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

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

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

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

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

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33 To fill this gap, this study builds on the recent innovation research on process-based
34 approach (e.g., Cobos *et al.*, 2016; Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2017; Rodriguez-
35 Sanchez *et al.*, 2019) to investigate the phases of ITT, covering the entire journey of
36 innovation. Prior studies in innovation have mainly concentrated on the aspects of idea
37 generation phase (De Massis *et al.*, 2016; Presenza *et al.*, 2019). There is a lack of the
38 understanding of the processes of innovation, particularly in the (post) implementation
39 period. In many cases of rural tourism, after the initial innovations were implemented,
40 especially those employing external consultants, there is limited motivations and
41 capabilities to sustain further innovation efforts. This is essential to refresh and generate
42 more value to their customers. Further, to improve the understanding of the factors
43 influencing successful implementation of ITT process, this study aims to discover the
44 key antecedents, at each phase, of the ITT process. In summary, there are three research
45 objectives, in the context of heritage B&B:
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- 5 1. To conceptualise a phase-based ITT
- 6 2. To identify key antecedents of each phase of ITT
- 7 3. To understand how ITT challenges could be overcome
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11 Based on an in-depth analysis of nine cases of rural small B&B in a heritage village
12 in China, this research develops a process framework of ITT as an analytical and
13 practical tool to help heritage B&B entrepreneurs to implement ITT successfully, and
14 to inform relevant authorities active in the heritage ecosystem.
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17 **2.Literature review**

18 **2.1 Opening the innovation black box: A process perspective**

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21 Innovation is the process of transforming any novel idea into reality and use
22 (Kanter, 1983, p. 20). The term "process" refers to the progression and sequential of
23 events (Crossan and Apaydin, 2010). Scholars have proposed many process-based
24 frameworks to explain complex innovation processes (Adam *et al.*, 2016; Montag *et*
25 *al.*, 2012; Wolfe, 1994; Ottenbacher and Harrington, 2007; Zaltman *et al.*, 1973). In
26 comparison to outcome based innovation studies, Petzold *et al.* (2019) and Rodriguez-
27 Sanchez *et al.* (2019) suggest that process-based model is useful in helping the
28 identification of the antecedents of each phase and thereby increasing the manageability
29 of the innovation process.
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35 There are efforts in dividing the innovation process into different phases of as
36 shown in **Table 1**. But they are varied for different innovation types and industries.
37 These phases can be broadly categorised into two: idea development and
38 implementation. The idea development phase covers the efforts and activities aimed at
39 creating new ideas and recognizing opportunities. It is considered to be emerged
40 primarily through intra-individual cognitive processes (Anderson *et al.*, 2014; Sarooghi
41 *et al.*, 2015). The implementation phase covers how an organization sells ideas,
42 mobilizes sponsorship, gathers the necessary resources, and adopts and commercializes
43 innovation. It primarily involves inter-individual social processes (Zaltman *et al.*, 1973;
44 Sarooghi *et al.*, 2015).
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52 **Insert Table 1 here**

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55 In tourism, interest in exploring complex internal workings of the innovation
56 process is rapidly increasing (Cobos *et al.*, 2016; Rodriguez-Sanchez *et al.*, 2019) given
57 that lack of practical know-how has been an important innovation issue faced by smaller
58 firms. As Fuglsang *et al.* (2011) suggested, guidance and control are required
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4 throughout the innovation process to give directions and manage progress (p.676). Thus,
5 a comprehensive analysis and understanding of this generative process of innovation is
6 equally useful in the tourism sector (Rodriguez-Sanchez *et al.*, 2019).
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10 **2.2 ITT as sustainable innovation**

