds and cultural identity, driving lifestyle migrants to seek environments that resonated with their notion of home. The interplay between *guanxi* and *jia* not only enriched the LMTE families' migrant experiences but also reinforced a sense of belonging and continuity amidst the challenges of migration, highlighting the unique motivations and aspirations that guided these individuals in their pursuit of a balanced and fulfilling life.

Yalong's experience illustrates the concepts of *guanxi* and *jia*, central to LMTE as discussed by Ruan & Ruan (2017). The clear delineation of roles within Yalong's family, with each member extending support, reflected the importance of family solidarity and mutual assistance in overcoming challenges. During Yalong's year-long battle with illness, his wife assumed some of his business responsibilities and even enlisted her cousin's help, demonstrating the extended family's involvement in ensuring business continuity and personal support.

This reflective experience highlighted the significance of the research in facilitating communication and insights for the families involved. It also underscored a unique aspect of Chinese culture, in which family harmony and emotional bonds are highly valued. The process not only helped Sanya and his wife understand their daughter better but also revealed her growth into a responsible and caring individual. The family reflected that this research was not just a study but a meaningful workshop that deepened their understanding of one another, aligning with the cultural emphasis on family cohesion and collective well-being.

As LMTE families adapt to a new cultural environment, the process of cultural integration can either strengthen or challenge family togetherness and solidarity. Understanding and respecting the local culture can enhance family togetherness as they collectively navigate the new cultural landscape. Conversely, cultural differences might test family solidarity, but overcoming these challenges together can ultimately reinforce their bonds.

One of the pivotal findings of this research is the concept of the Chinese Spirit of Sacrifice, which emerged as a defining characteristic of Chinese LMTEs. This concept reflects the deeply ingrained cultural value within Chinese society, where personal sacrifices are often made for

the benefit of the family and future generations (Gu, 2022). In the context of the LMTEs, this sacrifice manifested in several ways, including the relentless pursuit of entrepreneurial success, prioritising family well-being over personal desires, and enduring the challenges that came with migrating and establishing a new life in Hainan.

## **5.5 Chapter Conclusion**

The LMTEs were not just motivated by lifestyle aspirations; they also recognised the potential for success in catering to the growing domestic and international tourist markets. Hainan's robust tourism infrastructure, coupled with increasing visitor numbers and strong government promotion efforts, created an ideal environment for entrepreneurial ventures. These newcomers saw the tourism sector as a strategic opportunity to establish sustainable income sources while creating businesses that aligned with their personal interests and values (von der Weppen & Cochrane, 2012). This research highlights how the LMTEs strategically leveraged Hainan's favourable conditions to pursue economic and lifestyle goals. By tapping into the expanding tourism market, they could build businesses that generated income and reflected their passion and commitment to a particular way of life. This approach demonstrates the unique blend of economic pragmatism and lifestyle-driven motivations that characterise LMTEs, adding a new dimension to understanding how lifestyle entrepreneurs operate in thriving tourism destinations.

In conclusion, despite the push and pull motivations commonly described by tourism entrepreneurship scholars (Morrison et al., 2008; Walker & Brown, 2004) offering a helpful framework, the motivations driving LMTEs in this study reveal a much more intricate and nuanced picture. This research demonstrates that LMTEs' motivations are far from straightforward or singular. Instead, they emerge from a complex interplay of multiple factors often involving a dynamic combination of push and pull elements.

Key among these motivations are personal, familial, financial, experiential, and locational aspects. These drives are closely intertwined with broader themes of the LMTE escapism, where LMTEs seek to break free from the pressures of their previous stressful lifestyles, an aspect particularly relevant within the Chinese context of *neijuan* and *tangping*. These concepts

illustrate a growing desire among individuals and families to resist urban life's relentless competition and societal pressures by seeking more balanced, fulfilling, and peaceful ways of living.

Additionally, family considerations play a pivotal role in migration and entrepreneurial decisions. The desire for family togetherness and solidarity is not just a motivation but also a fundamental value that shapes LMTE experiences. Families migrate together, not only to improve their quality of life but to strengthen familial bonds and provide a supportive environment for each other. The cultural insights, with their emphasis on the family as a core unit of society (*jia*), further amplify this dimension, highlighting how entrepreneurial decisions are deeply influenced by family dynamics and the collective well-being of the family unit.

In addition, the desires for new experiences and self-fulfilment contribute significantly to the decision-making process, reflecting a deeper search for meaning and satisfaction beyond simple economic gain. This quest for self-fulfilment is often intertwined with the pursuit of an aspirational lifestyle, which includes living in locations that offer natural beauty, a slower pace of life, and opportunities for personal growth—particularly prominent factors in choosing destinations like Hainan.

This chapter contributes to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the multifaceted and interconnected nature of LMTE motivations. It challenges the notion that they can be easily categorised into simplistic push or pull factors. Instead, the study reveals that LMTEs are motivated by a rich tapestry of reasons that include not only economic and lifestyle considerations but also emotional, familial, and experiential dimensions.

Furthermore, this chapter emphasises the importance of context, particularly the specific cultural, geographical, and social environments in which these motivations are formed and acted upon. For example, the preference for coastal cities such as Hainan, shaped by previous positive travel experiences and a desire for a relaxed lifestyle, underscores the importance of familiarity and personal connection with the destination in shaping migration decisions.

By integrating these diverse aspects—motivations, neijuan, tangping, family togetherness, family solidarity, and shared migration experience—this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of LMTE. It contributes to a deeper understanding of how these elements collectively influence the lifestyle migration and entrepreneurial decisions of LMTE families. This holistic perspective enriches the academic discourse on lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship and offers valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners aiming to support the unique needs and aspirations of lifestyle entrepreneurs in various contexts.

# **Chapter 6 Gender, Children, and Family Experiences**

## **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter delves into the intricate dynamics of gender, children, and families within the context of LMTE. Drawing upon the diverse experiences of LMTE families, it explores how gender roles and the presence of children influence migration decisions, entrepreneurial ventures, adaptation processes, and postmigration experiences in new environments.

From a motivational perspective, gender differences reveal that migration is driven not only by individual aspirations but also by a collective desire to enhance the family's overall quality of life. While previous research has often focused on the challenges and opportunities individuals face in entrepreneurial settings, this discussion extends the narrative to include the pivotal roles played by all family members, including children. This research project shifts the focus from the individual entrepreneur to the family unit as a whole.

This chapter aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors driving family migration and their subsequent impacts in both personal and professional spheres. Through this exploration, it sheds light on the multifaceted nature of LMTE experiences, offering insights into the broader implications for family dynamics and entrepreneurial success.

## **6.2 Gender in LMTE**

LMTEs' entrepreneurial work is more complex than that of paid workers, which makes entrepreneurial work more challenging and stressful (Rauch et al., 2018). The unique context of lifestyle migration adds layers of complexity, as individuals balance personal aspirations with professional endeavours in unfamiliar settings. Entrepreneurs have shown their capability to navigate complex situations in previous studies (Pathak et al., 2022). This research project found that the gender differences in LMTE in Hainan mirrored those in other developing countries, where traditional culture often grants men more privilege and positions them as primary decision-makers and heads of the family. These gender roles have continued to

influence the dynamics of the LMTE families, with men typically holding more authority in family and entrepreneurial decisions (Malmström et al., 2017). Women's entrepreneurship in Asia significantly differs from Western contexts since conflicts between women's traditional cultural and contemporary roles in society pose ongoing challenges (Cho et al., 2020). Women LMTEs in Hainan, China, demonstrated different motivations compared to the men.

### **6.2.1 Motivations**

Previous researchers have indicated gender differences in entrepreneurship, such as different motivations and challenges women entrepreneurs face (Figuroa-Domecq et al., 2020; Henry et al., 2016). Women entrepreneurs are drawn to migrate due to various pull factors, each driven by distinct motivations (Zgheib, 2018). This aligns with prior research on women entrepreneurs' motivations, which have often emphasised meeting social needs rather than solely pursuing profits (Solesvik et al., 2019). Women LMTEs exhibit multifaceted motivations for embarking on entrepreneurial ventures. Women entrepreneurs who have children are driven to continue and expand their businesses (Meyer & Keyser, 2019a). They enter the tourism industry to earn income for the family and contribute to family responsibilities while allowing more free time that can be used to minimise work-family conflict (Allen et al., 2020; Gódány & Mura, 2021).

All the women LMTEs in this research project had children and tended to make decisions based on how it would affect their children (Meyer & Keyser, 2019). They deeply consider their children's thoughts and opinions and strive to be positive role models for them. A common theme among these entrepreneurs was their concern for their children (Xu et al., 2018). Their motivations often revolved around setting an exemplary path for their offspring or seeking a transformative change in their lives (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015). This is different from previous research findings that have argued that women entrepreneurs experience conflict between work demands and the time they spend with their families (Obrenovic et al., 2020; Sardeshmukh et al., 2021; Yan & Zhang, 2024). Instead, the women LMTEs in this research closely linked their work and their lives with their families, especially their children. For the women LMTEs, the separation between work and personal life was often blurred, as the responsibilities of running a business regularly merged with their family roles, making it challenging to maintain

distinct boundaries (Brandth & Haugen, 2007). This transformation entailed transitioning to an occupation that allowed them more time with their children or to fulfil the social role of a mother who can be present to pick up their children from school each day.

In addition, these women LMTErs were attracted by opportunities similarly to the study findings by Xiong et al. (2020). Women LMTErs with a family history in business, like Qizi and Shimei, whose husbands were also entrepreneurs, are more inclined to start their own businesses compared to those without such familial experience (Sasu & Sasu, 2015).

The research found several differences between men and women LMTErs in Hainan. Financial gain ranked lower on the list of motivations for the women LMTErs, which is different from a previous finding (Allen & Curington, 2014). Moreover, the women did not choose to start businesses to achieve their own dreams. They wanted their children to know that their mothers can work and that it is okay for women to go to work. Women LMTErs may draw inspiration from their children's development issues when starting businesses, particularly in sectors like tourism. This underscores the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurship, where personal motivations are intertwined with professional goals. In the context of tourism, considerations of children's development could lead to businesses focused on family-friendly travel experiences or educational tourism initiatives (Bakas, 2017). LMTErs recognise that catering to the needs of families with children not only enhances the travel experience, but also taps into a growing market demand for educational and child-centred tourism. By focusing on these aspects, they can offer unique services that align with parental priorities, thus gaining a competitive edge in the industry.

For example, researchers have found that male LMTErs do not share the same emotional bonds with family members or their communities as female LMTErs do (Welsh & Kaciak, 2019). Male LMTErs in this study did not necessarily consider children as the primary motivation for pursuing entrepreneurship. Financial independence or sufficient initial funding was already in place at the establishment phase (Verheul & Thurik, 2001). Their main motivations centred on personal independence and the desire for flexible time for themselves, followed by the aim of spending quality time with their families. Concerns about being a role model or positively

influencing their children did not emerge as significant factors. Instead, men focused more on achieving business success and often did not share household responsibilities, such as picking up children from school, which the female LMTErs typically undertook.

As a result, the male LMTErs could devote more time and energy to their business endeavours, which may lead to greater financial advantages and business success compared to female LMTErs. This unequal distribution of responsibilities allows men to prioritise their entrepreneurial goals, potentially resulting in faster business growth and increased profitability. On the other hand, female LMTErs who juggle family and business duties may face more significant challenges in achieving the same level of financial success, highlighting a gender disparity in the landscape of tourism entrepreneurship.

### **6.2.2 Entrepreneurial and Migration Experience**

In recent decades, China has witnessed rapid development. However, it continues to uphold its relatively conservative and deeply rooted traditions. In this context, Hainan has emerged as a welcoming haven, particularly for mothers, offering them favourable living and working conditions to meet their own needs and those of their children. As an isolated island, Hainan provides a sanctuary away from the prying eyes of the mainland, shielding single mothers from the social pressures they might face elsewhere. Furthermore, the local community welcomes newcomers, making Hainan the ultimate choice for those seeking independence and promising a fresh beginning for women LMTErs.

In terms of resilience, gender roles also play a central part. Men focus on external business challenges, often seeing their entrepreneurial ventures as the key to securing the family's future. On the other hand, women assume critical responsibilities within the family, ensuring emotional stability and fostering resilience by managing daily challenges. In alignment with previous research, this research project found slightly gender differences in entrepreneurial performance (Sardeshmukh & Smith, 2024). Consistent with previous research, women LMTErs faced greater challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities (Russen et al., 2021; Sardeshmukh & Smith, 2024). These women often experienced increased family-related

pressures that could have affected their entrepreneurial endeavours (Kibler et al., 2017). As highlighted in earlier studies, traditional marriage and family roles significantly influence the entrepreneurial activities of women LMTErs, often leading to conflicting demands on their time and energy (Tillmar et al., 2022). However, despite these social pressures, the women LMTErs in this research project demonstrated a commendable ability to manage and harmonise their work and family lives effectively (Figueroa-Armijos & Berns, 2022).

One of the women entrepreneurs stated, “I believe I am an entrepreneur instead of women entrepreneur”. This perspective underscores a shift from gender-specific labels towards a more inclusive understanding of entrepreneurship among women LMTErs. By asserting her identity as simply an entrepreneur, this participant challenged traditional gender categorisations and emphasises her focus on entrepreneurial skills and achievements rather than being defined by her gender (Jakhar & Krishna, 2020). This sentiment aligns with broader movements within the entrepreneurial world, where the emphasis is increasingly placed on capabilities and accomplishments rather than gender distinctions (Octavia & Sriayudha, 2021; Maziriri et al., 2023).

Contrary to previous studies on women entrepreneurs that have highlighted the existence of discrimination (Ahmetaj et al., 2023), this research project found minimal discrimination among LMTErs regarding gender. All LMTErs, regardless of gender, encountered similar barriers and challenges in their entrepreneurial journeys. For example, they all needed to adapt to local regulations, familiarise themselves with the local working style and native languages, and navigate difficulties in securing payment. This suggests that while there may be nuanced differences in performance, the overarching obstacles faced by both men and women LMTErs were largely uniform, emphasising the need for a collective approach to overcoming these challenges in the tourism entrepreneurship sector.

