

# Transgenerational Entrepreneurship Potential Towards the Food Family Businesses' Sustainability in Langkawi, Malaysia

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**Abstract:** *Transgenerational entrepreneurial behaviour in family businesses goes past simple increasing trades, head count, or profits. Family business tycoons construct and encourage a growth and learning-oriented culture in both family and business matters, and they cultivate entrepreneurial behaviour in their relatives of all ages. Therefore, this study aims to explore the potential of transgenerational entrepreneurship towards the sustainability of food-based family businesses in Langkawi. Qualitative method had been used to understand the said potential via in depth interviews. The transcript had been analysed through content and thematic analysis. The findings revealed the potential of transgenerational entrepreneurship can be achieved from the resilience of the food-based family business as well as the sustainability of food tourism by receiving support and recognition from the local community and embracing innovativeness contribute to the sustained of these businesses in Langkawi. Hence, family businesses in Langkawi can secure their place in the business landscape while preserving their cultural heritage and making valuable contributions to the community's overall well-being.*

**Keywords:** Transgenerational entrepreneurial, family business, sustainability, resilience

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## 1. Introduction

The crucial success elements for family business frequently offer useful insight into how innate qualities like flexibility and adaptability can benefit the local community. To deal with situational issues, such as the capacity to handle incidence and other patterns throughout their increase over time, the ages (Beech et al., 2020). In this instance, their companies overcame the economic and social hardships brought on by the crisis and offer theoretical ideas on comprehending resilience and sustainability in the growth of the tourist industry (Ge & Campopiano, 2021). As a result, there is evidence that the presence of family businesses and transgenerational enterprises within the setting of family businesses has the special capacity to be the resilient factor (Calabrò et al., 2021). Prince et al. (2021) stated that due to the lack of a conceptually valid definition of entrepreneurship applicable to community tourist business and entrepreneurship, this is not being translated as a model for policy development. Although

various classifications have been created, academics are still at odds over the correct classification and interpretation for policy implementation.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship is the indication of business persistence and achievement; it is fundamental source of revolution in all facets of society (Porfírio et al., 2020). It authorizes persons to seek prospects where others discover perverse problems. An entrepreneur never crashes because business will be the capital for either new business scheme creations or change the trade field. This motion reinforced by the improvement of the latest venture creations or an entrepreneur to stipulate better services, products, or inexpensive resolution (Puzi et al., 2020). A study by Dilli et al. (2018) stated that there are various types of entrepreneurships that exist in this world and one of the notorious trading from long period of time ago, is the business that include family generations, or in other words, it is transgenerational entrepreneurship. Barbera et al. (2018) in their study stated that transgenerational entrepreneurship can be defined as the process through which a family uses and develop entrepreneurial mindsets and family influenced resources and capabilities to create new steams of entrepreneurial, financial, and social value across generations. Family business tycoons construct and encourage a growth and learning-oriented culture in both family and the business, and they strengthen entrepreneurial behavior in their relatives of all ages. They encourage the business heirs to be alert to their environment to spot and take advantage of profit chances (Dou et al., 2020). There has been considerable number of theories tested regarding the interaction amid entrepreneurship, the family and business families, where empirical study has essentially studied the connection between the entrepreneur and the family, focusing on how an individual's tendency to become an entrepreneur is molded by his or her family (Dou et al., 2020). The distinctiveness of family businesses is that family firms have a huge sense of family affection and ownership majorly are in hand of the family members (Amran & Che Ahmad, 2011). Previous research has studied the success of family firm or family business was postulate from few dimensions, which are firm entrepreneurial orientations and familiness that can affect their financial, social and market performance (Basco et al., 2019; Puzi et al., 2020). This study however will be two dimensions namely resilience dimension and food tourism sustainability as the key to transgenerational potential towards the food-based family businesses in Langkawi.