11 In many studies, ITT is conceptualized as an innovation strategy for family
12 businesses, suggesting innovation through acquiring, internalizing, and reinterpreting
13 past knowledge (De Massis *et al.*, 2016). While this type of innovation heavily depends
14 on traditional elements, it has also been combined with modern elements, such as digital
15 technologies and new materials, to innovate in the "form", production technologies,
16 modes of delivery, and interface with audiences (Miles and Green, 2008; Chan *et al.*,
17 2021).
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22 However, ITT is more complex in rural heritage than in an individual family firm.
23 Heritage tourism product development is increasingly constrained by regulations and
24 conservation standards. For rural heritage B&B, it is therefore important to balance the
25 diverse interests of stakeholders with the firm's innovation objectives (Xu and Dai,
26 2012). In this situation, ITT should be sustainable, defined as the utilization,
27 reinterpretation, or recombination of tangible and intangible traditional resources in a
28 process of innovating products or services, while enhancing not only economic, but
29 also social, cultural, and environmental performance.
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34 A new form of accommodation called Albergo Diffuso is an excellent example of
35 ITT (Paniccia and Leoni, 2019; Presenza *et al.*, 2019). It repurposes historic buildings
36 by following the local tradition and converts local tradition into a participatory tourism
37 experience through innovation. This kind of innovation will take into consideration the
38 local assets and competencies, incorporating existing living culture to enrich and
39 diversify economic activities. Instead of replacing the means and activities by which
40 locals have been practicing for generations, ITT stirs locals' pride and encourages them
41 to preserve and simultaneously revitalize traditions, voluntarily, as suggested by Su *et*
42 *al.* (2020) and Chan *et al.* (2016). Therefore, the concept of ITT provides a sharper
43 focus for B&B seeking to progress towards innovation and conservation of heritage.
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49 In summary, ITT is a key differentiation strategy for rural tourism. Tradition is
50 plausibly a strong carrier of emotional and symbolic meaning and differs greatly from
51 one area to another. ITT could offer a unique participatory experience and improve
52 visitors' experiential value (Christou *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, empirical evidence
53 presented by Paniccia and Leoni (2019) and Presenza *et al.* (2019) shows that if
54 accommodations in heritage could provide traditional experiences with modern
55 accommodation services simultaneously, it could be a key attraction for tourists. Yet,
56 many scholars (Chan *et al.*, 2020; Su *et al.*, 2020) advocate that the potential of local
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4 cultural traditions in heritage tourism development is undervalued and underexploited.
5 A clear path for B&B to develop ITT remains insufficiently developed.
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8 **2.3 Challenges of adopting existing conceptualisation of ITT in heritage B&B**

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10 Previous studies mostly conceptualised the process of ITT into *knowledge search*
11 and *recombination process*, i.e., the process of a useful and novel idea development
12 (De Massis *et al.*, 2016; Gorgoglione *et al.*, 2018; Holmquist *et al.*, 2019; Magistretti
13 *et al.*, 2020). Specifically, scholars have identified the *search direction* for traditional
14 knowledge (Presenza *et al.* 2019) and the *recombination approach* of traditional
15 elements into new products or services (Petruzzelli and Savino, 2015). Other studies
16 suggested that having a deep-rooted knowledge of local traditions is an important
17 prerequisite of ITT (Brătă, 2017). These previous studies support the hypothesis that
18 the ITT strategy could only be implemented successfully if firms can learn and
19 interiorise past knowledge from different sources (e.g., firm- and territory-based), and
20 then reinterpret and adopt effective recombination strategies (de Massis *et al.*, 2016).
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23 But some practical issues have been largely neglected, particularly the limited
24 understanding in overcoming “recency bias” and the lack of understanding in the
25 implementation phases of ITT. For example, recency bias towards tradition and
26 selective attention towards new information are common in rural entrepreneurs and
27 public administrations. Most of them believe that protecting tradition will reduce the
28 attractiveness of a destination (Molina-Collado *et al.*, 2022). In their eyes, novelty (as
29 against tradition) is essential to attract visitors, not old traditions. A study, by Gaœt *al.*
30 (2021) in the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces World Heritage Site, shows that homestay
31 operators neither see their hostel business to be directly related to heritage, nor consider
32 it as an innovation. Also, the difficulties in using traditional resources increase
33 whenever there is a conflict in common resource utilisation in rural heritage (Sunet *al.*,
34 2019; Zhang *et al.*, 2015). For example, if entrepreneurs utilize traditional elements
35 creatively to produce products or services without the express consent from the wider
36 community or local administrative authorities, it may attract criticism (Simons, 2000;
37 Yachin and Ioannides, 2020; Yang *et al.*, 2014). The lack of mechanism to overcome
38 these challenges will consequently limit the potential of practice -oriented innovation.
39 Thereby, it is essential to have a better understanding of the process of overcoming
40 these challenges during the implementation of ITT.
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55 **2.4 Conceptual framework**