In Hainan, women entrepreneurs constitute a significant and indispensable segment of the entrepreneurial community. In recent years, Hainan has organised several events to promote and support women entrepreneurs. For example, the Hainan Women’s Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, which has been held for 6 years (Hinews, 2024), has had over

5,000 women entrepreneurs participate. The Hainan government also has a special funding programme to support women entrepreneurs. The construction of the Hainan Free-Trade Port has created a new level of openness. Many insightful and market-savvy women have set their sights on this fertile investment ground, eagerly establishing themselves and turning the Free-Trade Port into a haven for entrepreneurial endeavours. For example, the Postal Savings Bank of China's Hainan Provincial Branch has launched the "Women's Free-Trade Loan" with a total credit limit of 5 billion RMB. After government interest subsidies, the interest rate for this loan is as low as 1.95% (China Post, 2023). This initiative effectively addresses the funding challenges facing female entrepreneurs in the Hainan Province and contributes to the development of the Free-Trade Port.

The findings of this research project are similar to those in previous studies (Sun et al., 2020), but they also contribute new insights into the unique experiences of LMTEs as lifestyle entrepreneurs in tourism destinations. LMTEs are psychologically better equipped to adapt to challenges, which improves their sense of work-life balance and overall happiness in tourist destinations. However, this research underscores the dual nature of entrepreneurship for LMTEs, illustrating that as migrant entrepreneurs, they navigate a complex landscape where family dynamics play a vital yet frequently overlooked role (Chan & Chan, 2011).

Specifically, while previous studies may have focused on individual entrepreneurs, this research emphasised the importance of the relationships between LMTEs and their family members, identifying this as a critical aspect of the entrepreneurial experience that has been neglected in previous research. Furthermore, the thematic exploration of STRESS faced by LMTEs—alongside its subthemes—illuminates both the challenges and opportunities they encountered as they embarked on tourism ventures in Hainan Island. This journey required them to acquire new competencies and knowledge while redefining their identities in response to a rapidly changing environment. By integrating these elements, this research offers a more nuanced understanding of the LMTE experience, demonstrating that explorations of the interactions between family dynamics and entrepreneurial challenges are essential to understand the holistic journey of lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs.

Compared to their experiences in their original home cities, the positive LMTE experiences echo previous studies, such as the feeling of being close to nature, the slow pace of life, and good vibes (Korpela, 2014), with few gender differences. The LMTEs were satisfied with the local environment, where the air is clean, the climate is comfortable, green scenery prevails, and it is close to the sea. This positive experience of enjoying the local environment is aligned with findings in Sun and Xu's (2017) study on Chinese lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs. This research project further substantiates Su's (2022) finding that the Chinese place a strong emphasis on the quality of their natural living environment. However, it goes beyond this by exploring how this preference influences the motivations and decisions of LMTEs. While Su's study highlighted a general concern for the natural environment, this research specifically illustrates how a desire for a better living environment serves as a significant draw factor for LMTEs migrating to tourist destinations such as Hainan. By focusing on the unique context of lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship, this study adds depth to the understanding of how environmental considerations shape entrepreneurial aspirations and community dynamics among Chinese migrants.

Previous studies have warned that work- family conflicts are more prevalent among women entrepreneurs due to the roles women play within families (Yan & Zhang, 2024). However, little difference has been observed between men and women LMTEs regarding work-family conflicts. Instead of creating role conflicts due to devoting more time to the business and less time with family (Fan et al., 2023), relocating to Hainan appears to have increased the amount of quality family time. This may be due to women LMTEs having higher pragmatic legitimacy (Kawai & Kazumi, 2021). This suggests that they have sufficient funds to support family expenses and maintain a high quality of life, reducing the need for their constant presence. In tourism businesses, especially those business run by women who influence tourism, freedom to work from home reduces family conflict (Asbari et al., 2021).

Women LMTEs frequently interact with their family members, which significantly influences their entrepreneurial activities (Makandwa & de Klerk, 2024). They often consider the opinions of their parents and children in their business ventures and benefit from the support and

innovative ideas provided by their spouses and children. Thus, family members are powerful agents that influence women LMTEs' business performance (Makandwa & de Klerk, 2024), and family dynamics play a crucial role in shaping the experiences of women LMTEs by providing essential resources and support (Cesaroni & Paoloni, 2016). For example, Qizi's son contributed to her entrepreneurial endeavours by assisting within his capabilities as a helper. This involvement highlights how family members can contribute significantly to the success of a business, showcasing the collaborative nature of entrepreneurship within family dynamics (Kawharu et al., 2017).

Gender significantly influences tourism entrepreneurship, shaping motivations, experiences, and outcomes for women LMTEs. Women often pursue tourism entrepreneurship to achieve work-life balance, personal fulfilment, and financial independence. They face the same challenges as male entrepreneurs but also benefit from strong social networks and family support. In the entrepreneurial tourism business, their experiences are marked by barriers and enablers. On one hand, women LMTEs encounter adaptation issues and societal expectations that prioritise domestic responsibilities over professional aspirations. On the other hand, women often leverage strong social networks, community connections, and family support to advance their entrepreneurial endeavours (Imbaya, 2012). Thus, women LMTEs play a pivotal role in fostering social cohesion by helping to build and maintain relationships, encouraging empathy, and cultivating a sense of belonging, which together enhance community bonds, cooperation, and tourism development in the host destination (Basu, 2023).

In summary, the identification of these gendered differences is vital, as it sheds light on the complex interplay between individual aspirations, family responsibilities, and cultural expectations. By highlighting the complementary roles of men and women, this research offers a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive lifestyle migration and shape entrepreneurial success. These findings challenge the notion that LMTE is purely an economic decision and emphasise the importance of family and gender in shaping migration experiences.

### 6.3 Children in LMTE

This research project found that the presence of children within LMTE families influenced the motivations for family migration decisions, in alignment with other studies which have found that parents consider the best interest of their children when making migration decisions (Kalverboer et al., 2017; Sime & Fox, 2015). The participation level of children in this study in this process varied between families and with the ages of the children. These findings correspond with a previous family migration study that argued that children often have a say in the decision-making process instead of being dominated by adults in the family (Bushin, 2009). The children in the LMTE families in this study expressed their excitement about this significant family transition. Unlike previous research on migrant children, which has argued that children face difficulties in achieving a sense of belonging in a new environment (Ní Laoire et al., 2011), this research project found that the adults experienced issues with belonging after migration, whereas the children from the LMTE families did not.

Migration is a unique family transition that significantly impacts children's development (Lu et al., 2019). The children from the LMTE families revealed new insights that differ from those found in earlier studies of Chinese children who were left behind in rural areas by migrating parents or moved from rural areas to cities. A previous study has cautioned that migration by Chinese fathers negatively affects children's well-being (Leng & Park, 2010). However, the children in the LMTE families reflected an overall sense of well-being. One potential moderating factor might be the increased quantity and quality of family time after migrating to Hainan (Haveman & Wolfe, 1995), as parents who start entrepreneurial ventures tend to have more flexible schedules.

One of the significant experiences among children in the LMTE families in this study was well-being. Happiness, life satisfaction, and flourishing are used interchangeably to describe well-being (Bakracheva, 2020). Well-being is a broad concept that involves many aspects. Eudaimonia is one of the approaches to pursuing happiness, which refers to achieving one's potential and experiencing a meaningful life (Chen & Zeng, 2024), while hedonia focuses on

the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, emphasising immediate gratification and sensory enjoyment (Drenski, 2019). Previous studies indicate that eudaimonia tends to be more beneficial for well-being compared to hedonia (Ryan et al., 2008). LMTE families have shown a clear focus on promoting their children's feelings of eudaimonia.

The LMTE families in this study facilitated opportunities for their children to exercise their volition (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and created an environment that empowered their children to exercise their autonomy and make independent choices. By encouraging their children's involvement in family businesses and decision-making processes, these families fostered a sense of agency, allowing the children to explore their interests and develop essential life skills. This supportive atmosphere not only promotes personal growth but also helps cultivate a strong sense of responsibility and self-confidence in the children, ultimately benefiting both the family and the broader community.

It emerged that relocating to Hainan provided their children with a better future (Sime & Fox, 2015). The LMTE families in this study believed that adopting a less stressful lifestyle had contributed significantly to their children's happiness and physical health. They recognise that a relaxed environment not only fosters well-being, but also promotes positive emotional development. Furthermore, the strong sense of community in which they reside enabled their children to cultivate close social relationships, which are essential for developing their social skills and providing emotional support (Phillips & Robinson, 2015). Additionally, engaging in tourism entrepreneurship provided the family with financial and material security, allowing them to create a stable foundation for their children's future. This combination of reduced stress, supportive social connections, and financial stability formed a holistic approach to enhancing their children's overall quality of life.

Although much of the focus of most studies is often on the adult perspective, children have also articulated their experiences of flourishing after migration. According to VanderWeele et al. (2019), the flourishing index can provide a holistic understanding of well-being. The children in the LMTE families in this study reflected these key areas of flourishing in their own lives. For instance, they experienced enhanced happiness and life satisfaction by relocating to Hainan.

The children benefited from an educational system that imposes less burden and allows for more freedom, contributing to their overall sense of well-being. Additionally, the children relished the various outdoor activities available to them and the increased family time, which significantly contributed to their flourishing. These experiences highlight how the environment and lifestyle changes LMTE brings can positively impact children's holistic development and well-being.

The role of children in entrepreneurship is underdeveloped in tourism research, and this research project contributes significantly. According to Canosa and Schänzel (2021), the major roles children play within LMTE include as family helpers (Basu, 2004), learners (Kawharu et al., 2017), and social agents (Bakas, 2018). The children in this research project proactively helped the entrepreneurs as family helpers and social agents, particularly the children from single-parent LMTE families, or during difficult times, by taking responsibility for household chores (Canosa & Schänzel, 2021). Children are naturally active learners with a sense of curiosity; even without explicit parental guidance, they gain entrepreneurial skills and experiences (Kawharu et al., 2017).

While acknowledging previous research, such as that by Bakas (2018), which identified children as economic actors but did not explore long-term outcomes, this study focuses on the immediate benefits of growing up in a supportive LMTE family environment. Specifically, this study emphasises how a less stressful lifestyle, strong community bonds, and financial security foster positive emotional development and social skills in these children. By focusing on these aspects, the research provides new insights into how the parenting practices and entrepreneurial choices of LMTE families can shape the future well-being and success of their children, a perspective that has been largely overlooked in previous studies.

The findings underscore the early development of a wealth-conscious mindset among children of Chinese tourism entrepreneurial families. These children gained a profound understanding of business from an early age (Zagkotsi, 2014). Children from LMTE families in this research reflected that they have an awareness of business ideas (Tarling et al., 2016). For example, Riyue's son traded his toys with his classmates to earn pocket money. Although being

immersed in a business-orientated environment can be enriching, it is crucial to ensure that children have the autonomy to explore their passions beyond the confines of their family businesses.

The study by Shekhar et al. (2022) implied that to instil entrepreneurial skills in successive generations during the succession planning process, family businesses often emphasise managerial education in their youth, aiming to foster innovation and creativity. However, this research project suggests that children become sensitive to finance without their parents' specific training. The children developed entrepreneurial skills naturally, which echoes finding in research by Miyakawa and Oguchi (2022), that family tourism entrepreneurship improves children's psychological ability to acquire generic skills.

The children in the LMTE families in this study exhibited strong family bonds, supported by parents and grandparents in Chinese child-centred family structures (Wu & Wall, 2016). This research revealed that the children's personalities changed from introverted to outgoing after migration. Previous studies have suggested that the parent-child relationships in migrant families shape children's personalities and impact children's adaptation to new environments (Klimova, 2020). In the context of the LMTE families, the ample time available for interactions between parents and children postmigration fostered this positive development, enabling children to build confidence and social skills in their new surroundings.

While the intense focus on children is beneficial, a careful balance is needed to ensure their holistic growth and optimal development. Overemphasis on children's needs may inadvertently overshadow other essential aspects of family life, including the parents' well-being and the family's overall dynamics. Excessive attention can impose undue expectations and pressures on children, potentially constraining their development of independence and decision-making skills (Fisher et al., 2014). This research contributes to understanding how migration and lifestyle changes influence child development within LMTE families, highlighting the importance of maintaining equilibrium in family interactions to support both children's and parents' growth.

Unlike previous studies on migrant children in China, which suggest that these children face discrimination and struggle to integrate into host communities (Huang et al., 2018), this research project found that children from the LMTE families integrated easily into their communities and did not encounter discrimination issues. Furthermore, the findings illustrate that a sense of community provides children with an additional support system: community members who can offer emotional support during times of adjustment and stress (Phillips & Robinson, 2015). Community support was considered a social capital resource (Putnam, 2000) that helped children feel less isolated and more connected to their new environment and peers in Hainan. During LSP, the children expressed a sense of cultural adaptation as they navigated differences in language, customs, and local practices. Explorations of adaptation experiences of children from tourism entrepreneurial families has been inadequate in previous studies. For example, Wilson (2007) explored the lifestyle motivations of adults, with only a minor focus on children as family helpers.

At the provincial government level in the last few years, the General Office of the Hainan Provincial Party Committee and the General Office of the Hainan Provincial People's Government have initiated a work plan for a 2023-2025 campaign to protect children's rights in communities and villages in Hainan (All China Women's Federation, 2023). This government-led initiative in Hainan demonstrates a solid commitment to protect children's rights and create a more informed and supportive environment for children. This initiative greatly benefits children, promoting their well-being and protection across the province.