Moreover, one of the most highlighted operations of family business in Malaysia is families' food business namely Old China Café (Kuala Lumpur), Cendol Kampung Hulu (Melaka), Foh Sam Dim Sum (Ipoh), Little India (Kuala Lumpur) and Restoran Bismillah (Pulau Pinang) (Ng, 2020). Food-based family business appears to be all over Malaysia. Numerous establishments are believed to be family-owned businesses (Mosbah et al., 2017). But it comes to the study attention that the priority are places where tourists are either locals or foreign are attracted to. This is because tourist attracted location can contribute to economic development for the country (Star et al., 2020). This study will be focusing more to the small-medium street's food-based family businesses in Langkawi. Langkawi Island is chosen because of its community competencies to develop the island to be a tourist terminus in Malaysia (Puzi et al., 2020). In a study by Ismail et al. (2019), it was believed that Langkawi Island have shown resilience during economic crisis, where its family businesses were able to survive, grow and prosper positively. In addition, numerous of these family trades have progressed into second generation, as they did not close but have long-drawn-out and inspired family members and the loftier community. Malaysian cities such those recognized in rural tangential island destination, such as Langkawi have been able to acclimate and recuperate in the face of economic slump (Ismail et al., 2019). Besides, this research will be converging on small-medium entrepreneurship of street's food-based family businesses in Langkawi, Malaysia. This focus will fill in the gap from previous

study by Tan et al. (2019) where the study carried out only generalize its targeted group settings, hence this study will use different settings, as aforementioned, to cater the need of the research where the targeted group would be food-based family business where their experienced incumbent would be the informant for this study.

## 2. Methodology

The research design of this study is a qualitative setting. The primary research design for this project will be a case study. An in-depth study of a particular subject, such as a person, place, event, organisation, or phenomena, is known as a case study (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Each informant is required to fill out a consent form as part of the interview guide to confirm their voluntary involvement. They were made aware of their right to renounce or stop participating at any time.

It was conceivable to gain multiple perspectives that would advance our knowledge of how to sustain family businesses from generation to generation for a longer period of time through exploring the perceptions of people who have experienced the issue in question. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the researcher investigates a contemporary, real-world bounded system (a case). To do this, the researcher collects detailed, in-depth data from a variety of sources, including observations, interviews, audio-visual material, documents, and reports (Creswell, 2018). The participants are chosen from a pool of family business restaurant owner around Langkawi Island. In order to discuss the transgenerational potential among food businesses owner in Langkawi, content analysis is utilized as it is beneficial when dealing with large data sets, as it provides a structured and systematic approach to categorize and analyse the data. On the other hand, thematic analysis is also employed for data analysis as it give in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and meanings as well as a contextual understanding of the research topic (Lewis, 2015).

## 3. Findings

The Informants of this study are experienced incumbent and successor of the family-oriented food business industry. Brief particulars of the informants are reflected in the Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Informant(s) Particulars**

Informant(s)	Age	Location	Successor/Incumbent	Nature of Food Business
Informant 1	48	Kedawang	Incumbent	Restaurant
Informant 2	51	Kedawang	Incumbent	Restaurant
Informant 3	47	Padang Matsirat	Incumbent	Hawker/Stall
Informant 4	69	Ulu Melaka	Incumbent	Restaurant
Informant 5	55	Ulu Melaka	Incumbent	Restaurant
Informant 6	54	Kuah	Incumbent	Restaurant

### 3.1 Sustainability of Food Tourism Sector in Langkawi

This section will highlight the sustainability of food tourism sector in Langkawi Island. The tourism industry's sustainability is essential to preserving its long-term profitability and reducing any negative effects. The sustainability of food tourism and potential of transgenerational business are found to be highly related (Bhatia et al., 2022).

The first component of sustainable food tourism is the adapting the sustainable practices such offering exceptional and ethical travel experiences, the tourism industry can help preserve

natural resources, support local communities, and promote economic progress. In this study, informants emphasize that the surrounding community are utilizing and buying local food which they foster the economic growth of the island's economy (Sakshi et al., 2020).

*“Local tourist tends to support hawker-style stall compare to high-end restaurant around the island.” (Informant 3)*

*“As a family business has been established for quite so long, people especially local communities will always dine in in a family-oriented restaurant like us where most of the customer said that food from this particular establishment can fulfil their taste preference.” (Informant 5)*

*“Tourist who visited Langkawi Island usually will be guide to a famous restaurant where most of them is a family business restaurant that serves variety of local or traditional foods.” (Informant 3)*

The above interview align with Okumus (2021) statement saying that in the context of food tourism, which involves tourists looking for authentic culinary experiences and learning about local food cultures, sustainability is an important factor.