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

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

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

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

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

39 40 **3.Methodology**

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42 The ITT phenomenon is novel and not much is known about this process of
43 innovation in a rural heritage B&B setting. Therefore, this study adopts multiple case
44 study method to obtain richer data and gain a deeper understanding of the ITT process,
45 and the antecedents affecting the process. The process-oriented reflexive critical
46 incident technique (CIT) was used in the enquiry to collect qualitative data (Flanagan,
47 1954) since it allows the exploration of the process dynamics that occur between
48 particular antecedents. CIT has been deployed widely in many qualitative studies,
49 particularly in health care (e.g., Viergever, 2019). It provides an approach and step-
50 wide framework for research design in exploring what helps or hinders in a
51 particular experience or activity in order “to acquire precise information on factors,
52 events, behaviours or experiences” (Viergever, 2019:1066). This study adopts this
53 approach to focus on most critical events, activities, experience in the innovation
54 journey of the informants in the heritage B&B sector.

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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 article sand then screen 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 constituted of twenty-eight B&Bs, which 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 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.

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

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29 Based on the empirical results, this study proposes an ITT process model with the
30 following phases: (1) *idea generation*; (2) *idea evaluation*; (3) *initial implementation*;
31 (4) *continuing implementation*; and (5) *sustaining improvement*. Moreover, given our
32 aim of understanding how ITT can be developed and implemented successfully,
33 the proposed process model also identifies three main antecedent themes that
34 significantly influence the innovation process, with varying frequencies in different
35 phases. The following sub-sections provide descriptions of these factors according to
36 their relative importance in different phases of the innovation process. Two rounds of
37 coding revealed relationships between the process phase and the primary antecedents.
38 **Fig. 1** sums up our findings and points out the different phases of ITT and their
39 associated antecedents.
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50 **4.1 Idea generation**

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52 This phase is defined as the process of generating innovative ideas through
53 emotional attachment, perceptions of, and aesthetic judgements of the traditions. *The*
54 *insightful tourism experience* of the innovators themselves is an important factor and
55 is a key source of inspiration during this phase. Numerous informants mentioned that
56 their own travel experience provided them with an opportunity to immerse themselves
57 in a multi-sensory real-world experience. Their personal travel experience - with
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4 exposures to purposely created *sensescapes* (*soundscapes, smellscapes, tastescapes,*
5 *and touch*) in other destinations, offers opportunities for reflection on unfamiliar aspects
6 of their familiar daily experience and traditions. A rich and vivid tourism experience
7 gained in other destinations increases the ability of local entrepreneurs and strengthen
8 their sensing capability to see the appeals of their own traditional resources or culture,
9 thereby ultimately enhancing the attention the local people given to the value of their
10 tradition. As explained by an informant in Case 2,

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16 *“To be honest, we are at times ‘blind’, failed to see what is special about (our)*
17 *traditional resources. For us, it is nothing beyond the ordinary; we prefer to enjoy*
18 *modern and novel design and stuff. However, I see this differently after my own*
19 *travel experience to a heritage destination, as I know that this (traditional element)*
20 *is something that can attract tourists.”*
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25 In addition, some informants stated that new insights and new information gained
26 through observation during their personal traveling journeys have improved their
27 appreciation of the functional and aesthetic values of their own local traditions. This
28 type of cognitive experience enables entrepreneurs to enhance their opportunity-
29 sensing capability, acutely sensitive to the potential of traditional elements in
30 innovation. This provides them with ideas about how to utilize and re-configure
31 traditional elements for modern tourism experience.

