

## **Process framework for innovation through tradition and its antecedents in rural heritage B&B**

**Chan, Jin Hooi, University of Greenwich**

**Wang, Wanfei, Zhejiang University**

**Ding, Lu, Zhejiang University**

**Qi, Xiaoguang, University of Cambridge**

**Design/methodology/approach:** Nine heritage Bed and Breakfast (B&Bs) displaying successful Innovation through tradition (ITT) in Songyang county in China were selected as the research site. Multiple cases of B&B were interviewed, and some observations were conducted. This study adopted the process-oriented reflexive critical incident technique to collect qualitative data and analysed it thematically.

**Purpose:** ITT is an increasingly important area of research particularly in the creative and cultural industries. The purpose of this study is to develop a process framework of ITT for rural heritage B&B sector and investigate the antecedents and challenges of ITT implementation.

**Findings:** Based on the findings, a five-phase innovation framework is proposed to demonstrate how ITT could be achieved in practice. These phases are idea generation, idea evaluation, initial implementation, continuing implementation, and sustaining improvement. Three key antecedents (experience corridors, networks, and institutional pressures) of ITT implementation were also identified.

**Practical implications:** This study has showed that rural heritage B&Bs can differentiate themselves from competition by the means of ITT. It proposes a process framework for this kind of innovation bringing to light the required steps, the antecedents, and key activities which the practitioners should pay great attention. It highlights the needs for continuing and sustaining innovations in long-term.

**Originality:** This study proposes a novel five-phase process framework of ITT to encompass the innovation activities in heritage setting. For practitioners, this study recommends enhancing the sensing capability of local entrepreneurs through personal travel experience and establishing business networks as the key antecedents of a successful ITT under rural heritage setting.

**Keywords:** Heritage B&B; Innovation through tradition; Innovation process; Hospitality management; Rural revitalisation

## 1. Introduction

The Bed and Breakfast (B&B) sector is a major part of the rural tourism industry, which is an important instrument for diversifying economic activities and promoting social development in rural areas (Komppula, 2014; Ye *et al.*, 2019). In heritage villages, an increasing number historic buildings have been renovated into B&B accommodations aiming to achieve dual objectives of conservation of living heritage and community participation in tourism - a more attractive economic activities (Bui *et al.*, 2020; Tritto, 2020). However, the market turbulence, such as caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, has posted tremendous challenges for many small-scale rural B&B, requiring them to enhance their offerings by innovating in services and products (Davari *et al.*, 2022; Yan *et al.*, 2022). B&B is a sub-sector of hotel industry; many other studies have advocated the importance for hotel to continue innovation to maintain competitive advantage and growth (e.g., Gomezelj, 2016; Wikhamn *et al.*, 2018; Fissi *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, the owner-managers of small rural B&B are more than ever being forced to pursue sustainable innovation strategies, which do not compromise conservation of heritage value.

For those owner-managers, one of the key resources for innovation is their tradition and heritage, as a highly idiosyncratic resource that allows them to develop innovations with local characteristics. The creative use of tradition is noted to be particularly important for small rural B&B (Mattsson and Cassel, 2020; Presenza *et al.*, 2019; Suvittawat, 2020) located in heritage villages. There are many valuable traditions with potential for creating an authentic experience for visitors (Benur and Bramwell, 2015; Yi *et al.*, 2017), for examples, historic buildings and attractions, arts and crafts, traditional farming and other related activities, and folklore handed down from generation to generation. This can enhance the customer experience, increasing attractiveness and building a strong differentiation advantage in the market ( Kuo *et al.*, 2018; Kesgin *et al.*, 2021). More importantly, innovation utilising traditions and heritage can, simultaneously, achieve sustainable objectives, encompassing heritage conservation, community development, and tourism economy (Menicucci, 2018; Widjojo and Gunawan, 2020).

The development and implementation of innovation, however, may be a challenging endeavour for a small B&B. On one hand, there are some observations suggesting that some local stakeholders see tradition merely from a narrow conservative sense, whereas innovation is viewed as something new in contrast with traditions and the “old” way, the “old” products (Chan *et al.*, 2020; Suvittawat, 2020). Some rural heritage studies suggests that any implementation of innovation will inevitably involve complexities since tradition and heritage are common resources associated with many sustainable development goals (Ma *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, any misfit

innovation may lead to conflicts among community stakeholders (Simons, 2000; Yachin and Ioannides, 2020; Yang *et al.*, 2014). For example, in *Kaiping Diaolou* and surrounding villages – a UNESCO World Heritage site in China, some large tourism developers held a series of tourism activities, such as classical car exhibition and the Dream Island events. Unfortunately, these seemingly novel tourism products tarnished the heritage village as an inauthentic place, as suggested by symbolic consumption (Sun *et al.*, 2019). It also has attracted significant number of residents to engage in tourism-related livelihoods, which is not a bad thing by itself, but has led to the loss of traditional skills, livelihoods, and customs (Wall and Mathieson, 2006). Despite these challenges, there is however a paucity of research about how B&B achieves successful sustainable innovation in rural heritage. In addition, there is a call to enhancing the theorizing the process of innovation, which is lagged behind practical needs (Erdogan *et al.*, 2020).

For the understanding of innovation in heritage B&B, "*innovation through tradition*" (ITT) is a suitable start point. ITT is an innovation framework focusing on the idea generation phase of product innovation. It is defined as a product innovation strategy by De Massis *et al.* (2016), where family firms need to *interiorise* firm and territory traditions, forming codified and tacit knowledge, and then *reinterpret* them for new product innovation. It examines innovation via a process perspective but only at the idea generation phase.

ITT has been increasingly adopted in various industries (Della Corte *et al.*, 2018; Erdogan *et al.*, 2020; Gorgoglione *et al.*, 2018; Holmquist *et al.*, 2019; Magistretti *et al.*, 2020; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). But most of the ITT studies are about product innovation in a family firm context, thereby they do not cover the entire innovation journey of an entrepreneur in a heritage B&B setting. The innovation in heritage B&B extends beyond merely product innovation, which ends after the product being designed, into services innovation that prolong well after the B&B being constructed.

To fill this gap, this study builds on the recent innovation research on process-based approach (e.g., Cobos *et al.*, 2016; Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2017; Rodriguez-Sanchez *et al.*, 2019) to investigate the phases of ITT, covering the entire journey of innovation. Prior studies in innovation have mainly concentrated on the aspects of idea generation phase (De Massis *et al.*, 2016; Presenza *et al.*, 2019). There is a lack of the understanding of the processes of innovation, particularly in the (post) implementation period. In many cases of rural tourism, after the initial innovations were implemented, especially those employing external consultants, there is limited motivations and capabilities to sustain further innovation efforts. This is essential to refresh and generate more value to their customers. Further, to improve the understanding of the factors influencing successful implementation of ITT process, this study aims to discover the key antecedents, at each phase, of the ITT process. In summary, there are three research objectives, in the context of heritage B&B:

1. To conceptualise a phase-based ITT
2. To identify key antecedents of each phase of ITT
3. To understand how ITT challenges could be overcome

Based on an in-depth analysis of nine cases of rural small B&B in a heritage village in China, this research develops a process framework of ITT as an analytical and practical tool to help heritage B&B entrepreneurs to implement ITT successfully, and to inform relevant authorities active in the heritage ecosystem.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Opening the innovation black box: A process perspective**

Innovation is the process of transforming any novel idea into reality and use (Kanter, 1983, p. 20). The term "process" refers to the progression and sequential of events (Crossan and Apaydin, 2010). Scholars have proposed many process-based frameworks to explain complex innovation processes (Adam *et al.*, 2016; Montag *et al.*, 2012; Wolfe, 1994; Ottenbacher and Harrington, 2007; Zaltman *et al.*, 1973). In comparison to outcome based innovation studies, Petzold *et al.* (2019) and Rodriguez-Sanchez *et al.* (2019) suggest that process-based model is useful in helping the identification of the antecedents of each phase and thereby increasing the manageability of the innovation process.

