A latent class approach to examining migrant family travel behavior

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ABSTRACT

Despite numerous studies suggesting the presence or absence of children influence family vacation travel, there has been little focus on migrant families. Latent class analysis was used to create empirically derived travel behaviour clusters of Western professional migrant families with and without children based on their motive to move, self-concept and how they construct a sense of home in the Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions of China. The analysis identified six distinct classes. Three groups were families without children and the rest were those with children. Each segment has markedly different travel behavior patterns with differences in demographic and migration characteristics also apparent. Implications for tourism management and future research are discussed.

1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to compare the travel behaviour of professional migrant families with children and those without on the basis of their motive to move, self-concept and sense of belonging. Most of the research on professional migrant families has concentrated on how children influence the family migration decision-making process and family adjustment to the new host country (Bushin, 2009; Goede & Berg, 2018). Little empirical research has focused on family holidays and even fewer studies examine how the presence or absence of children shapes family travel behavior (Carr, 2011; Khoo-Lattimore & Prayag, 2015; Michie, 1986; Thornton et al., 1997). This omission is surprising because several studies have shown the size and tourism potential of the migrant family market (Feng & Page, 2000; Gamage & King, 1999; Kang & Page, 2000; Klemm, 2002). A growing number of families who move abroad take their children with them (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008; McNulty, 2012). Even for childless families, going on family vacation provides opportunities for dealing with serious adjustment challenges as result of the move abroad (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008; Slobodin, 2019; Zimmermann et al., 2003).

Professional migrant families move for a variety of reasons. Their self-concept and aspects of themselves which are most relevant to who they are, impact on how they construct their sense of belonging in host country (Hay, 1998). The interface between the decision to move, self-concept and sense of belonging could impact their vacation behaviour. For example, Yankholmes and McKercher (2019) found a relationship between migrants who feel attached or unattached to the dominant host culture and/or who perceive themselves as permanent or temporary migrants with home-return travel propensity and the desire to travel throughout the region where they are located.

Although substantial tourism research has been carried out on family vacation travel, some shortcomings remain, for few studies have directly addressed the diversity present within families with or without children (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2014; Thornton et al., 1997). This paper examines the differences in the travel behavior of professional migrants with and without children using a sample of Western immigrants living in the Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions (SARs) of China. The purpose of this analysis is to extend knowledge in the area by pursuing two research questions: (1) how does the travel behaviour of families with children differ from those without children, and (2) are these segments significantly different across demographic and migration characteristics? For the purpose of this study, family includes those with and without children, as well as single individuals whose parents may live overseas. This broad definition is in line with Schänzel and Yeoman's (2015) recognition that the concept of 'family' is in a state of reconceptualization and can include networks of loosely connected family members who devise fresh approaches to cohesion and solidarity.

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2. Influence of the presence or absence of children on family migration and its implications for vacation travel

The migration literature suggests the presence or absence of children influences motive to move, and willingness and ability to adjust to the host country (Selmer & Lam, 2004; White et al., 2011). It tends to classify migrants into one of two categories, with each being motivated to move for different reasons. The first group, the 'directed' migrant, is posted overseas by his or her employer, usually on fixed term, short stay basis (Harrison et al., 2004). The second group involves 'self-directed' migrants, who relocate abroad on their own volition normally with no definite time frame in mind (Cole, 2012; Richardson, 2006). 'Directed' migrants are motivated in large part by both career development and lifestyle opportunities, although other motives such as the job itself, including the compensation package, the opportunity to have new experiences and personal interest in international experience play a part in the decision-making process (Dickmann et al., 2008). To them the overseas assignment aids their career development, especially in their ability to develop a repertoire of skills that could be applicable across a wide range of jobs (Suutari et al., 2012). By contrast, the opportunity for travel, the search for new experiences and the desire for an adventure/challenge emerge as dominant factors among most self-directed migrants, with career opportunities being less important (McNulty & Brewster, 2017). Changes in family circumstances, including marriage or family breakdown, have also been identified as influencing some self-directed migrants.

This dichotomous classification is overly simplistic, though, especially when one considers presumed length of stay. True, the length of stay of many 'directed' migrants is both short and fixed, but many others who initially arrive with the expectation of short term stays prolong their stays and eventually seek permanent residence in the host country (Khoo et al., 2008; Tsuda, 1999). They do this by either asking their employer to extend their posting or by job swapping. This issue is especially common among Westerners in Asia, where there is a degree of cachet associated with hiring Western foreigners, for their presence indicates the organisation has 'internationalised' (Lan, 2011). In a similar manner, many 'self-directed' migrants often extend their stays well beyond their initial planning horizon (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2008; Inkson & Myers, 2003; Tsuda, 1999).

Moving to another country can be daunting experience (Inkson et al., 1997; Haslberger & Brewster, 2008). It is for this reason the migration literature reports that generally while married individuals are less willing to move internationally than single people, men with a partner/or child are more likely to move abroad than women with a partner and/or child (Takeuchi et al., 2007; Tharenou, 2008). In addition, Chiotis-Leskowich (2009) and Dupuis et al. (2008) report that families with school-age children are reluctant to move abroad because of the risk of social and educational disruption, and when they do move, parents demonstrate a strong desire to maintain their subcultural identity (Groves & O'Connor, 2018; Tanner, 2007).

A critical issue is how well and how completely the professional migrant adjusts to the new country. How fully an individual can integrate into the host community also depends on the level of social, racial and economic acceptance within that community. Individuals who are socially, racially and economically marginalized will face greater challenges and may feel excluded (Chen et al., 2008). McKercher and Yankholmes (2018) added that adjustment for many Westerners in Asia relates less to fitting into the dominant local ethnic culture and more with adjusting to the parallel expatriate cultural bubble with its own institutions, school systems and social networks. Goede and Berg's (2018) systematic review of the literature revealed mixed results regarding how well expatriate families adjust to the host culture, with the failure of the trailing spouse or children to adjust affecting the jobholder's sociopsychological wellbeing (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008; McNulty, 2012; Truman et al., 2011). Interestingly, children especially older ones, can play an important role in the adjustment process. Some

help in translation as they are able to learn the host-country language easily and quickly, while others help forge adult social networks through their own friendship or school groups (Harvey, 2008; McNulty, 2012). However, some other children experience difficulties with identity development, making friends, fitting in, being successful at school and/or reporting higher cumulative risk associated with depressive symptoms (Lucier-Greer et al., 2015; Weeks et al., 2010). The net result is greater stress on parents.

Migrants construct a sense of belonging based on their length of residence and self-concept in the new country (Froese, 2012; Hay, 1998), with the longer people stay in the migrant destination, the more likely they develop a sense of belonging there (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). Migrants who self-define as temporary residents are least likely to try to set down roots in the new community and instead often remain rooted in their home culture and isolate themselves from the host culture or other migrants from different cultures. On the other hand, those who see themselves as permanent migrants tend to see themselves as integrating more into the local culture (Yankholmes & McKercher, 2019).

Importantly, from the perspective of this paper, how well migrant families adjust will affect their travel behaviour. Selmer and Leung (2007) and Zimmerman et al. (2003) reported that people who have difficulty adjusting may seek pleasure travel as an escape valve from everyday experiences of all kinds. In particular, home-return travel can represent a needed mental health break for individuals experiencing adjustment issues. The literature suggests even those who seem to cope well still value home-return travel as a means of exploring their ethnic links (Feng & Page, 2000; Kang & Page, 2000; Klemm, 2002; Ndione et al., 2018), making sure their children do not get away from their 'home' culture, language or kin (Selmer & Lauring, 2014; Thorne et al., 2001), to maintain social relationships, provide care to family members, maintain territorial rights, or simply to engage in a form of leisure tourism (Janta et al., 2015).

