A qualitative comparative analysis of tourism and gender equality in emerging economies

Jiekuan Zhang [a,*], Yan Zhang [b]

[a] *Asean Tourism Research Centre of China Tourism Academy, Guilin Tourism University, China*
[b] *School of Tourism Management, Guilin Tourism University, China*

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The impact of tourism on gender equality at the national level remains unclear. This study conducts a comparative analysis of tourism and gender equality in emerging economies, using a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis approach. The results demonstrate that tourism is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for gender equality. On the contrary, the combination of tourism and the economy, education and employment significantly affects gender equality. This study also summarizes four driving modes of gender equality: education-driven mode, economy-driven mode, tourism-employment-driven mode, and economy-employment-driven mode. Moreover, there is no significant temporal change in the four modes. We suggest recognizing the role of tourism in gender equality beyond tourism and focusing more on female education in tourism and the broader economy. This study considerably contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of tourism and gender equality from the perspective of method and content.

1. Introduction

Gender equality is one of the 17 primary sustainable development goals put forward by the United Nations and a fundamental indicator for measuring regional sustainable development. As indicated in *The Global Gender Gap Report* annually introduced by the World Economic Forum, gender equality is defined as no gap between men and women in terms of health, education, economy and politics and is measured as the relative gaps. As one of the world's largest and fastest-growing comprehensive industries, tourism has a significant impact on the global economy, society, environment and other sustainable factors, and is thus closely related to the 17 sustainable development goals (Boluk, Cavaliere, & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2017). Accordingly, promoting gender equality has undoubtedly become an essential function of tourism (Cole, 2018; Font, Garay, & Jones, 2016; UNWTO, 2019).

Extensive previous studies have focused on tourism and gender equality. These studies in many micro cases or specific tourism sectors worldwide examined the impact of tourism on gender equality, such as Acharya and Halpenny (2013), Rinaldi and Salerno (2019), Wilkinson and Pratiwi (1995) and Xu et al. (2018). A common conclusion of these studies lies in that during the development and participation of tourism, women's status has been considerably improved through economic,

employment, education and even political empowerment. Therefore, tourism has been widely accepted as an essential tool to promote gender equality. However, some studies hold the opposite view that tourism exerts a limited positive effect on gender equality. They found that even in the tourism sector, the gender gap is also increasing (e.g. Ferguson & Alarcon, 2015; Santero-Sanchez, Segovia-Pérez, Castro-Nuñez, Figueroa-Domecq, & Talón-Ballestero, 2015).

With respect to both positive and negative effects of tourism on gender equality, we find that the current small-scale microscopic case studies occupy the mainstream. This paradigm can intensely discuss the relationship between tourism and gender equality in a particular case; however, it fails to demonstrate the impact of tourism on gender equality at a macro such as the country level, which may make macro decision-makers at a loss because microcosmic research has a strong case dependence and its universality is limited in the broader area. We also find that most studies are single-case ones and lack comparisons. Besides, few studies examine the impact of tourism on gender equality outside the framework of tourism. System theory holds that any change in a social phenomenon has a profound and complicated influence mechanism, and gender equality of course is no exception. Apart from tourism, many other factors significantly affect gender equality, such as the economy (Damjanovic & Selvaretnam, 2020), education (Channa,

2015) and employment (Castellano & Rocca, 2018). The existing fixed research paradigm makes tourism and gender equality, an important tourism subfield, to a large extent stagnate in terms of research methods and knowledge innovation (Figueroa-Domecq, Pritchard, Segovia-Pérez, Morgan, & Villacé-Molinero, 2015; Pritchard, 2007). To fill this gap, we attempt to explore the impact of tourism as well as the combination of tourism and other factors on gender equality from a novel perspective using a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) approach.

We choose emerging economies as empirical objects. It should be noted that there is no precise definition of the emerging economy. Generally speaking, the emerging economy refers to a country with middle and low per capita annual income, underdeveloped capital markets, and a low industrialization degree. However, it has the potential and partial conditions to become a mature market economy. First, economic progress has caused significant changes in all kinds of life in emerging economies and women's status in these countries has changed dramatically as well, making gender equality an important economic and political issue (World Economic Forum, 2018). Second, tourism has become an important means of economic growth in many countries around the world (Brida, Gómez, & Segarra, 2020), making tourism possible to affect gender equality. Consequently, it is exciting to explore the effects of tourism, an important economic phenomenon, on gender equality, a prominent social aspect, in emerging economies. This can also provide a useful reference for other developing countries.

The three main advantages of the QCA method make itself very applicable in this study, thus persuading us to employ it to do our research. Firstly, this method allows the impact of various combinations of factors on the outcome. The QCA does not treat each antecedent variable as an independent condition that acts independently on the outcome variable but fully considers the combined effect of all antecedent variables (Ragin, 2008). The QCA test whether the combination of conditions leads to the outcome from a holistic perspective. Secondly, the QCA includes both the presence and absence of a condition into the analysis. Different from the traditional methods that can only deal with completely symmetric relationships, the QCA can well handle the asymmetry of the antecedent variables. For example, under the QCA framework, both the presence and absence of tourism may affect gender equality, thus broadening our understanding of the relationship between tourism and gender equality. Thirdly, the QCA is based on the principle of equivalence, which summarizes multiple combinations of antecedent variables that may lead to the same outcome. That is, the QCA believes that there may be more than one path leading to the result, such as gender equality in this study. The QCA allows tourism to promote or suppress gender equality through different channels, thus better reflecting the individual characteristics of the case.