There are efforts in dividing the innovation process into different phases of as shown in **Table 1**. But they are varied for different innovation types and industries. These phases can be broadly categorised into two: idea development and implementation. The idea development phase covers the efforts and activities aimed at creating new ideas and recognizing opportunities. It is considered to be emerged primarily through intra-individual cognitive processes (Anderson *et al.*, 2014; Sarooghi *et al.*, 2015). The implementation phase covers how an organization sells ideas, mobilizes sponsorship, gathers the necessary resources, and adopts and commercializes innovation. It primarily involves inter-individual social processes (Zaltman *et al.*, 1973; Sarooghi *et al.*, 2015).

**Insert Table 1 here**

In tourism, interest in exploring complex internal workings of the innovation process is rapidly increasing (Cobos *et al.*, 2016; Rodriguez-Sanchez *et al.*, 2019) given that lack of practical know-how has been an important innovation issue faced by smaller firms. As Fuglsang *et al.* (2011) suggested, guidance and control are required

throughout the innovation process to give directions and manage progress (p.676). Thus, a comprehensive analysis and understanding of this generative process of innovation is equally useful in the tourism sector (Rodriguez-Sanchez *et al.*, 2019).

## **2.2 ITT as sustainable innovation**

In many studies, ITT is conceptualized as an innovation strategy for family businesses, suggesting innovation through acquiring, internalizing, and reinterpreting past knowledge (De Massis *et al.*, 2016). While this type of innovation heavily depends on traditional elements, it has also been combined with modern elements, such as digital technologies and new materials, to innovate in the "form", production technologies, modes of delivery, and interface with audiences (Miles and Green, 2008; Chan *et al.*, 2021).

However, ITT is more complex in rural heritage than in an individual family firm. Heritage tourism product development is increasingly constrained by regulations and conservation standards. For rural heritage B&B, it is therefore important to balance the diverse interests of stakeholders with the firm's innovation objectives (Xu and Dai, 2012). In this situation, ITT should be sustainable, defined as the utilization, reinterpretation, or recombination of tangible and intangible traditional resources in a process of innovating products or services, while enhancing not only economic, but also social, cultural, and environmental performance.

A new form of accommodation called *Albergo Diffuso* is an excellent example of ITT (Paniccia and Leoni, 2019; Presenza *et al.*, 2019). It repurposes historic buildings by following the local tradition and converts local tradition into a participatory tourism experience through innovation. This kind of innovation will take into consideration the local assets and competencies, incorporating existing living culture to enrich and diversify economic activities. Instead of replacing the means and activities by which locals have been practicing for generations, ITT stirs locals' pride and encourages them to preserve and simultaneously revitalize traditions, voluntarily, as suggested by Su *et al.* (2020) and Chan *et al.* (2016). Therefore, the concept of ITT provides a sharper focus for B&B seeking to progress towards innovation and conservation of heritage.

In summary, ITT is a key differentiation strategy for rural tourism. Tradition is plausibly a strong carrier of emotional and symbolic meaning and differs greatly from one area to another. ITT could offer a unique participatory experience and improve visitors' experiential value (Christou *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, empirical evidence presented by Paniccia and Leoni (2019) and Presenza *et al.* (2019) shows that if accommodations in heritage could provide traditional experiences with modern accommodation services simultaneously, it could be a key attraction for tourists. Yet, many scholars (Chan *et al.*, 2020; Su *et al.*, 2020) advocate that the potential of local

cultural traditions in heritage tourism development is undervalued and underexploited. A clear path for B&B to develop ITT remains insufficiently developed.

### **2.3 Challenges of adopting existing conceptualisation of ITT in heritage B&B**

Previous studies mostly conceptualised the process of ITT into *knowledge search* and *recombination process*, i.e., the process of a useful and novel idea development (De Massis *et al.*, 2016; Gorgoglione *et al.*, 2018; Holmquist *et al.*, 2019; Magistretti *et al.*, 2020). Specifically, scholars have identified the *search direction* for traditional knowledge (Presenza *et al.* 2019) and the *recombination approach* of traditional elements into new products or services (Petruzzelli and Savino, 2015). Other studies suggested that having a deep-rooted knowledge of local traditions is an important prerequisite of ITT (Bråtå, 2017). These previous studies support the hypothesis that the ITT strategy could only be implemented successfully if firms can learn and interiorise past knowledge from different sources (e.g., firm- and territory-based), and then reinterpret and adopt effective recombination strategies (de Massis *et al.*, 2016).

But some practical issues have been largely neglected, particularly the limited understanding in overcoming “recency bias” and the lack of understanding in the implementation phases of ITT. For example, recency bias towards tradition and selective attention towards new information are common in rural entrepreneurs and public administrations. Most of them believe that protecting tradition will reduce the attractiveness of a destination (Molina-Collado *et al.*, 2022). In their eyes, novelty (as against tradition) is essential to attract visitors, not old traditions. A study, by Gao *et al.* (2021) in the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces World Heritage Site, shows that homestay operators neither see their hostel business to be directly related to heritage, nor consider it as an innovation. Also, the difficulties in using traditional resources increase whenever there is a conflict in common resource utilisation in rural heritage (Sun *et al.*, 2019; Zhang *et al.*, 2015). For example, if entrepreneurs utilize traditional elements creatively to produce products or services without the express consent from the wider community or local administrative authorities, it may attract criticism (Simons, 2000; Yachin and Ioannides, 2020; Yang *et al.*, 2014). The lack of mechanism to overcome these challenges will consequently limit the potential of practice-oriented innovation. Thereby, it is essential to have a better understanding of the process of overcoming these challenges during the implementation of ITT.

### **2.4 Conceptual framework**

To date, the debate around ITT emphasizes the aspects associated with family enterprises and their firm’s traditions (Magistretti *et al.*, 2020; De Massis *et al.*, 2016; Suddaby and Jaskiewicz, 2020). Scholars have identified two dynamic capabilities, i.e.,

interiorization and reinterpretation, as antecedents of idea generation of ITT (Della Corte *et al.*, 2018; Petruzzelli and Savino, 2015). The ITT model (De Massis *et al.*, 2016:97) proposed that firms need to interiorization, i.e., “assimilation and sharing of knowledge pertaining to the firm’s traditions or the traditions of its territory across the entire organization, as reflected by the different forms of codified and tacit knowledge used to develop new products”. Then, they need to reinterpret the knowledge, i.e., combine “the selected forms of past knowledge with up-to-date technologies to develop new products.”