The issue of family travel among migrants, though is less well understood. Much has been written about the influence children have on travel in general (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005), with children thought to be important influencers in the family decision-making process irrespective of the situational and contextual factors (Michie, 1986; Thornton et al., 1997). For example, Carr (2011) and Schänzel, Yeoman and Backer (2012) found children exert a considerable effect on the selection of family vacation activities and duration of stay, while Hunter-Jones (2014) and Woodside et al. (2004) found evidence to support the conclusion that children's leisure socialization influences their choice of travel destinations when they become adults. Children may also represent a constraining factor, inhibiting travel propensity (Lawson, 1991; Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008; Wen, 2020) and family holiday travel demand (Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002; Milkie *at al.*, 2004).

Importantly, Schänzel and Yeoman (2014) note that family tourism is about the emotional element of sociality experienced in being together with family that helps strengthen family relationships. Here, they note holidays enable extended families to spend time together engaging in different types of activities than they would do in their everyday life. In doing so, positive benefits accrue to adults, children and couples. Durko and Petrick (2013) and Schänzel (2013) add that due to increasing work pressures and the changing of family structures, pleasure travel provides an opportunity to maximize together time and to strengthen social connections.

Taken together, the body of research in migration suggest that the presence or absence of children influence family migration decision-making process and subsequent adjustment to their new country (Goede & Berg, 2018; White et al., 2011; McNulty, 2012). By the same token, tourism researchers have investigated the family vacation decision making and influence of children on family leisure travel (Carr, 2011; Khoo-Lattimore & Prayag, 2015; Rojas-de-Gracia & Alarcon-Urbistondo, 2016; Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015). As might be expected, these studies link the presence of children to significantly lower levels of active family vacation travel relative to not having

children in the household. However, comparisons of travel behaviour between families with children and those without were mostly done with limited attention paid to either the diversity present within households with or without the presence of children or theoretical specification of the ways migrant family vacation travel differs from that of the general population (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2014; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Expanding the typology of family vacation to encompass migrant families adds value to our understanding of family vacation (Janta et al., 2015).

3. Western expats in Hong Kong and Macau

The Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (CSD) produced a thematic report on ethnic minorities in the territory based on the results of the 2011 census (CSD, 2012). Ethnic minorities are defined as persons of non-Chinese ethnicity. The 2011 census included a category of 'White, ' an official classification according to the Census and Statistics Department, to denote Caucasian citizens of Europe, North America and Oceania (CSD, 2012). About 55,200 people or 0.8% of the population were categorized as 'White', making them the fourth largest ethnic group behind Chinese (93.6%), Indonesians (1.9%) and Filipinos (1.9%). Men in the workforce reported a median annual income of more than US$90,000, while women working full time earned US$50,000. This figure compares positively to the median income for all residents of US$17,000 per annum. The actual figures reported in the Hong Kong 2011 census may be low for HSBC (2016) survey of expatriates reported a median household income of US$170,000 per annum. About 78% of 'Whites' were born outside of Hong Kong, with those born within the SAR typically children. Their median age was 38 and two thirds were married. Three-quarters are university graduates. Among the married male population, more than half (56%) are married to people of the same ethnicity, while one quarter are married to an ethnically Chinese person and the rest to people of other ethnicities. Among married females, 89% are married to 'White' males.

Precise comparison with Macau is not possible because of difficulties encountered in finding information on the size and composition of the Western population there. However, anecdotal evidence suggests Westerners in Macau represent a similarly privileged income, education and professional group. The population is much smaller and probably represents fewer than 10,000 individuals (DSEC, 2012), although this figure may also be somewhat inflated as Macau documents people by nationality and not race. About 8000 were born in Europe, North America or Oceania (DSEC, 2012). Among those who had resided outside of Asia before, half have lived in Macau for five years or less, 30% have lived here for between five and 14 years and 20% have lived in Macau for more than 14 years. People of Portuguese extraction have tended to live in Macau even longer, on average.

The 'foreign' communities in both cities are quite socially diverse and consist of short stay 'expats', long-term Western migrants and a third group of 'undecided' migrants who are here on an open-ended basis, but who have not decided to make either Macau or Hong Kong their home. They may reflect what King Christou & Ahrens (2011) refer to as people who have a 'myth' of home return. These short term so-called 'guest migrants' or expats are morphing into long term immigrants but are still preserving their ethnic community characteristics and still maintain the myth of returning home some day, which may or may not occur. The first two groups have little to do with each other, as they move in different social circles. The third group is in a somewhat difficult situation as they eventually shift affiliations from the first to the second group. Indeed, Leonard (2008) argues the cultural divide between new and long-term immigrants is so large that some long-term residents disassociate themselves from newer expatriates.

Prior research has observed how colonial legacies make places like Hong Kong and Macau particularly appealing to expatriates. Wang et al. (2014) noted that many British citizens are still drawn to Hong Kong because of pre-existing colonial social and institutional linkages and

power relations between Hong Kong and the UK continue to be reproduced in the present. Amaro (2016) reached the same conclusion when examining Portuguese in Macau. The author found that the combination of higher wages and better working conditions coupled with the durable sense of superiority embedded from colonial times made Macau an appealing place to relocate. Studies also indicate that even though expat children adjusted well in Hong Kong (Selmer & Lauring, 2014), their parents are concerned about preserving their cultural identity in the selection of local schools (Groves & O'Connor, 2018).

4. Method

The purpose of this study is to compare travel behaviour of migrant families with children to those without children. The paper draws on data collected as part of a larger study of Western migrants' pleasure travel patterns. Respondents were recruited through a procedure described in detail by McKercher and Yankholmes (2018) and summarized briefly below. Both purposive and snowball sampling were employed, with data collected via face-to-face paper and online surveys. The target population was Western residents who had lived in either SAR for at least one year. Two rounds of data collection were undertaken. The first round involved the online survey and operated from June to October 2016, targeted at members of specific professional social groups. An insufficiently large sample size was gathered and so the research team decided on a second round of face to face interviews conducted between November and December 2016 that involved research assistants who recruited people directly in neighborhoods with a large Western population and at events that appealed to Westerners.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts and was derived based primarily on the extant tourism literature on travel by Western migrants. The first section sought information on the respondents' migration history, length of stay, reasons for moving, the role opportunity to travel played in their migration decision and their sense of place attachment. The second part gathered information on their pleasure travel patterns, including the importance of travel and their self-assessment level of travel experience. To measure travel propensity, respondents were asked to indicate the main destinations for long (2 weeks or longer), medium (7–13 nights) and short (1–6 nights) duration trips they had taken in the preceding year. Follow-up questions asked if the frequency of trips and choice of destinations has changed since they moved, and if so, to explain why. The third section consisted of a series of questions about the role of children in the travel decision-making process and family holiday travel behavior. The present analyses were limited to responses to those questions. The respondents were asked whether children influenced their vacation plans and to rate the importance of home-return trips. They were also asked to indicate whether or not it is common for families with school-aged children to take a long holiday with one parent while the other parent stays and works and if yes whether or not other parent then joined the family for part of the trip. Finally, the questionnaire requested respondents to answer a number of demographic questions such as age, employment status, annual leave allowances, marital status and annual household income.