The main contribution of this study is that this study conducts an empirical survey of tourism and gender equality at the national level, helping to look closely at the impact of tourism on gender equality from a macro perspective. Specifically, the article aims to answer how tourism affects national gender equality in different countries. To do so, this study employs the QCA, a method combining qualitative and quantitative research, which enriches the existing methodology system in the field of tourism and gender equality. Concretely, this study examines the effects of tourism on gender equality beyond tourism. We explore the explanatory power of the different combinations of tourism and other factors, including the economy, employment, and education. Besides, we also examine the impact of the absence of tourism on gender equality. Furthermore, we systematically conclude several ways tourism affects gender equality and discuss the influence mechanism of tourism on gender equality under different paths. To sum up, this study considerably contributes to the body of knowledge in this field from the perspective of method and content. This study also positively responds to Figueroa-Domecq et al. (2015), who identified the possible stagnation of future gender-aware tourism research.

We structure this study as follows. In the next section, we provide the theoretical background and summarize four hypotheses we seek to examine. In section 3, we report the specific method we employ in this study, namely the fsQCA approach, and the data collection. In section 4, we present the results of necessary and sufficient conditions for gender equality. Then we discuss the results in section 5 and conclude in the final section.

2. Theoretical background

Gender equality is a critical component of sustainable tourism and an essential indicator of tourism sustainability (Alarcón & Cole, 2019). At the same time, the inherent sustainability and industrial attributes of tourism enable it to play an important role in empowering women and narrowing the gender gap (Boley, Ayscue, Maruyama, & Woosnam, 2017; Ferguson, 2011; Nassani, Aldakhil, Abro, Islam, & Zaman, 2019; Rinaldi & Salerno, 2019). Consequently, gender equality has always been an important frontier issue in tourism research (Cohen & Cohen, 2019; Zhang & Zhang, 2020). Existing literature indicates that tourism changes women by increasing their income and employment, thus narrowing the gender gap.

Tucker and Boonabaana (2012) asserted that research on reducing the gender gap through tourism focuses mainly on the concept of "economic empowerment" for women. Munozbullon (2009) pointed out that tourism is characterized by a large number of low-wage jobs. Therefore, the minimum wage legislation provides particularly effective protection for women in tourism. As women begin to work in and earn from tourism, some dominant local gender discourses and practices are slowly being challenged (Boonabaana, 2014). In particular, Acharya and Halpenny (2013) found that operating a homestay raises women's incomes and contributes to gender equality and sustainable community development.

In terms of employment, Khatiwada and Silva (2015) and Rinaldi and Salerno (2019) showed that tourism provides women with unique employment advantages and is an important contributor to helping women create new employment opportunities, which helps to alleviate gender inequality in tourism destinations. Likewise, Duffy, Kline, Mowatt, and Chancellor (2015) asserted that women obtain economic and social independence through tourism employment. Nyaruwata and Nyaruwata (2013) also indicated that tourism is the leading industry for women's work. In terms of employment quality, tourism provides women with more opportunities for senior management positions. For instance, Skalpe (2007) found that more than 20% of the CEOs of tourism are women, while in the sample of manufacturing companies, this proportion is less than 6%. A similar phenomenon was found by Tran and Walter (2014) and Carvalho, Costa and Torres (2019).

Apart from these positive effects of tourism on gender equality, some different conclusions are raised. Scheyvens (2000) and Lenao and Basupi (2016) suggested that ecotourism development has the dual role of empowerment and disempowerment for rural women and may make them disadvantaged and marginalized. Besides, Ferguson and Alarcon (2015) argued that gender inequality in society has been replicated and aggravated in tourism to some extent.

Regardless of the negative impact of tourism on gender equality, even in the context of positive effects, the gender gap still exists within the tourism and is very obvious on some occasions. Tourism is not an "extrajudicial" place for the gender gap. Gender inequality in tourism lies mainly in two aspects: one is the pay gap (Guimaraes & Silva, 2016; Skalpe, 2007), namely that even with the same job characteristics, women's salaries are still lower than those of men. The other is job grade. Although tourism is a relatively feminine industry, most managers are still men and they dominate top management positions (Costa et al., 2017). In contrast, women in tourism are often at the bottom and are mainly engaged in low-responsibility, unskilled and low-paid jobs (Campossoria, Marchantemera, & Roperogarcia, 2011; Cave & Kilic, 2010; Trupp & Sunanta, 2017). Phommavong and Sörensson (2014) indicated the inequality in the division of labor between women and men as well.