However, the antecedents of the implementation phase have not been clearly and explicitly discussed, especially individual-level factors. **Table 2** summarised a review on ITT studies in relevant industries, exploring its processes and antecedents. It could be very helpful for rural entrepreneurs, in view of their background and exposure, where they could acquire the knowledge or acknowledge the usefulness of their traditional knowledge and transform it – providing it a new meaning and practical uses. Nevertheless, Holmquist *et al.* (2019) clearly indicate that the neglecting of antecedents of ITT on an individual level will constrain the creation of a more practice-oriented innovation. As Presenza *et al.* (2019: 200) pointed out, further study is needed to gain a better knowledge on the enablers or barriers of ITT, including “...the characteristics of the entrepreneur, as well as a host of possible external influences.”

### **Insert Table 2 here**

While the ITT model provides an understanding on the strategies toward the design of innovative products based on tradition, it does not explore the phases beyond this. For rural heritage B&B, product innovation is just a beginning. In order to build up a authentic experiential space, it needs to follow up with service innovation and further maintenance and innovation over the entire life cycle. This could involve co-creation, engaging with local community and visitors (Guan *et al.*, 2021; Hao, 2020; Kesgin *et al.*, 2021; Liu *et al.*, 2022). Innovation process studies suggested that neglecting implementation phases can create a black hole in process theory and render an explanatory framework of innovation antecedents incomplete (Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2017).

As shown later in **Section 4**, this study attempts and proposes a framework with a more detailed phase-wise process model for innovation through tradition and offer insights into key antecedents of a successful innovation. There are important differences between the nature of the outputs from ITT and those from general innovation that will eventually affect the development and implementation phases of innovative creation (Adams *et al.*, 2013). Given the multiple effects of ITT, particularly on sustainability, ITT is inevitably influenced by various stakeholders, including

government agencies, the media, and customers. Such an attribute increases the importance of institutional factors (Scott, 2007) in exploring ITT, but this has yet to be appreciated in the extant literature (Paniccia and Leoni, 2019; Presenza *et al.*, 2019).

The antecedents for this research builds on and dialogue with studies regarding innovation behaviour of small tourism firms in rural areas (Carson and Carson, 2018; Saxena and Ilbery, 2008). These studies discussed factors setting the innovation process in action. Among the important factors are individual factors (e.g., personal traits or knowledge corridors) and network factors (e.g., local network or extra network across the business lifecycle) (Strobl *et al.*, 2016).

Individual factors influence the entrepreneur's subjective perception of the opportunity and deemed to be crucial in rural setting. The lack of expertise increases the need for building social capital through networks such as business network, village resident network, and knowledge-university network (Paniccia and Leoni, 2019; Marques *et al.*, 2019). Network related factors, particularly local network embeddedness, are vital for rural entrepreneurs to achieve their business and innovation.

Besides, for heritage B&B, institutional factors become relevant since the effort to preserve traditional culture, history, art and architecture has gained broad attention and has been given some degrees of legal status (Gao and Wu, 2017). In fact, B&B implementing ITT may obtain financial and knowledge supports from relevant stakeholders, but probably be restricted by some rules and regulations. In summary, individual, network, and institutional factors are important and different, yet interdependent in rural setting, which this study is to address.

### **3. Methodology**

The ITT phenomenon is novel and not much is known about this process of innovation in a rural heritage B&B setting. Therefore, this study adopts multiple case study method to obtain richer data and gain a deeper understanding of the ITT process, and the antecedents affecting the process. The process-oriented reflexive critical incident technique (CIT) was used in the enquiry to collect qualitative data (Flanagan, 1954) since it allows the exploration of the process dynamics that occur between particular antecedents. CIT has been deployed widely in many qualitative studies, particularly in health care (e.g., Viergever, 2019). It provides an approach and step-wise framework for research design in exploring what helps or hinders in a particular experience or activity in order “to acquire precise information on factors, events, behaviours or experiences” (Viergever, 2019:1066). This study adopts this approach to focus on most critical events, activities, experience in the innovation journey of the informants in the heritage B&B sector.

Nine typical cases displayed successful ITT activities were selected following a strict evaluation procedure (as detailed in Section 3.2). The selection strategy is adopted in accordance with the recommendation by Eisenhardt (1989), Yin (2017), and Patton (2002) to gain a better understanding of the experience of implementing ITT.

### **3.1 Research setting**

The research site is Songyang county in the southwest of Zhejiang province in China. The county retains more than 100 traditional villages, including 75 of them classified as National Traditional Villages by the Ministry of Agriculture and National Tourism Administration of China. The ancient village has a history of more than 1,800 years, but with an intact layout. Songyang has preserved all the agricultural practices and is well-known as "the county specimen of classical China". Songyang is selected, for the two reasons discussed below, as an ideal research site with which to examine the ITT phenomenon in rural heritage B&B.

First, Songyang has employed a remarkable approach in rural revitalization process, incorporating traditional resources to build up a more diverse economy, including cultural and creative industry, and rural tourism with a unique B&B sector. Unlike some villages with massive external investments on tourism, Songyang identifies the essence of authentic culture and iconic cottage industry of each village, and then adds value based on those locally available traditional resources. It contributes to the sustainable livelihoods and boosts the local economy in a cost-effective way. This model of heritage conservation has not only been promoted nationwide by the government as a model, but also been selected by UN HABITAT as an inspiring practice on Urban-rural linkages.

Second, rural B&Bs are well developed in Songyang. In 2016, the local government launched the "Saving Old Houses Initiative", providing financial incentives for renovating old house, and encouraging residents and other social entities to capitalize these historic buildings to run B&Bs. Motivated by the "Save Old Houses Initiative", several owner-managers of B&B have creatively restored historic houses, creating new spaces to showcase unique local crafts and heritage. They combine homestay experiences with exhibitions, selling local handicrafts, and agricultural products as well as promoting folk-dance performances, creating several innovative tourism experiences based on local cultural heritage. Thereby, this initiative has demonstrated the phenomenon of self-gentrification (for details, see Chan *et al.*, 2016) as long-term residents benefited from the tourism development despite an influx of artists, architects, and intangible heritage conservationists to reside in Songyang county.

### 3.2 Data collection

Initially, the research team gathered online news articles and then screened for B&Bs which have reported evidence of practicing ITT. The official assessment of B&Bs, available in the government website, was also consulted. Then, the list was supplemented with inputs from five local experts at relevant government departments and local accommodation associations. The final list consisted of twenty-eight B&Bs, which were deemed to be suitable cases.

Before the interview, the team gathered data and analysed information from different online sources (such as online news, local Wechat groups, blogs, Tiktok, and other commonly used social media sites among the local B&B practitioners) to establish the situational context. This allowed us to tailor the questions to the interviewees and to their specific innovations and their journey as shown in the **Appendix 2**. Questions were asked about the ITT process and antecedents in accordance with the CIT method.

The summarised steps of case selection and interviews are as follows:

**Step 1:** Determine an initial list of sample cases. The authors gathered news articles from different online sources, e.g., Baidu.com and then screened for B&Bs that had developed some kinds of ITTs praised in the media.

**Step 2:** Invite local experts from relevant government departments and accommodation associations to review the list. They were asked to examine the enterprises on the initial list identified in Step 1, and then recommend other outstanding enterprises that had implemented ITT activities.

**Step 3:** Conduct field trips to observe the ITT practices implemented in each B&B. The contacts for the enterprises on the final lists were obtained from the Booking.com site. Related background information was collected from online sources for tailoring the questions and discussions during the interviews. Access to the twenty-eight B&Bs was negotiated with the help of government officers, and introducers.