## **6.4 LMTE Family Experiences**

Given the complexity of humans (Michalos, 2008), each individual's experience will be complex. Motivation is an important factor to explore for LMTE families; their postmigration and entrepreneurial lives are also worthy of attention. Different types of motivation lead to different qualities of experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2000). LMTE families' daily lives, relationships, and experiences after migration are influenced by both material and nonmaterial aspects which shape their overall quality of life (Zollet & Qu, 2023). Migration and

entrepreneurial processes transformed the lives of the LMTE families in this study, reflecting their positive and negative experiences. Participants shared complex migration and entrepreneurial journeys, highlighting a growing trend of families moving to destinations such as Hainan for better quality of life and tourism-related business opportunities. These experiences encompass various dimensions, affecting bonding between family members and shaping their interactions. The shared migration experience underscores the importance of mutual support and understanding within migrant families as they navigate the challenges and opportunities of their new environment together.

Waldren (2016) has argued that LMTE families are in “A privileged and marginal position at the same time” (p. 158). The migration and entrepreneurial processes also present challenges and negative experiences. Adapting to a new environment, different culture, and unfamiliar language can be daunting (Kim, 2005). LMTE families face difficulties adjusting to their new environments, establishing social networks, and managing the logistics of relocation. The absence of established support systems in their new locale can lead to feelings of isolation and frustration. Additionally, the controversy around lifestyle migration relates to the potential for these newcomers to alter the local social fabric and property markets, which sometimes provokes tensions with long-term residents (Villa, 2019). Alongside the positive experiences, as with other migrants and entrepreneurs and in line with previous studies, the participants in this study also experienced some constraints. For example, the families have had difficulties adjusting to local languages, and migrants from Northern regions have had difficulty adjusting to the humid climate and local food.

In prior studies on entrepreneurship, factors such as political effects, demographic changes, economic conditions, technological advancements, social changes, and political transitions have been identified as elements that entrepreneurs’ are aware of, which help trigger the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities (Alsos et al., 2016). However, this recognition may also come from other family members. For instance, the spouse often plays a crucial role in supporting LMTEs’ businesses. This aligns with findings by Mathias and Wang (2023) which

highlight the significant roles that entrepreneurs' spouses play before, during, and after the launch of a new venture.

Alongside the positive experiences, the entrepreneurial journey is characterised by ambiguity in a landscape where outcomes are often unpredictable and paths forward are full of complexity and uncertainty (Townsend et al., 2018). According to Chang and Hancock (2003), ambiguity is a primary cause of stress. LMTE families face the complexities of establishing businesses in new environments and encounter numerous uncertainties and challenges inherent to migration and entrepreneurship, especially during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Family support is crucial during these times for entrepreneurial survival and success (Gayatri & Irawaty, 2022). This support system is crucial for fostering family resilience, as it empowers LMTE families to effectively manage the challenges of their new ventures and adapt to changing circumstances such as those brought about by the pandemic. By relying on each other for emotional, financial, and practical support, family members can navigate difficulties more successfully, reinforcing their bonds and enhancing their ability to bounce back from setbacks. This collective resilience not only aids in overcoming immediate challenges but also contributes to the long-term stability and success of the family's entrepreneurial endeavours.

The LMTE families in this study also experienced some inconvenience. Hainan's petrol prices are higher than in other provinces due to a vehicle-toll surcharge included in the cost, unlike in other regions where tolls are collected separately. For mainlanders looking to settle in Hainan long-term, obtaining a local Hukou is essential, as it allows them to purchase vehicles and real estate. This regulatory environment creates barriers for potential migrants, affecting their decision to establish permanent residence in Hainan.

As well as the transportation issues, the poor service in Hainan contradicts the general public's expectations, as people expect good service and experiences in a tourist destination. This may raise expectations for improvements in service quality or trigger community discussions on related issues. Certain customs and cultural issues are reflected in the social practice of tourism development in Hainan (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2016). Hainan's reputation for poor service quality and the practice of providing freshly slaughtered food in local restaurants might be part of the

local customs, reflecting the regional dietary culture. Government departments' work hours and practices may also reflect the administrative culture and work habits in the area. Most participants reported experiencing subpar service throughout Hainan; however, they did not perceive this treatment as a negative reflection of their status as newcomers. They attributed the service quality to Hainan's laid-back lifestyle, noting that the locals tended to treat all individuals uniformly, regardless of their origins. This experience differs from other Chinese destination cities, such as Shanghai, where newcomers are usually treated differently from local residents.

The LMTE families in this study were significantly dissatisfied with the subpar service they received. It should be noted that the poor service attitude in Hainan separates it from other regions in China. While newcomers may encounter unsatisfactory service in Shanghai, the distinct aspect of Hainan's poor service is that it applies to everyone, regardless of whether or not they are from other parts of China. Historically, Hainan was once a destination for exiles and accustomed to people from diverse backgrounds (Chongyi & Goodman, 2002). This means that Hainan is relatively tolerant when it comes to accepting different cultures and communities and has little prejudice against individuals based on their backgrounds or origins. This inclusivity may be one of the factors that attract people to Hainan, especially those who want to live and work in a more tolerant social environment. Thus, the poor service reflects the local people's laid-back lifestyle; it is not targeted at newcomers. Thus, none of the LMTE families thought they should leave Hainan because of its poor service. Although the LMTE families were dissatisfied with the poor service, they recognised that local people were not being discriminatory and maintained a positive impression of local residents as kind and honest.

Overall, the majority of the LMTE families were enjoying life in Hainan, and the island has been an advantageous choice for families' relocation. However, the grandmother in Qizi family was contemplated a return primarily for healthcare reasons, seeking to avoid additional health-related expenses in Hainan. This highlights the importance of implementing health-related policies in tourism destinations (Moreno-González et al., 2020).

All these factors make Hainan an attractive place for tourism entrepreneurs to come and pursue their aspirational lifestyle. The LMTE families were enjoying the island’s laid-back lifestyle and appreciated the flexibility of working hours and had even adopted the local habit of midday breaks. Tensions within the family had diminished, as children’s education, often a source of conflict in families (Li, 2023), was less demanding in Hainan, allowing families more quality time together. This reduced pressure had fostered more harmonious family relationships.

## 6.6 Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, this discussion chapter has highlighted different gender-based motivations and experiences within LMTE families, along with the impacts on children as presented in Table 7 below. Firstly, the women LMTEs had different motivations for starting a tourism business than the men. They played an essential role in maintaining relationships and creating a supportive environment for their families, contributing to overall family stability and cohesion. In contrast, the men’s motivations in these contexts often revolved around entrepreneurial aspirations and economic opportunities. While the men focused on building and managing business ventures, the contributions of women were crucial in nurturing the social and emotional well-being of the family.

**Table 7**  
*LMTE Experience in Hainan*

<b>Individual Entrepreneurs</b>	<b>Entrepreneurship motivations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Men: Driven by economic opportunities and individual success.</li> <li>▪ Women: Motivated by social cohesion, family well-being and other motivations similar to men.</li> </ul>
<b>Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children's role in LMTE: Active participation and support.</li> <li>▪ Well-being: Overall physical and mental health.</li> <li>▪ Flourishing experience: Personal growth, adaptability and positive personality shifts.</li> <li>▪ Development: Long-term developmental outcomes influenced by family and entrepreneurial environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Positive Experience: Improved quality of life, increased family interaction time and better work-life balance.</li> <li>▪ Negative Experience: Adaptation issues.</li> </ul>

Regarding the entrepreneurs' experiences, the migration process provided them with flexible schedules due to their entrepreneurial activities, which allowed for increased family time. This flexibility helped create a supportive family environment and enhanced interactions between parents and children. The positive impact of the increased family time was reflected in the children's experiences and developmental outcomes. The children in the LMTE families displayed well adapted behaviour in their new environment. This shift indicates the positive influence of supportive family dynamics and the migration context on child development.

Overall, the LMTE experience provides a novel contribution by specifically dissecting the interconnected roles of entrepreneurial motivations, children's active participation, and family resilience, offering unique insights into how LMTE families navigate entrepreneurship and adapt to new social and cultural environments within the tourism sector. While the migration experience brings about significant changes in family dynamics and individual development, including the positive evolution of children's personalities, more research is needed to explore the long-term effects of these changes as children mature into adulthood.

The concluding chapter synthesises the key findings of this research project and outlines the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications and contributions of this research to tourism policy and entrepreneurial practice, particularly in addressing the nuanced needs of lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs within the tourism sector.

## **Chapter 7 Conclusions**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this exploration of the tourism entrepreneurial family landscapes of Hainan Island, the shared experiences of individual entrepreneurs and their families revealed a myriad of challenges, triumphs, and transformative moments. LMTE was identified as a key concept in tourism entrepreneurship and lifestyle migration scholarship. By applying the family embeddedness conceptual framework to the dynamics within LMTE, the conceptual framework used throughout the research led to a theoretical outcome; this research project has led to the construction of an LMTE experience framework that includes the perspectives of the individual entrepreneur, the children, and the family, capturing the nuanced interplay between work, family life, and entrepreneurial activities.

This research has delved into the motivations, challenges, and experiences of Chinese LMTEs and their families. It provides valuable insights into entrepreneurial activities within the tourism setting and the broader Chinese cultural context. By examining how these families navigate their roles as support systems and active participants in the entrepreneurial process, this study sheds light on the unique dynamics of lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship in China. These findings not only enrich the academic discourse on migration, lifestyle entrepreneurship, and family studies, but also highlight the distinctive characteristics of the Chinese context that shape these experiences. Furthermore, the study serves as a springboard for future research and academic discussions on similar phenomena in different cultural and regional settings.

Hainan Island's experience with LMTE families offers a unique perspective that can be compared and contrasted with similar phenomena worldwide, contributing to a broader understanding of migration patterns and their impacts on local communities. This research project's comparative approach underscores the distinctiveness of Hainan's LMTE landscape while highlighting broader, globally relevant patterns in lifestyle migration.

This final chapter starts with a synthesis of the results of the research project, emphasising key findings that enhance our understanding of the close integration of family within tourism entrepreneurship. It then discusses the implications of these findings; outlines the research's contributions, particularly how it expands existing knowledge on LMTE and family embeddedness; and explores the limitations of the research project. Recommendations for further research will also be provided, concluding with a final reflection considering the broader societal implications and the researcher's personal journey through this exploration.

## 7.2 Synthesis of the Research Project

**Main aim:** To explore family embeddedness in lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship and understand the entrepreneurial process and family lifestyle migration experiences on Hainan Island.

This research project aimed to explore family embeddedness in lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship and understand the entrepreneurial process and family lifestyle migration experiences on Hainan Island. Although family entrepreneurship has been a topic of investigation for decades, the specific experiences of LMTE families have been largely overlooked, especially within an Asian island context. This research addresses this gap by focusing on the lived experiences of LMTE families on Hainan Island, China, adding a layer of richness and uniqueness to the study of tourism entrepreneurship. The geographical specificity of Hainan acknowledges the diverse cultural nuances that shape the entrepreneurial endeavours of families in this region.

Guided by the main aim of this research, the overarching research question was explored through four subquestions. To answer the first question, "What motivates lifestyle migrants to settle on an island as tourism entrepreneurs?", this research highlighted the complex motivations driving Chinese LMTEs to engage in tourism entrepreneurship. A blend of lifestyle aspirations, economic opportunities, and family considerations was found to influence these motivations. The integration of family dynamics within the entrepreneurial process revealed that family support and involvement are crucial to the success and sustainability of

LMTE ventures. Through individual interviews with the entrepreneurs, the research uncovered the multifaceted dimensions of stress experienced by migrants before relocating to Hainan, encapsulated by the central theme of STRESS. Each subtheme—Support, Trouble, Relationship, Environment, Self-improvement, and Shift in Work Mentality—contributed to the intricate tapestry of challenges and opportunities within the entrepreneurial journey and migration initiative.

LMTErs expressed a commitment to continuous self-improvement, navigating trouble and adversity, managing relationships within and outside the family unit, adapting to the environmental and societal nuances of their new setting, and seeking and providing support networks. They chose lifestyle and amenity migration to escape the rat race, aiming for a work-life balance which would allow them to support their families and fulfil personal aspirational goals. These findings underscore the holistic nature of STRESS, illustrating its influence not only on business endeavours but also on personal growth, interpersonal dynamics, and community engagement (Van den Heuvel et al., 2010).

In addition to individual insights, family interviews conducted with entire family units revealed the collective dynamics that influence and shape the LMTE experience. These discussions highlighted how family members, including children, collaboratively navigate the entrepreneurial landscape, balancing the dual roles of being both a support system and active participants in the business. Family interviews provided a deeper understanding of how shared migration experiences and aspirations impact family unity and solidarity, highlighting the importance of family context in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes in the Chinese LMTE setting.

The geographical focus of this research on Hainan Island added a rich contextual layer to understanding LMTE. Hainan's unique cultural heritage, characterised by its blend of Han Chinese traditions and the indigenous Li and Miao cultures, created a distinct backdrop for the lifestyle and business decisions of LMTE families. This cultural diversity, combined with the island's evolving socioeconomic conditions as China's largest Special Economic Zone, offered a fertile ground for exploring how these factors interact with entrepreneurial activities. LMTE families, drawn to the island not only by its natural beauty but also by its reputation as a tourism

hub, found their ventures shaped by the opportunities and challenges posed by local infrastructure, policies, and market demands.

The island's distinctive socioeconomic environment also played a significant role in shaping the entrepreneurial journeys of these families. Hainan's rapid development as a tourist destination, coupled with government initiatives to promote tourism and entrepreneurship, created a dynamic context in which LMTE families could experiment with innovative business models tailored to domestic and international tourists. This economic landscape influenced not only the types of businesses they established but also how they navigated the pressures of competition and sustainability in a growing yet competitive market.

By focusing on Hainan, this research provides valuable insights into how specific local contexts can significantly influence broader patterns of lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship. The island's unique combination of cultural diversity, economic opportunity, and natural appeal served as a microcosm for understanding how LMTE families adapt their lifestyles and business choices to suit local conditions. These insights extend beyond the geographical boundaries of Hainan, with broader implications for lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship in other culturally and economically distinct regions.

