

1. Introduction

Ethnic tourism is based on culture, and operators package indigenous customs and indigenous people into tourist commodities to meet tourist consumption needs (Smith, 1989). The difference between mainstream and ethnic culture is one principal factor for ethnic tourism development (Wu & Yu, 2000). Such difference is primarily embodied in ethnic activities, such as folk songs and dances, festivals and costumes, and the minority people—especially women, who are the dominant participants (Wu & He, 2001; Chen, 2016). Consequently, the study of ethnic tourism from the feminism perspective is essential. According to the sustainable development agenda proposed by the United Nations (UN), the fifth goal is to achieve gender equality and empower women (UN, 2020). Fourth-wave feminism takes the advantage of social media to spotlight and address gender inequalities and emphasizes that the right of choice brings benefits to individual women, especially related to their careers or entrepreneurial endeavor (Petersson McIntyre, 2021). It often links women empowerment to economic and entrepreneurial success (Khoo et al., 2023; Berglund, 2018; Thwaites, 2016). The word “women” in “women empowerment” clearly refers to the practical goal of empowerment or the object of power transfer with cooperation, sharing, and development as the transition; that is, through the collaborative empowerment of individuals, collectives, and countries, women’s subjectivity is reshaped, and power development is finally realized (Inglis, 1997, p. 3–17).

However, the relationship between tourism work and women empowerment remains ambiguous and complicated (Trupp & Sunanta, 2017). Although tourism provides a relatively favorable and equal environment, its specific impact depends largely on whether local culture changes traditional gender norms and is inclusive for women. According to Duffy et al. (2015), tourism employment offers opportunities for women to achieve economic and social independence. Women in the tourism industry have gained a sense of empowerment and freedom from economic dependency on men and society, as well as from negative aspects, such as emptiness and familial dependency. They have moved from passive involvement to active participation in culture-related tourism ventures and have received vocational education (Moswete & Lacey, 2015). However, some conflicts remain. Arroyo et al. (2019) found that employment in the tourism industry may not necessarily lead to empowerment for women, especially when considering cultural factors. While working in the tourism industry may bring empowerment in one culture, it could lead to more suppression in another. Maliva et al. (2013) argued that women working in a sector that does not appreciate their work and contributions are often at risk of being exploited. In addition, women’s economic involvement alone cannot change the gender norms within the wider society (Timothy, 2001).

While tourism scholarship has increasingly examined gender dynamics (e.g., Kinnaird & Hall, 1996; Xu & Gu, 2018), the experiences of indigenous women remain underexplored. In his study of ethnic tourism impacts among Miao and Li communities in Hainan, Xie (2003b) found that indigenous groups undergo complex

1 cultural and economic changes through tourism engagement. However, focus must
2 remain specifically on how indigenous women are empowered or disempowered by
3 ethnic tourism forces and sociocultural contexts. Therefore, this study aims to address
4 this gap by analyzing the gendered impacts of tourism participation within indigenous
5 communities in Binglanggu Hainan Li and Miao Cultural Heritage Park (hereinafter
6 referred to as Binglanggu). This work is situated among emerging research at the
7 intersection of gender, indigeneity, and tourism (Ferguson & Alarcón, 2015; Tucker
8 & Boonabaana, 2012). As these studies elucidate, understanding indigenous women
9 empowerment requires careful analysis of sociocultural contexts shaped by ethnicity,
10 religion, class, and other identity factors. By focusing on the cultural specificity of
11 gendered impacts, this research intends to complement and extend existing knowledge
12 on the intricate relationship between gender, ethnicity, and tourism. According to
13 Zhou Qufei's work from the South Song Dynasty (AD 1178), named Lingwai Daida,
14 the Li people were the earliest inhabitants of Hainan Island (Wen, 2016), and they
15 lived a life in the primitive matriarchal commune until the Song Dynasty (Cen, 1957).
16 This was a social organization with matrilineal blood ties, and the most important
17 feature of it was that women have a high status and are respected in social production
18 and life. In addition, men enjoyed the same freedom and respect because of the equal
19 partner relationship between females and males (Chen, 1987; Wen, 2016). Referring
20 to Yang's studies (2013), the Li people have very similar matrilineal history to that of
21 Mosuo. For instance, Li's "Wan Long Gui" is consistent with Mosuo's "Walking
22 Marriage," whereas one of the notable differences was that Li set up a separate "Long
23 Gui House" for unmarried men and women to facilitate communication (Chen, 1987;
24 Guan, 2009; Wen, 2016). As cultural inheritors, Li females are still influenced by the
25 remnants of matriarchal culture. Therefore, this study analyzes the (dis)empowerment
26 of the Li female employees in Binglanggu with the following notable aims: First,
27 through deep observation and semistructured in-depth interviews along with
28 photography and field notes, the study explores the means of (dis)empowerment
29 among Li ethnic women employees in Binglanggu. Second, this study discusses
30 whether the matrilineal remnants of the Li minority group influence the empowerment
31 of modern Li women in cultural tourism. By examining the empowerment of female
32 Li employees in ethnic tourism, we contribute to the theoretical advancement on
33 whether the matrilineal culture of the Li places a strong emphasis on women's
34 involvement in ethnic tourism. Moreover, this study provides practical implications to
35 analyze the relationships among different dimensions of empowerment and to
36 increase the benefits of Li females through their participation in ethnic tourism.

1 **2. Literature Review**

2 **2.1 Tourism and Ethnic Women**

3 **2.1.1 Tourism and Gender Research**

4 Research on the tourism industry has been diverse and continuously increasing in
5 number. Since the 1980s, with the development and influence of gender studies,
6 gender research has been gradually incorporated into the tourism industry, and the
7 number of studies in this field has also increased. In 1995, the “Tourism Research
8 Annual” established a special publication related to gender issues, which greatly
9 promoted the growth of research in this field (Kinnaird et al., 1994; Kinnaird & Hall,
10 1996; Hunt & Harris, 1995; Harvey, Hunt & Harris, 1995; Nozawa, 1995; Swain,
11 1993, 1995).

12 Kinnaird et al.(1994) were the first to focus on the impact and role positioning of
13 women in the tourism industry in gender and tourism research, and they proposed the
14 development direction of gender research in tourism for the future (p. 12–34). Swain
15 (1995) also attempted to examine gender from the perspective of identity and social
16 relations and demonstrated the dynamic nature of gender issues in the tourism
17 industry and their association with political power issues (p. 255–259). At the same
18 time, Kinnaird & Hall (1996) established a gender awareness framework to help
19 understand the complexity of gender issues, which is crucial to analyzing the dynamic
20 development process of tourism. They also emphasized that all processes in the
21 tourism industry are constituted by gendered societies (p. 95–98). In the long-term
22 development, gender tourism research has mainly focused on four themes (Figueroa-
23 Domecq et al., 2015, p. 96). The first is gender consumption issues and gender
24 differences in travel quality. The second is exploring the specific impacts that tourism
25 industry development brings to the local area, and the differences caused by gender.
26 The third is discussing gender labor and discrimination issues in tourism work. The
27 fourth is the construction of some theories. This study analyzes the dimensions and
28 approaches of power flows that tourism work brings to women in the context of
29 tourism development and enriches the theory of empowerment with an ethnic tourism
30 case.

31 **2.1.2 Ethnic Tourism and Women**

32 Ethnic tourism is first defined as tourism “marketed to the public in terms of the
33 ‘quaint’ customs of indigenous and often exotic peoples” by Smith (1977, p.2). With
34 the rising interest in ethnic tourism, especially its relationships with stakeholders and
35 culture preservation (Henderson, 2003; Ryan & Aicken, 2005; Yang & Wall, 2009a),
36 scholars have widely discussed and continuously expanded the research scope (Butler
37 & Hinch, 1996; Weaver, 2010; Pereiro, 2016). Overall, ethnic tourism development is
38 based on the rich human and cultural resources of ethnic groups and also serves as an
39 approach to drive cultural revival and poverty reduction (Ishii, 2012; Walsh & Swain,
40 2004; Yang, 2011a).

1 Ethnic tourism not only brings in economic income and contributes to social
2 development but also plays a positive role in promoting the preservation and
3 inheritance of their traditional culture and way of life in modern context while also
4 strengthening the sense of identity among residents (Yang & Wall, 2009b; Xie,
5 2003b). Research on ethnic tourism in China dates back to at least the 1980s when
6 Swain (1989) studied the tourism industry developed by the Sani people in the Shilin
7 area of Yunnan. China, being a multiethnic country, has most ethnic minority groups
8 residing in the impoverished western regions (Lee, 2001). To bridge the gap between
9 these regions and the economically developed eastern areas, the Chinese government
10 has undertaken measures to develop ethnic minorities since the 1980s (Jackson,
11 2006). Hainan province also attracts many tourists with its rich ethnic minorities to
12 drive the development of ethnic tourism. In the 1990s, driven by a remarkable influx
13 of tourists along the highways, many Li ethnic villages have been established in
14 Hainan. With the increasing involvement of ethnic minority villages in tourism,
15 minority's identities and the local policies have been profoundly affected by tourism
16 development (Xie, 2003a). Consequently, governments at different administrative
17 levels have become actively engaged in tourism planning and policy formulation for
18 ethnic tourism. However, when governments attempt to "authenticate" indigenous
19 cultures and commodify cultural experiences into marketable tourism products, it
20 often exacerbates tensions and conflicts among authorities and the local community
21 (Xie, 2003a). Overall, during the process of participating in tourism, ethnic
22 communities have experienced economic growth and the evolution of culture, and
23 residents and visitors hold a positive view on ethnic tourism development (Wall &
24 Xie, 2005; Xie & Wall, 2002). Meanwhile, it is also needed to be aware of the
25 challenges and tensions that tourism development brings to local communities (Yang
26 & Wall, 2009b; Xie, 2003a).

27 Ethnic tourism cannot be separated from the participation of ethnic women, who
28 are the producers, performers, and inheritors of ethnic traditional art, skills, and
29 culture (Cohen, 2001; Davis, 2007; Li, 2004; Swain, 1993). The commercialization of
30 ethnic culture in tourism also relies on ethnic women as the main attractions, and
31 ethnic tourism development uses the gender and intentions of ethnic women for
32 destination marketing (Woodward, 1996). Ethnic minority women are better at
33 connecting and interacting with tourists through the culture of local communities,
34 further promoting the commodification of ethnic culture (Bai, 2018).