**Step 4:** Conduct semi-structured interviews with the owners or top managers of the enterprises, beginning with where access was firstly gained.

Informants were asked to describe a typical example of ITT that they had implemented and how the innovation processes had unfolded. Then, the informants were asked to reflect on any critical moments or incidents regarding the process that they felt were notable and important, as suggested by the CIT method. If required, prompts were given on discussing the antecedents of each phase of the innovation process.

All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded (the information of the coding method is provided in **Section 3.3**). The interviews and transcripts were in Chinese, with totally more than 25,500 words. The transcripts were firstly analysed in Chinese by the research team to avoid errors in translation. Only the findings and selected

transcripts were translated into English. The details of the cases and their innovation, as well as sample of translated transcribes are presented in **Appendix 1**.

Finally, nine owner-managers of heritage B&B participated in semi-structured interviews (lasting ~90 minutes) over two fieldworks (9 - 13 April and 6 - 11 May 2019). The case B&B enterprises are established for 3 – 8 years, which are relatively new enterprises but coincided with the period of tourism development and the development of ideas of heritage B&B in the site. The size of the B&B is considered as large size in the site, measured by the number of rooms, with around 9-20 rooms. The founding entrepreneurs are between the age of 30 -50, and their education level ranging from primary school to university.

With continuous iterations between data collection and analysis, the authors concluded that theoretical saturation was achieved at the 9th case, as no new information was found, and new data only reinforces previously collected information. This method is in accordance with the proposal of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Suri (2011). At this theoretical saturation point, one neither expect further theoretical insights nor any new core category to be emerged during the coding process (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Therefore, no further case is deemed necessary.

In addition, the study conducted two field trips to make observation on the ITT practices implemented in each B&B. Supplementary data were also collected from the official websites of the local governments and tourism promotional media to triangulate evidence from interviews. Our empirical material consists of information from different sources as detailed in **Table 3**.

**Insert Table 3 here**

### **3.3 Data analysis**

The interviews were transcribed verbatim for analysis. Thematic analysis is deployed to categorise and sort the incidents systematically. The research team, with the required language skill, began the analysis by getting familiar with the data. To do so, the transcripts were analysed line-by-line to identify the critical incidents emerged from the data. Notably, all sources of evidence were analysed together.

These critical incidents were coded into basic units and then moving them to a higher level of abstraction into general phase categories. An independent researcher was introduced to see whether these critical incidents were described in sufficient detail and ensure the suitability of classification. At the same time, the statements linked to antecedents of ITT in the transcript were labelled to uncover the similarities, which turned out to be helpful in containing them under manageable themes.

*A posteriori* themes were initially developed according to key issues and innovation stages in the literature. Nonetheless, the research team were opened to uncovering additional *a priori* themes. There was only one researcher who performed the coding to achieve higher consistency. Other researchers checked the coding, which is an accepted practice to ensure consistency and dependability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Then, the team conduct second round of coding. The results of the analysis and also selected quotes were then translated into English and double checked by another two bilingual researchers. The data revealed key themes and relationships between the antecedents and their primary influences in different phases. Seven key themes were prominent in the data, with varying frequencies in different phases. The coding structure is as shown in **Table 4**.

**Insert Table 4 here**

## **4. Findings**

Based on the empirical results, this study proposes an ITT process model with the following phases: (1) *idea generation*; (2) *idea evaluation*; (3) *initial implementation*; (4) *continuing implementation*; and (5) *sustaining improvement*. Moreover, given our aim of understanding how ITT can be developed and implemented successfully, the proposed process model also identifies three main antecedent themes that significantly influence the innovation process, with varying frequencies in different phases. The following sub-sections provide descriptions of these factors according to their relative importance in different phases of the innovation process. Two rounds of coding revealed relationships between the process phase and the primary antecedents. **Fig. 1** sums up our findings and points out the different phases of ITT and their associated antecedents.

**Insert Figure 1 here**

### **4.1 Idea generation**

This phase is defined as the process of generating innovative ideas through emotional attachment, perceptions of, and aesthetic judgements of the traditions. *The insightful tourism experience* of the innovators themselves is an important factor and is a key source of inspiration during this phase. Numerous informants mentioned that their own travel experience provided them with an opportunity to immerse themselves in a multi-sensory real-world experience. Their personal travel experience - with

exposures to purposely created *sensescapes* (*soundscapes*, *smellscapes*, *tastescapes*, and *touch*) in other destinations, offers opportunities for reflection on unfamiliar aspects of their familiar daily experience and traditions. A rich and vivid tourism experience gained in other destinations increases the ability of local entrepreneurs and strengthen their sensing capability to see the appeals of their own traditional resources or culture, thereby ultimately enhancing the attention the local people given to the value of their tradition. As explained by an informant in Case 2,

*“To be honest, we are at times ‘blind’, failed to see what is special about (our) traditional resources. For us, it is nothing beyond the ordinary; we prefer to enjoy modern and novel design and stuff. However, I see this differently after my own travel experience to a heritage destination, as I know that this (traditional element) is something that can attract tourists.”*

In addition, some informants stated that new insights and new information gained through observation during their personal traveling journeys have improved their appreciation of the functional and aesthetic values of their own local traditions. This type of cognitive experience enables entrepreneurs to enhance their opportunity-sensing capability, acutely sensitive to the potential of traditional elements in innovation. This provides them with ideas about how to utilize and re-configure traditional elements for modern tourism experience.

The analysis of the interview transcripts indicated that *family background* - of the entrepreneurs, particularly when their family practices strongly adhere to many traditional culture - could also serve as a key driver for the entrepreneurs to innovate through tradition. Traditions are dynamic and evolving, having been adopted from generation to generation within local families (Widjojo and Gunawan, 2020). Thus, entrepreneurs whose family mastered local skills and traditional knowledge have more opportunities to gain tacit knowledge and learn about the skill of making traditional crafts from their family members. Additionally, due to family history, these entrepreneurs may develop a personal affinity for local traditions, embedded in their everyday life. Thereby, they will demonstrate a higher degree of willingness to protect the traditions when they realize that it may in danger of disappearing. One informant in Case 3 described the moment of inspiration that led to an innovation in integrating a local traditional paper-making technique into his B&B’s design and construction, as well as embedding in the services provided to the customers (See **Appendix 1**).

## 4.2 Idea evaluation

The *idea evaluation phase* involves several activities, such as searching for relevant information for the implementation of an innovative idea or predicting its outcome, making some adjustments, and refining the idea. While evaluation of innovation is usually conducted in terms of technical feasibility, financial viability, and market acceptance, any innovation through tradition might also need to gain local legitimacy through compliance with relevant institutional factors (Scott, 2007).