Of the total 1122 useable questionnaires received, 635 (56.5%) were from Macau and 487 (43.4%) from Hong Kong. Statistical analysis was conducted using IBM Statistics SPSS® 26 and latent class analysis using Latent GOLD software. First, equivalence and representativeness of two data samples were computed using bivariate analysis with Chi-square tests. The analysis found no statistically significant differences between the off-line and on-line survey scores. Second, characteristics of respondents with and without children were compared. Third, a latent class model was estimated in order to determine the existence of distinct segments of respondents. Latent class analysis examines the joint probability of multiple variables in this case designated X and Y (Fig. 1). Unlike *k*-means clustering procedure, latent class uses a model-based approach that enables selection of the clustering criteria as well as statistical tests for selection of the number of clusters (Bakk & Vermunt,
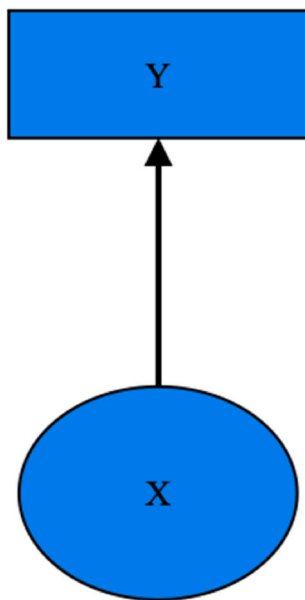
Fig. 1. Latent class overview.

2016). This paper uses a 3-step approach where the processes of identifying classes and predicting variables are separate analytical steps (Lanza et al., 2013).

This three-step approach is of value in exploratory studies because it separates the membership model from the classification model. The measurement model between the latent variable (X: travel range in this study) and indicators (Y) is first established and validated (Bauer & Curran, 2003). This is of value in research as the addition of covariates may change the number of classes. In the present study, the indicators used were motivation to move, self-concept and sense of belonging (Fig. 2).

Next, cases or entities were assigned to latent classes using scores from model indicators. The number of classes were identified from the most parsimonious significant model (p > .05) in terms of log likelihood and Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC). Once the number of classes were determined, the grouping variable of children (Yes/No) was added to enable comparison of class structure. Group comparison were analyzed using Chi-square with adjusted standardized residuals and independent *t*-test and Welsh's *F* test (with Games-Howell test for post hoc analysis) as appropriate. An alpha level of 0.05 was used to establish statistical significance for all tests.

5. Results

The data analysis followed two stages. First, migrant families with children and those without were compared on their demographic profile and travel patterns to identify items with the highest predictive power. Second, a latent class model was constructed using the constituent variables.

5.1. Comparison between migrant families with and without children

Table 1 presents the profile of the two sets of respondents. Just over half of the sample (53%) did not have children. Unsurprisingly, those with children were more likely to be partnered, as one third of those without children were single. Parents also tended to be older, reside for longer periods of time in either Macau or Hong Kong and earned higher incomes than non-parents. Typically, they were 'self-directed' migrants who relocated for both lifestyle and economic reasons, while childless migrants tended to move for economic reasons, suggesting a higher proportion of 'directed' migrants. Parents also stated they were staying in Hong Kong or Macau for both lifestyle and economic reasons while those without children were staying principally for economic reasons. While a majority of respondents indicated Hong Kong or Macau felt like 'home', parents were far more likely to express this opinion. By contrast, one in five migrants without children said these places definitely do not feel like home. Families with children expressed a strong sense of belonging and thought of themselves as permanent migrants.

5.2. Impact of the presence or absence of children on family travel behaviour

Table 2 compares the travel behaviour of both groups of respondents. While the vast majority of both groups took overnight vacations outside of their respective SARs, parents with children were slightly less likely to travel. The literature suggests the opportunity to travel may play a role in the migration decision-making process (Lauring et al., 2014). This study corroborated that finding, as in both cases, about 75% of respondents said the opportunity to travel played some to a very important role in the migration decision, with no difference noted between childless respondents and those with children.

Travel patterns varied widely between the two groups, though. Respondents with children self-assessed as having more travel experience than those without children, likely as a factor of both age differences and a greater sense of adventuresomeness as reflected in the higher importance placed on lifestyle factors as a reason to migrate. Expat parents took more trips a year on average than non-parents. No differences were noted in the propensity to engage in short haul travel. However, parents did participate more in long haul travel and, in particular, engaged in
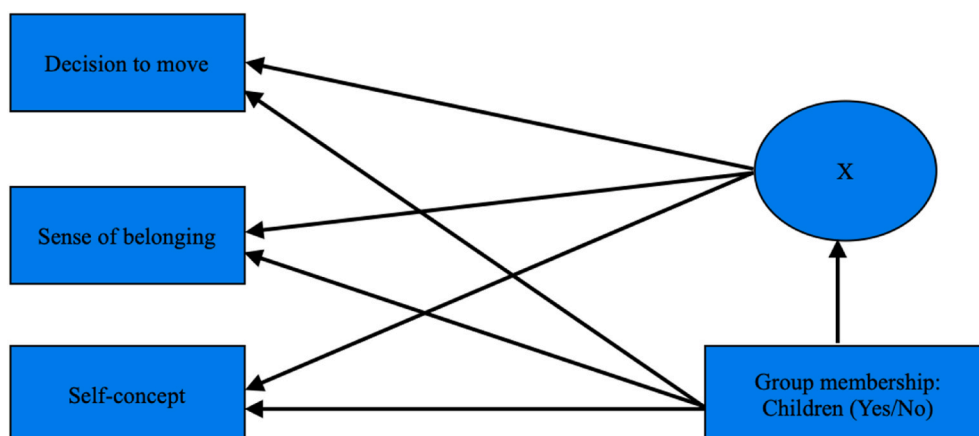

Fig. 2. Measurement model including group membership.

Table 1
Characteristics of migrant families with or without children.

Variable	All	Without children (n = 618)	With Children (n = 544)	Test score
Age (yr.)				$\chi^2 (4) =$
18–24	3.3	6.1	0.2	180.402, p <
25–34	23.8	37.1	8.9	.001*
35–44	35.8	30.4	42.0	
45–54	24.3	15.7	34.0	
>55	12.7	10.7	15.0	
% Marital status				$\chi^2 (1) =$
Partnered	78.4	63.8	94.6	159.644, p <
Single	21.6	36.2	5.4	.001*
Mean of length of residency: yr.	11.26 ± 10.21	9.70 ± 9.19	13.31 ± 11.04	t (1058.526) = −6001, p < 001*
Earnings per annum *(categories)*				$\chi^2 (4) =$ 86.540, p <
< US$65,000	17.6	24.8	8.6	.001*
US$65,000 - < US$130,000	27.2	29.9	23.8	
US$130,000 - < US$260,000	30.0	28.3	32.2	
US$260,000 - < US$390,000	16.7	13.2	21.0	
> US$390,000	8.5	3.8	14.4	
% Decision to move				$\chi^2 (2) =$
Lifestyle reasons	18.7	19.4	17.8	19.888, p <
Equally for lifestyle and economic reasons	42.7	36.8	49.5	.001*
Economic reasons	38.6	43.8	32.7	
% Decision to stay				$\chi^2 (2) =$
Lifestyle reasons	16.2	15.1	17.5	28.342, p <
Equally for lifestyle and economic reasons	48.4	42.6	55.0	.001*
Economic reasons	35.4	42.4	27.4	
Sense of belonging (Does Hong Kong or Macau feel like home?)				$\chi^2 (2) =$ 42.282, p < .001*
Definitely not	17.6	21.5	12.9	
Not yet, but hopefully some day	12.1	16.1	7.1	
Definitely	70.3	62.4	80.0	
Self-concept				$\chi^2 (2) =$
Feel like a permanent migrant	53.2	47.0	61.0	26.593, p < .001*
Feel like a temporary worker whose length of stay is open-ended but not long term	36.1	39.2	32.3	
Feel like a contract employee with a fixed length of stay	10.6	13.8	6.7	
% Intended length of stay	13.4	17.6	8.6	$\chi^2 (3) =$ 23.501, p <
1 year or less 2 or 3 years	11.0	12.1	9.7	.001*
4 or more - stated number	9.0	8.3	9.7	
Open-ended	66.7	62.1	71.9	

*Difference significant at *p* < .05.