35 Scholars have noted that the growth of the tourism industry can help achieve the
36 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and promote gender equality and women
37 empowerment (Ferguson, 2015, p. 475). Tourism development creates job
38 opportunities for minority women, allowing them to earn money, expand their social
39 networks, and improve their social status (Li & Yue, 2005; Cavaco, 1995; Lin &
40 Wen, 2018; Yuan & Yan, 2013). Female leaders in ethnic minority communities have
41 emerged, showcasing the positive impact of tourism development on gender equality,
42 as leadership is a key indicator of gender equality (Chen & Zhang, 2015; Chu, Zhao
43 & Zhang, 2015; Xu & Gu, 2018). Studies also show that women's employment in the
44 tourism sector can help promote their empowerment (Almathami et al., 2021; Abou-

1 Shouk et al., 2021; Duffy et al., 2015). Some ethnic women have even developed
2 multiple professional identities, such as artisans, merchants, and teachers, by utilizing
3 their folk skills, bringing their crafts and culture to a larger stage, and breaking the
4 traditional roles set for them by patriarchal sociocultural contexts (Cone, 1995). This
5 development has enabled them to become more proactive and self-reliant, earning
6 income and social capital through their own efforts and achieving success (Lin &
7 Wen, 2018).

8 However, some studies suggest that the development of ethnic tourism has not
9 improved the status of ethnic minority women or furthered women empowerment. For
10 instance, Rinaldi & Salerno (2020) argue that ethnic minority women in emerging
11 countries' ethnic regions face gender segregation barriers in the horizontal and
12 vertical labor markets, which hinder their entry into the tourism industry. Feng (2013)
13 concludes from research on ethnic tourism in Miao regions of China that ethnic
14 tourism does not empower Miao women but instead maintains their obedience to men
15 (p. 10–11). Onen (2016) points out that the tourism industry does not have a
16 significant promoting effect on women empowerment (p. 173–175). Gender is closely
17 linked to sustainable development in the tourism industry, and gender studies in
18 tourism, especially ethnic tourism, remain underrepresented (Munar et al., 2017),
19 posing considerable challenges to sustainable development in the tourism industry. To
20 address these issues, Egaer, Munar, & Hsu (2022) argue that we need to challenge
21 traditional and binary gender knowledge and develop gender knowledge in ethnic
22 tourism from a feminist and power relations perspective (p. 1474).

23 **2.2 Empowerment and its Process Measurement**

24 Empowerment theory, which emerged in the 1980s, refers to “the process of
25 gaining greater power through challenging existing sources of control” (Batliwala,
26 1994, p. 130) or “a process of acquiring, providing, and bestowing resources and
27 means or enabling access to control over such means and resources” (Medel-
28 Anonuevo, 1995, p. 8). The concept of empowerment is not fixed, but rather
29 constructed, and scholars have reconceptualized it according to different application
30 scenarios in the process of development.

31 To explore empowerment in detail, Kabeer (1999) regarded exercising the ability
32 of making strategic choices as a necessary condition for being more powerful and
33 developed the resource-agency-achievement framework. Resources refer to all
34 material and nonmaterial elements in society and nature and are distributed by all
35 kinds of institutions within the society (such as family, ethnic group, and firm).
36 Agency, related to the “power to,” is the ability to make choices and act toward them
37 even regardless of objections. The synergy of resources and agency trains the
38 capacities that enable people to live their own lives (Sen, 1985; Chakrabarti &
39 Biswas, 2008). Achievements are the outcomes of previous steps of empowerment.
40 These steps may have uncertainties because empowerment can succeed, fail, or be
41 inadequate. These three steps interact with each other, standing for the approaches to
42 bring about dynamic empowerment.

1 According to Bayissa et al. (2017), empowering women should involve
2 expanding their necessities, including material resources, self-esteem, knowledge of
3 their legal rights, domestic decision-making, perception of sociocultural practices that
4 reduce women's welfare, and political participation. However, some studies often
5 focus on one dimension or stakeholder of empowerment but ignore the complexity
6 and dynamics of its process (Sun & Liao, 2016; Cole, 2016). Therefore, this study
7 uses the resource-agency-achievement framework to explore the process of how Li
8 females are (dis)empowered in different dimensions through the development of
9 ethnic minority tourism, focusing on their own initiative and agency.

10 **2.3 Empowerment Frameworks in Feminism and Tourism**

11 In the 1970s, women empowerment was proposed first and particularly by
12 women's organizations, aiming at contriving and boosting the fight for gender and
13 social equity through structural transformations of economy, society, and politics at a
14 global level (Bisnath & Elson, 2000; Bisnath, 2001; Mosedale, 2005). In postmodern
15 women's development, the mainstream paradigm of women empowerment is critical
16 and constructive. The paradigm embodies the characteristics of modern poverty
17 reduction by combining individual and social empowerment of women, a composite
18 concept of multiple domains. Batliwala (1994) added that empowerment is also a goal
19 that challenges the patriarchal society, transforms social injustice and gender
20 discrimination, and enables women to access and control resources.

21 Specific empowerment processes must be analyzed under certain dimensions for
22 particular groups and fields. Bayissa et al. (2018) argue that while most interventions
23 to promote women empowerment focus on the economic level, economic progress
24 alone does not guarantee progress in other aspects of empowerment. Therefore, more
25 comprehensive interventions are necessary to promote women's rights and interests in
26 all areas. Thus, to define a comprehensive framework to measure women
27 empowerment in tourism is necessary. Several designs for the dimensions from
28 feminism and tourism perspectives have been proposed after the 1990s (Sen, 1999;
29 Stromquist, 1995, 2002; Scheyvens, 1999, 2010; Nussbaum, 2000; Walker &
30 Unterhalter, 2007). This study mainly refers to the widely recognized research of
31 Stromquist and Scheyvens.

32 Stromquist (1995) examined women empowerment and supposed that "a full
33 definition of empowerment must include cognitive, psychological, political, and
34 economic components" (p. 13). The cognitive component is the principal factor of
35 women's awakening. With cognitive empowerment, women understand themselves,
36 their gender relations, and their roles and behavior patterns within different social
37 groups. Three other components are also critical because they affect various levels of
38 (dis)empowerment, which may awaken or dim women's self-cognition. Several
39 scholars (Hunter et al., 1996; Malhotra et al., 2002; Joo et al., 2020; Heath, 2014;
40 Knight & Cottrell, 2016) using this framework also introduced new aspects.

41 Moreover, the status and empowerment of females within households are also
42 noteworthy. Stromquist (1995) mentioned the significant impact, especially as
43 barriers, of several familial factors on women empowerment, including their access to

1 and control over economic resources, being deprived of personal freedom due to
2 family constraints, inability to receive respect from family members, and lacking self-
3 efficacy or critical consciousness (O'Hara & Clement, 2018; *Almathami et al., 2022*).
4 However, the familial influence is categorized and divided into other aspects rather
5 than taking the special role of the family itself, such as the members' attitudes toward
6 females' roles and power as a single dimension to empower women.

7 In her research, Scheyvens developed the empowerment framework to identify
8 how tourism affects the four empowerment dimensions of community members—
9 economic, psychological, social, and political. This framework can be used in
10 developed and developing countries. However, with emphasis on empowerment as a
11 core concern, the framework may be especially useful for studying how
12 disadvantaged groups benefit from ecotourism (Scheyvens, 1999). Scheyvens
13 considers the community in her definition within the social dimension. The
14 involvement of ethnic women in the development of ethnic tourism is closely linked
15 to community engagement. Wondirad & Ewnetu (2019) suggest that community
16 participation in tourism development can be achieved by empowering individuals to
17 participate, which in turn promotes further empowerment. Empowerment is a crucial
18 factor in community and individual participation, and active participation ultimately
19 leads to greater empowerment within the community. Despite this, some scholars
20 have noted that conventional academic perspectives tend to prioritize strategic
21 outcomes in the relationship between sustainable tourism and empowerment, often
22 overlooking more important social processes (Mayaka et al., 2018; 2020). Therefore,
23 empowerment as a process must be considered, and the interdependence between
24 groups and individuals, as well as power dynamics, must be examined. In 2021,
25 Scheyvens supplemented her framework with cultural empowerment. She argued that
26 cultural empowerment is evident when residents value and respect diverse local
27 heritage, enjoy opportunities and agency to express their cultural heritage in all
28 spheres of life, and have the power to determine the portrayal of their cultural
29 heritage. Such dimension must be at the core of future empowerment thinking.
30 However, except for Ningdong (2018) and Kunjuraman (2020), the cultural
31 dimension has thus far been underrepresented in the tourism empowerment
32 framework (Scheyvens & Heidi, 2021). Therefore, this study extends the concepts
33 into the Li cultural context to determine whether Li females are in a potentially
34 advantageous position based on their culture.

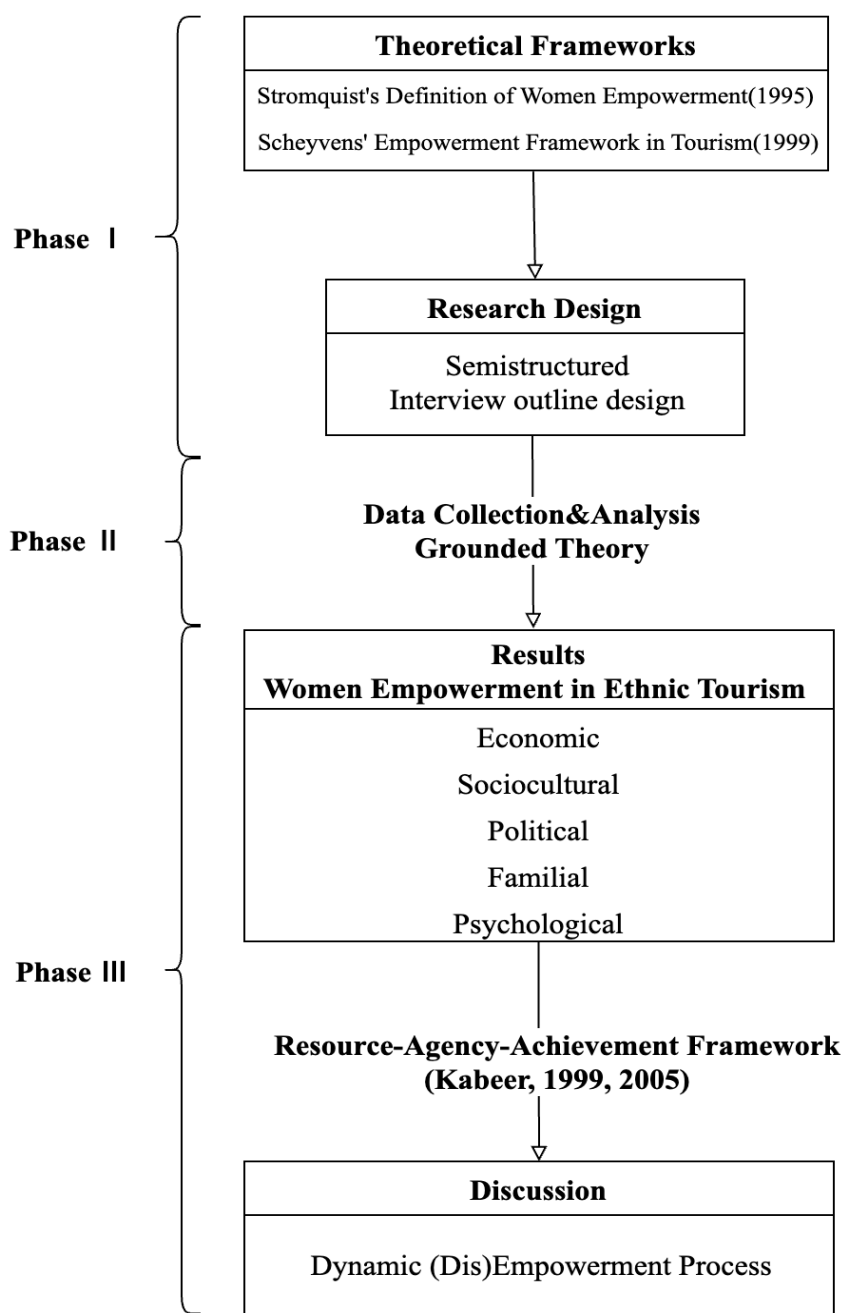
35 This study merges the two empowerment definitions of Stromquist (1995) and
36 Scheyvens (1999), which includes the economic, political, social, and psychological
37 components. Meanwhile, inspired by other late publications, the familial and cultural
38 dimensions are added. Moreover, the resource-agency-achievement framework is
39 utilized to display the (dis)empowerment process.