In recent years, various policies and regulations have emerged to protect traditional villages in China and also globally (Gao and Wu, 2017; Zhang and Smith, 2019). Similar requirements also exist in sites designated as UNESCO World Heritage Site, where local governments impose various guidelines and controls over any attempt to innovate or alter the existing “old” elements. These regulatory institutions protect traditional resources and influence the nature innovation and methods of implementation by imposing direct constraints through explicit rules and regulations. **Regulatory pressure** was highlighted by every single interviewee as the most relevant antecedent affecting the idea evaluation phase, e.g., an informant in Case 1 stated:

*“I indeed received great pressure from the local government agencies which enforce strict approval criteria for any renovation of heritage buildings for the purpose of transforming it to B&B accommodation. For example, one local B&B operator was summoned by the local government to restore some traditional elements that had been removed during the renovation process. That B&B operator had to remove the newly fitted modern French windows in each room and replaced them with the original window frames in a heritage building. If one does not take regulatory requirements seriously before the implementation of any innovation, one will incur very high costs with substantial human, material, and financial impacts, as well as wasting valuable time.”*

Thus, to reduce the risk of ruining traditional culture and heritage, it is necessary to check for compliance with the conservation regulations and standards, and other relevant laws during this *idea evaluation phase*. When an innovative idea gains legitimacy without infringing any institutional factors – particularly coercive regulations, it also provides opportunities for an effective conservation of traditional culture. However, over-zealous conservation regulations could also impede innovation. An interviewee in Case 7 vividly described this dilemma of regulatory pressure as in **Appendix 1**. It is evidence that the tension between compliance and innovation is very much alive even in this rural tourism setting, and in the literature (e.g., Chan *et al.*, 2020).

### 4.3 Initial implementation

During the *initial implementation phase*, a vague idea is to be turned into something tangible, i.e., a finished product or service. After developing an idea into a relatively mature concept that is sharable with others, an entrepreneur will seek outside support in resources and capacity required for the detailed development of traditional resources. The empirical results revealed that entrepreneurs tend to rely more on *external business networks* to gain professional assistance at this phase rather than on interactions with local business networks. For example, the founder of Case 9 “Tea valley yard” stated,

*“I wanted to build an accommodation with tea as the theme. However, I encountered some difficulties when I attempted to design the B&B by myself because I didn’t have the full knowledge of the tea culture, such as what elements can be extracted from the tea culture for interior and exterior decoration, and which phases of the tea production process are suitable for designing some activities for tourist participation.”*

Collaborating evidence was also collected from local government officers verifying that many entrepreneurs either turned to experts and relevant scholars for help during this phase or directly outsourced their design and detailed planning tasks to an external design firm.

The successful implementation of B&B innovation in Case 2 was credited to the engagement of an external architectural professor (see **Appendix 1**: Case 2). The innovation is about applying traditional landscaping practices and artistic elements from traditional poetries to create sceneries that reflects the shifting seasons and weather. The owner added, *“it is such a fantastic innovation that I couldn’t have implemented without him”*.

### 4.4 Continuing implementation

During the *continuing implementation phase*, entrepreneurs work to ensure a long-term functioning of the new practice or innovation. ITT usually requires the linkage of activities that extract value from traditional resources with the characteristics of the local industry (Presenza *et al.*, 2019). Local business networks were found to play a substantial role in the *continuing implementation phase*, as it provides access to labour and unique local resources for the entrepreneur. As the manager of Case 4 stated,

*“The historic rosin industry is a regional symbol of our village. Thus, we have decided to implement a B&B service innovation and offer tourist memorable experiences based on the traditional rosin industry. However, cutting pine and collecting pine oleoresin are very specific activities. Most of the tour guides or students who graduated from tourism*

*program, usually do not have such skills in this industry. We must only employ local villagers in the implementation of this innovation.”*

Our findings not only underscore the importance of local business networks in facilitating continuing implementation of ITT. But the data also points to a noteworthy conclusion: the concept of “providing benefit to the wider local society” should be integrated into the implementation process to build trust with various local stakeholders. This could ensure a cooperative effort in implementation of the innovation, thereby convincing government agencies or rural officers to support ITT.

#### **4.5 Sustaining improvement**

Post implementation of an innovation, entrepreneurs must make some incremental changes to renew the original product or service innovation. This is classified as the *sustaining improvement phase*. The aim is to satisfy any concerns of stakeholders who provide essential resources or influence the sustainability and success of the operation. Most of our interviewees admitted that *normative and cognitive pressure* act as a catalyst during this phase, driving them to consider the social and cultural benefits that ITT may produce and to keep making changes to gain legitimacy and improve their reputations. Comparing with coercive regulatory pressure, normative and cognitive pressure is more likely to influence entrepreneurs’ innovative efforts regarding traditional resources.

Normative pressures are derived from the expectations and demands of the locals. As the manager of Case 8 said,

*“If you want to keep a long-term and stable operation in this village, it is necessary to meet the locals’ need to some extent and conform to their expectations. Otherwise, they will constantly create some troubles.”*

The media, another important source of normative pressure, could influence a B&B access to certain resources, such as reputation in the community, recognition by the government, and customers. In response to the government’s call for “preservation of traditional villages”, the media has been giving increasing attention to practices that make good use of traditional buildings, objects, and activities, which revitalising local traditions. Hence, entrepreneurs undertake efforts that align with the media’s expectations to obtain positive press coverage.

Cognitive pressure has its origin in the ‘typical’ or ‘normal’ practices of benchmarking enterprises in the local areas. As the entrepreneur of Case 6 said,

*“The locally praised B&Bs have one thing in common: distinctive local features are fully embodied, particularly those incorporating features related to traditional resources or industries. To obtain more information, I visited these successful B&Bs and learned how to utilize traditional resources to innovate.”*

## **5. Discussion and Conclusions**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

Over several decades, the debate has intensified on how rural heritage B&B can be developed in a way that reconciles the economic, environmental, and social goals (Bui *et al.*, 2020; Tritto, 2020). This study aims to increase knowledge in rural tourism sector on how innovation could contribute to the symbiotic and sustainable relationship of heritage and tourism. The results show that, ITT, as an antidote to homogeneity facing B&B, is in a position to nourish the heritage tourism economy (Chen *et al.*, 2018; Mitchell, 2013), and also help B&B to obtain clear competitive advantage.

As shown in Fig. 1, this article charts a path towards a more complete understanding of ITT processes, with the two main phases: idea development and idea implementation. The idea development phase consists of two embedded sub-phases (idea generation and idea evaluation), which focuses on finding inspiration and generating creative ideas based on the innovator’s own travel experience, and the affective bonds with their family and local culture. This study proposes that insightful tourism experience and family background are two factors that can rectify entrepreneurs’ cognitive bias regarding traditional resources and knowledge.

In addition, entrepreneurs adjust and refine their ideas according to governmental regulations and other specific requirements from relevant authorities. This study reveal that regulatory pressures compel entrepreneurs to consider sustainable outcomes at idea evaluation phase and facilitate their new idea to develop in a normative direction. Regulatory pressures act as an essential antecedent of ITT for a sustainable outcome.

This study proposes that the idea implementation phase consists of three embedded sub-phases (i.e., initial implementation, continuing implementation and sustaining improvement) - an addition to the ITT concept.

This study indicates that only few entrepreneurs possess sufficient traditional knowledge and capabilities to turn an innovative idea into a finished product or service in the initial implementation phase. All entrepreneurs interviewed refer to external business connections, such as universities and outsourcing firms, as the most important

factor in the initial implementation phase. But entrepreneurs rely more on their local business network (comparing to external network) during the continuing implementation phase to create a conducive environment for long-term operation.