The second research question was, "What is the meaning of family within LMTE?" This research introduced a new conceptual framework (see Figure 4) to analyse family embeddedness in LMTE, offering a novel lens through which to view the interconnectedness of family roles and entrepreneurial activities. This framework effectively captured the nuanced interplay between individual and family perspectives within the entrepreneurial journey. One of the key themes identified within LMTE families is the concept of Family Togetherness. It underscores the central role that the family occupies in the lives and decision-making processes of LMTE families. Family togetherness is not merely a circumstance but a deliberate pursuit and aspirational lifestyle, reflecting the intricate balance required to maintain cohesion amidst each family member's diverse aspirations and experiences.

Addressing the third research question, “How does family resilience shape the entrepreneurial process?”, many families demonstrated resilience and adaptability, leveraging their unique cultural backgrounds and family networks to overcome obstacles. Family resilience plays a crucial role in providing entrepreneurs with a stable and supportive environment, both physically and psychologically, throughout their entrepreneurial journey. LMTE families exhibit a remarkable ability to effectively address and overcome conflicts and challenges encountered along the way. However, it is essential to acknowledge that family dynamics can also create hidden stressors for entrepreneurs, as the support they receive may not always be consistently positive.

The fourth subquestion was, “What are the lifestyle migration experiences of LMTEs and their families in the tourism entrepreneurial process?” This research uncovered the various challenges the LMTE families faced, including cultural adaptation, regulatory hurdles, and balancing work and family life. These challenges were addressed by recognising the diverse experiences of family members and different families. Although most participants acknowledged Hainan’s favourable natural environment, many also believed that the region is underdeveloped and that local islanders exhibited laid-back characteristics. Some participants expressed disconnection and dissatisfaction with living conditions due to the challenges of adapting to the new environment and lifestyle.

An innovative qualitative multimethod approach was applied in this research to understand the LMTE families’ perspectives, meanings, and lived experiences, as well as the social and cultural contexts in which they are situated. The approaches included narrative inquiry, whole-family research, case study, and LSP methodology. These approaches were used within a theory-building process rather than to make generalisations (Bendassolli, 2013).

The LSP method was adapted to be used at local teahouses on Hainan Island as culturally appropriate settings for whole-family workshops. This interactive methodology provided a platform for all family members, including children, to engage in the research process. Participants constructed visual representations of their experiences of and aspirations for lifestyle migration and entrepreneurship using physical Lego® bricks which include Chinese

character minifigures. This innovative and culturally sensitive method elicited nuanced insights that might not have been fully captured through traditional interviews, offering a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the family dynamics at play within the context of Chinese LMTE (Ju et al., 2024). This approach not only enriched the data collected but also empowered participants, particularly the children, to express their perspectives, making it a pioneering tool for capturing the intricacies of family life in the context of Chinese LMTE. As such, it sets a new standard for involving families in migration and entrepreneurship research, offering a more holistic and participatory model that could be applied in other cultural and regional studies.

This research advances the theoretical understanding of LMTE on Hainan Island and provides practical insights for policymakers, communities, and aspiring tourism entrepreneurs and their families. By synthesising the experiences of LMTE families, the study enriches the broader dialogue on migration, entrepreneurship, tourism and family studies, paving the way for further exploration.

### **7.3 Theoretical Implications and Knowledge Contributions**

This section explores the multifaceted theoretical implications and knowledge contributions of the research project. This research project makes several significant theoretical contributions to the fields of lifestyle migration studies, tourism entrepreneurship theories, and family studies by shedding light on the complex and multifaceted nature of LMTE. While existing research has largely focused on the motivations and experiences of adult migrants and entrepreneurs, this research expands the theoretical understanding of LMTE by investigating the central role of family embeddedness in the migration and entrepreneurial process. Specifically, the research introduces a new perspective on the role of family solidarity in shaping postmigration and tourism entrepreneurial outcomes.

A key theoretical contribution in this research project results from the inclusion of the experiences of all family members—adults and children alike—to offer a comprehensive understanding of the family as a unit in the LMTE process and the active role of all family

members, including children, in shaping their realities. The whole-family approach emphasizes the impact of migration and tourism entrepreneurship on children's well-being, education and socialization, providing a more holistic understanding of the intergenerational dynamics within LMTE families. Additionally, this research project incorporates the women LMTEs' perspectives, exploring why women in LMTE families decide to engage in tourism entrepreneurship and contribute to the family's financial responsibilities and business success. The following sections discuss these contributions in detail, highlighting how this research extends, challenges, and refines theories in lifestyle migration, tourism entrepreneurship, and family studies.

### **7.3.1 Theoretical Contributions**

LMTE experiences underscore the need for a more nuanced understanding of lifestyle migration and entrepreneurship in the context of tourism, taking into account the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon and its implications for newcomers and host communities. The findings highlight the complexity of lifestyle migration and entrepreneurship within the tourism sector. It suggests that to fully grasp these phenomena, researchers and practitioners must consider the various dimensions and factors that influence them, including the motivations, challenges, and experiences of migrants and host communities.

First, this research project is a pioneering study that positions LMTE as a form of lifestyle entrepreneurial migration involving all family members. While the concept of lifestyle migration has been recognised and studied previously (Ria-Maria, 2023), the specific phenomenon of LMTE, where entrepreneurship and family migration intersect, has been largely overlooked by tourism scholars. This research addresses that gap by identifying and analysing LMTE within the context of existing tourism entrepreneurship and migration literature (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Carson & Carson, 2018). It supplements and extends existing concepts, addressing their deficiencies by incorporating the critical role of family dynamics in the entrepreneurial process. This approach highlights the intertwined nature of business and family life in the context of lifestyle migration, offering a more holistic understanding of the LMTE experience. Also, this research project highlights that entrepreneurship, particularly within the

tourism sector, serves as both a motivator and a strategy for settling and adapting in a new location—in this case, Hainan.

Scholars exploring the phenomenon and evolution of Chinese tourism have engaged with and critically evaluated existing Western tourism theories and concepts (Xu et al., 2013). However, a significant gap in the literature remains on the integration of the Chinese context into tourism theories and knowledge. This research addresses this gap by examining the LMTE phenomenon in Hainan, China, enriching the academic discourse. This conceptualises LMTE through extending existing theories on lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship offering a more entrepreneurial dimension to the migration experience and showing how migration can be intertwined with the pursuit of tourism entrepreneurship.

Second, this research project advances the study of LMTE by integrating and extending existing theoretical frameworks. Specifically, it combines Aldrich and Cliff's (2003) family embeddedness framework, Nordqvist and Melin's (2010) conceptualisation of family entrepreneurship, and Bakas's (2017) insights into entrepreneurial families. By weaving together these frameworks, the research provides a comprehensive lens through which to analyse LMTE families, highlighting the intricate ways family dynamics influence and are influenced by the entrepreneurial process within the context of lifestyle migration.

This integrated approach provides a deeper understanding of how family roles, relationships, and support systems contribute to the success and sustainability of tourism entrepreneurship. The research emphasizes that family embeddedness is not just a background factor but a central element in the entrepreneurial journey, particularly in the context of lifestyle migration. Additionally, the study extends existing theories to better align with the unique cultural and socioeconomic contexts of LMTE families on Hainan Island, offering fresh insights into how local environments shape their experiences and outcomes. This enriches the theoretical discourse on family entrepreneurship within tourism studies.

Furthermore, this research contributes to family studies by incorporating the concepts of family solidarity and family togetherness into the exploration of lifestyle migration and tourism

entrepreneurship. It underscores the pivotal role of family dynamics in both migration decisions and the entrepreneurial process. Unlike much migration research that traditionally focuses on the individual migrant, this study highlights the centrality of the family unit, particularly within LMTE contexts. The multigenerational involvement—where grandparents, parents, and children all contribute—creates complex, interconnected family dynamics that support and enhance the entrepreneurial journey. By adopting a multigenerational perspective, reflecting the deeply ingrained cultural value within Chinese society.

This contribution helps bridge the gap between cultural studies and entrepreneurship theory, suggesting that cultural capital should be integrated into the entrepreneurial process in tourism contexts, especially when migration plays a role. This thesis also challenges existing socioeconomic theories of work-life balance in China, showing that LMTE families engage in entrepreneurial activity as a counter-narrative to mainstream societal trends like Neijuan and Tangping.

Fourth, this research contributes to the empowerment of women in tourism entrepreneurship. Women play a significant role in tourism enterprises (Dang & Phan, 2023). According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), which focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, initiatives focused on gender equality are crucial to fostering inclusive development and social justice (World Tourism Organization, 2022). This exploration of women LMTErs in Hainan has significant implications for women's empowerment, within the region and beyond. It highlights the roles of women as entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, particularly in the context of lifestyle migration. This recognition of women's entrepreneurial endeavours can catalyse the empowerment of women economically and socially, promote gender equality, and encourage further growth in Hainan and similar destinations.

Lastly, this research contributes to the emerging discourse on the role of children in tourism entrepreneurship. The voices of entrepreneurs' children have been underrepresented in tourism research and this study builds on the foundational work of scholars such as Bakas (2018), Koščak et al. (2018), Canosa and Schänzel (2021), Wall (2022), and Séraphin and Chaney

(2023). It positions children not merely as passive members of LMTE families but as active co-creators of the entrepreneurial tourism experience.

The research also explores how LMTE families foster flourishing and eudaimonia through their lifestyle choices and family dynamics, with a particular focus on children's emotional and social development. It underscores the significance of supportive environments, where children's personal growth is nurtured, potentially enabling them to shift from introversion to greater social engagement postmigration.

Furthermore, this study highlights the concept of resilience within these families. It demonstrates how LMTE families navigate migration challenges while ensuring that their children's well-being remains a priority. By examining the balance between intense family involvement and holistic growth, this research provides valuable insights into how families cultivate both individual and collective resilience. This dual focus on flourishing and resilience enhances our understanding of how lifestyle migration contributes positively to family life, emphasizing the interconnectedness of family dynamics, personal development, and community participation.

The findings reveal the complex dynamics in situations faced by children raised in tourism-entrepreneurial families. Their experiences illustrate how the intersections of family life and entrepreneurship shape their development and adaptation to new environments. While children benefit from a supportive environment that fosters growth, resilience, and the development of social skills, the intense focus on their success can also create pressure, leading to stress or anxiety.

This research demonstrates the need for a comprehensive approach to supporting children in LMTE families. It calls for targeted interventions and resources that address their academic, social, and emotional needs. Policymakers, educators, and community organizations can work together to create strategies that promote balanced environments, ensuring holistic growth for these children.

Ultimately, this study underscores the importance of understanding the intricate relationship between family dynamics and entrepreneurship in shaping children's lives. By fostering an environment that supports children to cope with the challenges and reap the benefits of their unique circumstances, we can empower these children to thrive and reach their full potentials.

By acknowledging these complexities, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how lifestyle migration affects not only the newcomers but also the local communities that receive them. This insight can be used to inform policies and practices that better support both groups, fostering more sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships. Overall, the results show the need for a shift in perspective that recognises the interconnectedness of these experiences, which can enhance our knowledge of tourism-related entrepreneurship and its broader social implications.

The theoretical implications of this research are substantial, particularly in the realms of family tourism entrepreneurship, lifestyle migration, and the intersection of the two. The research advances the understanding of LMTEs' motivations for migrating and starting businesses in tourism, identifies roles within LMTE families, and explores their experiences.

The following section explores the research's multifaceted theoretical implications from three perspectives. First, it examines the impact of LMTE in Hainan, revealing the unique dynamics in lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship. Second, it looks at how the research project informs the development of tourism in Hainan, China, and beyond, by identifying best practices and innovative approaches. Lastly, it explores children's roles in LMTE, emphasising their contributions to family dynamics and the tourism industry.

## **7.3.2 Theoretical Implications**

### **7.3.2.1 LMTE in Hainan**

Exploring LMTE in Hainan contributes to our knowledge of the tourism entrepreneurial landscape of the region in several key ways. By examining LMTE in Hainan, this study provides a granular analysis of the region's unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities

within the tourism sector. It reveals the factors that make Hainan an attractive destination for lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs, such as its favourable climate, strategic location, and government policies. This research sheds light on why entrepreneurs and their families choose Hainan for lifestyle migration and business, uncovering the driving factors that shape entrepreneurial activities in this region. LMTE not only includes engaging in the entrepreneurial activities but also involvement in shaping the local tourism landscape and fostering cultural exchanges. This improves our understanding of the local entrepreneurship ecosystem and the factors influencing the success and sustainability of tourism ventures in Hainan.

#### Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

This research enriches our knowledge of Hainan's entrepreneurial ecosystem by highlighting the unique socioeconomic and cultural dynamics that influence LMTE families. It uncovers how these families navigate the complexities of the island's business environment, balancing their entrepreneurial ambitions with family life and cultural expectations. By documenting the strategies employed by LMTE families to achieve business success and community integration, this study contributes to broader discussions on entrepreneurship in emerging economies. It promotes community engagement by increasing local understanding of the contributions and challenges faced by LMTE families, thereby fostering a more supportive environment for lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs.

#### Integration of Personal and Academic Perspectives

This research contributes to the broader discourse on entrepreneurship and family dynamics and offers accounts of real-life experiences that can guide future LMTE families. It serves as a testament to the importance of studying LMTE families within the specific context of an Asian island. By integrating academic inquiry with personal experiences, the research bridges scholarly knowledge and lived realities, providing a comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial journey through lifestyle migration on Hainan Island. This integration emphasises the importance of contextualising research within specific geographic and cultural

settings, to ensure the findings are relevant and applicable to those navigating similar experiences.

#### Impact on Quality of Life

The migration of families from mainland China to Hainan introduces diverse perspectives shaped by individual backgrounds, aspirations, and experiences. This research highlights how these families, with their varied perspectives, navigate the opportunities and challenges of life on the island. Whether it comes down to transportation problems or embracing eco-friendly travel options, each family's journey is unique. However, they share a common goal of seeking a better quality of life and new opportunities. This study underscores the importance of understanding the diverse contributions of these families to Hainan's multicultural landscape and their potential to influence the region's future development.