1 **3. Methodology**

2 **3.1 Research Procedure**

3 For further clarification, Figure 1 demonstrates the research procedure with
4 theoretical framework application. The study combines the two frameworks
5 mentioned in literature review as a theoretical basis to design the semistructured
6 interview outline in Phase I. After data are collected and analyzed fully by qualitative
7 methods in Phase II, the obtained results reveal five multidimensional empowerments
8 across the economic, psychological, sociocultural, political, and familial dimensions
9 through four approaches, namely, Li cultural inheritance, employee participation,
10 employee training, and incentive provision in Phase III. Then, the authors follow the
11 resource-agency-achievement framework to decompose the five dimensions and
12 interpret them using a dynamic empowerment process (Figure 1).

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Fig. 1. Research Procedure

3 **3.2 Background information**

4 As indigenous people of a tropical island in China, Li nationality is one of the
 5 major minorities in Hainan, as well as China, accounting for 90.67% of the total
 6 minority population in Hainan (Cao, 2010; Cong, 2018; Qiao & Chen, 2018).
 7 According to their material and spiritual culture, the migration and regional
 8 distribution of their ancestors, and the characteristics of dialects, the academic circle
 9 divides the Li people into five branches: Ha, Meifu, Run, Qi, and Sai (Pan, 2017).
 10 Though society has transited into a patriarchal one following its development, many

1 distinctive cultural remnants of the previous matriarchal system remain. The cultural
2 development of the matrilineal clan of Li nationality was similar to that of Mosuo and
3 potentially affected today's Li women (Chen, 1987; Wen, 2016). The current research
4 team is interested in this cultural background and conducted a field study in a
5 representative Hainan ethnic tourism destination; that is, Binglanggu, a national 5A
6 level tourist attraction located in Sanya (Figure 1), which means that this destination
7 is one of the best tourist attractions in China. Binglanggu exhibits 10 of the 24 Hainan
8 national intangible cultural heritage items and attracts more than 1.2 million tourists
9 each year. The government attaches significance to the cultural development of the Li
10 people. At present, new progress has been achieved in the application of "Hainan
11 Tropical Rainforest and the Traditional Settlement of Li Ethnic Group," which has
12 been included in the Preliminary List of World Heritage by the UNESCO World
13 Heritage Center.

14 Studies on ethnic tourism theme parks have repeatedly mentioned the following
15 key issues: tourists' concerns about cultural authenticity and service quality (Yang,
16 2011a & 2011b; Xie & Wall, 2002), the connection between scenic spots and local
17 communities, as well as the degree of community participation and profit (Yang &
18 Wall, 2009b). As one of the ethnic theme parks, Binglanggu has the attributes of a
19 resort and forms similar to enclave tourism. However, under the leadership of the
20 general manager Ji Gui, who also belongs to the Li nationality, Binglanggu is actively
21 inheriting the ethnic culture and supporting community development, rather than only
22 focusing on carrying out homogeneous commercialization in modernization and
23 allowing capital to spill over. While excavating and branding local culture,
24 Binglanggu pays attention to the development of employees, encourages the
25 participation of local communities and supports more than 20 poor households in the
26 upper and lower villages of Ganza, Baoting Sandao Town, where the scenic spot is
27 located. Tan Yequan, head of lower Ganza Village, introduced that 390 people in the
28 two Li villages were employed directly in tourism service or involved in the radiation
29 of tourism service in Binglanggu. The efforts of Binglanggu led by the Li people
30 themselves are constructing the "scenic spot–villagers' community with a shared
31 future," which is also the reason why we chose this area as the research site.

32 In addition, Binglanggu is considered to have a unique research value as a Li
33 ethnic settlement to develop ethnic and cultural tourism and provide employment
34 opportunities for surrounding communities (Xu & Ma, 2020).

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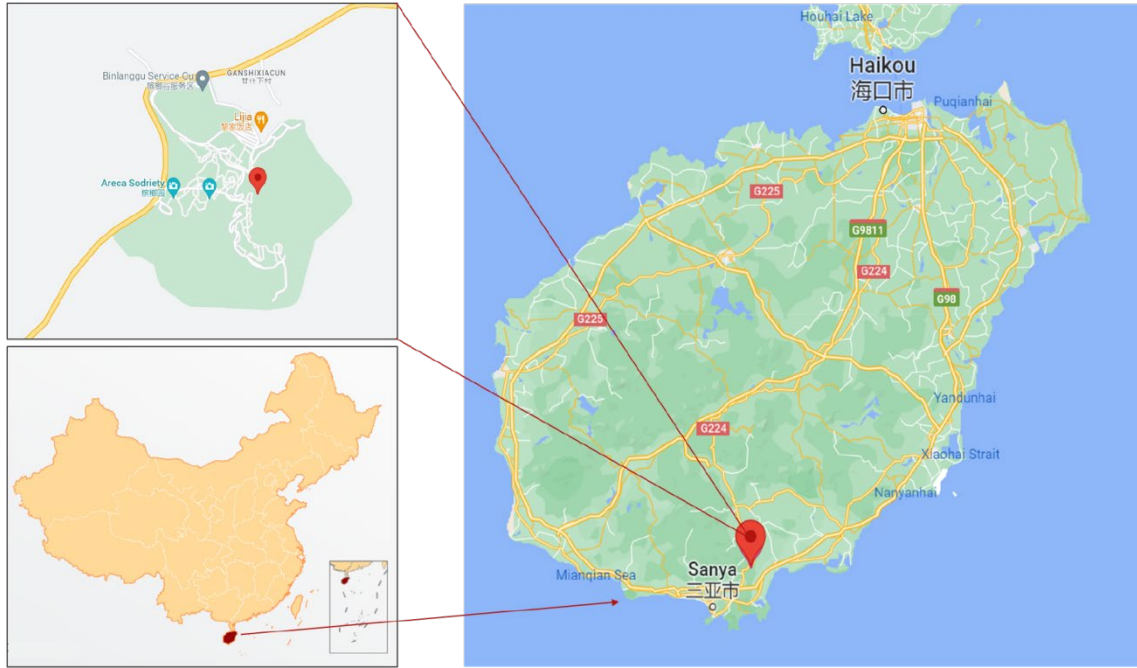


Fig. 2. *Study Setting (Binglanggu Hainan Li and Miao Cultural Heritage Park, Baoting Li and Miao Autonomous County)*

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5 In Binglanggu, 52% (329) of employees are women, and among them, (53%) are
6 of Li nationality (Qiao & Chen, 2018). Of the destination's middle-level managers, 24
7 are from the Li ethnic group, 11 of whom are women (Qiao & Chen, 2018). Although
8 females' subjectivity is seldom emphasized (Zhao, 2004; Yu, 2022), Li women play
9 an indispensable role in preserving ethnic traditions and displaying Li nationality's
10 culture to the public, which are also critical purposes of Binglanggu. Most of the Li
11 intangible cultural heritage, such as tie dyeing, Li brocade, and folk songs, are
12 mastered and presented by women. In particular, the Li brocade is traditionally
13 inherited by daughters from their mothers. Therefore, Li women are the cultural
14 symbol of this ethnic group.
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Fig. 3. *Tattoo Patterns and Positions on Li Women*

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4 This role is also connected with the remnants from matrilineal society. Before
5 the liberation of China, the Li people had already entered the patrilineal society.
6 Compared with the research of Glassman (2017) and Banerjee's team (2015), that of
7 Guan (2009) reveals that the long and comprehensive transition from a matriarchal
8 society to a patriarchal one represented the gradual transfer of women's power and
9 change in their viewpoints to take on power, especially on economic, familial and
10 political aspects, including the ownership of inheritable family property, such as
11 production means, as well as the significant status on clan management and rule-
12 making. However, the Li people have retained some cultural relics of the matrilineal
13 clan. For instance, Li females still undertake essential parts in pottery and brocade
14 making. Totemism, such as frog worship, also exists and appears on Li brocade and
15 percussion instruments, such as brass drums and gongs, which are some
16 representative examples in modern Li people's daily and religious life. The remnants
17 of matriarchal time are an important part of the Li traditional culture, which is mainly
18 expressed through the promotion of traditional cultural-expressing skills, such as Li
19 brocade weaving, dancing, and totem worship. The performance shows the distinct
20 authenticity of nowadays ethnic culture as the tourist attraction, which is also the
21 foundation of the local ethnic tourism development (Xie, 2003b; Wall & Xie, 2005;
22 Xie, 2010; Yang, 2013).

23 Consequently, the research team selected Binglanggu not only because the area
24 protected and implied the original culture of Hainan Li ethnic group but also because
25 its ethnic female employees who work in a remote province of China provided an
26 insightful research context because they fully reflect the marginality embodied in their
27 gender, ethnicity, work, and region (Thakur et al., 2023).

1 **3.3 Research Methods**

2 This study applied an interpretive paradigm and used a qualitative approach
3 combining observation and field note and photo-taking, as well as semistructured
4 interviews, to improve the understanding of how ethnic tourism affects women
5 empowerment in Binglanggu. After two field trips, data were collected from
6 December 28, 2021 to January 4, 2022. Through snowball sampling, 34 female
7 employees from different departments were chosen as the participants. The
8 researchers observed and analyzed the sample by participating in their daily lives. At
9 total of 20 field notes (three templates in **APPENDIX A**) with detailed descriptions
10 were also provided, in consideration of their usefulness for understanding
11 interviewees' thoughts, especially during data analysis (Atkinson et al., 2000; Sanjek,
12 2019; Van Maanen, 2011). The visual method of photography was also applied. The
13 team took 153 photos to demonstrate how ethnic women employees in Binglanggu
14 behave in various work positions, showing the potential integration of ethnic elements
15 and culture into their behaviors.