The primary reason for the inequality is gender discrimination. Rinaldi and Salerno (2019) pointed out that women are subject to various gender discriminations in the labor market, especially in developing countries. Even among senior female managers in tourism, discrimination is still widespread (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke, & Torres, 2019; Carvalho, Costa, & Torres, 2019). Moreover, gender discrimination constitutes the most critical obstacle to the promotion of most female leaders (Kattara, 2005; Nyaruwata & Nyaruwata, 2013). Tran and Walter (2014) indicated an outstanding gender inequality with respect to social class, child care and aggression against females. Various obstacles in tourism employment make women not optimistic about the development of tourism (Alrwajfah, Almeida-García, & Cortés-Macías, 2020).

Gender discrimination stems from a traditional sociopolitical culture that has become the main obstacle for women to enter tourism and the main reason for the expansion of the gender gap within tourism. Therefore, even though tourism is a relatively accessible industry for women, traditional conservative culture limits the role of tourism in empowering women. For example, Masadeh, Al-Ababneh, Al-Sabi, and Allah (2018) found that in Islamic societies, women are very interested in the jobs provided by tourism; however, religious beliefs and social traditions that women should take care of their families hinder their tourism participation. Likewise, Alsawafi (2016) pointed out that even though female students positively evaluated the empowerment of women in Oman's tourism sectors, conservative social traditions and customs still prevent female students from choosing to work in tourism after graduation. Gil Arroyo, Barbieri, Sotomayor, and Knollenberg (2019) and Uduji, Okolo-Obasi and Asongu (2020) also indicated that the traditional community culture still prevents women from benefiting from tourism development. Besides, subject to gender stereotypes, many tourists prefer male tour guides (Banerjee & Chua, 2020). Therefore, Scheyvens and Hughes (2019) and Tucker and Boonabaana (2012) suggested that in addition to the economic and employment empowerment, tourism should affect traditional culture, thereby promoting women's status. However, currently this impact is still limited. On the contrary, the positive impact of tourism on women's status is more offset by traditional culture.

Differently, some scholars believe that the gender gap in tourism is not due to gender discrimination, but human resources themselves, namely the lack of women's working ability (Litwin, Ngan, & Atembe, 2019). As a result of the lack of education and training, women's work quality is lower than that of men and this gap will widen with age, leading to that women's jobs in tourism are still dominated by low-skilled and low-level positions with fewer promotion opportunities than men (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). In contrast, with the improvement of the female education level, the occupational gap between men and women will gradually narrow in the hotel industry (Campossoria et al., 2011). Therefore, Nomnga (2017) suggested that female entrepreneurs need extensive education and training in modern technology and management skills, which is the basis for narrowing the gender gap.

In summary, the rise of women in tourism is a relative term. Whether in the broader economy or tourism, a common phenomenon is that there exists a significant gap between women and men in terms of salary, promotion opportunities, educational opportunities and working environment. However, this gap in tourism is smaller than that in the broader economy. As argued by Santos and Varejao (2007), the gender discrimination index in tourism is much lower than the average of non-tourism. However, we notice that prior studies are basically limited to the tourism sectors or a specific destination. The spillover effect of tourism on gender equality, that is, whether tourism can change gender equality at the broader macro level, such as the national level, remains unclear (Zhang & Zhang, 2020). Given the positive and negative effects of tourism on gender equality in macro cases, we assume that the same phenomenon exists at the national level. We thus obtain the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Tourism positively affects gender equality.

Hypothesis 2. Tourism negatively affects gender equality.

In addition, country-level gender equality is influenced by many other factors, such as the economy, employment and education. Economic growth provides more resources and opportunities for gender equality and thus is conducive to gender equality (Damjanovic & Selvaretnam, 2020). Similarly, education is key to gender equality and female education contributes significantly to the realization of long-term gender equality (Channa, 2015; Halloran, 2009; Hong, Kim, Park, & Sim, 2019). Also, employment enables women to gain more voice in the family and society (Castellano & Rocca, 2018; Ferragina, 2020). Especially, Zhang and Zhang (2020) found that the economy, education, and employment significantly affect gender equality individually. However, their combined effects on gender equality are still unclear. We also noticed significant relationships between the economy, education and employment (Bhorat, Cassim, & Tseng, 2016; Burger, Stavropoulos, Ramkumar, Dufourmont, & van Oort, 2019). Hence, we wonder how gender equality will perform under the combined influence of these factors, including tourism. This is also the core idea of the QCA method. That is, any social phenomenon, including gender equality, is a complex system often affected by multiple factors. We assume that gender equality is influenced by a combination of tourism and the economy, employment and education, regardless of cultural factors that are difficult to quantify. Similarly, we assume that this effect has two dimensions, positive and negative. Accordingly, we additionally hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3. The combination of tourism, economic growth, education and employment positively affects gender equality.

Hypothesis 4. The combination of tourism, economic growth, education and employment negatively affects gender equality.