### **7.3.2.2 Impact of this Research on Tourism Development in China**

#### Domestic Impact

The study provides actionable information for tourism development strategies in China. It identifies best practices and innovative approaches to encourage entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism development, contributing to China's Five-Year Plan for tourism, which significantly accelerates the development of Hainan as a leading global tourism destination and tourism consumption hub (State Council, 2021). The findings offer practical guidance for policymakers and tourism stakeholders on how to cultivate an environment that supports the growth of lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship, which can be instrumental in shaping Hainan's tourism industry.

The contribution of this research spans multiple facets, fostering a comprehensive understanding of Chinese LMTE and its impact on families. This study enriches academic scholarship by addressing existing gaps in the literature, providing nuanced insights into the motivations, challenges, and experiences of this unique community.

By examining the experiences, challenges, and successes of LMTE in Hainan, this research provides insights that inform tourism development strategies across China. Understanding the factors driving entrepreneurial activities in Hainan allows policymakers and industry practitioners to identify strategies for fostering entrepreneurship and promoting sustainable tourism development nationwide.

Moreover, the research critically examines the relationship between traditional values and contemporary social phenomena such as neijuan and tangping. These phenomena highlight the changing attitudes of the younger Chinese generation toward work and life. Unlike their parents, who embody the “forever tolerant and hard-working generation,” the younger generation is increasingly resistant to the relentless pressures of societal expectations and seeks alternative lifestyles that prioritise balance, well-being, and personal fulfilment.

By exploring these generational shifts, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural values evolve and influence entrepreneurial behaviour across generations in China. This study not only provides information on the unique Chinese characteristics of family entrepreneurship but also offers a comparative perspective on how the attitudes and behaviours of the younger generation diverge from those of their predecessors. In doing so, it adds to the ongoing discourse on the interplay between culture, generational change, and entrepreneurial practice in the context of a rapidly changing Chinese society.

#### International Implications for Tourism Development

This research offers inspiration for tourism development beyond China’s borders by showcasing the unique dynamics of LMTE in Hainan. It provides a valuable case study which can inform tourism development efforts in other island destinations and tourist hubs worldwide. Lessons from Hainan’s experience with LMTE can serve as benchmarks for promoting responsible tourism development globally. Furthermore, exploring LMTE in Hainan deepens our understanding of how lifestyle migration shapes tourism entrepreneurship and development. Recognising the influence of lifestyle factors on entrepreneurial decisions can help with the

development of targeted strategies to attract and retain entrepreneurial talent in the tourism sector, both domestically and internationally.

Examining LMTE in Hainan introduces a new geographical context for analysis, expanding the boundaries of tourism scholarship beyond Western knowledge. This broadens global tourism research by incorporating insights from a region that may be less explored but holds immense potential to contribute to understanding of the dynamics of tourism entrepreneurship in island destinations. By studying how lifestyle migrants engage in entrepreneurial activities within Hainan's tourism sector, the research offers valuable insights into the factors driving entrepreneurship in island settings. It contributes to understanding the diverse and evolving dynamics of global tourism entrepreneurship.

#### Cultural and Socioeconomic Diversity

The exploration of LMTE in Hainan enriches the discourse on global tourism research by incorporating cultural and socioeconomic diversity. By examining the unique cultural context through family lenses, this research enriches the academic dialogue with perspectives often underrepresented in mainstream tourism scholarship. This comprehensive understanding provides detailed insights into the dynamics of LMTEs and their families on Hainan Island. It offers perspectives that extend beyond the immediate context to inform broader discussions on entrepreneurship, migration studies, family dynamics, and the role of children in tourism.

This research provides a novel contribution to entrepreneurship by elaborating on the concept of the Chinese Spirit of Sacrifice, a cultural value deeply embedded in the experiences of LMTE families. This concept reflects the enduring commitment and self-sacrifice that has historically characterised the older generation of Chinese entrepreneurs, who often prioritised family and work over personal well-being. By integrating this concept into the broader discourse on Chinese family entrepreneurs, the study enriches our understanding of entrepreneurship within a specific cultural context. It highlights how cultural values, particularly the Chinese Spirit of Sacrifice, influence entrepreneurial behaviour and are dynamically negotiated across generations. This culturally nuanced perspective offers a unique contribution to

entrepreneurship research, especially in the context of Chinese LMTEs, further expanding the global discourse on entrepreneurship.

### **7.3.2.3 Children in Tourism Entrepreneurial Families**

Children's voices are notably absent in much of the tourism research, particularly in the context of tourism entrepreneurship. This study uniquely addresses this critical gap by focusing on children from tourism entrepreneurial families, revealing a rich tapestry of opportunities and challenges that shape their upbringing and future prospects. Unlike traditional studies that have often overlooked the experiences of younger family members, this research actively engaged with these children, uncovering valuable insights into how growing up in families focused on tourism-related businesses influences their development.

Listening to these young individuals captured the nuanced ways in which their familial and cultural environments impact their growth. The shared narratives highlight a distinctive blend of advantages and complexities associated with their background. Exposure to diverse cultures and business skills fosters entrepreneurial spirit and innovation. However, children also face challenges such as balancing family obligations with personal aspirations and managing expectations tied to a family legacy.

The novel approach of this research project in capturing children's perspectives sets it apart from conventional tourism research, which frequently neglects younger family members. Recognising their voices, the research sheds light on the subtle interplay between tradition and modernity, individual growth and family responsibilities, and the preservation of culture while embracing new ideas. Personalised advice and mentorship are crucial for these children to navigate the complex expectations placed upon them within their families and the broader community.

The findings highlight that children play an important role in shaping the family's entrepreneurial journey. Their perspectives, ideas, and participation contribute to decision-making processes and family dynamics. Children in LMTE families are not only influenced by the entrepreneurial activities of their parents but also actively participate in them, often taking

on responsibilities or contributing creatively to the family business. This active participation helps them develop entrepreneurial skills and mindsets early on.

The research reveals that children in LMTE families may express a clear interest in entrepreneurship and exhibit the potential to become future entrepreneurs. This interest is often nurtured by their direct involvement in the family business and by observing the entrepreneurial behaviours of their parents. The findings underscore the importance of recognising and fostering this potential, as these children are likely to carry forward the entrepreneurial legacy, thus contributing to the sustainability and continuity of tourism entrepreneurship within LMTE families.

The insights gained from these children's experiences have significant implications for policy and practice, particularly in designing family-friendly policies and support systems within the tourism industry. Longitudinal studies could further illuminate the long-term effects of migration and entrepreneurial experiences on the development, academic achievements, and general well-being of these children. By integrating their experiences into the discourse on tourism entrepreneurship, this research project not only improves our understanding of broader family dynamics but also contributes to developing informed strategies to support these young people. This approach promotes their well-being and supports their successful integration into Hainan's evolving social fabric, ultimately enriching the discourse on tourism entrepreneurship.

This research project uncovered the impact of cultural transition on young migrants. Relocation from mainland China to Hainan introduces lifestyle, behavioural, and normative changes. Cultural adaptation, an aspect overlooked in previous studies, emerges as an essential part of their experience. Similarly, education is the top priority for LMTE families, with participants navigating the Hainan education system characterised by reduced homework and more leisure time.

This research project adopted a child-centric perspective grounded in the theoretical lens of childism (Wall, 2022). Childism challenges traditional adult-centred views by recognising children as active agents with valuable insights, thus promoting collaborative learning, creative

thinking, and communication skills among children (Canosa et al., 2024). This child-centred approach calls for future research to continue exploring the complex interplay between children's experiences and broader societal and economic forces. It invites scholars to delve deeper into how children's roles within entrepreneurial families evolve over time and how they impact their personal development and the success of family enterprises. By embracing childism, this research not only contributes to the growing body of literature on lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship but also paves the way for more equitable and comprehensive studies that genuinely reflect the diversity of family experiences.

Comparing these findings with similar studies in different cultural or geographical contexts could provide additional insights into the unique aspects of the Asian context and Hainan specifically. The stories emerging from children in family tourism businesses reveal a rich tapestry of experiences, aspirations, and challenges, encouraging us to acknowledge and address the interaction between traditional and modern ways, individual advancement and family responsibilities, and protect culture while promoting new ideas.

## **7.4 Methodological Implications and Limitations**

### **7.4.1 Methodological Implications**

Understanding how personal and cultural experiences shape identity is crucial when examining the impacts of migration and cultural integration. The concept of subject formation, as discussed by Yeboah (2023) in the context of the experiences of middle-class British Indians in the UK illustrates how experiences simultaneously shape identities. This concept is also relevant in the Chinese context; Sun and Xu (2017) have argued that domestic mobility and subject formation are different compared to developed countries. The process of cultural adaptation often tests family solidarity, but it also offers opportunities for the development of deeper understanding and greater cohesion as families face these challenges together.

The experiences of LMTE families migrating from urban areas to lifestyle amenity areas reflect a blend of excitement, anticipation, and adaptation. These families seek lifestyle changes

similarly to other lifestyle migrants, drawn by the allure of escaping high-pressure urban environments and pursuing more balanced lives. Thus, the primary shared experience of the LMTE families in Hainan was the reduction in daily pressure, which aligned with their desire for a more relaxed and favourable living environment.

Another notable finding is that the female LMTEs tended to be more talkative and open during the interviews compared to their male counterparts. This difference in communication style may have been influenced by my identity as a woman, as all the male entrepreneurs I interviewed were married. Their marital status might have contributed to a perceived need to maintain a certain distance from me, which could have inhibited open dialogue. Additionally, the male participants exhibited heightened sensitivity toward the term “interview,” frequently seeking reassurance that the interview would not negatively affect their businesses. They expressed concerns about being portrayed unfavourably or featured on television, indicating a fear that their participation could harm their professional reputations. This reaction suggests a nuanced cultural distinction in how the term “interview” is perceived, with the male entrepreneurs possibly viewing it as a more formal and potentially risky engagement, in contrast to the more casual interpretation common in Western contexts. On the other hand, the female entrepreneurs did not express similar concerns during the interviews, and demonstrated greater levels of comfort and willingness to engage openly in discussion. This difference highlights the impacts of gender dynamics and cultural perceptions on communication styles in entrepreneurial contexts.

Methodologically, this research has embraced narrative inquiry (Riessman, 2008) and whole-family research approaches (Handel, 1997). By introducing the innovative use of LSP workshops within a Chinese context, specifically in local Old Dad Teahouses, the study offers a new creative lens to explore family dynamics and entrepreneurial narratives. Engaging the whole family in the research process through LSP workshops not only fostered dynamic and open dialogues but also revealed the interconnectedness of family members’ experiences and the crucial role children play in the success and adaptation of LMTE families. This approach proved effective in capturing symbolic representations of experiences and demonstrated its

adaptability in local family settings, expanding the toolkit available to researchers studying complex phenomena (Ju et al., 2024).

This research project adapted LSP as a research tool. by Including children from Chinese entrepreneurial tourism families resulted in two notable advantages. First, the application of LSP enabled the incorporation of children's perspectives into studies of family entrepreneurship in the tourism sector. This approach was particularly effective during the sessions at the Old Dad Teahouse, where the whole family could participate simultaneously, mitigating ethical concerns associated with research involving children. The Old Dad Teahouses, with their relaxed atmospheres and engaging experiences, were conducive environments for family interactions, aligned with the concept of "fun" as defined by Podilchak (1991) through the pleasure derived from constructive activities, and fostered social interactions.

Secondly, the LSP workshops helped empower the children and contribute to new findings. Researchers can better understand children's life experiences through the playful Lego® building process. Chinese character bricks were used to provide a more culturally appropriate method. Using Lego® bricks as metaphors allowed the models to reflect deeper meanings with no right or wrong answers. Children often looked to their parents at the beginning of each workshop, waiting for their parents' permission; this action was sometimes repeated several times. During the subsequent process of building the Lego® models, the children became more confident and eventually stopped looking to their parents and freely expressed their feelings and shared their stories. This illustrates that methods such as LSP can enable children to express their voices and participate actively in research co-creation.

A notable contribution of this study is the incorporation of Chinese minifigure Lego® bricks, which added a culturally resonant element to the visual representations created by participants. This innovative and culturally sensitive method facilitated a relaxed and engaging environment, allowing children to express themselves in ways traditional interviews may not capture. The participatory nature of the LSP workshops not only fosters a unique environment but also creates cherished family memories, offering a relaxing activity that encourages participants to share their experiences freely. This child-centred approach ensures that children's perspectives

are integral to understanding family dynamics in tourism entrepreneurship, in alignment with the SDGs regarding social justice.

Furthermore, situating the LSP workshop at Old Dad Teahouses—settings embedded in local culture and intergenerational storytelling—further reflects the cultural adaptation in my research. Unlike the controlled environments in which LSP is typically conducted in Western contexts, these settings provided culturally meaningful spaces that fostered authentic interactions, fluid conversations, and intergenerational engagement. The informal yet socially rich settings allowed participants to express their experiences in ways that traditional structured methodologies may not have captured.

Building on Canosa and Graham's (2019) work, which advocated for research conducted by children rather than merely with them, my research project contributes to this evolving methodological approach. In my project, children were not passive participants but active contributors, as evidenced by their involvement in co-creating their narratives through the LSP workshop. This method prioritised their perspectives and empowered them to lead parts of the storytelling process, offering a more authentic and inclusive representation of their experiences.

The implementation of LSP to engage Asian children opens a significant avenue of inquiry in the fields of tourism and child development. The workshops are well suited for Chinese families, offering several advantages. The use of Lego® bricks encourages creative thinking and imagination, allowing children to freely express themselves without the constraints of “right or wrong” answers. By providing a medium for visual expression, children can share their thoughts and emotions, promoting effective communication both within the family and with researchers.

Beyond academia, this research contributes to cultural understanding, policy development, and sustainability initiatives by uncovering the diverse stories of individuals and families navigating the intricate intersections of migration, entrepreneurship, and family life. The methodological choices made in this research offer actionable insights for future studies exploring creative methods for investigating complex social phenomena with Chinese participants.