16 The design of the semistructured interview referenced the frameworks of women
17 empowerment (Stromquist, 1995) with an ecotourism basis (Scheyvens, 1999) to
18 analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of women empowerment in Binglanggu
19 under the context of ethnic tourism. The specific components were listed in the
20 interview outline (**APPENDIX C**). With the consent of interviewees, 34 interviews
21 (including two pilot tests) were undertaken and audio-recorded. Four researchers were
22 divided into two groups and took turns leading interviews, lasting from 35 to 100
23 minutes. When someone took the interview, another researcher in the same group was
24 responsible for probing supplementary questions, whereas others provided support by
25 taking notes and photographing. **Table 1** presents the basic information of the
26 respondents.

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1 **Table 1**
 2 ***Basic Information of Interviewees***

Num.	Nationality	Age	Education Level	Department & Position	Salary (RMB)	Marriage Status	Coding Record
1	Li	31-45	Bachelor's Degree or higher	Ethnic Customs Department (Manager)	More than 8000	Married	CJY
2	Li	46-60	High School or Technical Secondary School	Ethnic Customs Department (Leader of Cultural Inheritance Group)	3000-5000	Married	WQX
3	Li	46-60	Primary School	Ethnic Customs Department	Less than 3000	Married	WYM
4	Li	46-60	Junior High School	Ethnic Customs Department	3000-5000	Married	JAP
5	Li	46-60	Junior High School	Ethnic Customs Department	Less than 3000	Married	WAP
6	Li	18-30	High school or Technical Secondary School	Business Management Department	Less than 3000	Single	FJQ
7	Li	18-30	Junior High School	Business Management Department	Less than 3000	Married	LLK
8	Li	31-45	High school or Technical Secondary School	Business Management Department	Less than 3000	Married	GCY
9	Miao	31-45	Junior High School	Business Management Department	Less than 3000	Married	NHY
10	Miao	31-45	Primary School	Business Management Department	Less than 3000	Married	CXE
11	Li	31-45	Junior High School	Business Management Department	3000-5000	Married	JQY
12	Li	31-45	Junior High School	Business Management Department	Less than 3000	Married	HQ
13	Li	31-45	High school or Technical Secondary School	Business Management Department	Less than 3000	Married	NJL

3 *Note.* Coding record refers to the respondents' initials to distinguish between participants without compromising their privacy.

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Table 1 (continued)

Num.	Nationality	Age	Education Level	Department & Position	Salary (RMB)	Marriage Status	Coding Record
14	Li	18-30	Bachelor's Degree or higher	Ticketing Department (Manager)	5000-8000	Married	GY Y
15	Li	18-30	High School or Technical Secondary School	Ticketing Department	3000-5000	Married	WLX
16	Li	18-30	High School or Technical Secondary School	Performing Arts Department	Less than 3000	Single	ZMX
17	Li	18-30	High School or Technical Secondary School	Performing Arts Department	Less than 3000	Single	WHP
18	Li	18-30	High School or Technical Secondary School	Performing Arts Department	Less than 3000	Single	ZM
19	Li	under18	High School or Technical Secondary School	Performing Arts Department (Intern Student)	Less than 3000	Single	ZPP
20	Li	18-30	Bachelor's Degree or higher	Guide Department	5000-8000	Single	YXY
21	Li	18-30	Bachelor's Degree or higher	Guide Department	3000-5000	Single	WY
22	Li	18-30	Bachelor's Degree or higher	Guide Department	Less than 3000	Married	CXN
23	Li	18-30	Bachelor's Degree or higher	Guide Department	Less than 3000	Single	LHH
24	Li	46-60	Junior High School	Food and Beverage Department	Less than 3000	Married	LGF

Note. Coding record refers to the respondents' initials to distinguish between participants without compromising their privacy.

(continued)

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Table 1 (continued)

Num.	Nationality	Age	Education Level	Department & Position	Salary (RMB)	Marriage Status	Coding Record
25	Li	31-45	Junior High School	Food and Beverage Department	Less than 3000	Married	LQY
26	Li	46-60	Primary School	Food and Beverage Department	Less than 3000	Married	LGL
27	Miao	46-60	Primary School	Food and Beverage Department	Less than 3000	Married	SMM
28	Li	31-45	High School or Technical Secondary School	Project Department	3000-5000	Married	HQF
29	Li	18-30	High School or Technical Secondary School	Project Department	3000-5000	Single	HCC
30	Li	31-45	Primary School	Merchants at Huinong Street	3000-5000	Married	HXX
31	Li	18-30	Junior High School	Merchants at Huinong Street	3000-5000	Married	ZXQ
32	Li	31-45	High School or Technical Secondary School	Merchants at Huinong Street	Less than 3000	Married	CXB
33	Li	31-45	Primary School	Transport Department	Less than 3000	Married	WZ
34	Li	18-30	Bachelor's Degree or higher	Visitor Center	3000-5000	Married	FF

5
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7

Note. Coding record refers to the respondents' initials to distinguish between participants without compromising their privacy.

1 In terms of their job positions, the interviewed ethnic female employees come
2 from 10 different departments, covering all departments in Binglanggu. Most of the
3 interviewees are from the Business Management Department, with a total of eight
4 employees from four different groups. The interviews also covered three positions at
5 different levels, with two department managers as the highest position and one group
6 leader, whereas the rest are all first-line employees.

7 **3.4 Proceduralized Grounded Theory**

8 This study employs a proceduralized grounded theory approach to analyze the
9 interview data through rigorous coding and theme development (Corbin & Strauss,
10 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Initial codes were guided by existing empowerment
11 frameworks in women empowerment and tourism; however, the final conceptual
12 categories were inductively derived from the data. Coding was conducted in three
13 steps: open, axial, and selective coding by using a technical tool, i.e., NVivo 11 Plus.
14 Open coding allowed us to decompose the raw transcripts, and the example data in the
15 first column of **Table 2** were extracted as line-by-line coding items. After excluding
16 unrelated items and reserving one-fifth of nodes for theoretical saturation in line-by-
17 line, 39 concepts were resynthesized. In axial coding, similar concepts retrieved from
18 the open coding were grouped together to establish 24 subthemes; examples are
19 shown in the third row of **Table 2**. In the fourth column, the five main themes—
20 economic, psychological, sociocultural, political, and familial—were derived through
21 selective coding by refining each content and analyzing the logical correlation among
22 24 subthemes. All the themes and subthemes respectively comprise the dimensions
23 and their corresponding components in the women empowerment framework.
24

1 **Table 2**

2 ***Select Coding Process***

Open Coding (Line-by-Line Coding)	Open Coding (Concept)	Axial Coding	Main Themes
The leaders and subordinates of Binglanggu respect each other, forming a large family; Familiar with the staff; Working will integrate me with the local community	High Integration	Sense of Belonging	+
Vocational training; learning other scenic spots' development experience by organizing staff trips; Gaining management experience; Being more responsible after contacting tourists; Providing staff training and learning opportunities; Improving communication skills after work	General Improvement		
Working helps develop interpersonal relationships; getting along well with neighbors and relatives; More contact with tourists makes me braver; Self-Confidence comes from the reaction of tourists; Believe in Li ethnic product	Social Needs Satisfaction	Self-Confidence	+ Psychological Empowerment
Neighbors and relatives favor our work; work improves social status; Explaining the culture of the Li ethnicity makes me integrate into the group; Strong leadership; very proud of the Li and Miao culture	Being Acknowledged	Sense of Pride	+

3 *Note.* This table only shows part of the process and examples of open coding.

4 “+”=Empowerment; “-” =Disempowerment.

1 Continuous comparisons are required to ensure the reliability and validity of
 2 coding results during the whole material analysis in this study. Four team members
 3 were divided into two groups. In each group, one of the members independently
 4 coded the interview data and reread the material after each coding step, followed by
 5 repeated discussion and revision with another member through intragroup
 6 cooperation. The member who was not in charge of coding also conducted a
 7 reliability and saturation test, comparing and filtrating the alternative codes, concepts,
 8 and themes until the team consensus was reached. In this study, the intercoder
 9 reliability was calculated in accordance with the formula proposed by Boyatzis (1998)
 10 as below.

$$11 \quad \text{Intercoder Reliability} = \frac{n \times \text{Average mutual agreement}}{1 + [(n - 1) \times \text{Average mutual agreement}]}$$

$$12 \quad \text{Average mutual agreement} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

13
 14
 15
 16
 17 In this formula, n is the number of coders, which in this study is 2; M is the
 18 number of the same codes in the results of different coders, and the value is 839; Nx is
 19 the number of codes for the x coder, which are 921 and 1005, respectively. According
 20 to the calculation, the mutual agreement degree of the two groups of coders is 0.872,
 21 and the reliability is 0.931. According to the requirement of Boyatzis stating that the
 22 reliability should be greater than 0.70, the coding results are highly reliable.

23 After the initial construction of the model, the research team tested the
 24 theoretical saturation on the reserved one-fifth of the interview nodes. The test results
 25 showed that the categories (subthemes) in the framework were sufficient. Neither new
 26 categories (subthemes) nor new associations between the main categories (main
 27 themes) were found.

28 **4. Results**

29 **4.1 Economic (Dis)Empowerment**

30 This study defines the economic empowerment for ethnic minority women as
 31 follows: ethnic tourism provides opportunities for ethnic minority women to engage
 32 in productive activities, such that they can obtain a reliable source of economic
 33 income and a certain degree of economic autonomy, and thus have a sense of
 34 economic independence (Stromquist, 1995). Economic empowerment for Binglanggu
 35 female employees can be illustrated in the following four aspects:

36 *Promoting women's engagement in productive activities* refers to the
 37 environment and development opportunities that enable local women to participate in
 38 productive activities provided by Binglanggu. This aspect includes the *provision of*
 39 *production conditions* and *cultivating the ability of women to carry out production*
 40 *activities*. The former emphasizes that tourism development in Binglanggu has
 41 increased local income and provided numerous employment opportunities for

1 surrounding residents, including women; thus, the disadvantage of women, who only
2 carried out manual labor especially in the agriculture industry, has been transformed
3 into an advantage. Women gradually sold goods near Binglanggu or turned their
4 unused houses into homestays. The latter indicates that female employees can learn
5 practical skills and improve service awareness corresponding to their department
6 through Binglanggu's employee training. The overall improvement has increased the
7 local women's employment rate and income, causing more women to come out of
8 their homes and join in productive activities. 19-ZPP mentioned that women from
9 nearby villages considered selling agricultural products in Binglanggu's Farmer-
10 Supportive Street as a profitable opportunity and felt better working outside rather
11 than being a housewife.

12 *Reliable revenue source* includes two aspects. *Wages and allowances* are
13 important to support the family and bring some life changes. *High employee*
14 *benefit* shows that Binglanggu pays the insurance and housing fund for employees and
15 provides free staff dormitory, living allowance, training opportunities, and staff trips.
16 These generous allowances provide employees with a certain financial security. As
17 mentioned in the interview of 5-WAP: "...During the epidemic, the scenic spot was
18 closed, but it also insisted on paying the Insurance and Housing Fund for us." As
19 such, female employees can *enhance personal economic power and status and gain*
20 *financial autonomy*.