In order to maintain economic sustainability in the culinary tourism industry, all stakeholders must share economic gains fairly (Star et al., 2020). This entails encouraging projects for community-based tourism as well as helping local farmers, artisans, and restaurateurs. They noted that through promoting patronage of local eateries, culinary tourism may boost local economies, generate opportunities for employment, and contribute to the general economic growth of the location.

*“Our restaurant bought ingredients for our daily operations from the local farmers as a mark of supporting them to boost their economy. We have built a strong bond of relationship with the local suppliers that they already what we want to order every single day when we visit their shop.” (Informant 4)*

*“People not only visited Langkawi Island for holiday purpose only, some came here to look for a job. We as restaurateurs are glad to hire this young, ambitious generations where they can gain little experience before moving on for a better job, same as I was back then when my mother offer me to work at this restaurant as a waiter. My son as well is working with me right now, he said that he has developed an interest in being part of this family business.” (Informant 1)*

### **3.2 Resilience as part of Langkawi Transgenerational Business Potential.**

This part of the study will emphasize on the relation of Transgenerational Entrepreneurship Potential with resilience. Resilience is crucial for organisational success in the business world. Highly resilient businesses are better able to adapt to market changes, foresee and manage risks, and keep their competitive advantage. Additionally, resilience can aid businesses in forging closer connections with their stakeholders, employees, and customers (Liu et al., 2020). Resilience is paramount for a family business restaurant to thrive in the face of challenges. The ability to adapt and remain flexible is crucial in an industry that experiences changing consumer demands and economic fluctuations (Beech et al., 2020).

*“Although our business was hit hard by the pandemic of COVID-19, we manage to get back on our feet, together as a family. We believe that people needed food, so we stay put and continue to pray, luckily our food business are getting better day after day.” (Informant 6)*

*“My daughter is the one who saved our family business restaurant, she learns how to promote products online, she is the one who manage our daily operation so that our business won’t hit the wall just yet. She kept it alive.” (Informant 2)*

The above highlight aligns with the literature that says adaptability to new technology is a live saver. Resilient family business restaurants leverage technology to streamline their operations and improve efficiency. This includes adopting reservation management systems, online ordering platforms, and digital marketing strategies. By embracing technology, these restaurants can adapt to changing consumer behaviours and stay relevant in the digital age (Dan, 2019).

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of transgenerational entrepreneurship potential in family businesses in Langkawi highlights the crucial role it plays in ensuring their long-term sustainability. The unique cultural and economic landscape of Langkawi presents a prolific environment for these businesses to thrive across generations. The findings of this article emphasize the significance of strong family ties, resilience, and intergenerational transfer of knowledge in maintaining the continuity of family businesses. Additionally, the support and recognition from the local community, coupled with the ability to embrace innovation and adapt to changing market trends, contribute to the sustained growth and success of these businesses. By doing so, family businesses in Langkawi can secure their place in the business landscape while preserving their cultural heritage and making valuable contributions to the community's overall well-being. Besides, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) embraced by the Malaysian Government, under the 12<sup>th</sup> Pillar, namely, Responsible Consumption and Production, Langkawi food tourism sector can focus on promoting sustainable practices in food production, minimizing food waste, and supporting local sourcing of ingredients. Emphasizing sustainable and locally sourced food options can help reduce the sector's environmental footprint and promote responsible consumption, hence there is a need for future research to be carried out to ensure that food tourism especially food-based family business can sustain for the longer term. One research limitation related to the experience while conducting the research in a food-based family business study could be the potential bias or subjective interpretation of data. Family members who are actively involved in the business may have personal biases or preconceived notions about certain aspects of the business, which could influence their responses during interviews or surveys. To mitigate this limitation, researchers should be mindful of their own biases and strive to maintain objectivity throughout the data collection and analysis process.



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