Finally, the philosophical emphasis of this research on holistic perspectives, combined with theoretical contributions to tourism family entrepreneurship and lifestyle migration, advances the scholarly discourse in tourism entrepreneurship research, particularly within the context of lifestyle migration in Asia. These implications extend beyond the immediate study, with the potential to influence how researchers conceptualise, theorise, and methodologically approach the LMTE phenomenon in Hainan from a family perspective. By integrating novel methodologies and culturally relevant techniques, the study provides a richer, more nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by migrants and their families, contributing valuable knowledge to both academic discourse and practical applications.

To summarise, the successful cultural adaptation of LSP in this study highlights its potential as an effective research tool in diverse cultural settings. Asian societies, which often emphasise group harmony, respect for authority, and adherence to traditional norms (Rozman, 2014), may benefit particularly from the collaborative and creative nature of LSP. The workshops facilitated meaningful interactions among family members, allowing them to express themselves freely and participate in discussions that might not have occurred in more traditional interview settings. This methodological innovation underscores the importance of adapting research tools to the cultural contexts of the participants, ensuring that the data collected is rich and culturally relevant.

#### **7.4.2 Methodological Limitations**

While this research provides valuable insights into the experiences of LMTE families, it is important to acknowledge its methodological limitations. As with all qualitative research, one of the primary limitations is the inherent subjectivity in the data collection and analysis, given that interpretations are shaped by both participants and the researcher. The constructivist paradigm embraced in this study acknowledges a relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology, where multiple realities exist, and knowledge is co-constructed through interactions between the researcher and participants. This recognition of subjectivity highlights the potential for multiple interpretations of the data, which could affect the study's reliability and validity.

Another limitation arises from the nature of qualitative research: the limited generalisability and replicability of findings. Since the sample size in this study was relatively small, the insights gained from individual and whole-family interviews may not reflect the experiences of broader populations or those in other contexts. While the study offers a detailed view of specific LMTE families, motivations and experiences likely vary widely between different groups. A larger and more diverse sample would have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the LMTE phenomena. However, accessing an exhaustive list of LMTE families on Hainan Island was a challenge, as no centralised database or registry exists. Identifying and recruiting LMTE families was further complicated by the island's large population and the difficulty of distinguishing lifestyle migrant families from local residents.

Despite these challenges, the study provides valuable information about LMTE families' experiences. Future research can build upon this by addressing several key areas to mitigate the subjectivity of qualitative methods and expand the scope of findings. For example, a mixed-methods approach integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods could provide a more balanced perspective. Quantitative methods would complement the rich narrative data, enhancing the reliability and validity of findings through statistical analysis. Expanding the sample size and including families from different national and cultural backgrounds would also offer a more inclusive view of LMTE experiences, particularly as tourism entrepreneurship continues to grow in Hainan and other regions.

Longitudinal studies could also address the limitation of this study's short-term focus by exploring the long-term adaptation and evolving dynamics of LMTE families. Tracking these families over time would provide deeper insights into how their experiences and decisions change, revealing more nuanced patterns in lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship. Additionally, future research could refine data collection techniques, particularly by developing more effective ways of interviewing children and obtaining parental consent. This could further improve research processes and address ethical considerations when working with young participants.

It is also important to acknowledge the researcher's role as a facilitator during both data collection and analysis. The interaction between the researcher and participants, as well as the researcher's background and experiences, can introduce bias into the research process. Although such participation was inevitable, efforts were made to minimise bias and enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. Reflexivity, the researcher's ongoing reflection on their own perspectives and biases, was employed throughout the study to mitigate potential sources of bias. This approach, along with detailed descriptions of data collection and analysis techniques, was intended to improve the transparency and credibility of the research.

While this research project has limitations, its contributions to understanding LMTE families, particularly within the Asian context, are significant. Recognising these limitations, this research lays a strong foundation for future studies to further explore how family dynamics and cultural values shape LMTE experiences across diverse regions. Expanding the scope and sample in future research will enrich the scholarship on lifestyle migration and tourism entrepreneurship, providing more comprehensive insights into this growing phenomenon.

## **7.5 Policy and Practical Implications**

The key findings highlight the need to review and possibly revise tourism, entrepreneurship, and immigration policies to better accommodate the unique characteristics and contributions of LMTEs and their families. Insights from this research go beyond Hainan Island, offering valuable guidance for policymakers and practitioners in the tourism and entrepreneurship sectors. Understanding the multifaceted stress experienced by LMTEs and the dynamics of family life during lifestyle migration can inform future policy development tailored to Chinese tourism and LMTE families. This section explores the implications of the research findings for policy and practice. It is divided into three main subsections: LMTE development, empowerment of women and families, and implications for policymakers.

## **7.5.1 LMTE Development**

### **7.5.1.1 Enhancing Market Insights and Support**

This research has significant implications for the development of LMTE. First, through deep understanding of lifestyle migration and the entrepreneurial spirit of tourism in Hainan, China, it offers profound insights into the tourism market and enterprises, such as the motivations behind lifestyle migrant families' choices, consumer preferences for authentic and experiential tourism products, and the emerging demand for family-oriented services and experiences. Additionally, it sheds light on how social dynamics, such as changing family structures and the search for work-life balance, shape tourism consumption. It provides a nuanced understanding of how enterprises can cater to the evolving needs of LMTE participants and their families. Recognising the challenges faced by LMTEs, can help future LMTEs better grasp target markets and customer demands to formulate more effective marketing strategies and product positioning. This could also lead to the development of support programmes and resources to address their specific needs to establish and sustain their businesses (Fairlie & Fossen, 2020).

Insights into LMTE in Hainan can inspire innovative thinking and business models for tourism companies, helping them remain competitive in a constantly evolving market. For instance, based on the research project's findings, entrepreneurs can develop tourism products that cater to the lifestyle motivations of migrants, such as offering immersive, family-oriented experiences that focus on environmental sustainability and cultural authenticity. Incorporating outdoor activities like eco-tours, adventure sports, or community-based tourism—highlighted by participants during interviews—can resonate with tourists seeking relaxation and meaningful engagement with nature and local culture. Additionally, entrepreneurs could explore wellness tourism, given the participants' emphasis on work-life balance, by offering wellness retreats, mindfulness programmes, and family-centred holistic experiences. This tailored approach not only aligns with evolving visitor preferences but also differentiates tourism agencies as adaptable and forward-thinking, ensuring long-term competitiveness in the tourism industry.

### **7.5.1.2 Fostering Community and Business Partnerships**

Collaborating with local islanders and stakeholders can enhance the sustainability and success of tourism enterprises, particularly in agritourism. LMTE offers a unique opportunity for partnerships with local communities, addressing labour shortages and enriching tourist experiences with authentic local insights. This collaboration can foster community engagement, strengthen social cohesion, and build economic resilience in remote village settings.

## **7.5.2 Empowerment of Women and Families in Tourism Entrepreneurship**

### **7.5.2.1 Supporting Women LMTErs**

By exploring the roles and experiences of women in LMTE, this research underscores their significant contributions and potential in the tourism industry. Entrepreneurial policies are significant for supporting women entrepreneurs (Ozasir-Kacar & Essers, 2023). The research project suggests opportunities for women, particularly those unemployed for various reasons and seeking new paths, to achieve their desired lifestyle in Hainan. It enables them to engage in successful tourism entrepreneurship and effectively address region-specific challenges. These achievements can serve as inspiration for other women considering LMTE opportunities in the future.

This research helps identify and address the challenges and obstacles women face, particularly those balancing family responsibilities with career development (Bullough & Renko, 2017), especially single mothers who are responsible for raising their children while earning income for the family. By understanding these issues, policies and measures could be formulated to promote equal opportunities and development for women in tourism entrepreneurship. This research contributes to the SDGs by addressing gender equality in the context of tourism entrepreneurship, specifically aligning with SDG 5, which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. By understanding women's unique challenges and opportunities in LMTE, this study provides a foundation for formulating policies and measures that promote equal opportunities and development for women in this sector. The insights gained

from this research can guide the creation of more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems, ultimately advancing gender equality within the tourism industry.

Networking opportunities for LMTE can lead to synergies, shared resources, and collective initiatives that enhance business outcomes. For example, the “Free Trade Port Women’s Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition” (Ma, 2023) provides LMTEs a platform to gather, exchange experiences, stay informed about government tourism policies, and establish potential business partnerships.

### **7.5.2.2 Strengthening of Family Well-being**

This research provides insights into family empowerment in tourism entrepreneurship by exploring how families navigate the challenges of migration and tourism entrepreneurship. It highlights the significance of family cohesion, mutual support, and shared decision-making for fostering entrepreneurial success and well-being. This understanding of the interdependence of family members in this journey can inform policies and programmes to support family entrepreneurship and strengthen family bonds globally.

Particular attention should be paid to marginalised (Feng & Li, 2016) and vulnerable groups (Buchanan, 2023) within LMTE families, such as children and elderly family members. Policies should focus on their unique needs, ensuring that the well-being of the entire family unit is prioritised throughout the entrepreneurial process. For example, creating policies that provide support for children’s education and well-being, such as scholarships or educational programmes, can help mitigate the impact of migration on younger family members. Similarly, providing eldercare options or healthcare support for elderly family members can reduce the strain on family caregivers, ensuring that all generations in the family are supported.

Policymakers could also consider developing family-focused financial support programmes, such as subsidised microloans or family-specific grants that address the dual needs of business and family welfare. Additionally, promoting family-friendly workspaces and providing access to flexible childcare services would help parents within LMTE families maintain a healthier

work-life balance. Establishing community support networks for LMTE families can help to create environments where family members can share resources, foster relationships, and strengthen their sense of belonging. These targeted interventions would ensure that all family members, including the most vulnerable, are able to thrive within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This comprehensive approach to supporting family well-being would enhance the sustainability and success of LMTE ventures, while fostering social cohesion and family resilience.

### **7.5.3 Policy Implications**

The local regulatory environment, government policies, and cultural differences can hinder entrepreneurial success. Additionally, an influx of entrepreneurs, if not well-managed, can lead to contentious issues, such as overdevelopment, increased congestion, and potential exploitation of local resources. These newcomers into the local business ecosystem may be met with either support or resistance from the existing business community (Schuch & Wang, 2015).

Policy implications include the need for supportive policies that foster family cohesion and recognise LMTE families' contributions to local economies and cultures. Practical implications highlight actionable insights for entrepreneurs, the development of LMTE, women's and family empowerment, and policymakers. This emphasizes the interconnectedness of theoretical, methodological, policy, and practical aspects, enriching our understanding of the dynamics of LMTE within tourism entrepreneurship.

#### **7.5.3.1 Assessing Family Well-being and Support**

Exploring LMTE from a family perspective reveals significant policy implications. Policymakers can assess its impact on family well-being, including work-life balance and overall quality of life. Targeted interventions like child-care programmes, simplified Hukou transfer processes ("Hukou" system in China is a household registration system that officially records a person's place of residence and family background), and improved access to education and healthcare are essential to support the successful settlement and long-term welfare of families on Hainan Island. By implementing these policies, authorities can ease the transition for lifestyle migrant families, fostering their stability and integration into the local community.

### **7.5.3.2 Promoting Entrepreneurial Skills and Values**

Policymakers can gain insights into how entrepreneurial skills and values are passed down from one generation to the next (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015). This understanding can inform policies that promote family cohesion and continuity in business ventures. For example, children in LMTE families often reflect on the learning opportunities provided by their parents and express aspirations to become entrepreneurs. Government efforts should include education and awareness campaigns to inform the local population about the benefits of LMTE and dispel misconceptions. This can foster a more diverse and supportive community environment, contributing to a more favourable business climate (Cavallo et al., 2019).

Introducing incentive programmes is crucial to encouraging the establishment and growth of LMTE businesses. Tax incentives, such as those implemented under Circulars 31 and 32 by China's Ministry of Finance and the State Taxation Administration, play a pivotal role (Deloitte, n.d.). Effective from January 1, 2020, and expiring on December 31, 2024, these measures include a reduced enterprise income tax rate of 15% for "encouraged" business activities in Hainan and larger tax deductions for eligible capital expenditures (Hinews, 2020). These fiscal policies are designed to foster investment in critical sectors, including tourism. By simplifying the Hukou process and offering financial incentives, such as tax benefits and deductions, the initiative aims to attract and support tourism businesses and entrepreneurs. The reduced tax rate and investment support enhance the attractiveness of Hainan as a destination for tourism-related ventures, encouraging growth and development in the tourism sector, while streamlining administrative processes for new and existing enterprises.

### **7.5.3.3 Enhancing Infrastructure and Marketing**

The practical implications of this exploration of families' migration experiences include the need to enhance language training, improve transportation infrastructure, ensure access to utilities, and increase government efficiency. Promoting Mandarin in official departments and service industries on Hainan Island is crucial, along with providing training in cross-cultural

communication, understanding of the local market, and sustainable business practices to improve tourism and living standards.

Furthermore, positioning Hainan as a preferred destination for LMTE families requires targeted marketing campaigns emphasising its unique attractions—such as natural landscapes, cultural heritage, and supportive tourism policies. Leveraging digital platforms and social media for marketing can enhance global engagement and stimulate economic growth in the region.

## **7.6 Recommendations for Future Research**

The avenues for future research in Chinese LMTE are diverse and promising. This research illuminates the intricate tapestry of experiences within this unique community, revealing rich opportunities for scholars and researchers to explore uncharted dimensions. The recommendations for future research outlined in this section aim to guide and inspire further investigations, offering avenues that could significantly contribute to understanding lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship in China. These recommendations provide a roadmap for scholars to advance knowledge, address research gaps, and contribute to policy development that improves the well-being of this dynamic group and their families.