21 However, although the jobs in Binglanggu empowered women
22 economically compared with their previous state of being unemployed, *less economic*
23 *benefit*, which includes *low income, reduced wages, and unemployment caused by*
24 *COVID-19*, was also indicated in the interview. Several of the female employees felt
25 the heavy financial burden because their job was tiring and underpaid. 25-LQY said
26 that the wage cannot satisfy their daily expenses due to high prices,
27 and the employees' treatment was also not as good as outside.

28 4.2 Sociocultural (Dis)Empowerment

29 Sociocultural empowerment is described as the improvement of women's social
30 status and the ability and initiative to show their culture to outsiders within ethnic-
31 cultural tourism background. The potential influence of traditional local minority
32 culture is also discussed. Five elements are included to illustrate this dimension.

33 The *group cohesiveness* in Binglanggu and the *promotion of the ethnic cultures'*
34 *preservation and development* are external supportive conditions for retaining Li and
35 Miao traditional cultures, which can also affect the psychological empowerment for
36 women's belongingness:

37
38 *Our department is one of the most united departments in Binglanggu, we have a*
39 *good relationship and a sense of belonging. (17-WHP)*
40

41 Li and Miao cultures also *support and encourage women's willingness to*
42 *broaden their vision*. Females are an essential part of *Li culture inheritor*, especially
43 for intangible cultural heritage, such as Li brocade. This contribution to socioculture

1 also works to empower women to increase their skills and protect their own rights.
2 Moreover, *employment opportunity of women is available and encouraged* in Li and
3 Miao cultures (10-CXE).

4
5 *As this is a Li and Miao culture scenic spot, I can dance and have some special*
6 *skills, so I was introduced and came to work.* (17-WHP)
7

8 After the matrilineal time and until modern society, Li's respect of women from
9 the matriarchal system continued and contended with the patriarchal notions of male
10 superiority. 4-JAP pointed out that "*we value men as well as respect women.*"
11 Nowadays, society is gradually progressing toward gender equality. In this context,
12 cultural exchanges between Li and other ethnic groups help to realize
13 the *advancement of women's status* through practice of their traditional culture of
14 revering females.

15 The disempowerment is mainly about *cultural assimilation*, which includes the
16 *Hanhua* (in the process of ethnic integration, influenced by the advanced mode of
17 production and culture of the Han nationality, a certain nationality naturally and
18 gradually changes part or all and becomes similar to or assimilated by the Han
19 nationality) of Li. This disempowerment tells a phenomenon that most ethnic
20 minorities have followed the style of Han nationality. 15-FT mentioned that "*now*
21 *most of them are becoming the style of Han nationality, and there is not much*
22 *difference in diet.*" Although this aspect is categorized as disempowerment, it remains
23 worthy of further discussion.

24 **4.3 Political (Dis)Empowerment**

25 Political empowerment indicates that women's interests and rights can be
26 represented by the authority, and enough opportunities are available for women to
27 express their voice (Miller, 1994) and participate in programs, especially in decision-
28 making (Stromquist, 1995). Political disempowerment refers to the loss of control
29 of tourism development from women's perspectives. In this study, the political
30 dimension can be illustrated in the following five categories, of which the last one
31 shows disempowerment:

32 The authority (in this case, Binglanggu) provides a *feasible environment for*
33 *employees to participate in decision-making*. The pleasant working environment and
34 strong corporate culture allow female employees to express their creative thoughts.
35 The opportunities for career advancement and personal development depend more on
36 whether the employee is competent for a position rather than their inborn condition,
37 such as gender (2-WQX), which also encourages women to take more initiative in the
38 workplace.

39 *Various channels for expression* are also important for women to participate in
40 sharing opinions and making suggestions. According to 15-WLX, 20-YXY, and 11-
41 JQY, meetings, direct contact with superiors, suggestion box, and their departmental
42 chat group are all possible communication channels.

1 *Diverse participation forms*, including encouraging individual and collective
2 activities for women to participate, are necessary. In addition, providing *positive*
3 *participating feedback*, such as solving employees' problems, is also meaningful,
4 proving that women's involvement is valuable and promotes their psychological
5 empowerment. By contrast, *ineffective participation* disempowers females by limiting
6 and rejecting responses to their expressions, thus depriving women's control of
7 tourism programs and leads to psychological disempowerment, such as feelings of
8 disappointment. 25-LQY stated that "*staff opinions are useless, they are not valid, the*
9 *leader does not care.*"

10 **4.4 Familial (Dis)Empowerment**

11 Familial empowerment is mainly reflected in *family's support* and *household*
12 *division of labor*. *Family's support* refers to the employees' burden unless the work
13 domain is alleviated by family members in different ways, including giving work
14 advice, negotiating the redivision of labor in the household, and taking care of
15 children. This indicator is less frequently used in measuring women empowerment
16 (Malhotra et al., 2002). The interviews clearly reveal that the family's positive
17 attitude toward ethnic women work is the precondition of full engagement in the
18 workplace (27-SMM). Moreover, with the help of families, women do not necessarily
19 assume care responsibilities and are happy to transform their identities from
20 housewives to working women (2-WQX).

21 *Household division of labor* is presented from *financial control*, *decision-making*
22 *power within the household*, and *equal status* in the findings. *Financial control* means
23 that ethnic females take a dominant role in managing their own financial property or
24 even that of their families. Two-thirds of the interviewees are in accord with this
25 concept. Statements, such as "*go dutch financially*" (2-WQX) and "*have the say in*
26 *the family, and in charge of the finances*" (1-CJY) displayed this point. Although a
27 few Li female employees mentioned their *decision-making power within the*
28 *household*, most of them believed that they have an equal status because they have the
29 right to know, manage, and negotiate on household finance. These statements prove
30 that Li female participants have certain personal control over intrahousehold affairs
31 and that the balance of gender power promoted a more harmonious family.

32 However, household gender equity is not totally realized among the participants.
33 Two ethnic women admitted and expressed their subordination. The description, such
34 as "*male chauvinism*" (25-LQY), was used. Being deprived of decision-making
35 power within the household is an aspect of familial disempowerment.

36 **4.5 Psychological (Dis)Empowerment**

37 The data related to the psychological dimension certified that through the
38 internal training offered by Binglanggu and positive responses of outsiders toward
39 their unique culture, ethnic women employees gain and enhance their sense of
40 belonging and pride of being a minority and construct a sense of agency to make
41 personal choices (Boley et al., 2014; Scheyvens, 1999; Stromquist, 1995). Moreover,

1 the Li ethnic traditional cultural ideology is a critical intermediary because the gender
2 role is more or less affected by remnants of the matriarchal society in the social
3 transition.

4 The categories represent an empowerment through different stages. When ethnic
5 women employees are involved in the work domain for a period, their perception of
6 the workplace provide them with mental hints. In Binglanggu, almost all participants
7 stated that they have gained a *sense of belonging* through their department or the
8 whole park. This feeling in the workplace is the first phase of empowerment and is
9 also the basis of enhancing confidence and pride.

10 *Self-Confidence* and *sense of pride* appear to be improved from inside out.
11 Internally, Binglanggu offers vocational staff training and other learning opportunities
12 such as organizing staff trips to learn from other attractions. Meanwhile, during work,
13 female employees gain management experience and satisfaction. These factors enable
14 them to have a *general improvement* and a *sense of achievement*.

15 By interacting with outsiders, such as tourists, community members, and their
16 relatives, female employees are also empowered mentally. The active reactions of
17 tourists toward Li's ethnic customs and art skills especially strengthen women's
18 national pride and confidence (Scheyvens, 1999). On this basis, the increased
19 interactions between tourists and employees help the latter promote service capacity
20 and sense of responsibility. Several even establish relationships with tourists, which
21 satisfy their social needs. Interviewee 22-CXN said that several tourists were curious
22 about their life and living place, and they became
23 friends through chatting. Additionally, women's work in ethnic tourism *being*
24 *acknowledged* by community members and relatives constructs their *sense of pride*.
25 As a minority, they are sure of engaging in careers that aim at developing their own
26 culture and makes them feel proud of themselves. As a tie-dye inheritor, 6-FJQ
27 mentioned that she felt inferior when others recognized her ethnic identity before, but
28 after beginning her career in Binglanggu, she felt proud by exhibiting her cultural
29 heritage and gained a sense of identity.

30 After the enhancement of *Self-Confidence* and *sense of pride*, several women
31 achieve a *sense of agency*, which includes the *increase in personal voice* and the
32 *ability of decision-making*. Among these interviewees, women who have discourse
33 power own the leadership in the workplace and household. A senior woman in the
34 Cultural Inheritance Department is an example; she explained that she informs the
35 company of her thoughts as soon as she finds problems, whereas her family follows
36 her instructions within the household. Moreover, a few of them carry out their own
37 development, such as learning tie-dye because of enthusiasm and learning to obtain
38 certificates to have more choices.

39 However, participants also described their negative perceptions of work.
40 *Confusion, frustration, and disappointment* are three main passive emotions, and
41 *disinterest* is expressed by a few. *Problems in workplace* and *high work pressure*,
42 especially during the pandemic era, cause *confusion* and *frustration*, respectively.
43 Furthermore, excessive contact with tourists, especially impolite ones, causes

1 *frustration* among employees. In addition, a few interviewees showed *low*
2 *participation intention* with an indifferent attitude.

3 **4.6 Empowerment Dilemmas in Binglanggu**

4 As a (dis)empowerment agent, Binglanggu faces difficulties that mainly include
5 three aspects: *imperfect transportation construction*, *scenic project development*
6 *issues*, and *continuing impact of COVID-19*. *Imperfect transportation construction*
7 leads to a decline in Binglanggu tourism revenues and further affects the development
8 of women's economic empowerment. According to the interviewees, the decline
9 also negatively influenced psychological and familial dimensions of empowerment.
10 *Scenic project development issues* reflect the contradiction between the
11 modern entertainment project development and the ethnic-cultural activities or
12 workshops for experiencing authentic Li culture in Binglanggu. The entertainment
13 projects and commercialized ethnic activities can bring homogeneity problems, which
14 may lead to Li people's loss of self and cannot constantly attract tourists. Finally, the
15 *continuing impact of COVID-19* refers to multiple negative effects of COVID-19 on
16 women empowerment. Significantly and continuously affected by COVID-19, ethnic
17 tourism female employees in Binglanggu face reduced wages and unemployment. The
18 epidemic has left them without sufficient income for two years, and they are still
19 recovering.

1 **5. Discussion**

2 The research has identified that Binglanggu (dis)empowered female employees
3 from five dimensions—psychological, economic, sociocultural, familial, and political
4 dimensions (Figure 4)— where the psychological dimension was the core. Moreover,
5 a dynamic flow chart is used to demonstrate the (dis)empowerment process based on
6 the resource-agency-achievement framework (Kabeer, 1999).