During the sustaining improvement phase, entrepreneurs are subject to normative and cognitive pressures and thereby continuously adjust their methods for implementing ITT to gain legitimacy and maintain good reputation. Normative and cognitive pressures act as opportunities for developing innovative and sustainable solutions (Gyau and Stringer, 2011). On the one hand, innovation activities are embedded in social contexts. Adherence to the prevailing social norms minimizes potential conflicts with the locals and creates circumstances that are conducive for innovation. On the other hand, to gain more attention from media, entrepreneurs are required to respond to public expectations through the upholding of a social mission. In addition, the cognitive pressures perceived from recognised successes inspire entrepreneurs to innovate through tradition. They drew inspiration from high-profile B&Bs which leverage on precious heritage or immaterial cultural heritage, and then developed their distinctive ITTs.

## 5.2 Theoretical Implications

First, this article contributes to the discussion of heritage tourism by answering the call for a stronger integration of literature in heritage preservation and innovation of tourism product. This study of the ITT process demonstrates how the heritage preservation literature can inform the innovation literature and vice versa. Further, exploring how to overcome the challenges in the use of traditional resource provides extended understanding of how ITT strategic value can be achieved in tourism sector. Our study shows that a successful ITT process needs to take into account the sustainability of livelihood in the local communities and the needs of heritage conservation, which accords with the ideas of Chan *et al.* (2016), Lee *et al.* (2015), and Yachin and Ioannides (2020).

This study also makes several theoretical contributions to the ITT literature - a relatively young and evolving research field. Prior studies concentrate on aspects of idea generation phase but neglect some issues facing innovator in the process of implementation and post-implementation. This study proposes a five-phase innovation framework of ITT with respective antecedents (See Figure 1): Idea Development (Idea generation, Idea evaluation) and Idea Implementation (Initial, Continuing, Sustaining). The antecedents identified can be categorised into experience corridor, network, and institutional pressure.

***Experience corridors:*** Several past contributions mainly linked combinative capabilities to the occurrence of ITT (Petruzzelli and Savino, 2015; Presenza *et al.*,

2019). However, we argue that the application of knowledge and the exertion of such capabilities are built on the premise of acquisition and absorption of traditional knowledge, which have largely been neglected in many ITT studies. This study proposes the category - “experience corridors”, highlighting the roles of self-tourism experience and family background in ITT. Entrepreneurs’ experience corridors help the discovery of the value of traditions and identify business opportunities embedded in traditions. This finding also concurs with many other studies of pre-entry resources in strategy literature, which supports the advantages of *de alio* firms (e.g., Chan and Reiner, 2019) in innovation and firm performance.

**Networks:** Networks and cooperation are essential to drive innovation, particularly in rural tourism industry (Lee *et al.*, 2015; Novelli *et al.*, 2006). The loose ties in the external business network are important as demonstrated in this study, concurring with the suggestions that entrepreneurs need the access to heterogeneous and useful resources and competences (Brouder and Eriksson, 2013; Granovetter, 1973). However, the extant literature failed to examine the roles of different types of networks at each phase of innovation. This study refines the understanding of the importance of networks in facilitating ITT by distinguishing the role that external business networks and local business networks play in the different phases of innovation. This accords with the ideas of Perry-Smith and Mannucci (2017) where entrepreneurs should activate different network characteristics at an appropriate moment.

**Institutional pressure:** The prior literature has not yet explored the factors influencing ITT from institutional theory perspective. Firms need to secure their positions in the society and gain legitimacy by conforming to the rules and norms of the local institutional environments (Scott, 2007). It is more important when institutional forces are strong, such as in highly regulated sectors, in a closely knit community, and in rural heritage tourism. Moreover, innovation can be a strategic tool in responding to regulatory, normative, and mimetic pressure. This study demonstrates that institutional pressures are particularly relevant in the idea evaluation and the sustaining improvement phase.

### **5.3 Practical Implications**

This study has shown that rural heritage B&Bs can create meaningful differentiation via ITT. The owners and managers of B&B should fully consider ITT in historic building restoration and refurbishment. Managers could also through ITT to transform traditional customs and crafts into experience-based activities for tourism. But the owners and managers need to expand their experience corridors by either exploring their family traditions and/or embarking on study visits to other heritage

destinations. In promoting ITT, local authorities could upscale local entrepreneurs and enhance their sensing capability through study visits.

In rural setting, external network is important at the earlier phases of innovation, when the entrepreneurs need concrete knowledge and skills to transform idea to reality. Local authorities could facilitate the creation of networks with universities and innovative firms in the city. The findings also suggest that local network is important in the continuing phase of the innovation, where local skills and knowledge are needed in the provision of heritage products and services for the tourists.

The long-term success of any ITT is influenced by institutional pressures. First, heritage B&B owners should consider heritage conservation objective at the very beginning of the innovation process, aligning the needs for innovation and conservation in the heritage sector. They need to ensure that their innovation does not breach the relevant regulatory requirements in heritage conservation. Well into the process of innovation, they need to gain legitimacy and build good reputation in the local community. To build a stable social connection, rural entrepreneurs should share social responsibilities and participate in local community activities.

#### **5.4 Limitations and Future Research**

First, while it is not appropriate to claim generalisability of the findings on a multiple case study, this study would like to offer suggestions for potential applicability of the findings and proposed framework to other locations and in other context, e.g., city-based heritage sites. The antecedents identified might have a different importance depending on the social-cultural contexts and the existing knowledge and skills of the entrepreneurs. Institutional factors might be applicable in city heritage site (Chan *et al.*, 2021). Second, this study based on evidence mainly from interview data of a limited number of rural B&B owners or managers. Despite its contribution to theory development, any generalization of the findings could only be made after more extensive studies. Hence, this study calls for an investigation and test on this process framework and their antecedents on a broader empirical base survey. Finally, a longitudinal study to investigate the unfolding of ITT activities over time would produce even richer data.

#### **References**

- Adams, R., Jeanrenaud, S., Bessant, J., Denyer, D. and Overy, P. (2016), "Sustainability-oriented innovation: a systematic review. *International Journal of Management Review*, Vol.18, pp.180–205.