Table 2
Impact of the presence or absence of children on travel behaviour.

	All (n = 1162)	Without children (n = 618)	With children (n = 544)	Test score
Did they travel? (% yes)	89.4	100.0	92.6	$\chi^2 (2) =$ 47.061, p = < .001*
% Importance of travel in the migration decision				$\chi^2 (2) =$ 1.825, p = .401
Played no role	23.6	22.0	25.4	
Played some role	46.1	57.8	55.0	
A very important to move	30.3	20.2	19.6	
% Travel experience				$\chi^2 (2) =$
An inexperienced tourist	4.4	14.9	10.3	9.381, p < .009*
Average experience	31.5	24.6	21.0	
Experienced tourist	64.1	60.5	68.7	
Mean number of trips	3.73 ± 2.54	3.18 ± 2.34	3.68 ± 2.50	t (1120) = −3.445, p < .001*
Home-return travel (% yes)	42.3	37.7	47.0	$\chi^2 (1) =$ 12.076, p < .001*
Did long-haul travel (% yes)	67.4	61.5	74.6	$\chi^2 (1) =$ 21.723, p < .001*
Did short-haul travel (% yes)	87.7	88.0	87.3	$\chi^2 (1) =$ .135, p = .713
Took long duration vacation (2 weeks or more) (% yes)	53.5	53.1	60.8	$\chi^2 (1) =$ 6.978, p < .008
Took medium duration trip (7–13 nts) (% yes)	65.4	70.4	68.0	$\chi^2 (1) =$ .803, p = .370
Took short duration trip (1–6 nts) (% yes)	61.1	63.8	65.5	$\chi^2 (1) =$ .413, p = .520

* Difference significant at *p* < .05.

Table 3
Children's influence on travel plans.

% who say children influence travel plans	79.6
Is it common for families of school-aged children to take a long holiday with one parent while the other stays and work? (% yes)	45.9
Did the other parent then try to join the family for part of the trip (% yes)	84.8
% who agree it is important to take children to their 'home' country	90.5
% Reasons to take children to their home country (single response only)	36.0
It is important for them to know their relatives	48.4
It is important for them to know where they come from We plan to move back and feel it is important for them to have a sense of belonging in their future home	15.5

home-return travel more than families without children. Respondents with children were then asked about the role that children play in their travel decisions (Table 3). Almost 80% indicated that children do affect their travel plans, with a vast majority stating it is important to take them to their home country. Reasons cited included understanding their roots, getting to know their relatives and, for some, a means of beginning the adjustment process for their children when they eventually returned to their home country.

One interesting finding was the high likelihood of families taking split vacations, with the non-working spouse taking children on longer vacations, while the working spouse stayed behind. Most of those who stayed behind, though, tried to join for at least part of the vacation. When asked if this practice was common, just under half of parents with children (45.9%) agreed, although most of the working spouses (84.8%) tried to join the family for part of the trip. This issue is critical, given extreme time pressures placed on many working expatriates in Hong Kong and Macau. As Schänzel and Yeoman (2015) note, holidays are often the only time when the whole family spends time together. This time has important symbolic meaning for it provides one of the few opportunities for families to connect or reconnect without other pressures. Parents forsaking family time for work may have long term implications on family cohesiveness.

5.3. Latent class modelling

As the major purpose of the study was to examine the differences in the travel behavior of families with children and those without, a latent class regression analysis was performed to determine whether there were sub-groups of respondents with similar profiles. The most parsimonious significant model (p > .05) in terms of log likelihood and BIC scores was a 3-class model (Table 4). Once the three-class model was confirmed, the grouping variable of presence or absence of children in the household (yes or no) was added to create a 6-class model (3 without children classes and 3 with children classes).

In the final step, the estimated classes were used to establish the relationship with external variables of interest or covariates. For this research, the external variables were short, medium and long duration travel, the importance of family vacation and participation in home-return travel (Fig. 3).

The six latent classes range in size from 7.8% to 28.7% of the sample. Table 5 summarizes the characterization of each of the classes. This table is based on the latent class model findings shown in Table 6. The three latent class for the families without children group range in size from 14.9% to 22.4% of the sample. Class 1 (22.4%) displays relatively little interest in home-return travel. Instead, members show relatively high interest in both short and long duration travel. The most probable explanation for their interest in short regional trips may relate to their strong sense of belonging in Hong Kong and Macau as this subgroup felt like permanent residents who are planning to stay for long term. This group moved here for economic reasons and live together with their partners. We label this class "economic belongers".

Class 2 comprises 16% of the sample and displays travel behavior patterns in a manner similar with Class 1. Members are relatively more likely to undertake short, medium and long duration holidays. However, they are less likely to do home-return travel. They score high as permanent migrants who are planning to stay (or have stayed) for the long term. This class is labelled "lifestyle belongers".

Class 3 makes up 14.9% of the sample. Members feel like temporary workers whose length of stay is open-ended but definitely not permanent. They moved for economic reasons and definitely do not feel a sense of belonging to Hong Kong and Macau. They were less likely than other childless couples to participate in home-return travel and less likely to take long duration holiday and instead took short and medium duration holidays. They are labelled as "economic temporary non-belongers".

In the case of families with children, the segment sizes varied from eight percent to 29% of the sample. Class 4 comprises 28.7% of the sample and is not keen on home-return travel but more prone to short, medium and long duration family holidays. They are the least travel active group, as 20% indicated they did not travel for pleasure in the previous year. Members moved for both lifestyle and economic reasons and have the highest proportion of people who feel like permanent migrants who are planning to stay (or have stayed) for the long term. This subgroup had the strongest affirmative response to possessing a sense of belonging and so was named "balanced belongers".

People in Class 5 are most likely to participate in home-return travel as well as short, medium and long duration family vacation travel on regular basis. They take long duration trips to Europe and also seem to favor short-haul destinations within Asia. Members of this class consist mostly of people who moved for both lifestyles and economic reason and

who think of themselves as temporary workers whose length of stay is open-ended but definitely not permanent. As a result, this class is named "balanced temporary belongers".

Class 6 (7.8% of the sample) is the smallest group and is the complete opposite of Class 3 in terms of family travel behavior. Members have relatively little interest in travel in general, including home-return travel. Members moved for economic reasons, describe themselves as temporary workers whose length of stay is definitely not permanent and who do not feel a sense of belonging in Hong Kong and Macau. This group was labelled "economic temporary family non-belongers".