### **7.6.1 Comparative and Longitudinal Studies**

Future research in the domain of LMTE and family dynamics could benefit significantly from a multifaceted approach to deepen current understanding. Firstly, there is a critical need for cross-regional comparative studies that explore how the dynamics of LMTE vary across diverse sociocultural and economic contexts. Investigating the factors influencing entrepreneurial experiences and family dynamics in different regions within China or globally would enrich scholarship. Such comparative studies could offer insights into variations in policies, cultural contexts, and economic landscapes, contributing to a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by LMTE entrepreneurs. Additionally, including nonmigrant entrepreneurs in these comparative analyses would provide a nuanced understanding of the

distinctions between lifestyle migrant and nonmigrant entrepreneurs, illuminating the specific factors that shape the unique entrepreneurial experiences of migrants.

Longitudinal studies offer a promising avenue for future research to increase understanding of Chinese LMTE. Tracking the trajectories of LMTE entrepreneurs and their families over an extended period would reveal how their experiences evolve. Such studies can provide insights into the challenges, successes, and adaptation strategies as these entrepreneurs establish themselves in new destinations. This longitudinal perspective is crucial for assessing the sustainability and long-term impact of LMTE ventures. Additionally, exploring the availability of resources, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities for this demographic would enhance understanding of their entrepreneurial journeys.

### **7.6.2 Further Exploration of Children's Perspectives**

This research underscores the critical need for deeper exploration of children's perspectives within tourism studies, where their voices and experiences are often overlooked. To address this gap, future research should prioritise understanding tourism through the lens of childism by actively including children's voices. Adopting qualitative research methodologies will be essential to effectively capture the nuanced experiences of children in tourism settings. Implementing child-friendly approaches and activities will facilitate meaningful engagement, ensuring children's perspectives are authentically represented. This supports recent critical developments in tourism (Canosa et al., 2024).

In alignment with the SDG on children's rights, this research investigates the impact of tourism on children's well-being, education, socialisation, and cultural identity. By understanding how tourism activities shape their lives and examining their role within the family unit during these experiences, this research provides valuable insights into family dynamics in tourism contexts. This includes exploring how children influence family decision-making processes and interact with other family members, and children's overall satisfaction with travel experiences.

Ethical considerations are paramount in research involving children, requiring strict adherence to established guidelines to safeguard their rights and well-being. Collaboration between

stakeholders in the tourism industry, policy makers, and child welfare organisations is crucial to developing child-friendly tourism initiatives, policies, and practices. Researchers and practitioners can foster a tourism environment that prioritises children's well-being and rights by working together.

In conclusion, addressing these recommendations through future research endeavours will significantly contribute to a comprehensive understanding of children's perspectives on tourism. This understanding, in turn, can inform the development of sustainable tourism practices and policies that benefit children and tourism destinations alike. Future research could explore the impact of tourism entrepreneurship on children's educational outcomes and mental health, or examine these dynamics in other regions to broaden the understanding of this field.

### **7.6.3 Empowering Women Entrepreneurs**

Gender-centric analyses are a crucial recommendation for future research. A thorough investigation of the unique challenges and opportunities women entrepreneurs face in lifestyle migration would enrich our understanding of gender dynamics and their impacts on family roles and entrepreneurial choices.

Specifically, research focusing on women LMTEs who are divorced or single, presents a promising avenue for exploration. The experiences and challenges unique to these women in the context of lifestyle migration warrant thorough exploration. By examining their motivations, decision-making processes, and coping strategies, researchers can provide nuanced insights into the intersectionality of gender, entrepreneurship, and migration. Such insights are vital for advancing knowledge and developing policies supporting women entrepreneurs' diverse needs in tourism contexts.

A comprehensive exploration could encompass examining the factors influencing the decisions of divorced, single, or widowed women to engage in lifestyle migrant entrepreneurship. Understanding the motivations and aspirations that drive these women to embark on entrepreneurial ventures in new locations could unveil distinctive patterns and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of women's entrepreneurship within the broader context of

migration. Additionally, investigating the specific challenges faced by entrepreneurs who are solo mothers during lifestyle migration and entrepreneurship is essential. This could include examining the support networks these women rely on, the strategies employed to balance family and professional responsibilities, and the impacts of cultural and societal factors on their entrepreneurial journeys.

Thus, directing research efforts towards women LMTEs, particularly those who are divorced or single, has the potential to uncover valuable insights. By amplifying the voices and experiences of these women, researchers can contribute to a more equitable understanding of entrepreneurship in the context of lifestyle migration. This approach also lays the foundation for developing customised support mechanisms to improve the success and well-being of women entrepreneurs in diverse family structures.

#### **7.6.4 LMTE Resilience and Coping Strategies**

Future research in the field of LMTE could benefit significantly from an expanded focus on the well-being and quality of life of LMTE families. Research avenues could include examining factors such as health, education, and overall life satisfaction. Additionally, exploring the role of community support and family-friendly policies in enhancing the well-being of LMTE families represents another promising area for investigation.

Further exploration into family coping strategies during migration and entrepreneurial processes remains an underexplored area in current research. Investigating how families navigate the challenges associated with lifestyle migration and entrepreneurship can yield crucial insights for academic research and practical applications. This includes understanding resilience mechanisms, communication patterns, and support systems that contribute to successful adaptation and well-being.

Detailed analysis of family coping strategies would involve examining collective responses to stressors and uncertainties introduced by lifestyle migration and entrepreneurship. Key aspects to explore include intrafamily communication dynamics, distribution of responsibilities, and adaptive mechanisms that sustain a cohesive and supportive family environment over time.

Additionally, understanding how individual and collective coping mechanisms interact within LMTE families can inform the development of intervention programmes, support networks, and counselling services tailored to their unique needs. By identifying effective coping strategies that promote family resilience, future research can contribute to holistic strategies to enhance the overall well-being and success of LMTE families throughout their migration and entrepreneurial journey.

### **7.6.5 Other Recommendations**

Combining qualitative and quantitative methods could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics of LMTE. For example, integrating surveys, statistical analyses, and qualitative interviews could offer a holistic perspective on the various factors that influence LMTE. Additionally, exploring the broader cultural and social impacts of LMTE presents another avenue for future research. Investigating how these entrepreneurs contribute to or influence local cultures, economies, and community development could offer valuable insights into the broader societal implications of their endeavours.

Researchers could investigate the impacts of policy interventions to support lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs and their families. Evaluating the effectiveness of government initiatives and support systems in fostering entrepreneurial success and well-being could inform future policy decisions and interventions. Integrating technological innovations into the study of LMTE is a noteworthy area for exploration. Investigating how technology influences business operations, marketing, and communication within this specific entrepreneurial context could provide insight into the role of digital platforms in shaping the landscape of lifestyle migrant entrepreneurship.

As well, there are opportunities for future research in the realm of work-life balance. These might include exploring the potential roles of technology, remote work, and the gig economy in reshaping work dynamics in China. In addition, I call for continued research to monitor the evolving landscape of work and life in this dynamic society. The discussion segment encapsulates the complexities of work-life balance in contemporary China. It underscores the

need for a multifaceted approach involving individuals, employers, policymakers, and society. As China continues its rapid development, addressing these work-life balance challenges is important for individual well-being and crucial to sustaining a harmonious and productive society.

These recommended avenues for future research aim to build upon the foundations laid by the current study. Future studies in these areas have the potential to deepen our understanding of the evolving landscape of Chinese LMTE and contribute valuable insights to academia, policymaking, and community development.

## **7.8 Final Reflections**

The stories emerging from the LMTE families unveil a rich tapestry of experiences, aspirations, and challenges. This study encourages us to acknowledge the subtle interactions between tradition and modern ways, individual advancement and family responsibilities, and desires to safeguard culture while promoting new ideas. By recognising and dealing with the complexities of their experiences, we can enhance the ability of young individuals and tourism entrepreneurs to confidently navigate their life course and positively contribute to the ongoing development of their family's legacy and progress the tourism entrepreneurship discourse. By gaining insight into their challenges and opportunities, informed strategies can be developed to enhance their experiences, promote their well-being, and ultimately contribute to the successful integration of LMTE into Hainan's evolving social fabric.

Despite hardships, LMTEs persevere and strive for better lives for themselves and their families. The conceptual model of the central and key themes (Figure 20) encapsulate their journey, encompassing personal growth, challenges, relationships, support networks, and integration into local society. The experiences of LMTE families on Hainan Island underscore the intricate interplay of stress, environment, self-improvement, trouble, relationships, support, and society. Within this complex tapestry, they embark on transformative journeys, redefining themselves and their surroundings, contributing to their growth and the dynamic evolution of

Hainan's tourism landscape. Their narratives serve as a testament to the human spirit's resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity.

The engagement of women entrepreneurs in the LMTE context is noteworthy for revealing the unique challenges and strategies at the intersection of entrepreneurship, family, and migration. Their contributions to their families and Hainan's entrepreneurial landscape highlight important gender dynamics within the LMTE community. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of how gender influences entrepreneurial and migration experiences by exploring the roles and experiences of women entrepreneurs.

Incorporating children into the LSP workshops represents a significant methodological advancement, offering a more nuanced understanding of family dynamics. This groundbreaking approach has the potential to inspire further exploration and experimentation within the academic community. By engaging children directly in the research process, this approach enriches our insights into how family members interact and contribute to tourism entrepreneurship and highlights the importance of capturing the voices and perspectives of younger participants within an Asian context. This approach challenges existing paradigms in tourism and migration research by highlighting how children's viewpoints reflect and influence family decisions, entrepreneurial strategies, and the overall migration experience.

As individuals, we inevitably perceive places through the lenses of our own experiences, each narrative crafting a unique tapestry of memories. Whether Hainan becomes a cherished sanctuary or a mere waypoint on life's journey, it will undoubtedly leave an indelible mark on those who dwell within its embrace. With each family forging its own path, the collective narrative of life after migration to Hainan unfolds with an array of perspectives and experiences, enriching the fabric of this vibrant community.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A: Adult Consent Form



### ADULT CONSENT FORM

*Project title: Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship on Hainan Island: Chinese Family Perspectives*

*Project Supervisor: Associate Professor Heike Schänzel; Dr Claire Liu*

*Researcher: Xiaoxi Ju*

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes  No

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 3 October 2022**

**AUTEC Reference number 22/203**

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

## Appendix B: Adult Information Sheet



### ADULT INFORMATION SHEET

#### Date Information Sheet Produced:

7 July 2022

#### Project Title

Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship on Hainan Island: Chinese Family Perspectives

#### An Invitation

My name is Xiaoxi Ju, a current PhD student at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. The research has developed from my interest in both lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs and their family members. I invite you (and your family) to participate in interviews for this research which is voluntary. Should at any stage today following our interview you wish to withdraw from your involvement in this research, please inform myself in person or by contact email provided at the end of this information sheet.

#### What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research project is to explore how families are embedded within lifestyle migration and the tourism entrepreneurial process on Hainan Island. There is an increasing trend in family migration to Hainan Island. Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship has become a new community in Hainan where the entrepreneurs share the attributes of lifestyle entrepreneurs and migrant entrepreneurs. It further explores family experiences during Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship processes, which include the experiences of all family members within the family, i.e., grandparents, parents, and children (between ages of 6-17). As a researcher, I want to find out why the Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurs and their family members migrated to this island, how the family contributes to the entrepreneurial success based on their adaptation experience, and family members' experiences going through these processes.

#### How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been selected to participate in the research because you are recognised as a lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneur who migrated to Hainan Island in the last 9 years with your family (one or more elder and child(ren) between the ages of 6-17) and you are a member of the Shanxi Entrepreneurship Association.

Some tourism entrepreneurs are defined as lifestyle entrepreneurs due to their characteristic of pursuing a better way of life through starting a tourism business that is not necessarily driven solely by economic motives. Furthermore, some lifestyle entrepreneurs are also migrant entrepreneurs, where lifestyle is one of the motivations for migration. In other words, lifestyle migrants are individuals who are searching for a better way of life and are called "lifestyle entrepreneurial migrants". In short, LMTers are lifestyle-oriented/driven migrant entrepreneurs who stimulate local innovation through networks of interaction and collaboration.

This invitation is extended to all family members present to participate to help me gain a broad understanding of your lifestyle migration experiences gained from your adaptation to the island.

#### How do I agree to participate in this research?

To be eligible to participate, you will need to fill in a consent Form and if required sign on behalf of any children unable to do so themselves. Any younger children for whom you sign consent will be asked for verbal consent by myself to ensure they are comfortable to be asked questions. This means that all family members who choose to participate need to consent/assent. You will have two weeks to consider this invitation. Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You could either email back the consent form to the researcher's email at [xiaoxi.ju@outlook.com](mailto:xiaoxi.ju@outlook.com) or give the hard copy to the researcher when we meet before the entrepreneur personal interview.

#### What will happen in this research?

There are two rounds of interviews for this research: entrepreneur's personal interview and family interview. You and your family members will be asked questions about your experiences (both positive and negative) during your old-daddy tea interview. I will arrange a time to meet you that suits you and your family. The

personal interview with the entrepreneur will take approximately 30minutes; the old-daddy tea interview with the whole family will take approximately 60 minutes. The interviews will be recorded on my cell phone which allows for instant transcription. Additionally, old-daddy tea will be offered as a token of appreciation for your participation in this research after the family interview, and each child receives a free Lego starter kit.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

It is not anticipated the interview process will cause any risk or discomfort to you and your family. If you or any family member feels uncomfortable, you are well within your rights to cease the interview process and we can mutually depart from the meeting area with no explanation required.

**What are the benefits?**

The primary purpose of the research is to meet the thesis requirements to complete my PhD Degree at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. However, as a family group sharing experiences after migration, you should also benefit from your participation and reflection from your individual and group experiences today. The research will also benefit other academics and organisations who have an interest in this project topic.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

I am the only researcher who will have access to the information you give me today. I will ensure that the research is anonymous and only pseudonyms will be used.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There are no monetary costs affecting your participation in this research. As previously mentioned, participation will require about 30 minutes of your time and 60 minutes of your family time.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You **have two weeks** to decide whether to participate in this research.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes, once the research has finished, you will receive a summary of the findings and discussion. This will be sent to you via the email address provided on your consent form if you have indicated you would like to receive any follow up.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified to the Project Supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Heike Schänzel, [heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz](mailto:heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz) +64 9 921 9999 x 6923.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), (+649) 921 9999 ext. 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Xiaoxi Ju, [xiaoxi.ju@outlook.com](mailto:xiaoxi.ju@outlook.com), +8618001203040

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Assoc. Prof. Heike Schänzel, [heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz](mailto:heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz) +64 9 921 9999 x 6923.