3. Methods and materials

There are three mature specific core QCA techniques, namely the crisp-set QCA (csQCA), multi-value QCA (mvQCA) and fuzzy-set (fsQCA). CsQCA is the earliest and most widely used method. FsQCA is the latest but has achieved amazing popularity in recent years. Compared with mvQCA, the fsQCA has the following advantages: a fuzzy set has both qualitative and quantitative attributes because it includes the kind and degree of a set's membership; a fuzzy set has the benefits of many fixed-distance variables, especially the advantages of precise distinction, while allowing the operation of set theory (Rihoux & Ragin, 2008). Besides, csQCA is a particular case of the fsQCA (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). Given this background, we adopt the fsQCA in this study.

We employ a four-scale fuzzy set. As indicated by Rihoux and Ragin (2008), the number of fuzzy set scale is primarily determined by the researcher according to the empirical cases. If we have more case information, and there are significant differences between the cases, the four-scale fuzzy set is appropriate (Rihoux & Ragin. 2008). We calibrate the outcome and all conditions according to the following scale:

1 denotes fully in the set;
0.67 denotes more in than out;
0.33 denotes more out than in;
0 denotes fully out of the set.

In our fsQCA model, the outcome is gender equality measured as the gender gap index reported in *The Global Gender Gap Report*. The *Report* publishes annual gender gap index rankings for more than 140 countries. A higher gender gap index means the higher the gender equality. According to our hypotheses, we determine four variables as conditions for gender equality: tourism, economy, education and employment. Similar to the previous studies, we quantify tourism using inbound

tourist arrivals (Paramati, Alam, & Chen, 2017; Roudi, Arasli, & Akadiri, 2019). Likewise, following the previous literature, we use the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita to represent the economy (Balli, Sigeze, Manga, Birdir, & Birdir, 2019; Lee & Brahmasrene, 2013). In terms of gender equality, women are usually in a weak position. The increase in women's resources means the rise in gender equality. Consequently, we use female employment and female education to represent employment and education, respectively. We further respectively use the female labor force participation rate (percentage of female population ages 15 and above) and female literacy rate (percentage of females ages 15 and above) to measure employment and education. All the above data on conditions are collected from the World Bank Development Indicators Database. Table 1 reports the definitions of all fsQCA variables.

The Economist once gave a list of emerging economies that included 15 developing countries, including Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Russia, South Africa, Mexico, Philippines, Turkey, Indonesia, Egypt, Poland, Hungary, Malaysia, and Romania. However, limited to data availability, we exclude Russia, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, and Egypt.

Table 1
All fsQCA outcome and conditional variables.

Variables	Definition for attributes	References
Gender equality	This outcome is characterized by the magnitude of gender-based disparities with respect to health, education, economic participation and political rights rather than women's absolute empowerment. This definition reflects the comparison of women's and men's rights within a country, but it does not have the comparison function of women's rights between countries. A country with a high gender equality score does not mean that women's rights in this country are more than those with a low score.	The Global Gender Gap Report
Tourism	Compared with many industries, the entry threshold of tourism is lower, which is more suitable for many women who lack work experience and skills. In tourism, women gain skills, increase their income, and even increase their knowledge in cultural exchanges, thus awakening a certain gender consciousness. At the same time, tourism may also fix women in relatively low positions, and the changes in gender positioning will also cause conflicts with men, thus leading to an increase in the gender gap.	Boonabaana (2014); Phommavong and Sörensson (2014); Cole (2018)
Economy	Economic growth means that more resources are likely to be allocated to women, raising their status and ultimately reducing the gap with men.	Damjanovic and Selvaretnam (2020)
Education	Investing in women's education means the social recognition of women's status, thus changing some traditional gender concepts. Besides, it also enables women to acquire more knowledge and work skills so that they can better integrate into society.	Channa, 2015; Halloran, 2009; Hong et al., 2019
Employment	This condition refers to women's participation in the labor market. Through employment, women's economic status in both society and family will rise significantly.	Castellano and Rocca (2018); Ferragina (2020)

Finally, ten emerging economies consisting of Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, Romania and South Africa are selected. Besides, we use the data in 2010 and 2018 to add the temporal comparison. Through these two time points, we can determine whether the influence of the combination of tourism and its related variables on gender equality is time-varying. 2018 is selected because the data on tourism, economy, employment, and education in the World Bank Development Indicators Database are as of 2018. Finally, we form a total of 20 cases of ten emerging economies at two time points. Therefore, the four-scale fuzzy set is appropriate.

We then turn to the calibration of the outcome and conditional variables following the four-scale fuzzy set. Referring to Fiss (2011), we set the three anchor points of all variables as the upper quartile, the mean of the upper and lower quartiles, and the lower quartile of the sample data. Table 2 gives the calibration results.

4. Results

We use the software fsQCA 3.0 to process two basic models:

Model 1: gender equality = f (tourism, economy, employment, education);
Model 2: ~gender equality = f (tourism, economy, employment, education).

In the fsQCA, "~" indicates "low" or "weak" or "absent". The two models suggest that a combination of four conditional variables may lead to gender equality, or widen the gender gap to reduce gender equality.