- Anderson, N., Potočnik, K. and Zhou, J. (2014), "Innovation and Creativity in Organizations: A State-of-the-Science Review, Prospective Commentary, and Guiding Framework", *Journal of Management*, Vol.40 No.5, pp.1297–1333.
- Benur, A.M. and Bramwell, B. (2015), "Tourism product development and product diversification in destinations", *Tourism Management*, Vol.50, pp.213–224.
- Brouder, P. and Eriksson, R.H. (2013), "Tourism Evolution: On the Synergies of Tourism Studies and Evolutionary Economic Geography", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.43, pp.370–389.
- Bui, H.T., Jones, T.E., Weaver, D.B. and Le, A. (2020), "The adaptive resilience of living cultural heritage in a tourism destination", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol.28 No.7, pp.1022–1040.
- Carson, D.A. and Carson, D.B. (2018), "International lifestyle immigrants and their contributions to rural tourism innovation: Experiences from Sweden's far north", *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol.64, pp.230–240.
- Chan, J.H., Chen, S.Y., Piterou, A., Khoo, S.L., Lean, H.H., Hashim, I.H.M. and Lane, B. (2021), "An innovative social enterprise: Roles of and challenges faced by an arts hub in a World Heritage Site in Malaysia", *City, Culture and Society*, Vol.25, p.100396.
- Chan, J.H., Hashim, I.H.M., Khoo, S.L., Lean, H.H. and Piterou, A. (2020), "Entrepreneurial orientation of traditional and modern cultural organisations: Cases in George Town UNESCO world heritage site", *Cogent Social Sciences*, Vol.6 No.1, 1810889.
- Chan, J.H., Iankova, K., Zhang, Y., McDonald, T. and Qi, X. (2016), "The role of self-gentrification in sustainable tourism: Indigenous entrepreneurship at Honghe Hani Rice Terraces World Heritage Site, China", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol.24 No.8–9, pp.1262–1279.
- Chan, J.H. and Reiner, D. (2019), "“Dominance by birthright”? Reconfiguration of firm boundaries to acquire new resources and capabilities", *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, Vol.119 No.9, pp.1888–1907.
- Chen, X., Yi, N., Zhang, L. and Li, D. (2018), "Does institutional pressure foster corporate green innovation? Evidence from China's top 100 companies", *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Vol.188, pp.304–311.
- Christou, P., Farmaki, A. and Evangelou, G. (2018), "Nurturing nostalgia?: A response from rural tourism stakeholders", *Tourism Management*, Vol.69, pp.42–51.
- Cobos, L.M., Mejia, C., Ozturk, A.B. and Wang, Y. (2016), "A technology adoption and implementation process in an independent hotel chain", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol.57, pp.93–105.
- Corner, P.D. and Ho, M. (2010), "How opportunities develop in social entrepreneurship", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, SAGE Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA, Vol.34 No.4, pp.635–659.
- Crossan, M.M. and Apaydin, M. (2010), "A multi-dimensional framework of organizational innovation: A systematic review of the literature", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol.47 No.6, pp.1154–1191.
- Davari, D., Vayghan, S., Jang, S.(S). and Erdem, M. (2022), "Hotel experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic: high-touch versus high-tech", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 34 No. 4, pp.1312-1330.
- Della Corte, V., Del Gaudio, G. and Sepe, F. (2018), "Innovation and tradition-based firms: a multiple case study in the agro-food sector", *British Food Journal*, Vol.120 No.6, pp.1295–1314.

- De Massis, A., Fratinni, F., Kotlar, J., Messeni Petruzzelli, A. and Wright, M. (2016), "Innovation Through Tradition: Lesson from Innovative Family Businesses and Direction for Future Research", *Academy of Management Perspectives*, Vol.30 No.1, pp.93–116.
- Denzin, K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2005), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Sage.
- DiMaggio, P.J. and Powell, W.W. (1983), "The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields", *American Sociological Review*, pp.147–160.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989), "Building theories from case study research", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol.14 No.4, pp.532–550.
- Erdogan, I., Rondi, E. and De Massis, A. (2020), "Managing the Tradition and Innovation Paradox in Family Firms: A Family Imprinting Perspective", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol.44 No.1, pp.20–54.
- Flanagan, J.C. (1954), "The critical incident technique.", *Psychological Bulletin*, American Psychological Association, Vol.51 No.4, p.327.
- Fuglsang, L., Sundbo, J. and Sorensen, F. (2011), "Dynamics of experience service innovation: innovation as a guided activity - results from a Danish survey", *Service Industries Journal*, Vol.31 No.5, pp.661–677.
- Gao, J., Lin, H. and Zhang, C. (2021), "Locally situated rights and the 'doing' of responsibility for heritage conservation and tourism development at the cultural landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, China", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Routledge, Vol.29 No.2–3, pp.193–213.
- Gao, J. and Wu, B. (2017), "Revitalizing traditional villages through rural tourism: A case study of Yuanjia Village, Shaanxi Province, China", *Tourism Management*, Vol.63, pp.223–233.
- Guan, J., Wang, W., Guo, Z., Chan, J.H. and Qi, X. (2021), "Customer experience and brand loyalty in the full-service hotel sector: the role of brand affect", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.33 No.5, pp.1620-1645.
- Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1967), *The discovery of grounded theory*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London.
- Gomezelj, D.O. (2016), "A systematic review of research on innovation in hospitality and tourism", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.28 No.3, pp.516-558.
- Gorgoglione, M., Petruzzelli, A.M. and Panniello, U. (2018), "Innovation through tradition in the Italian coffee industry: an analysis of customers' perceptions", *Review of Managerial Science*, Vol.12 No.3, pp.661–682.
- Granovetter, M.S. (1973), "The strength of weak ties", *American Journal of Sociology*, University of Chicago Press, Vol.78 No.6, pp.1360–1380.
- Gyau, A., Stringer, R. (2011), "Institutional isomorphism and adoption of e-marketing in the hospitality industry: a new perspective for research", *Food, Agri-Culture and Tourism*, Springer, pp.130–139.
- Hao, F. (2020), "The landscape of customer engagement in hospitality and tourism: a systematic review", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.32 No.5, pp.1837-1860.
- Hargadon, A.B. and Douglas, Y. (2001), "When Innovations Meet Institutions: Edison and the Design of the Electric Light", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol.46 No.3, p.476.
- Holmquist, A., Magnusson, M. and Livholts, M. (2019), "Reinventing tradition: Exploring the creation of new meaning through innovations involving craft-based design", *Creativity and Innovation Management*, Vol.28 No.1, pp.124–137.

- Kanter, R.M.(1983). *The change masters: Innovation for productivity in the American corporation*. Simon and Schuster, NY.
- Kesgin, M., Taheri, B., Murthy, R.S., Decker, J. and Gannon, M.J. (2021), "Making memories: a consumer-based model of authenticity applied to living history sites", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.33 No.10, pp. 3610-3635.
- Komppula, R. (2014), "The role of individual entrepreneurs in the development of competitiveness for a rural tourism destination – A case study", *Tourism Management*, Vol.40, pp.361–371.
- Kuo, C.-M., Tseng, C.-Y. and Chen, L.-C. (2018), "Choosing between exiting or innovative solutions for bed and breakfasts", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol.73, pp.12–19.
- Lee, A.H.J., Wall, G. and Kovacs, J.F. (2015), "Creative food clusters and rural development through place branding: Culinary tourism initiatives in Stratford and Muskoka, Ontario, Canada", *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol.39, pp.133–144.
- Liu, X., Zeng, Y., He, J. and Li, Z. (2022), "Value cocreation research in tourism and hospitality: a comparative bibliometric analysis", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.34 No.2, pp.663-686.
- Ma, X., Wang, R., Dai, M. and Ou, Y. (2021), "The influence of culture on the sustainable livelihoods of households in rural tourism destinations", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol.29, No.8, pp.1235-1252.
- Magistretti, S., Dell’Era, C., Frattini, F. and Messeni Petruzzelli, A. (2020), "Innovation through tradition in design-intensive family firms", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol.24 No.4, pp.823–839.
- Marques, C.S., Santos, G., Ratten, V. and Barros, A.B. (2019), "Innovation as a booster of rural artisan entrepreneurship: A case study of black pottery", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, Vol.25 No.4, pp.753-772.
- Mattsson, K.T. and Cassel, S.H. (2020), "Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Potentials for Path Creating Tourism Development in Rural Sweden", *Tourism Planning & Development*, Vol.17 No.4, pp.384–403.
- McIntosh, A.J. and Prentice, R.C. (1999), "Affirming authenticity - Consuming cultural heritage", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.26 No.3, pp.589–612.
- McKercher, B., Ho, P.S.Y. and du Cros, H. (2005), "Relationship between tourism and cultural heritage management: evidence from Hong Kong", *Tourism Management*, Vol.26 No.4, pp.539–548.
- Menicucci, E. (2018), "The influence of firm characteristics on profitability. Evidence from Italian hospitality industry", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.20 No.8, pp.2845-2868.
- Miles, I., Green, L., (2008). *Hidden innovation in the creative industries*, MIOIR services research: NESTA.
- Mitchell, C.J.A. (2013), "Creative destruction or creative enhancement? Understanding the transformation of rural spaces", *Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol.32, pp.375–387.
- Molina-Collado, A., Santos-Vijande, M.L., Gómez-Rico, M. and Madera, J.M. (2022), "Sustainability in hospitality and tourism: a review of key research topics from 1994 to 2020", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-10-2021-1305>.
- Montag, T., Maertz, C.P. and Baer, M. (2012), "A Critical Analysis of the Workplace Creativity Criterion Space", *Journal of Management*, Vol.38 No.4, pp.1362–1386.