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 3 October 2022**

**AUTEK Reference number 22/203.**

## Appendix C: Child Information Sheet

### CHILD INFORMATION SHEET



#### Lifestyle and Entrepreneurial Experience after Migration to Hainan

#### INFORMATION SHEET AND ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN UNDER 12

(Parent/caregivers please read to children)

*This form will be kept for a period of 6 years*

Hello, my name is Xiaoxi. I am a PhD student and currently studying lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship and their families in Hainan Island. I am keen to talk to you about what you liked or disliked about your life experience after migrating to Hainan Island. I am keen to know your honest thoughts about your favourite things you enjoyed and maybe why the experience made you feel happy or sad.

I would like to spend about an hour with you and your family to play Lego bricks together and talk about how you enjoyed your life in Hainan. You will be with your family throughout our chat.

During our chat and the Lego play exercise, you can talk to me or interrupt me asking about my work whenever you want, and feel free to share the model you have built. We can get to know each other. If you don't want to answer or share any question, you don't have to. I will be using my phone to record our conversation so I can re-listen after and make a written record of what you and your family have shared with me. Is that okay? Let me know how you feel about today's activity by circling in one of these words:

Happy

Fine

Not Sure

Worried

If you are not sure or worried you can ask me any questions and ask one of your parents or caregivers about this. If you want me to leave you for a moment to talk about things with your family, I can do that and come back later. Just feel free to make any decision.

Please circle "Yes", if you would like to take part in my chat

Please circle "No", if you do not want to do this

Yes

No

Please circle "Maybe", if you are not sure. If you cannot decide, that is totally fine. You can tell me or one of your parents/caregivers that you want to join in.

Maybe

I hope we can do this together. It will be great to chat and play with you and get to know you and your family.

After we chat, there will be old-daddy afternoon tea for you and your family to enjoy, and you will get a LEGO set for free. This is a way for me to personally thank you for helping me in my research.

#### **What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Heike Schänzel, [heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz](mailto:heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz) +64 9 921 9999 x 6923.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 3 October 2022**

**AUTEK Reference number 22/203.**

Thank you for completing this form. Please ask your parent/care giver to sign here:

(Signature)

(Date)

If you feel that you understand what the project is about, please give this form back to me.

Researcher Name: Xiaoxi Ju

## Appendix D: Assent Form



### Assent Form

**Project title:** *Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship on Hainan Island: Chinese Family Perspectives*

**Project Supervisor:** *Associate Professor Heike Schänzel; Dr Claire Liu*

**Researcher:** *Xiaoxi Ju*

- I have read and understood the sheet telling me what will happen in this study and why it is important.
- I have been able to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that I can stop being part of this study whenever I want and that it is perfectly ok for me to do this.
- If I stop being part of the study, I understand that then I will be offered the choice between having any information that that other people can know is about me removed or letting the researcher keep using it. I also understand that sometimes, if the results of the research have been written, some information about me may not be able to be removed.
- I agree to take part in this research.

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 3 October 2022**

**AUTEC Reference number 22/203**

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form*

# Appendix E: Parent/Guardian Consent Form



## Parent/Guardian Consent Form

For use for conjunction with either:

- An appropriate Assent Form when people under 16 years of age are participants in the research or
- A Consent Form when involving participants aged 16-20 years where their age makes them vulnerable as concerns informed or voluntary consent.

**Project title:** *Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship on Hainan Island: Chinese Family Perspectives*

**Project Supervisor:** *Associate Professor Heike Schänzel; Dr Claire Liu*

**Researcher:** *Xiaoxi Ju*

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw my child/children and/or myself from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw my child/children and/or myself from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to my child/children and/or myself removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of our data may not be possible.
- I agree to my child/children taking part in this research.
- I understand that my child is able to refuse to give assent to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes  No

Child/children's name/s : .....

Parent/Guardian's signature: .....

Parent/Guardian's name: .....

Parent/Guardian's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 3 October 2022**

**AUTEC Reference number 22/203**

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form*

# Appendix F: Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneur Interview

## Questions

1. **Please introduce yourself briefly?**  
Age, education, hometown, family structure, etc.
2. When did you come to Hainan? Why did you migrate to Hainan?
3. **Could you briefly introduce your main business? How did you choose this business?**
4. Could you share your entrepreneurial process, experience, and stories behind it?
5. **What are the reasons for you to choose Hainan as your entrepreneurship destination? Are there any other reasons?**
6. Have you gotten used to Hainan's lifestyle and working style? What are they?  
Do you think there is a big difference between Hainan and China Mainland?  
What are some of the differences? Do you think it is a good thing? Why/not?
7. During the entrepreneurship process in Hainan, what kind of difficulties, opportunities, and challenges have you encountered? Could you specify them? Please tell me a bit more about your business during your entrepreneurial process?
8. Have you met new friends here? What types of friends did you make in Hainan?? Have they supported you at any point of your entrepreneurial process? And how? Please give some examples.
9. **Did your family move to Hainan with you together? If yes, who are they? If no, why not they move with you?**
10. Do you think coming to Hainan affects your relationship with your family members? In what way, has your family changed since the migration? (e.g., better relationship with parents or worse).
11. Are you aware of any difficulties your family members may have encountered during this process? (e.g., education issue, employment issue and pension related issues). Please tell me more about your story.
12. What do you think these entrepreneurial migration processes bring to your family?
13. During your entrepreneurial process, what kind of roles have your family members played? Have they been supportive? If yes, how did they support you? If no, how does this affect your entrepreneurial process? What actions are you taking to resolve the issues?
14. How do you think your entrepreneurial process affects your family members? Do you think it has affected the children? How?
15. Please share with me anything else about your story and the story with your family.

## Appendix G: Old Dad Tea Family Group Interview Questions

The purpose of today's session is to gain insights into your lifestyle migrant entrepreneurial experiences on Hainan Island. My name is Xiaoxi. I migrated to Hainan five years ago with my family. My husband got an opportunity to start his agritourism business at that time. I am curious about people like our family and wonder how they adapt to the new life here in Hainan. This is how today's session works: I am going to ask you a question and then invite you to build a model with the LEGO bricks in response to my question. Lego is a trendy play toy now in China among children, we are using it in teaching and research. It will provide you with time to think before you answer questions. LEGO play is suitable for children, and it can ensure full participation of everyone in this room today. It also gives all of you a chance to appreciate your family member's viewpoints and insights. The Lego workshop favours all styles of communication.

Today's workshop will have four stages, each of the stages follows the above steps (posing the question, construction, sharing and reflection). We will warm up first, then you each will build your own, individual model. After that, you work together with your family members by using your individual model to build a shared model. I will give you a few minutes to build your model at every stage. Once you have completed, we will go around the table and each person will have a turn to tell their story of what they have built. We will then discuss and reflect on what happened and what was said by the family members.

Everyone okay with that? *Okay, let's get started! Is everyone ready?*

Stage	Actions*	Set type	Actions*	Building + Sharing (depends on the number of participants)
1	<b>Warm-up</b>	Window exploration kit for each participant	Build a tower.  Q1: Let's build your tower, there is no right or wrong tower. Call me if you need support. Can you describe the model you built? Tell us about your tower, please.	2 min +2 min
2	<b>Individual model</b>	Window exploration kit for each participant	Adapt your tower.  Q2: You can take pieces off and on to change your tower, either positive or negative experience of living here in Hainan.	4 min +2 min
3	<b>Individual model</b>	Customized Lego bricks as per regulations of the LSP Master Trainers Association	Build a model to describe your positive/negative family lifestyle migration experience on Hainan Island. You could choose either one or both to build.  Q3: Deconstruct your model, and build what your family experience of lifestyle migration to Hainan Island.  > Think back your life here with your family, is there anything you memorize until now? Maybe happy memories or sad memories, or just a thing you believe is special.  > Why you think of this from your memory? What happened?  > Or, if you couldn't think of anything happened with your family, build a model which is your favorable lifestyle or disguise lifestyle with your family.	5 min+7 min

			Please share what your model represents and tell us your story of your model.	
4	Shared model	Customized Lego bricks as per regulations of the LSP Master Trainers Association	Use previous individual models from stage three. Think each model's relationship with other models, orientate each model in relation to other models in a way that reflects the lifestyle of your family after your family moved to Hainan Island.  Q4: Please talk to your family members and build a shared model together. You could move around your previous individual models to make sense of the joint model. Please consider what your family lifestyle is and put all the models together. You could talk to each other and move models around the table. Share your story of your model.	5 min+10 min
<b>*Note: After each building stage participants will have time to share and reflect on their models.</b>				

**During their reflection, the following questions might be asked:**

Q5: What was special about your model?

Q6: Tell me about your experience after migrating to Hainan.

Q7: You mentioned...Could you tell me more about it?

Q8: How do you feel about the lifestyle changes after migrating?

Q9: What do you mean by...?

Q10: Tell me about your relationship with your family since the move?

**11. What was the process of deciding to move to Hainan?**

12. Did you come to Hainan to start a new business?

13. Was it a quick decision or relative long decision-making process?

14. Please tell me more about your migration story.

**15. What is the most impressive thing after migrating to Hainan?**

16. Did you have any difficulties adapting to new lifestyle?

17. Do you know what is your husband/son/dad/child's business about?

18. What about the involvement in the business/enterprise?

19. How is the business affecting your daily life?

20. What kind of roles do you think you've played during the entrepreneurial process? What is the impact of the business on you?

21. In general, what kind of improvements in life do you think happened after moving to Hainan? What disadvantages have happened after the move?

22. Have you encountered any difficulties? Could you be more specific? Why?

23. Will you recommend your relatives to move here? Why yes/no?

24. Do you have any other stories that you want to share with me today?

## Appendix H: Recruitment Poster

# Lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurial (LMTE) family interview volunteer recruitment

- I am a PhD candidate Xiaoxi Ju in the College of Culture and Society at Auckland University of Technology. I am conducting a research study to explore the lifestyle experience of entrepreneurial families including every family member after they migrate to Hainan Island.
- I am recruiting Chinese tourism entrepreneurs who migrated with their families to Hainan Island during the past 9 years.
- LMTEs are lifestyle-oriented/driven migrant entrepreneurs who stimulate local innovation through networks of interaction and collaboration. LMTEs share attributes of both lifestyle and migrant entrepreneurs, but not all lifestyle entrepreneurs are migrant entrepreneurs, and vice versa.
- Family should includes their parents and their children (7-17 years old). The first interview will be at the entrepreneur's working place, which will take approximately 30 minutes with the entrepreneur alone. The second interview will take approximately 60 minutes with all family members. Lego bricks will be given at the second interview location. The location for second interview will be at Luck and Peace Old Daddy teahouse, 4 east road, haidian island, Haikou, China. You and your family will receive a free old-daddy afternoon tea ( worth 300 RMB) completing the interview, and each child from the family will receive a free Lego starter kit.
- Your participation in this study is voluntary. The interviews are confidential. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please email me at [xiaoxi.ju@outlook.com](mailto:xiaoxi.ju@outlook.com)

# Appendix I: Child Information Sheet



## CHILD INFORMATION SHEET

### Lifestyle and Entrepreneurial Experience after Migration to Hainan

#### INFORMATION SHEET AND ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN OVER 12

*This form will be kept for a period of 6 years*

Hello, my name is Xiaoxi. I am a PhD student and currently doing some research on lifestyle migrant tourism entrepreneurship and families in Hainan Island. I am keen to talk to all your family including yourself so I can get some helpful information as to what you liked or disliked about your life experience after migrating to Hainan Island. I am keen to know your honest thoughts about your favourite things you enjoyed and maybe why things you have seen or done made you feel happy or sad.

During the research, I would like to spend time with you and your family to play Lego bricks together and talk about how you enjoyed your life in Hainan today. It will probably take about an hour, and you will be with your family throughout our chat.

During our chat and the Lego play exercise, you can talk to me, and feel free to share the model you have built. We can get to know each other. You can ask me about my work whenever you want to. If you don't want to answer or share any question, you don't have to. I will be using my phone to record our conversation so I can re-listen after and make a written record of what you and your family have shared with me. Let me know how you feel about this by giving me a thumbs up or down.

If you are not sure or worried you can ask me any questions and ask one of your parents or caregivers about this. If you want me to leave you for a moment to talk about things with your family, I can do that and come back later.

Please tick thumbs up

Please tick thumbs down



If you would like to take part in my chat



If you do not want to do this

Please tick "Maybe", if you are not sure. If you cannot decide, that is fine. You can tell me or one of your parents/caregivers that you want to join in.

# Maybe

I hope we can do this together. It will be great to chat, play Lego and get to know you and your family.

After we chat, there will be old-daddy afternoon tea for you and your family to enjoy and a way for me to personally thank you for helping me in my research.

#### What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Heike Schänzel, [heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz](mailto:heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz) +64 9 921 9999 x 6923.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 3 October 2022**

**AUTEK Reference number 22/203.**

Thank you for completing this form. Please ask your parent/care giver to sign here:

## Appendix J: Ethics Approval



### Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology  
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ  
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316  
E: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)  
[www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics](http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics)

3 October 2022

Heike Schanzel  
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Heike

Re Ethics Application: **22/203 Lifestyle Migrant Tourism Entrepreneurship on Hainan Island: Chinese Family Perspectives**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 30 September 2025.

#### Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Please ensure that it is stated in the Information Sheet that all participants are to provide either written consent or assent.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study, but please send through the updated documents to file.

#### Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.
8. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz). The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat  
**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

Cc: xiaoxi.ju@outlook.com; Claire Liu

## Appendix K: Facilitator Certificate