4.1. Necessary conditions

The essential operation of the fsQCA is to build a fuzzy truth table to

Table 2
Calibration of all variables.

	Gender equality	Tourism	Economy	Employment	Education
Argentina 2010	1	0.33	1	0.67	1
Brazil 2010	0.33	0	1	1	0.33
China 2010	0.33	1	0.33	1	0.33
India 2010	0	0.33	0	0	0
Indonesia 2010	0.33	0.33	0.33	1	0
Malaysia 2010	0	1	0.67	0.33	0.33
Mexico 2010	0.33	1	1	0	0.33
Philippines 2010	1	0	0	0.67	1
Romania 2010	0.33	0.33	0.67	0.33	1
South Africa 2010	1	0.33	0.67	0.33	0.33
Argentina 2018	1	0	1	0.67	1
Brazil 2018	0.33	0.33	0.67	1	0.33
China 2018	0	1	0.67	1	0.33
India 2018	0	0.33	0	0	0
Indonesia 2018	0.33	0.33	0.33	1	0.33
Malaysia 2018	0.33	1	1	0.67	0.33
Mexico 2018	0.67	1	0.67	0	0.33
Philippines 2018	1	0	0	0.33	1
Romania 2018	0.67	0.33	1	0.33	1
South Africa 2018	1	0.33	0.33	0.67	0

calculate multiple solutions to the outcome. Before creating a truth table, it is vital to do the necessary tests for each condition to examine its effect on the outcome. As mentioned earlier, the QCA method allows for the asymmetry of conditions, so we consider each condition's presence and absence. Table 3 reports the results for the necessary tests. Ragin (2006) and Schneider and Wagemann (2012) argued that if the consistency of a condition exceeds the threshold of 0.9, it is necessary for the outcome. Besides, if a condition exceeds the consistency threshold of 0.75, it is a sufficient condition for the outcome (Mas-Verdú, Ribeiro-Soriano, & Roig-Tierno, 2015).

As shown in Table 3, each consistency does not exceed 0.9, so all the conditions are not necessary conditions for high or weak gender equality. Moreover, all conditions except ~ tourism for gender equality and ~education for ~ gender equality are less than the consistency threshold of 0.75, indicating that most of the conditions are not sufficient for the outcome. ~tourism is a sufficient condition for high gender equality and ~education is a sufficient condition for weak gender equality. In summary, whether tourism or economy or employment or education is neither necessary nor sufficient for gender equality. This means that a single antecedent condition is weak in explaining gender equality. We further incorporate these antecedent conditions into the fsQCA to explore the configurations causing high or weak gender equality, namely the solutions to **Models 1 and 2**.

4.2. Configuration

As a powerful heuristic tool, truth tables are at the core of fsQCA (Schneider & Wagemann, 2010). Truth tables present which configurations of conditions are the sufficient conditions for the outcome (i.e. the answer to the question). Additionally, reporting truth tables enable others to replicate the logical minimization causing the solution terms (Schneider & Wagemann, 2010). Therefore, we provide the truth tables in this paper. Tables 4 and 5 respectively give the truth tables for gender equality and ~gender equality. According to fsQCA's default rules, we set gender equality and ~gender equality to 1 for rows with the consistency of greater than or equal to 0.8.

The fsQCA will generate three types of solutions: complex solution (not involving logical remainder), parsimonious solution (involving logical remainder) and intermediate solution (only involving logical remainder in accordance with theory and practice). Generally speaking, the intermediate solution is superior to the other two solutions as it does not allow the elimination of necessary conditions (Rihoux & Ragin, 2008). Therefore, we merely report the intermediate solutions to **Models 1 and 2**. Besides, we distinguish the core conditions and peripheral conditions according to the intermediate solution and parsimonious solution. If a condition appears in both parsimonious solution and intermediate solution, it is a core one; if a condition appears only in an intermediate solution, it is a peripheral one. Core conditions play a more critical role in the outcome, relative to peripheral conditions.

We obtain intermediate solutions through counterfactual analysis. It is assumed that each conditional variable's presence has the potential to promote gender equality. Finally, we find two configurations resulting

in high gender equality (as shown in Table 6). In the meantime, we assume that the presence of each conditional variable has the potential to cause weak gender equality. We find two configurations leading to weak gender equality (as shown in Table 7). Ragin (2017) presented three indicators to identify each configuration's characteristics, namely the raw coverage, unique coverage and consistency.

> *"Raw coverage measures the proportion of memberships in the outcome explained by each term of the solution. Unique coverage measures the proportion of memberships in the outcome explained solely by each individual solution term (memberships that are not covered by other solution terms). Consistency measures the degree to which membership in each solution term is a subset of the outcome."* (Ragin, 2017)

Generally, the consistency threshold is set to be 0.8.