5.4. Differences among classes

To investigate whether the demographic characteristics and travel behaviour patterns differed among the six latent classes, a series of Chi-square and one-way ANOVA tests was performed. The results are shown in Table 7 and reveal the "economic belongers" group consists of partnered young professional migrants. Members have been here an average of eight years and do not plan to leave. By contrast, the "lifestyle belongers" are mostly partnered and slightly older (34% in the 35–44 age group). The "economic temporary non-belongers" comprises younger single individuals and are overrepresented in the lowest income group. They have lived here for relatively shorter periods of time and have open-ended stays. Those identified as "balanced belongers" were predominantly partnered. They were relatively higher earners who have lived here longer than the other groups. "Balanced temporary belongers," were partnered, 35–44 years old and equally spread across the income groups. They have lived here on average 5 years and have open-ended stays. Finally, among migrants identified as "economic temporary family non-belongers", the majority were partnered, aged 35–44 years and on relatively high incomes. They have lived here on average 4 years and while self-defining as temporary residents, have no immediate plans to leave.

No significant differences were noted among the six cohorts in relation to gender, country of origin of trailing spouse and place of residence of partner. However, differences did emerge with age, marital status, length of residency, intended length of stay and income. The "economic belongers" was more likely to be partnered, heavily over-represented in 25–34 age category, earn between US$130,000 and US$260,000 a year, resided here relatively longer on average than "economic temporary non-belongers" and have open stays. A significantly greater proportion of professional migrants in the "lifestyle belongers" group were partnered, aged between 35 and 44, had relatively high incomes, resided in either Hong Kong or Macau for 13 years on average and were unsure about how long they expected to remain. The "economic temporary non-belongers" was more likely to be in the 25–35 age group, single, have a relatively low household income, lived here less compared to the "economic belongers" and is less likely to become permanent resident. The "balanced belongers" could best be described as partnered, between 45 and 54 years, a family income in the range of US$130,000 to US$260,000, spent considerably more time here compared to "economic belongers" and the "economic temporary non-belongers". By contrast, members of the "balanced temporary belongers" cohort are composed of migrants in the 35–44 age bracket who are partnered, earn US$130,000 to US$260,000 a year, have lived in either SAR less than the "lifestyle belongers" and likely perceive their

Table 4
Fit indices for the latent class analysis to determine number of classes.

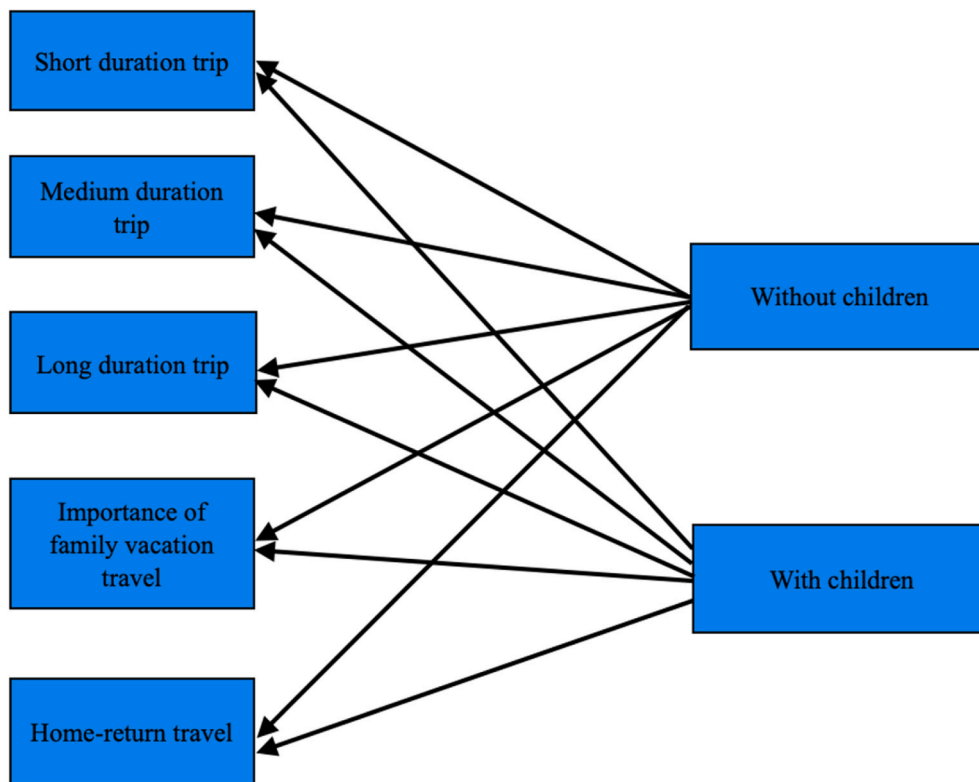|	LL	BIC(LL)	Npar	L²	df	p-value	Class. Err
3 class	−4505.4	9234.807	32	90.3046	87	0.38	0.2569
4 class	−4497.07	9295.153	43	73.6469	76	0.55	0.3093
5 class	−4489.98	9357.968	54	59.4583	65	0.67	0.3546
6 class	−4486.27	9427.563	65	52.05	54	0.55	0.3886
8 class	−4788.22	10185.47	87	117.5776	151	0.98	0.2082

Fig. 3. Clusters with travel behaviour indicators.

Table 5
Latent class regression interpretation.

Without children group

Class 1 Economic belongers: Second largest class (22% of respondents). They were less likely to do home-return travel (63%) but instead engage in mostly short, medium (second highest of all classes) and long duration travel. They feel family vacations are important, move mainly for economic reasons, feel at home and describe themselves as permanent migrants who are planning to stay.

Class 2 Lifestyle belongers: This class comprises 16% of the sample. Lifestyle dominate their motivation to expatriate, think like permanent migrants and more likely to feel at home (highest in sample). They are less likely to do return trips to their home countries (61% answered negatively to the question) but likely to take trips of short, medium and long duration.

Class 3 Economic temporary non-belongers: makes up 15% of the sample are less likely to do home-return travel (74% said no) and long duration trips (60% said no). Majority are more likely to engage in trips of medium and short duration. They moved for economic reasons, think of themselves as temporary workers whose length of stay is open-ended but definitely not permanent and definitely do not feel at home.

With children group

Class 4 Balanced belongers: This is the largest class (28.7%) of all respondents. These professional migrant families are more likely to do short, medium and long duration trips and less likely to visit their home countries (58% answered no). They moved here for both lifestyle and economic reasons with 89% identifying themselves as permanent migrants who were planning to stay (or who has stayed) for the long term and feel at home in Hong and Macau. In this class, taking family vacation each year is considered important.

Class 5 Balanced temporary belongers: Most likely to engage in short, medium (highest in sample) and long duration trip as well as home-return travel. Taking a family vacation every year is considered important. They feel at home and think of themselves as temporary workers.

Class 6 Economic temporary family non-belongers: This group were less likely to do short, medium and long duration trips as well visit their country of origin (80% answering no) even though they think taking a family vacation every year is important. They emigrated for economic reasons and definitely do not feel at home. They self-describe as temporary workers.

move as permanent. Lastly, the "economic temporary family non-belongers" had high proportion of people who are partnered, in the 35–44 age group and household incomes between US$130,000 and US $260,000. They have lived here considerably less on average than the "economic belongers", "lifestyle belongers" and "balanced belongers" and have open stays.

It was also clear that there were significant travel behaviour differences across the six subgroups (Table 8). The "balanced temporary belongers" had a high propensity for frequent travel than members of other cohorts. They also took more family holidays on average than the "economic temporary non-belongers" and "economic temporary family non-belongers". In addition, this group was more likely than other groups to take both short and long duration trips. Again, the "balanced temporary belongers" were more likely to engage in home-return travel than others".