7 The analyzed interview data also showed that through four approaches, namely,
8 Li cultural inheritance, employee participation, employee training, and incentive
9 provision, Binglanggu made such (dis)empowerment system work. Excavating and
10 inheriting Hainan Li and Miao cultures for continuous growth is the mission of
11 Binglanggu. This mission is also the work purpose and spirit of most employees,
12 which empowers female employees to identify themselves as Li inheritors and
13 psychologically promotes their self-esteem. Managing employee participation
14 politically and psychologically empowers employees. Their managerial ability,
15 experience in work tasks, and Self-Confidence improve. Employee training is
16 conducted all through the employees' entire work process, relating to work quality
17 and salaries. Li female employees always learn new skills during this process and gain
18 Self-Confidence. Moreover, integrating with colleagues give them belongingness.
19 Incentives, including salaries and welfare, are economic rewards in the workplace that
20 motivate and directly benefit employees. However, these four aspects can also lead to
21 disempowerment if Binglanggu does not effectively handle administrative issues and
22 contradictions, especially under the circumstances brought by the pandemic. After all,
23 such vulnerability context often affects female employees' livelihood in the medium
24 or even long term (Department for International Development, 1999). Therefore,
25 those four approaches are important to female workers' five-dimension
26 (dis)empowerment.

27 **5.1 Five Dimensions of Empowerment**

28 Given that women empowerment is a broad and multifaceted concept, researchers
29 have developed various dimensions and indicators for its measurement (Mahmud et
30 al., 2012; Malhotra et al., 2002; Tsikata & Darkwah, 2014). The interrelationships
31 among the dimensions are fully discussed but do not reach regular or sequential
32 relationships due to partial overlaps (Bayissa et al., 2018; Malhotra et al., 2002). We
33 agree with this point. All indicators that embody the five dimensions interweave with
34 each other, thus contributing to empowerment at all levels. In this study,
35 psychological dimension is considered the core, echoing the findings of Bayissa et al.
36 (2018).

37 Working in Binglanggu intensifies women's mental empowerment in different
38 occasions, such as in guiding tourists or doing management. We find that for Li
39 women employees to be empowered mentally requires a process from gaining a sense
40 of belonging, Self-Confidence, and pride to owning a sense of agency. In such a
41 spiraling process, psychological empowerment is the prerequisite for continuously
42 striving for resources of other dimensions (Bayissa et al., 2018; Landig, 2011;

1 Narasimhan, 1999). It is also the psychological dimension that interacts most closely
2 with other dimensions. Hence, psychological empowerment plays a central role in this
3 study (Di Castri, 2004; Stroma, 2011; Bayissa et al., 2018). In its interaction with the
4 sociocultural dimension, the original gender ideology of Li is evoked and
5 restrengthened through cultural practices, reinforcing women's self-cognition (Su et
6 al., 2023; Johnson, 2015). Moreover, each of the other empowerment dimensions acts
7 on empowering women mentally at last, and the accumulated ego identity can support
8 their exploration in other fields. A proper empowerment can ultimately reach a
9 virtuous circle.

10 Previous studies attach great importance to the economic dimension of women
11 empowerment, given that the economy is a key indicator of development (Malhotra et
12 al., 2002; Bradshaw, 2013). However, whether it is a necessary and sufficient
13 condition for a successful empowerment or not has been strongly discussed. Several
14 scholars believed that improved economic dimension can bring equality, and other
15 dimensions follow (Kabeer, 2005; Esplen & Brody, 2007; DFID, 2010). Others
16 proposed that women participating in paid work added another workload apart from
17 housework and family care (Feng, 2013; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012; Esplen &
18 Brody, 2007; Haile et al., 2012). Thus, the economic dimension, a process comprising
19 women's engagement in productive activities, their gained reliable income, and
20 finance autonomy, is comprehended as a double-edged sword in our study. Economic
21 empowerment can promote women empowerment in sociocultural, familial, and
22 psychological dimensions. As Hall (1992) points out, neutralizing women's economic
23 subordination is a prerequisite for their empowerment. The paid jobs of Binglanggu
24 enable Li women to express themselves in diverse positions, be the breadwinner of
25 their family, and find their ego. All of the above are based on the context of Li and
26 toward protecting its culture. However, the improved economic condition does not
27 always have a good effect. The economic benefits of informal or low-paid work,
28 especially in the tourism industry, cannot offset the heavy financial and health
29 burdens it lays on women, disempowering them in other dimensions (Feng, 2013;
30 Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012; Trupp & Sunanta, 2017). Several interviewees still do
31 not have decision-making ability or even the respect of their spouses, though they
32 make monetary contribution to households. Thus, economic empowerment can be
33 seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for overall empowerment (Bayissa et
34 al., 2018).

35 As stated earlier, sociocultural empowerment has a strong connection with
36 psychological empowerment, including various subdomains, such as the marriage
37 system, familial support, and the social network (Bayissa et al., 2018). This case
38 mainly represents a part of the Li society and its culture and underlines the ethnic
39 social culture as a support for empowering Li women. From a cultural perspective, the
40 original Li culture itself endogenously energizes Li women. In Binglanggu, Li female
41 employees vitalize and intensify the female-friendly cultural ideology by producing,
42 imparting, innovating, and presenting ethnic traditional skills. The pattern of energy
43 exchange between Li women and their culture is powerful and worthy of further
44 research. Moreover, this dimension plays a crucial role in bringing people together to

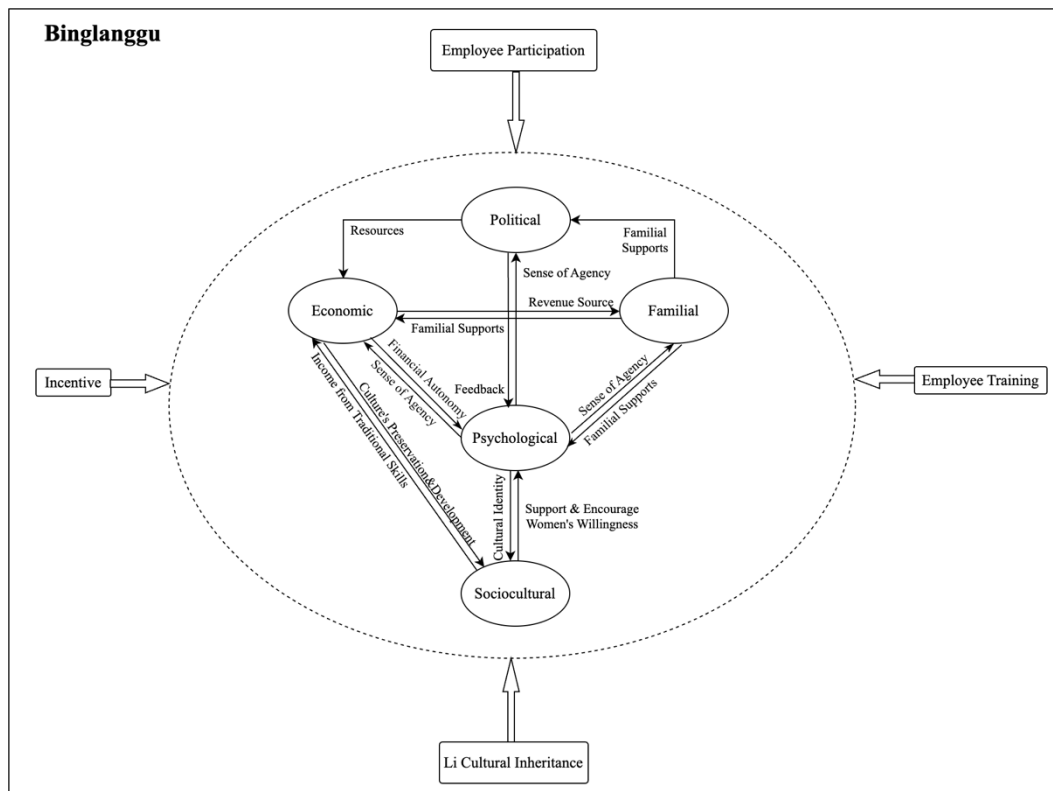
1 collaborate on mutual interests (Di Castri, 2004). In addition, improved cohesion and
2 collaboration are regarded as critical prerequisites for local economic development
3 (Kay, 2006). Our findings confirm that Binglanggu unites Li female employees and
4 intensifies their internal cohesion through the determinant bond, that is, Li culture. As
5 the core value and goal of Binglanggu, Li culture preservation is practiced through
6 different kinds of traditional activities or skills (e.g., Li brocade, tie-dye) that are
7 almost mastered and inherited by ethnic females. Naturally, they therefore play the
8 leading role in this process. Meanwhile, displaying their skilled handicraft-making to
9 outsiders can strengthen the practitioners' own cultural identity and enable their
10 psychological empowerment (Johnson, 2015; Su et al., 2023). At present, culture
11 preservation is guiding Li females to the global stage where their identity and self-
12 cognition awakens. However, barriers cannot be ignored. With the process of social
13 integration, the Hanhua of Li is unavoidable and continues to modernize the Li people
14 and enhance their life quality. While there is an argument that the Hanhua, as basis for
15 society progress and development, unites different minorities, we have to admit its
16 negative impact on ethnic culture, such as homogenization. In short, the Li culture
17 may not only empower Li females but also help to achieve cultural preservation and
18 collective empowerment for Li ethnicity.

19 Women's intrahousehold distribution of labor and role are proven to be
20 persistently unequal and is always considered a barrier of their empowerment
21 (Agarwal, 1997; Stromquist, 1995; Malhotra et al., 2002; [Almathami et al., 2022](#)).
22 Therefore, the familial dimension is decomposed and embedded into other
23 components rather than regarded as an independent one in previous related research
24 (Malhotra et al., 2002). However, this study finds that the family plays a crucial role
25 in empowering and encouraging most of the participants to devote themselves to
26 work, and the concrete expression forms vary for all ages ([Almathami et al., 2021](#)).
27 For example, the unmarried young and the old female participants are not always
28 caught up in the household and supported by their family and Binglanggu materially
29 and emotionally. This lack of support is also faced by married interviewees, although
30 the forms are more complex and diverse. Adult female employees have to assume
31 more responsibility, especially for the married ones with children. They also accept
32 family help, such as in taking care of their children and doing housework, and thus
33 reduce their burdens. However, for migrant employees who are distant from their
34 families, household affairs must be divided between couples. Except for two
35 interviewees who expressed suppressed emotions and subordination to their husband,
36 others state that division of labor within the household is reasonable. Given their
37 relatively higher income, education level, or sociocultural status within the household,
38 several Li females manage their finances and decide on major household affairs,
39 acting as the head of the family. However, this is not the initial situation in a
40 patriarchal society. Working in Binglanggu, particularly in the tourism industry,
41 emancipates Li females from the traditional division of labor in household to varying
42 degrees and evokes their desire to participate in and control familial affairs or even
43 gain authority within the household. Family power refers to the ability of individuals
44 to exercise their rights even if they are opposed by the spouse (Tang et al., 2009).