Table 6 shows the overall solution with the coverage of 0.750 and a consistency of 0.913, indicating that this solution accounts for about 75% of the membership in the outcome high gender equality. Moreover, these two configurations are sufficient for high gender equality. The two configurations also achieve high values of consistency (0.899&0.921), implying that they are sufficient for high gender equality. Configurations 1 and 2 account for about 64.3% and 42.7% of the membership in the outcome high gender equality, respectively. Meanwhile, we find that only education is the core condition in configuration 1, meaning its significant impact on high gender equality. All variables in configuration 2 are the core conditions. Configuration 1 reflects a combination of the absence of tourism and the presence of education. Configuration 2 combines the absence of tourism, presence of economy, and absence of employment.

Table 7 shows the overall solution with the coverage of 0.437 and a consistency of 0.876, indicating that this solution accounts for about 43.7% of the membership in the outcome weak gender equality, and these two configurations are sufficient for weak gender equality. Moreover, the consistencies of 0.847 and 0.868 of these configurations indicate that each configuration is sufficient for weak gender equality. These two configurations respectively account for 34.3% and 40.5% of the membership in the outcome weak gender equality. We also find that tourism and employment are core conditions in configuration 3, and all variables are core conditions in configuration 4. For the weak gender equality, configuration 3 includes the combination of the presence of tourism and employment and the absence of education. This configuration means that regardless of high levels of tourism and female employment, if female education is at a low level, gender equality in these cases will also be at a low level. Like configuration 3, configuration 4 also implies that without a high level of female education, high levels of economic development and female employment are equally likely to result in weak gender equality.

5. Discussion

Our results demonstrate that tourism is neither necessary nor sufficient for high or weak gender equality. This reveals that single tourism does not affect gender equality, either positively or negatively. This result seems to somewhat contradict hypotheses 1 and 2 and is not consistent with the findings in various macro cases. It is noteworthy that our results indicate that single tourism does not lead to high or weak gender equality at the national level, but do not negate the impact of tourism on gender equality. Among the four solutions of models 1 and 2, the presence or absence of tourism appears in three ones and plays the role of core conditions in two solutions. We therefore need to look at the role of tourism dialectically. On the one hand, in many micro cases, tourism has a significant impact (either positive or negative) on gender equality (Boonabaana, 2014; Lenao & Basupi, 2016). On the other hand, we do not evidence that single tourism could considerably affect the country-level gender equality. Our results support that the change in gender equality at the macro-regional level is a result of the interaction

Table 3
Analysis of necessary conditions.

Condition	Outcome variable: gender equality		Outcome variable: ~gender equality	
	Consistency	Coverage	Consistency	Coverage
Tourism	0.461373	0.497685	0.653558	0.807870
~tourism	0.821888	0.674296	0.593633	0.558099
Economy	0.678112	0.591760	0.655431	0.655431
~economy	0.605150	0.605150	0.591760	0.678112
Employment	0.641631	0.578337	0.624532	0.645068
~employment	0.606223	0.584886	0.591760	0.654244
Education	0.713519	0.769676	0.433521	0.535880
~education	0.569743	0.467430	0.813670	0.764965

Table 4
Truth table for gender.

Tourism	Economy	Employment	Education	Number	Gender equality	Raw consist.	PRI consist.	SYM consist
0	1	1	1	2	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
0	1	0	0	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
0	0	0	1	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
0	0	1	1	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
0	1	0	1	2	1	0.897590	0.663367	0.663366
0	0	1	0	3	0	0.795796	0.661692	0.661692
0	1	1	0	2	0	0.795181	0.492537	0.492537
1	1	0	0	3	0	0.746867	0.497512	0.497512
1	0	1	0	1	0	0.697885	0.397590	0.397590
1	1	1	0	2	0	0.663317	0.330000	0.330000
0	0	0	0	2	0	0.632877	0.424893	0.424893

Table 5
Truth table for ~ gender equality.

Tourism	Economy	Employment	Education	Number	~Gender equality	Raw consist.	PRI consist.	SYM consist
1	1	1	0	2	1	0.834171	0.670000	0.670000
0	1	1	0	2	1	0.801205	0.507463	0.507463
1	0	1	0	1	1	0.800604	0.602409	0.602410
0	1	0	1	2	0	0.798193	0.336634	0.336634
1	1	0	0	3	0	0.749373	0.502487	0.502488
0	0	0	0	2	0	0.728767	0.575107	0.575107
0	1	1	1	2	0	0.723288	0.000000	0.000000
0	1	0	0	1	0	0.622642	0.000000	0.000000
0	0	1	0	3	0	0.600601	0.338308	0.338308
0	0	0	1	1	0	0.498113	0.000000	0.000000
0	0	1	1	1	0	0.498113	0.000000	0.000000

Table 6
Intermediate solution to high gender equality.

	Configuration	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency
1	~tourism*education	0.643	0.323	0.899
2	~tourism*economy*~employment	0.427	0.107	0.921
Solution coverage: 0.750		Frequency cutoff: 1.000		
Solution consistency: 0.913		Consistency cutoff: 0.898		

Note: Bold variables represent core conditions, non-bold variables represent peripheral conditions. Cases with greater than 0.5 membership in term ~ tourism*education: 0.67 (1,0.67), 1 (1,1), 1 (0.67,1), 0.67 (0.67,0.67), 0.33 (0.67,0.33), 0.67 (0.67,0.67); Cases with greater than 0.5 membership in term ~ tourism*economy*~employment: 0.33 (0.67,0.33), 1 (0.67,1), 0.67 (0.67,0.67).