6. Discussion

This study represents one of, if not, the first to compare the travel behaviour of professional migrants with children to those without children. The study used latent class procedures to classify Western expats based on their reasons for moving abroad, self-concept and their sense of belonging in their new country. Previous research found that the presence or absence of children influences both family migration decision-making and subsequent adjustment processes (Goede & Berg, 2018). A number of other studies discussed earlier have also highlighted the positive and negative influences children have on vacation patterns.

Overall, the results of this study corroborate other studies that indicate the presence of children influences family vacation travel behavior. The study revealed that families with children take on average more vacation trips a year than those without children, are more likely to take short duration escapes to nearby regional Asian destinations and also engage in more long haul, long duration trips, particularly to their home country. The findings further suggest that the presence of children is not an inhibitor to family vacation travel and indeed may be an

Table 6
Latent class estimation results.

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
	Without children			With children		
Class Size	0.2237	0.1593	0.1494	0.2874	0.1017	0.0784
Indicators						
Decision to move						
Lifestyle reasons	0.0127	0.4643	0.1663	0.2433	0.0161	0.1254
Equally for lifestyle and economic reasons	0.411	0.3653	0.2965	0.5329	0.6845	0.0953
Economic reasons	0.5763	0.1703	0.5373	0.2238	0.2994	0.7793
Sense of belonging						
Definitely not	0.0508	0.0457	0.6407	0.0004	0.2285	0.4804
Not yet, but hopefully some day	0.213	0.0038	0.2531	0.0312	0.0477	0.2534
Definitely	0.7361	0.9505	0.1062	0.9684	0.7238	0.2661
Self-concept						
A permanent migrant who is planning to stay (or who has stayed) for the long term	0.5244	0.7653	0.068	0.895	0.1372	0.1622
A temporary worker whose length of stay is open-ended but definitely not permanent	0.4481	0.1586	0.5593	0.1047	0.7782	0.5448
A contract employee with a fixed length of stay and definite plans to exit.	0.0275	0.0761	0.3726	0.0003	0.0847	0.293
	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
Class Size	0.2238	0.1601	0.1494	0.2871	0.0956	0.0839
Covariates						
Medium duration trip						
Yes	0.721	0.7089	0.5476	0.6555	0.7958	0.45
No	0.279	0.2911	0.4524	0.3445	0.2042	0.55
Long duration trip						
Yes	0.5345	0.56	0.3906	0.618	0.7059	0.3081
No	0.4655	0.44	0.6094	0.382	0.2941	0.6919
Short duration trip						
Yes	0.5937	0.6352	0.5903	0.6283	0.7647	0.456
No	0.4063	0.3648	0.4097	0.3717	0.2353	0.544
Importance of family vacation travel						
Unimportant	0.0491	0.1349	0.1443	0.1013	0.1957	0.1211
Neither important nor unimportant	0.1632	0.103	0.2175	0.1135	0.1059	0.2466
Important	0.7877	0.7621	0.6381	0.7852	0.6984	0.6323
Does home-return trips?						
Yes	0.3608	0.389	0.2509	0.4152	0.7365	0.1918
No	0.6392	0.611	0.7491	0.5848	0.2635	0.8082

inducer of travel, in contrast to the findings of Nyaupane and Andereck (2008) and Wen (2020).

But the findings are much more subtle and nuanced than many studies suggest, as latent class modelling identified six discrete cohorts of Western professional migrants in Hong Kong and Macau. The data suggest migrant family travel behaviour is not homogenous. Rather, it is heterogeneous, and a function of reasons to move abroad, self-concept, sense of belonging in their new home as well as the presence or absence of children. While the "balanced temporary belongers" cohort is likely to take trips of long duration, "economic temporary non-belongers" are unlikely to do so. In terms of home-return travel, all the three cohorts of respondents without children are less likely to visit their home countries than those with children. In particular, the "balanced temporary belongers" cohort was substantially more likely to return to their home country.

These findings suggest that studies that treat migrant families as a homogenous group are likely to underestimate the influence of the presence or absence of children on family vacation travel and over-estimate the influence children exert on home-return travel. It has been suggested in the findings of past research (for e.g., Selmer & Lauring, 2014; Thorne et al., 2001) that home return-travel plays a ubiquitous role in migrant travel behaviour. This finding is not supported in the current study, for home-return trips are not particularly popular. Indeed, in a previously published empirical work analyzing travel patterns of Western migrants, less than 10% of all trips taken could be classified as home-return travel (McKercher & Yankholmes, 2018). In this study, just over one-third of respondents participated in home-return travel, but in light of the above finding, it represents a relatively small share of their total annual travel experience. Instead, home-return travel is just one element of their travel histories, where visits back home are a component of the total travel mix engaged in by professional migrants.

Furthermore, home-return travel patterns are influenced by migrants' motivation to move to Hong Kong or Macau, their self-concept and how they construct a sense of home there. Specifically, the "economic temporary non-belongers" group exhibits a disproportionately low propensity for family vacation travel and home-return travel. Similarly, the "economic temporary family non-belongers" group is less predisposed to long duration travel and never visits their home countries. One interpretation of this finding is that the propensity for family vacations with or without children and home-return travel in particular depends largely on what migrants perceive to be the important role vacations play in family life and the benefits of maintaining home country relationship capital.

The six classes of respondents were significantly different across age, marital status, length of residency, intended length of stay and income. Obviously, these variables are all interrelated, and the fact that these factors varied significantly between the different clusters has clear implications, not only for understanding family migration more generally, but also for understanding family vacations. This implication is discussed further in the section that follow. Here, previous studies have stressed the associations between demographic characteristics and motivation to move (Lauring et al., 2014), although the influence of family demographic and migration characteristics on travel behavior is far from answered. In this study, the significant age differences between the clusters indicate that age can be used to segment migrant families. Younger families especially those with children are the most viable tourist market, whereas older and more experienced travelers are perhaps more able to not only adjust and incorporate children in their travel lifestyles but also deal with vacation frustrations that stem from travelling with children (Carr, 2011). In relation to marital status, except for the "economic temporary non-belongers" the rest of the classes were likely to be partnered. The differences in age and marital status are consistent with previous studies that suggest majority of professional migrants are married and in their 40s (Selmer et al., 2017). Length of residence varied considerably because the "balanced belongers" is well settled and travel for pleasure compared to their peers. This finding confirms and extends others that demonstrated that migrants who perceived themselves to be permanent and developed ties to the new country are reluctant to relocate (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Tsuda, 1999). With reference to income effects, migrant families with children have high incomes than those without children. Specifically, the "balanced permanent belongers" reported higher incomes and higher outbound travel propensity than the "economic temporary non-belongers". This finding contradicts previous studies which found that families with children in the household are more susceptible to reduce family holidays (Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002; Shaw et al., 2008; Milkie et al., 2004). The obvious explanation is that professional migrants enjoy higher incomes, lower taxes, paid home-return travel and other financial incentives to satisfy nearly all-important desires including leisure travel (McKercher & Yankholmes, 2018). There were no significant differences across the six subgroups with gender, country of origin of spouse and their usual of residence.

Table 7
Sample descriptors by class.