1 Such power is not constant and unchangeable but dynamic, fluctuating with the
2 amount of material resources owned by the spouse (Zhang, 2008). Involvement in
3 tourism enables females to earn and thus have ownership and control over family
4 property within a limited range, which is the foundation of gaining bargaining power
5 (Hashemi et al., 1996; Liao, 2018). Women's involvement in ethnic tourism expands
6 their scope of activities and social connections. This allows them to leverage their
7 traditional skills and realize their self-agency, individuality, and self-worth. It also
8 enhances their ability to participate in family decision-making. However, as
9 mentioned above, female employees' status in the household is not all positive; the
10 household power exchange after participating in tourism does not mean that the
11 traditional gender division of labor is broken. The fight for women's rights still has a
12 long way to go. In brief, to a large extent, the setting shows women empowerment in
13 the family and lays the foundation for political and psychological empowerment. In
14 addition, economic empowerment has the largest effect on women's household status
15 as it provides them with more bargaining power within the household (Antman, 2014;
16 Doss, 1996).

17 Political empowerment is a dimension that most closely resembles the
18 overarching notion of residents "gaining mastery of their affairs" (Rappaport, 1987, p.
19 121). Malhotra et al. (2002) proposed a list of the most commonly used empowerment
20 dimensions at different levels of social aggregation (household, community, and
21 broader arenas). Literature that focused on political dimension always operationalized
22 at a relatively high level of aggregation, ignoring the intermediate levels. This study
23 fills the gap by taking Binglanggu, an ethnic tourism community, as its research
24 destination. Binglanggu is a specific context of intermediate social aggregation that
25 provides a place for its employees to produce, work, and live. Moreover, the
26 indicators of political dimension coded by this study are different from previous
27 research. On the intermediate levels, indicators, such as women's involvement or
28 representation in local political system and support for specific politicians are often
29 used to demonstrate empowerment (Malhotra et al., 2002; Bayissa et al., 2018).
30 However, in this study, the female employees' participation, control, and decision-
31 making capability in their workplace are used to understand the political dimension;
32 although it is not really political, the political cognition is mapped into the tourism
33 work field. The results showed that Binglanggu offers a feasible environment and
34 various channels for employee participation and expression, which seem practically
35 invalid (Almathami et al., 2022). Except for several seniors, most female employees
36 have poor political participation awareness, even if they are aware of the exact issues
37 in the workplace. Several seniors are either the managers or cultural inheritors who
38 have longer working experience and are more approachable to higher hierarchies. As
39 described by participants, they can obtain enhanced psychological empowerment or
40 disempowerment depending on the participation and corresponding feedback to some
41 extent. For example, providing *positive participating feedback*, such as solving
42 employees' problems, is meaningful, which can prove that women's involvement is
43 valuable and promotes their psychological empowerment by improving their *Self-*
44 *Confidence*. However, the weak awareness of participation in political affairs cannot

1 only be attributed to the women themselves, but rather to an inveterate structural
 2 problem caused by the patriarchal society (Landig, 2011).
 3



4
 5 **Fig. 4.** *Interactions of Women (Dis)Empowerment Dimensions in Binglanggu*
 6

7 **5.2 Dynamic (Dis)Empowerment**

8 We use a dynamic flow chart to display the empowerment process according to
 9 Kabeer’s resource-agency-achievement framework (1999, 2005). Rather than
 10 conceptualizing each empowerment dimension independently, the flow diagram
 11 interprets how those five parts cooperate in each stage of the power mechanism.

12 In the middle of Figure 5, the resources, agency, and achievements serve as the
 13 precondition, process, and outcomes of empowerment, respectively. Successful
 14 empowerment flow is shown on the right side, and the failed one is on the left.
 15 Referring to the definition of resources mentioned before, the job opportunity offered
 16 by Binglanggu is the most valuable precondition for Li ethnic women. Thus, they can
 17 protect and carry forward the Li culture and traditions, which are significant
 18 intangible resources. The process of empowerment is called agency, which represents
 19 tangible and intangible changes through empowerment. Obvious changes occur for Li
 20 ethnic women employees after working in Binglanggu. We find that the psychological
 21 dimension plays a central role on both sides. The effective empowerment brings Li
 22 women a source of endogenous dynamics to improve themselves in a sustainable way.
 23 However, when negative, power can be overridden and oppressive, causing negative

emotions or acts of resistance. The interviewees have been stressed out for various reasons in their life, but these do not impede their entire empowerment. Achievements are the outcomes of empowerment and the premise of bringing better resources to start a new empowerment. For most Li ethnic women employees, the empowerment process of is successful along with new opportunities and threats. At the same time, COVID-19 and the epidemic prevention policy that limits tourism development was an intensive passive factor for the whole empowerment process in Binglanggu.

Figure 5 shows that the psychological dimension is an inevitable agency and a result that is used to judge whether the empowerment is successful or not. The positive sociocultural and political aspects take effect throughout the whole empowerment process. The former spontaneously promotes the status of Li women and potentially protects the culture itself, whereas the latter cultivates women’s administrative capacity and authorizes them in workplace, which lays a better foundation for empowerment in other dimensions. Familial element is a fateful and inflexible role as the result of empowerment or the precondition of disempowerment (Figure 5).

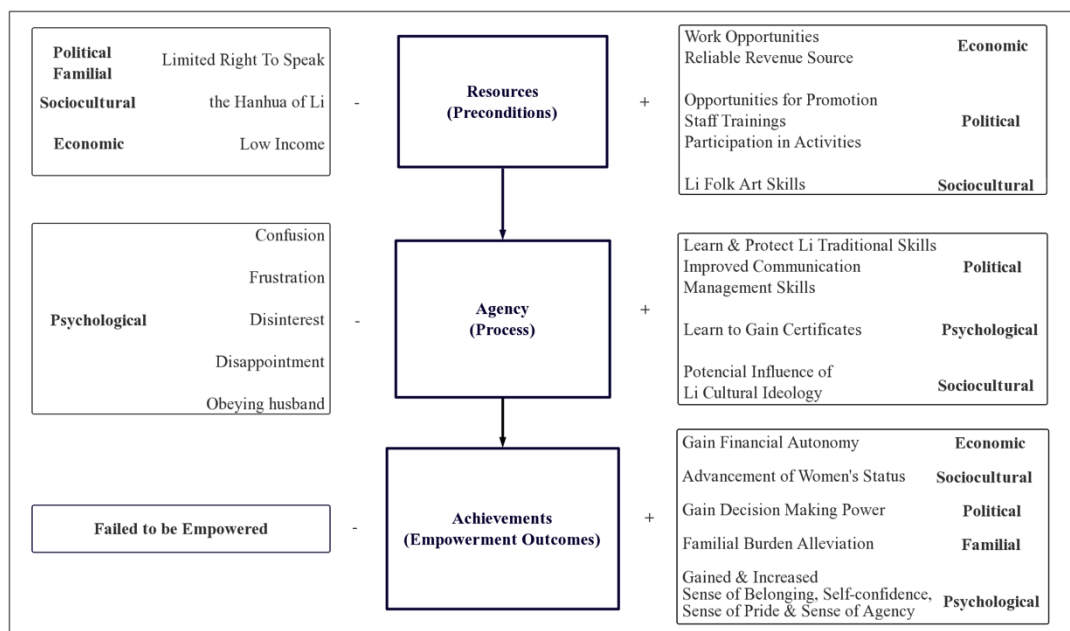


Fig. 5. Resource-agency-achievement Framework

5.3 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to related literature in three ways. First, the study addresses the ambiguity of female empowerment in ethnic tourism work by introducing a feminist perspective. Previous studies largely focused on arguing the negative or positive influence of tourism work on women employees based on certain cases (Cone, 1995; Ishii, 2012; Timothy, 2001; Trupp & Sunanta, 2017). However, this study has observed the significance of minority women’s participation in ethnic

1 tourism as they are the creators and inheritors of traditional crafts skills (Trupp &
2 Sunanta, 2017; Yang, 2011a; Yang & Wall, 2009b). Their exhibition of the Li
3 traditional skills expresses the authenticity of the ethnic culture, bearing witness to the
4 cultural evolution of the Li people and contributing to the revitalization of cultural
5 identity (Wall & Xie, 2005). This further confirms the positive impact of tourism
6 development in preserving vanishing cultures (Xie, 2003b). Then, we present a
7 concrete discussion of tourism work based on empowerment theory. Subsequently,
8 bottom-up research by women researchers is conducted to deliver and analyze the
9 ethnic females' authentic thoughts and transfer into flows of power relations. Thus,
10 the present study provides a new insight, that is, a feminist perspective in measuring
11 the (dis)empowerment in ethnic tourism. Within the research process, the researchers
12 do not regard themselves as sympathetic superiors who rescue inferiors, but rather
13 people who pursue and convey the thought that the marginals, the vulnerable groups,
14 deserve the respect and fully play their subjectivity.

15 Second, this study broadens and specifies the dimensions of (dis)empowerment
16 framework based on ethnic tourism by referring to previous empowerment framework
17 in feminism and tourism studies (Stromquist, 1995, 2002; Scheyvens, 1999, 2010).
18 Rooted in the collected interview material, the current study finds that Li women are
19 (dis)empowered from five dimensions—psychological, economic, sociocultural,
20 familial, and political, which are redefined by researchers. The psychological
21 dimension is an empowerment core because the functions of other dimensions
22 activate it, and sociocultural and familial dimensions are proposed as innovations. The
23 remaining culture relics of matrilineal clan connects the matriarchal culture with the
24 Li female employees in Binglanggu and affects their cognition on women's potential
25 and strength. As this deep link exists, their sociocultural consensus takes a positive
26 role in the intrahousehold labor division and the entire empowerment, providing
27 reference value to future ethnic tourism studies. Meanwhile, we also provide a new
28 insight into the role of familial dimension in empowerment theory. It is complicated
29 and changes largely with the sociocultural environment and the intrahousehold power
30 dynamics (Zhang, 2008; Tang et al., 2009; [Almathami et al., 2022](#); [Almathami et al.,
31 2021](#)). Third, this study illustrates the power position of ethnic female employees in
32 Binglanggu through (dis)empowerment, thereby providing a more comprehensive
33 understanding for female empowerment from individual, family, community, and
34 society levels through a dynamic development perspective. On the macro level, we
35 conclude the power pathways through four approaches, which clearly points out the
36 primary four aspects regarded as key elements that lead to (dis)empowerment. On the
37 micro level, the present study is the first to decompose the (dis)empowerment
38 structure into three components—resource, agency, and achievement—that
39 respectively elaborate the preconditions, process, and empowerment outcomes of
40 (dis)empowerment. The recombination of the subthemes under different dimensions
41 reveals certain rules within the process, as discussed above.