Table 7
Intermediate solution to weak gender equality.

	Configuration	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency
3	tourism*employment*~education	0.343	0.032	0.847
4	economy*employment*~education	0.405	0.095	0.868
Solution coverage: 0.437		Frequency cutoff: 1.000		
Solution consistency: 0.876		Consistency cutoff: 0.801		

Note: Bold variables represent core conditions, non-bold variables represent peripheral conditions. Cases with greater than 0.5 membership in term tourism*employment*~education: 0.33 (0.67,0.67), 0 (0.67,1), 0.33 (0.67,0.67); Cases with greater than 0.5 membership in term economy*employment*~education: 0.33 (0.67,0.67), 0.33 (0.67,0.67), 0 (0.67,1), 0.33 (0.67,0.67).

of multiple factors. This actually confirms that the role of tourism in the realization of gender equality in micro cases is not applicable at the macro-regional level, as indicated above.

Our results substantiate hypotheses 3 and 4. The results demonstrate that four solutions of models 1 and 2 all have high explanatory power and coverage. The configuration analysis indicates that no solution is a single variable. On the contrary, all the solutions are combinations of tourism and other variables or the combination of the economy, employment and education. This suggests that the effect of tourism on gender equality depends on its combined effect with other conditions. At the national level, merely developing tourism will not lead to a change in gender equality. We also notice that the absence of tourism takes effect in the solutions of model 1. The presence of tourism works in configuration 3. The results partly support the findings of Ferguson and Alarcon (2015) and Trupp and Sunanta (2017) who argued that tourism increases the gender gap. Our findings provide a more comprehensive intellectual framework for how gender equality is driven by a complex combination of tourism attributes and economic, employment and educational variables. The positive or negative impact of the combination of tourism and other conditions on gender equality depends on tourism's attributes and how they are combined with these variables.

As a result of the findings, we conclude four driving modes of gender equality, namely the education-driven mode and economy-driven mode leading to high gender equality and tourism-employment-driven mode and economy-employment-driven mode leading to weak gender equality. We name the above four modes mode I, mode II, mode III, and mode IV, respectively.

Mode I corresponds to configuration ~ tourism*education. This mode indicates that regardless of the level of economic growth and female employment, as long as education is vigorously developed to improve women's education, high gender equality can be produced. Prior studies have confirmed the importance of female education to gender equality (Channa, 2015; Hong et al., 2019). Also, we found that the absence of tourism is the premise of education's promoting gender equality. That is, we should weaken the effects of tourism in the process of gender equality. The possible reason is that there are significant differences between women and men in both the pay gap and job level in tourism (Costa et al., 2017; Phommavong & Sörensson, 2014; Trupp & Sunanta, 2017). Mode I has the highest coverage (64.3%) and high explanatory power, indicating that such a mode is relatively universal in emerging economies. The typical case is Argentina. According to the World Bank data, Argentina has about 99% female literacy, but

Argentina is at the bottom of all instances for tourism. This implies that in Argentina, most women with knowledge and job skills serve many industries other than tourism, rather than being limited to a large number of low-level and low-paid tourism jobs. This education-driven mode dominated in both 2010 and 2018.

Mode II corresponds to configuration ~tourism*economy*~employment. This mode shows that regardless of the level of female education, as long as the economy is vigorously developed and low levels of tourism and female employment are maintained, high gender equality can be achieved. This mode implies that women can get more benefits from economic growth, thereby narrowing the gender gap. This finding is consistent with Damjanovic and Selvaretnam (2020) who found economic growth contributes to gender equality. Notably, this economic growth is less dependent on tourism. In this mode, the effect of tourism is also insignificant. The possible reasons lie in that first, economic growth replaces the function of tourism, thereby weakening the impact of tourism on gender equality. Second, as explained earlier, tourism fixes women in relatively low-income and low-level positions. In the meantime, the role of female employment is no longer significant. This seems to contradict the findings of Castellano and Rocca (2018) and Ferragina (2020) who argued that high female employment promotes gender equality. We know that women are employed to narrow the gender gap with men by increasing their economic income. In this mode, economic growth plays this role, enabling women to have more welfare support. However, high female employment does not necessarily lead to high gender equality, which is closely related to the nature of work, as discussed in tourism. The coverage of this model is relatively small, and the typical case is Romania. Among emerging economies, Romania has the highest GDP per capita. Despite its relatively low levels of tourism and female employment, Romania has an advantage over other emerging economies in terms of female welfare and rights, thanks to Europe's high welfare climate and gender culture (Bucur & Miroiu, 2018). Furthermore, we also found that from 2010 to 2018, this economy-driven mode became more prominent in Romania.