Variable	All (n = 1162)	Without children			With children			Test score[a]
		Economic belongers (n = 305)	Lifestyle belongers (n = 202)	Economic temporary non-belongers (n = 152)	Balanced belongers (n = 375)	Balanced temporary belongers (n = 124)	Economic temporary family non-belongers (n = 74)	
Gender								χ^2 (5) = 6.946, p = .225
Male	52.5	48.4	57.4	47.7	55.8	51.6	50.7	
Female	47.5	51.6	42.6	52.3	44.2	48.4	49.3	
Age (yr.)								χ^2 (20) = 270.470, p < .001*
18–24	3.3	5.5	4.5	7.9	0.8	0.0	0.0	
25–34	24.5	35.5	22.7	60.5	7.4	12.1	16.2	
35–44	35.8	33.8	34.3	19.7	37.6	51.6	44.6	
45–54	23.7	15.7	21.7	6.6	36.8	25.8	27.0	
>55	12.8	9.6	16.7	5.3	17.3	10.5	12.2	
% Marital status								χ^2 (5) = 52.743, p < .001*
Partnered	79.6	67.5	76.9	48.8	92.7	94.6	89.7	
Single	20.4	32.5	23.1	51.2	7.3	5.4	10.3	
If partnered, is your spouse from the same country as you?								χ^2 (5) = 5.566, p = .351
Yes	46.5	51.0	41.3	50.0	40.4	54.5	60.0	
No	53.5	49.0	58.7	50.0	59.6	45.5	40.0	
Residence of partner/spouse								χ^2 (10) = 17.920, p = .056
With me on a full-time basis	79.8	72.2	77.3	78.5	83.6	85.5	79.4	
With me here some of the year and in some other country the rest of the year	12.9	19.3	13.5	9.2	10.6	11.1	11.8	
Other	7.3	8.6	9.2	12.3	5.8	3.4	8.8	
Mean of length of residency: yr.	11.18 ± 10.31	8.41 ± 7.44	13.84 ± 10.34	4.00 ± 4.18	17.09 ± 11.58	5.78 ± 5.55	4.68 ± 4.77	Welch $F_{5,139517}$ = 31.194, p < .001*
% Intended length of stay	16.8	19.1	10.4	37.2	6.9	21.6	27.6	χ^2 (15) = 54.658, p < .001*
1 year or less 2 or 3 years	10.4	9.0	4.5	11.6	10.8	10.8	24.1	
4 or more - stated number	8.4	6.7	6.0	18.6	6.2	8.1	13.8	
Open-ended	64.8	65.2	79.1	32.6	76.2	59.5	34.5	
Earnings per annum (categories)								χ^2 (20) = 140.393, p < .001*
< US$65,000	17.9	23.7	14.1	38.9	9.7	5.8	14.5	
US$65,000 - < US$130,000	27.8	30.7	28.3	32.9	24.5	20.4	30.6	
US$130,000 - < US$260,000	29.6	27.7	33.7	20.8	30.7	42.7	19.4	
US$260,000 - < US$390,000	16.3	14.6	17.4	5.4	20.1	16.5	27.4	
> US$390,000	8.4	3.3	6.5	2.0	15.0	14.6	8.1	

*p < .05.
[a] Means for continuous values were compared by using Welch *F* test and proportions for categorical values were compared using χ^2 test.

7. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate there are subgroups of migrant families with and without children who have unique travel behaviour profiles. It clarifies some of the apparent disparities in the existing literature on migration, mobilities and tourism. First, the findings highlight the need to rethink family travel and appreciate it is much more diverse than previously considered. While there is unequivocal evidence linking the influence of children on family travel, this study identified three different cohorts of families with children and three different cohorts of families without children each with significantly different travel behaviour. Second, there is the need to broaden the study of migrant travel patterns to look far beyond the singular focus of home-return travel. Our findings suggest that while recognized as a component of migrant travel, it is not a major element of their travel patterns, nor is it a singular element. Moreover, home-return travel is somewhat important to families with children but occurs far less frequently than just regular escapist vacation travel. Far less relevant for those without children. This makes the notion of migrant family

vacation even more sociopsychologically relevant and underscore the utility of migrant's motive to relocate, self-concept and sense of belonging for explaining family vacation. Of particular significance in this connection is the evidence in this study that most migrant families are well settled, think of themselves as permanent residents and travel for pleasure. Those who are unsettled and whose self-concept are that of temporary residents make up a small share of the sample (one third), and only few seem detached especially if their motive to move here were imposed by economic necessity. This fact suggests that conceptualising migrant family vacation in terms of the subtle but important interaction between decision to move, self-concept and sense of belonging provides a better understanding of the different travel behaviour patterns with attendant characteristics relating to demographic and migration out-comes. Thirdly, there is a need for better integration of tourism, migration and mobilities literature as suggested by Janta et al. (2015). While the literature provides a primacy for economic and lifestyle rea-sons as well as tourism-related motivation for moving abroad, it is increasingly clear the interconnected nature of the decision to move. Lastly, the present study and its findings give promise of lending clarity

Table 8
Travel behaviour patterns for the six latent classes.

		Without children			With children			Test score[a]
	All (n = 1162)	Economic belongers (n = 305)	Lifestyle belongers (n = 202)	Economic temporary non-belongers (n = 152)	Balanced belongers (n = 375)	Balanced temporary belongers (n = 124)	Economic temporary family non-belongers (n = 74)	
Did they travel? (% yes)	89.4	88.8	91.0	100.0	80.0	100.0	100.0	χ^2 (5) = 25.205, p = < .001*
Importance of travel in the migration decision								χ^2 (10) = 9.250, p = .509
Played no role	23.6	29.1	14.9	23.3	22.6	21.6	34.5	
Played some role	46.1	48.8	50.7	41.9	43.5	48.6	41.4	
A very important to move	30.3	22.1	34.3	34.9	33.9	29.7	24.1	
Travel experience								χ^2 (10) = 28.821, p < .001*
An inexperienced tourist	13.4	18.2	12.4	16.4	10.3	8.1	14.9	
Average experience	23.2	25.5	23.8	24.3	22.2	13.7	31.1	
Experienced tourist	63.4	56.3	63.9	59.2	67.6	78.2	54.1	
Mean number of trips	5.63 ± 2.52	5.79 ± 2.42	5.75 ± 2.59	4.88 ± 2.20	5.85 ± 2.66	6.16 ± 2.84	4.58 ± 1.76	Welch $F_{5,127.911}$ = 3.287, p < .008*
Home-return travel (% yes)	38.3	33.1	38.1	28.9	39.2	61.3	36.5	χ^2 (5) = 37.062, p < .001*
Did long-haul travel (% yes)	67.4	62.1	66.0	54.6	74.8	78.2	67.6	χ^2 (5) = 29.245, p < .001*
Did short-haul travel (% yes)	87.7	87.9	87.1	89.5	87.9	90.3	79.7	χ^2 (5) = 5.673, p = .339
Took long duration vacation (2 weeks or more) (% yes)	53.5	48.9	55.2	44.7	57.2	64.5	48.6	χ^2 (5) = 16.409, p < .006*
Took medium duration trip (7–13 nts) (% yes)	65.4	65.6	71.1	60.5	61.0	75.8	64.9	χ^2 (5) = 13.736, p = .017*
Took short duration trip (1–6 nts) (% yes)	61.1	57.7	62.7	61.2	58.3	75.0	62.2	χ^2 (5) = 13.055, p = .023*

*p < .05.
[a] Means for continuous values were compared by using Welch *F* test and proportions for categorical values were compared using χ^2 test.

to redefining 'family' especially for expats as it can include extended family not at home.