- Novelli, M., Schmitz, B. and Spencer, T. (2006), "Networks, clusters and innovation in tourism: A UK experience", *Tourism Management*, Vol.27 No.6, pp.1141–1152.
- Ottenbacher, M. and Harrington, R.J. (2007), "The innovation development process of Michelin-starred chefs", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.19 No.6, pp.444–460.
- Paniccia, P.M.A. and Leoni, L. (2019), "Co-evolution in tourism: the case of Albergo Diffuso", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol.22 No.10, pp.1216–1243.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002), "Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective", *Qualitative Social Work*, Vol.1 No.3, pp.261–283.
- Perry-Smith, J.E. and Mannucci, P.V. (2017), "From Creativity to Innovation: The Social Network Drivers of the Four Phases of the Idea Journey", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol.42 No.1, pp.53–79.
- Petruzzelli, A.M. and Savino, T. (2015), "Reinterpreting Tradition to Innovate: The Case of Italian Haute Cuisine", *Industry and Innovation*, Vol.22 No.8, pp.677–702.
- Petzold, N., Landinez, L. and Baaken, T. (2019), "Disruptive innovation from a process view: A systematic literature review", *Creativity and Innovation Management*, Vol.28 No.2, pp.157–174.
- Presenza, A., Messeni, A. and Sheehan, L. (2019), "Innovation through tradition in hospitality . The Italian case of Albergo Diffuso", *Tourism Management*, Vol.72, pp.192–201.
- Rodriguez-Sanchez, I., Williams, A.M. and Brotons, M. (2019), "The innovation journey of new-to-tourism entrepreneurs", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol.22 No.8, pp.877–904.
- Saroghi, H., Libaers, D. and Burkemper, A. (2015), "Examining the relationship between creativity and innovation: A meta-analysis of organizational, cultural, and environmental factors", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Elsevier Inc., Vol.30 No.5, pp.714–731.
- Saxena, G. and Ilbery, B. (2008), "Integrated rural tourism - A border case study", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.35 No.1, pp.233–254.
- Silberman, N.A. (2013). *Discourses of development: Narratives of cultural heritage as an economic resource*, Heritage and tourism: Place, encounter, engagement. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Scott, W.R. (2007). *Institutions and Organizations*. Foundations for Organizational Science. Sage, London.
- Simons, M.S. (2000), "Aboriginal heritage art and moral rights", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.27 No.2, pp.412–431.
- Strobl, A. and Kronenberg, C. (2016), "Entrepreneurial networks across the business life cycle: the case of alpine hospitality entrepreneurs", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.28 No.6, pp.1177-1203.
- Su, M.M., Wall, G., Ma, J., Notarianni, M. and Wang, S. (2020), "Empowerment of women through cultural tourism: perspectives of Hui minority embroiderers in Ningxia, China", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, available at:<https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1841217>.
- Suri, M. (2011) , "Purposeful sampling in qualitative research synthesis", *Qualitative Research Journal*, Vol.11, pp.63-75.
- Suddaby, R. and Jaskiewicz, P. (2020), "Managing Traditions: A Critical Capability for Family Business Success", *Family Business Review*, Vol.33 No.3, pp.234–243.
- Sun, J., Zhou, Y. and Wang, X. (2019), "Place construction in the context of world heritage tourism: the case of 'Kaiping Diaolou and Villages'", *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, Vol.17 No.2, pp.115–131.

- Suvittawat, A. (2020), "Hospitality industry economic innovation out of tradition small–medium-size enterprises in North-Eastern Thailand", *Australian Economic Papers*, Vol.59 No.4, pp.319–335.
- Tritto, A. (2020), "Environmental management practices in hotels at world heritage sites", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol.28 No.11, pp.1911–1931.
- Viergever, R.F. (2019), "The critical incident technique: method or methodology?", *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol.29, No.7, pp.1065-1079.
- Wall, G. and Mathieson, A. (2006), *Tourism: Change, Impacts, and Opportunities*, Pearson.
- Widjojo, H. and Gunawan, S. (2020), "Indigenous Tradition: An Overlooked Encompassing-Factor in Social Entrepreneurship", *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, Vol.11 No.1, pp.88–110.
- Wikhamn, W., Armbrrecht, J. and Wikhamn, B.R. (2018) "Innovation in Swedish hotels. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.30 No.6, pp.2481-2498.
- Wolfe, R.A. (1994), "Organizational innovation: Review, critique and suggested research directions", *Journal of Management Studies*, Wiley Online Library, Vol.31 No.3, pp.405–431.
- Xu, H. and Dai, S. (2012), "A system dynamics approach to explore sustainable policies for Xidi, the world heritage village", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol.15 No.5, pp.441–459.
- Yachin, J.M. and Ioannides, D. (2020), "'Making do' in rural tourism: the resourcing behaviour of tourism micro-firms", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol.28 No.7, pp.1003–1021.
- Yan, Q., Shen, H. and Hu, Y. (2022), "'A home away from hem": exploring and assessing hotel staycation as the new normal in the Covid-19 era", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.34 No.4, pp.1607-1628.
- Yang, J., Ryan, C. and Zhang, L. (2014), "External entrepreneurs/investors and guanxi: hostels in a tourism area, Xinjiang, China", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.26 No.6, pp.833–854.
- Ye, S., Xiao, H., Ying, T. and Zhou, L. (2019), "Determinants of small accommodation business size", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol.31 No.4, pp.1626-1646.
- Yi, X., Lin, V.S., Jin, W. and Luo, Q. (2017), "The Authenticity of Heritage Sites, Tourists' Quest for Existential Authenticity, and Destination Loyalty", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol.56 No.8, pp.1032–1048.
- Yin, R.K. (2017), *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, Sage publications.
- Zaltman, G., Duncan, R. and Holbek, J. (1973), *Innovations and Organizations*, New York; Toronto: Wiley.
- Zhang, C., Fyall, A. and Zheng, Y. (2015), "Heritage and tourism conflict within world heritage sites in China: a longitudinal study", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol.18 No.2, pp.110–136.
- Zhang, R. and Smith, L. (2019), "Bonding and dissonance: Rethinking the Interrelations Among Stakeholders in Heritage Tourism", *Tourism Management*, Vol.74, pp.212–223.