Mode III corresponds to configuration tourism*employment*~education. This mode is mostly the opposite of mode I. The difference is that employment is additionally introduced in this solution. This mode indicates that regardless of economic growth, gender equality remains weak as long as women's education level is low, even with high levels of tourism and female employment. This, on the one hand, confirms the importance of women's education to gender equality, on the other hand, reflects that increasing tourism and female employment does not narrow the gender gap. We deduce that in emerging economies, female employment and tourism participation are still significantly characterized by low-level and low-paid jobs. Mode III has the smallest coverage, and the typical case is China 2018. China ranks top in terms of both tourism and female employment among emerging economies; however, due to a relatively low level of female education, there is still a significant gap between women and men in terms of employment competitiveness in various industries (Golley, Zhou, & Wang, 2019). This results in a significant gender-based opportunity inequality in China's labor income.

Mode IV corresponds to configuration economy*employment*~education. This mode is similar to mode III. The difference is that tourism is replaced by the economy. This mode suggests that regardless of the development level of tourism, as long as the female education level is low, gender equality will remain low even if the economy and female employment are high. In the cases covered by this mode, women can only obtain lower economic growth benefits, suggesting a typical male-led economic growth. In addition, female jobs are also low-level and low-paid. This mode covers about 40% of the cases, and the typical country is Malaysia. Among the emerging economies, Malaysia ranks lower in female education. Women have fewer opportunities to be educated in Malaysia compared to other emerging countries. Despite the relatively high economic success, the conservative Islamic culture makes it more difficult for women to share social and economic benefits. Also, a low-level of female education makes female employment in Malaysia mainly concentrated in extensive service industries, including tourism (Noor & Mahudin, 2016). All of these lead to weak gender equality. Moreover, this mode does not change much over time.

In summary, our findings reveal the complexity of the process of how tourism affects the national gender equality. The results indicate that the change in gender equality must be explained by acknowledging tourism's dualities, especially its negativity and the complex reality of its combination with other vital variables. The relationship between tourism and the antecedents such as economy, education, and employment may be non-linear and has strong spatial properties. In different cases, the same combination of antecedents may generate a different outcome. Our results suggest that, despite a large amount of previous research on tourism and gender equality, the reality at the macro level may be more complicated.

In emerging economies, the effect of tourism on gender equality is unexpected. Tourism does not positively affect gender equality. On the contrary, slowing the development of tourism is more conducive to the realization of gender equality. This result is not consistent with those revealed in many micro cases. It is certainly possible that in specific sectors or micro cases in emerging economies such as a rural tourism destination, tourism may still contribute to gender equality. Yet, at the national level, we found no evidence of this. In emerging economies, we need to reexamine the idea that tourism contributes to gender equality. We also found that female education dominates gender equality. Concretely, female education's presence leads to high gender equality, and the absence of female education leads to weak gender equality. This implies that in emerging countries, attaching importance to female education is the most effective way to achieve gender equality. Besides, the driving model of gender equality in various emerging economies is relatively fixed and does not change significantly over time.

6. Concluding remarks

This study employed an fsQCA approach to explore the effects of tourism on gender equality, based on 20 cases of ten emerging economies at two time points, 2010 and 2018. Following the idea of the QCA, we simultaneously considered the influence of economic growth, female employment, and female education. The impact of tourism on gender equality at the national level is significantly different from that in some specific micro-cases or tourism sectors. Our results show that single tourism is neither necessary nor sufficient for gender equality. However, tourism affects gender equality in its own way by combining it with other variables such as the economy, employment, and education. We found four development modes leading to high or weak gender equality, namely the education-driven mode, economy-driven mode, tourism-employment-driven mode, and economy-employment-driven mode. We also found that these development patterns are time-stable in specific countries.

Our findings might extend the policy implications of how tourism affects national gender equality. First, the rapid development of tourism will not lead to high gender equality in its existing industrial characteristics, which will even be counterproductive. Second, it is possible for tourism that provides a large number of female jobs to promote women's status. The shaping and realization of gender equality in the tourism sectors can give a good model for society. Of course, the premise is to implement equal pay for equal work within the tourism industry, give women equal opportunities for promotion, and eliminate gender discrimination. In order to achieve these, the third policy implication is the most critical. That is, along with tourism development, women should be empowered more in the economy, employment and education. In particular, it is extremely necessary to strengthen the education of female employees in terms of knowledge improvement, skill training, management ability, and gender equality culture, so that women and men can be equally competitive in any tourism position. This will allow

women to fill more high-level, more skilled, higher-paying jobs, thereby narrowing the gender gap.

As a conclusion of this study, we present the limitations and future improvements. In terms of the selection of variables, in addition to tourism, we introduce three key variables affecting gender equality, namely the economy, employment, and education. Some other factors affecting the realization of gender equality, such as cultural ones mentioned in some studies, are not covered in our research. Future research might therefore incorporate these political and cultural variables if they can be quantified. Besides, the QCA method fails to quantify the relationships between the outcome and each antecedent variable and among the antecedent variables. In the future, we could employ the panel data analysis techniques to investigate these relationships, which can significantly advance this tourism subfield.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

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