What are the implications of this study for tourism management? This study offers data to guide efforts by destination managers and tourism service providers on each of the six segments for focused marketing actions and product development. Given the demonstrated heterogeneity within professional migrant family market, the results suggest that a single management approach is not likely to meet the needs of all complex migrant family subgroups. Efforts to tailor programme interventions should be guided by the needs suggested for each of the different segments. However, creating six separate tourism products and marketing plans for this small but heterogenous population segment may be impractical, and thus strategies should be developed that address shared needs across groups and that can implement tailored experiential marketing objectives with respect to profit, growth and market share. As such, the first decision involves selecting a market segment to attract and then developing family vacation offerings and effectively marketing them. In this case, the "economic temporary family non-belongers" who moved to either Hong Kong and Macau for economic reasons, described themselves as temporary workers whose length of stay is open but definitely not permanent and do not feel a sense of belonging here appear to be viable target market. This group showed disinterested enthusiasm for both short and long duration family holiday trips as well as returning to their home countries. They were also more likely to be partnered, age 35–44 years with relatively high household incomes. These migrant families with children have lived

here for relatively short period and have open stays. Given that they can be distinguished from their counterparts on both demographic and migration characteristics, there are several tactics destination managers and tourism service providers can use to attract this segment. Because they do not care much about taking family holiday trips, hotels and tourism service providers could design family holiday packages as well as amenities to attract this group. Noting this group's relatively high household income has wide-ranging impact on their choice of destinations, accommodation, mode of transport, kinds of activities, and length of holiday and travel budget. Destination mangers and marketers could promote family focused accommodation, attractions, and facilities where special benefits such as discounts or other value-added-services are offered. Given that migrant families rely heavily on their ethnic networks and communication technologies (Harvey, 2008), media advertising and marketing campaigns via television and social media would likely be effective as word of mouth, to disseminate information to this group. Coinciding with the growing recognition of the family vacation market has been a greater emphasis placed on internet marketing communications. Since developing a collaborative relationship with families typically takes time, the internet becomes an important distribution channel for destination managers and marketers to communicate destination features (Wang, 2008). The key distinguishing feature of the internet from other mass media is its network structure and resulting peer-to-peer communication. This presents huge opportunities for destination managers who want to target the migrant family market as migrants' sphere of interest and social networks span both

country of origin and that of residence. Additionally, family-oriented groups, clubs and societies can also be explored to widen the advertising and marketing campaigns. Hong Kong and Macau has an abundance of social clubs and expat forums to join.

Alternatively, the "economic temporary family non-belongers" might constitute a high-potential family market segment for their countries of origin. As has been shown, these people exhibit a disproportionately low propensity for home-return travel even though they believe it is important for their children to know their roots. Thus, destination managers in migrants' countries of origin could emphasize family connections in marketing and advertising campaigns. Existing literature on ethnic migrants indicates home-return travel remains important regardless of their length of stay in the host country (Feng & Page, 2000; Gamage & King, 1999; Kang & Page, 2000; Klemm, 2002; Ndione et al., 2018). Similarly, the "economic temporary non-belongers" appear to be a viable target market for home-return travel. These migrant families without children are not likely to engage in long-haul and home-return travel but are interested in short duration trips. In addition, they tend to be single, aged 25–35 and have low family income. They have the shortest residency in either Hong Kong and Macau and less committed to remain here. If they are unable to overcome the challenges of moving abroad, they will likely make home-return visits. A marketing mix which addresses this aspect will likely be successful.

In terms of tourism product and experience development, in many respects parent consumers resembles non-parent consumers (given the nature of an increasingly consumer-oriented society) even though the former invests a lot of time and efforts and likely to be dissatisfied with their holiday experiences than the latter (Rojas-de-Gracia & Alarcon-Urbistondo, 2020; Shaw et al., 2008). This may be true for migrant families with children who have not set down roots in the host country and think of themselves as temporary residents. Like the general family population, migrant families with children buy a wide range of tourism products and services and given their spending power, destination managers and marketers should develop new brands designed to service their unique needs. Such products or services such as interactive games, car hires, activities for children at attraction sites, baby-sitting/holiday nanny and children clubs can help parents especially female ones escape childcare responsibilities. It should not be overlooked; however, that childless families also engage in pleasure travel and destination managers and marketers should also pay attention to this sub-market. For this reason, destination managers and marketers need to broaden their appeal to the childless family market by developing new products and services that highlight all the ways this sub-group can have a great experience at the destination. Marketing and advertising efforts to this sub-segment should also be vastly different, if not completely opposite, from communication with parents.

As with all studies, this one has several limitations that afford areas for further research. Ideally, a random or quota sampling procedure would be adopted to ensure representativeness of the sample. However, because the exact population is unknown, coupled with the impossible task of identifying the residences of such a relatively small population (less than one percent of the Hong Kong and Macau populations), a convenience-based sample was necessary. For the purposes of this study, a convenience population is suitable. Moreover, the online survey may have introduced unwanted bias in the sample. While our expectations were not met with the online questionnaire in terms of response rate, it did not affect the results. Possible explanation for the low participation rate could relate to convenience, access, comfort with technology and so forth (Cronk & West, 2002). Further, pragmatic issues relating to the time involved to complete the survey meant that the selection of questions had to be parsimonious and functional in nature. It is always a balancing act between comprehensiveness of data collection versus respondent fatigue. The final version of the questionnaire gathered over 120 pieces of information. As a result, single variable metrics complemented using open-ended questions were selected where appropriate

in order to maximize the breadth of data to be collected and enhance analytical opportunities. Still another limitation in our study was that the dataset does not capture the number and age of children in household. Research suggests that children's ages influence family vacation decision-making process (Carr, 2011). Finally, survey participants in this research were adults, meaning the voices of children could not be recorded. A number of authors (Frost & Laing, 2017; Poria & Timothy, 2014; Rhoden et al., 2016) have called for this type of omission to be rectified.

Hence, future research should conduct a comprehensive study on children and why they prefer different types of vacation trips. It would also be beneficial to explore the migrant family structure and the specific nature of their family vacation activities. The current study only aimed to place the new empirical data on the influence of the presence or absence children on family travel behavior in the context of various migration, mobilities and tourism studies. The literature prepared for this study supports the case for reconceptualizing family. By this we mean exploration of single people and their idea of 'family' and how that influences their travel decisions. More details about the destinations visited and the benefits sought from travel experience would help shed light on efforts and rewards involved in family vacation travel because we know from past research that there are differences in experience travelling as a family unit. This may provide additional information about the relative importance and motives for each type of trip or combination of different trips undertaken by professional migrant families with and without children and why they allocate time and resources to family vacation. For example, how valuable do people rate home-return travel compared to the other types of trips they take each year? Do motives for different types of trips differ? (short break to escape, family togetherness, etc., while longer trips to reconnect, explore, and home-return for familial reasons).

Note on contributions

Aaron Yankholmes led on primary data collection, contributed to the literature review, and analysis and writing the manuscript. **Bob McKercher** led on primary data collection, contributed to the literature review, and contributed to writing the manuscript. **Nigel L Williams** contributed to analysis and contributed to writing the manuscript.

Impact statement

Western professional expatriates represent at least 10% of the high-income earning households in Hong Kong and Macau, yet the travel industry does not cater well to their needs. This study will help destination managers in the region establish the attractiveness of the professional migrant family market in order to design tourism products and marketing strategies targeted at this market.

The findings of this study are also important to the tourism industry in the expatriates' countries of origin. The study supports the need for greater sophistication in tourism management of the VFR market, quality marketing strategies based on market segmentation and transdisciplinary research collaboration between tourism researchers and practitioners.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

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