5.4 Practical Implications

From the empowerment and disempowerment dimensions, favorable conditions and threats to women empowerment and the development of ethnic tourism are indicated in this study, on which relevant stakeholders from different four levels—individual, family, community, and society—are urged to pay specific attention. From the personal level, the interviews reflected that Li women’s existing knowledge level can no longer meet the increasingly diversified needs of tourists due to the influence of foreign cultures and new factors; this is not conducive to ethnic tourism empowerment. ~~this study suggests that minority employees must improve their educational level spontaneously and learn professional knowledge and skills by themselves or within groups.~~ And previous studies have already proved that education is an essential for women empowerment (Almathami et al., 2021; Almathami et al., 2022). Therefore, this study suggests that institutions organizations could set up a reward system that encourage women employees to learn specialized knowledge, take up and apply new skills related to tourism industry.

Second, an inclusive community that supports employee wellbeing must be promoted; implementing initiatives, such as on-site childcare facilities, could remarkably benefit working women. As many married interviewees carry the burden of childcare, having access to affordable care near their workplace would relieve worries and pressure, enabling them to focus more fully on their jobs. Additionally, creating communal spaces and activities, especially for aged Li minority inheritors, would provide much-needed social connection and companionship. An inclusive, caring workplace community has been shown to enhance psychological empowerment and performance (Siyal et al., 2023). As such, investments in childcare support and communal spaces tailored to employees’ needs would convey organizational commitment to their holistic wellbeing. Such investment cultivates a mutually supportive environment where all employees, regardless of age, gender, or family status, can meaningfully engage in preserving Li heritage. ~~The cultivation of an inclusive community needs support from different stakeholders, such as the investments of governments, the guidance from NGOs and the approval of community members.~~

Third, from the level of ethnic tourism destination, the present study has two detailed suggestions for personnel management and infrastructure construction. First, ethnic tourism destinations should work on providing effective insurances, such as staff dormitories, living allowances, training opportunities, or staff trips, according to the demands of ethnic employees and the destinations’ developments. Meanwhile, new insights into employee management are also provided. Strengthening the training of the professional knowledge of employees, holding relevant competitions, and setting up bonuses to promote employees’ passion for learning are feasible choices that can increase ethnic females’ participation in modern ethnic tourism. All these policies can help promote thorough empowerment. In addition, the reduction of ethnic-culture-related projects in Binglanggu have induced the disempowerment of ethnic female employees in authentic cultural presentation and participation, which causes their dissatisfaction and hinders the culture focus of ethnic tourism

1 destinations. Hence, keeping creating new presentation forms of ethnic-culture-related
2 projects is imperative for ethnic tourism destination. For example, Augmented Reality
3 and Virtual Reality technology could foster the real-time interaction between tourist
4 and destinations to create a compelling tourists' experience.

5 Last, the COVID-19 crisis revealed that overreliance on in-person tourism made
6 Bilingual vulnerable. Interviewees expressed distress over work uncertainty,
7 reflecting pandemic-induced disempowerment. Building resilience through
8 digitalization is now critical to tourism industry (Khoo et al., 2023). Leveraging
9 technologies to engage remote audiences creates diverse revenue streams (Song et al.,
10 2022). In particular, developing a unified digital platform jointly promoting regional
11 heritage sites could draw broader visibility through coordinated branding and
12 promotions. ~~Virtual showcasing of core heritage offerings enables continuity even~~
13 ~~amid disruption.~~ Moreover, digital infrastructure and employee training in online
14 marketing/sales skills can empower agile adaptation. So equipping employees with
15 versatile digital skills also sustain empowerment growth despite external shocks.

16

1 **6. Conclusion**

2 Based on an interpretive paradigm, this study analyzes 34 semistructured
3 interviews with Li female employees in Binglanggu to explore how ethnic female
4 employees are empowered and disempowered from different dimensions. The codes
5 of interview data are obtained by using grounded theory and identified five main
6 themes, 24 subthemes, and 39 concepts. Centered on the main themes (economic,
7 psychological, sociocultural, political, and familial dimension), the Li female
8 employees' empowerment structure and dynamic power flow chart are summarized to
9 provide an improved understanding of women empowerment in ethnic tourism. The
10 main findings of this study are as follows:

11 First, historical gender roles and status of the Li ethnic group must be clarified
12 before formulating psychological empowerment component. Influenced by the
13 matriarchal society, the Li people value men and women. However, the status of Li
14 women has declined because the society integration and patriarchy cause them to be
15 the most extreme of the marginalized compared with men. In recent years, however,
16 the development of ethnic tourism revives and preserves the traditions and culture of
17 the Li and Miao ethnic groups. As the main inheritors of culture, ethnic women's
18 value and status have been reactivated. Consequently, the importance of exploring
19 and utilizing ethnic culture is emphasized in ethnic tourism and is the core internal
20 driving force of empowering minorities, especially women.

21 Second, psychological, economic, sociocultural, familial, and political
22 empowerment dimensions are defined and developed under the context of Binglanggu
23 to analyze women's (dis)empowerment in ethnic tourism work. Among them,
24 economic, psychological, social, and political empowerment have frequently appeared
25 in current literature related to community-based tourism and rural tourism (Wang et
26 al., 2015; Strzelecka et al., 2017). However, the present study, which is rooted in
27 ethnic tourism from the female perspective, attaches more importance to the dynamic
28 exchange of power rather than only interpreting empowerment's concepts and results.
29 The process of psychological empowerment demonstrates a spiral upward trend and
30 has the strongest interaction with the other four dimensions.

31 Third, based on the core themes of ethnic female employees' empowerment in
32 Binglanggu, the study details the (dis)empowerment approaches and dynamic
33 processes by using a flowchart. The four approaches of management provide a
34 systematic review to display the (dis)empowerment path offered by Binglanggu. The
35 dynamic flow chart is presented to clarify empowerment in detail according to
36 Kabeer's resource-agency-achievement framework (1999, 2005) rather than
37 conceptualizing each empowerment dimension independently. The flow diagram
38 interprets all stages of the power mechanism combined with five empowerment
39 dimensions, which presents reference value for managing other ethnic tourism
40 destinations with consideration of ethnic women.

41 However, although the empowerment framework is articulated, its decomposed
42 components have "a sense of discreteness" that might result in a one-sided
43 understanding of women's realistic lives and the inability to clarify the complexity
44 and vulnerability of women's situations (Bisnath, 2001). The researchers urge future

- 1 scholars to propose a relatively more comprehensive empowerment framework with
- 2 workable strategy implementations from successful cases, especially exploring the
- 3 endogenous power of culture for females.

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1 **APPENDIX A**

2 **Participant Consent**

3 Women employees' roles and empowerment in ethnic tourism: A case study in

4 Binglanggu.

5 Consent to take part in research

6

7 • I _____ voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

8 我_____自愿同意参加这项研究调查。

9

10 • I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any
11 time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

12 我明白即使我现在同意参加，我也可以随时退出或拒绝回答任何问题而
13 不会有任何后果。

14

15 • I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing
16 and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

17 该研究的目的和性质已经以书面形式向我做了解释，并且我有机会就
18 研究提出问题。

19

20 • I understand that participation involves interviewing my personal
21 information including my job, age, family and also my individual view
22 about the ethnic tourism development in Binglanggu.

23 我明白我的参与包括采访我的个人信息，包括我的工作，年龄，家
24 庭，以及我个人对槟榔谷民族旅游发展的看法。

25

26 • I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

27 我明白我不会从这项研究中直接受益。

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- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

我同意将我的采访录音。

- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

我明白我在本次研究中提供的信息将会被保密。

- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

我明白，在任何有关这项研究结果的报告中，我的身份将保持匿名。这将通过更改我的名字和隐瞒任何可能泄露我的身份或我所谈论的人的身份的采访细节来实现。

- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the researchers' graduation thesis and the papers with related topics which may be reported or published on conferences or journals.

我知道研究者的毕业论文和相关主题的论文可能会引用我的采访内容，并在会议或期刊上报道或发表。

- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

我明白如果我通知研究人员我或其他人有受到伤害的风险，他们可能必须向相关当局报告——他们将首先与我讨论这一点，但可能在没有我的许可下被要求报告

1 • I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be
2 retained in a password-protected hard drive, locked in document storage
3 room and will only be accessed by the project group members and the tutor
4 until the publication of the related papers.

5 我明白签署的同意书和原始录音将保存在有密码保护的硬盘中，并保
6 管在文档室，相关论文发表前只有项目组成员和导师可以访问。

7

8 • I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying
9 information has been removed will be retained for the publication of the
10 related papers.

11 我明白我的采访记录将被保留，以备相关论文发表之用。

12

13 • I understand that under freedom of information legalization I am entitled to
14 access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as
15 specified above.

16 · 我明白在信息自由合法化的情况下，我有权在任何时间前往所在储存
17 室访问我所提供的信息。

18

19 • I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the
20 research to seek further clarification and information.

21 我明白我可以随时联系任何参与研究的人，以寻求进一步的说明和信
22 息。

23

24

1 **APPENDIX B**

2 **Semistructured Interview Outline**

3 Questionnaire and interview outline for female employees in Binglanggu Li and Miao
4 Cultural Heritage Park

5 **Basic information** includes Age, Ethnicity, Education Back Ground, Marital Status,
6 Main Personal and familial Income Resource, Families' Employment Industries and
7 Monthly Salary in Binglanggu is collected from interviews and talks.

8
9 **Work Participation (political)**

10 1. What kind of work are you doing in Hainan Binglanggu Li and Miao Cultural
11 Heritage Park? Could you tell us about the specific contents of your work? How many
12 years have you been doing this job?

13 2. Do you have the opportunity to participate in discussions or observe when there are
14 some policy updates or changes in Binglanggu Li and Miao Cultural Heritage Park? If
15 so, please give examples.

16 3. On a scale of 10, how would you rate your involvement in the development of
17 Hainan Binglanggu Li and Miao Cultural Heritage Park? Are you satisfied with your
18 current level of participation? (Whether you want to increase your participation, why?
19 What are the factors that hinder the increase in participation).

20
21 **Social Culture**

22 1. Are there any significant gender differences in the distribution of positions and
23 promotion process? If so, please give examples.

24 2. Do you feel that your job has made you become more independent, confident, and
25 has improved your family status and social status in some way?

26 3. Does working at the local scenic spot make you feel more involved in the local
27 community?

28 4. Does the local minority culture encourage women to go out and make more friends
29 by participating in more social activities?

30
31 **Economy**

32 1. Has the tourism development in Binglanggu Li and Miao Cultural Heritage Park
33 solved the employment problem of local women to a large extent? What are their
34 salaries? Are you satisfied with the current salary level?

35 2. Do you know women who have started their own businesses in or around the park?
36 What kind of business, exactly? Tell us about them.

37
38 **Family**

39 1. During your work in the past few years, have you ever had any conflict between
40 family and work? If so, how did you handle it

41 2. Does your family support your work? How do they support you?

1 **Attitude (Psychological)**

2 1. Do you want to stay in your current job or do you have plans to change another
3 job? Why?

4 2. What is your evaluation of the current tourism development in Hainan Binglanggu
5 Li and Miao Cultural Heritage Park? Will you support its further development?

6