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

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4 *program, usually do not have such skills in this industry. We must only employ local*
5 *villagers in the implementation of this innovation.”*
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8 Our findings not only underscore the importance of local business networks in
9 facilitating continuing implementation of ITT. But the data also points to a noteworthy
10 conclusion: the concept of “providing benefit to the wider local society” should be
11 integrated into the implementation process to build trust with various local stakeholders.
12 This could ensure a cooperative effort in implementation of the innovation, thereby
13 convincing government agencies or rural officers to support ITT.
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17 18 19 **4.5 Sustaining improvement**

20 Post implementation of an innovation, entrepreneurs must make some incremental
21 changes to renew the original product or service innovation. This is classified as the
22 *sustaining improvement phase*. The aim is to satisfy any concerns of stakeholders who
23 provide essential resources or influence the sustainability and success of the operation.
24 Most of our interviewees admitted that *normative and cognitive pressure* act as a
25 catalyst during this phase, driving them to consider the social and cultural benefits that
26 ITT may produce and to keep making changes to gain legitimacy and improve their
27 reputations. Comparing with coercive regulatory pressure, normative and cognitive
28 pressure is more likely to influence entrepreneurs’ innovative efforts regarding
29 traditional resources.
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35 Normative pressures are derived from the expectations and demands of the locals.
36 As the manager of Case 8 said,
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40 *“If you want to keep a long-term and stable operation in this village, it is necessary to*
41 *meet the locals’ need to some extent and conform to their expectations. Otherwise, they*
42 *will constantly create some troubles.”*
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46 The media, another important source of normative pressure, could influence a B&B
47 access to certain resources, such as reputation in the community, recognition by the
48 government, and customers. In response to the government’s call for “preservation of
49 traditional villages”, the media has been giving increasing attention to practices that
50 make good use of traditional buildings, objects, and activities, which revitalising local
51 traditions. Hence, entrepreneurs undertake efforts that align with the media’s
52 expectations to obtain positive press coverage.
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56 Cognitive pressure has its origin in the ‘typical’ or ‘normal’ practices of
57 benchmarking enterprises in the local areas. As the entrepreneur of Case 6 said,
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4 *“The locally praised B&Bs have one thing in common: distinctive local features are fully*
5 *embodied, particularly those incorporating features related to traditional resources or*
6 *industries. To obtain more information, I visited these successful B&Bs and learned how*
7 *to utilize traditional resources to innovate.”*
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10 11 12 13 14 15 **5. Discussion and Conclusions**

16 17 18 **5.1 Conclusions**

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

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

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

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

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52 This study indicates that only few entrepreneurs possess sufficient traditional
53 knowledge and capabilities to turn an innovative idea into a finished product or service
54 in the initial implementation phase. All entrepreneurs interviewed refer to external
55 business connections, such as universities and outsourcing firms, as the most important
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4 factor in the initial implementation phase. But entrepreneurs rely more on their local
5 business network (comparing to external network) during the continuing
6 implementation phase to create a conducive environment for long-term operation.
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8 During the sustaining improvement phase, entrepreneurs are subject to normative
9 and cognitive pressures and thereby continuously adjust their methods for
10 implementing ITT to gain legitimacy and maintain good reputation. Normative and
11 cognitive pressures act as opportunities for developing innovative and sustainable
12 solutions (Gyau and Stringer, 2011). On the one hand, innovation activities are
13 embedded in social contexts. Adherence to the prevailing social norms minimizes
14 potential conflicts with the locals and creates circumstances that are conducive for
15 innovation. On the other hand, to gain more attention from media, entrepreneurs are
16 required to respond to public expectations through the upholding of a social mission.
17 In addition, the cognitive pressures perceived from recognised successes inspire
18 entrepreneurs to innovate through tradition. They drew inspiration from high-profile
19 B&Bs which leverage on precious heritage or immaterial cultural heritage, and then
20 developed their distinctive ITTs.
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29 **5.2 Theoretical Implications**

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32 First, this article contributes to the discussion of heritage tourism by answering the
33 call for a stronger integration of literature in heritage preservation and innovation of
34 tourism product. This study of the ITT process demonstrates how the heritage
35 preservation literature can inform the innovation literature and vice versa. Further,
36 exploring how to overcome the challenges in the use of traditional resource provides
37 extended understanding of how ITT strategic value can be achieved in tourism sector.
38 Our study shows that a successful ITT process needs to take into account the
39 sustainability of livelihood in the local communities and the needs of heritage
40 conservation, which accords with the ideas of Chan *et al.* (2016), Lee *et al.* (2015), and
41 Yachin and Ioannides (2020).
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47 This study also makes several theoretical contributions to the ITT literature - a
48 relatively young and evolving research field. Prior studies concentrate on aspects of
49 idea generation phase but neglect some issues facing innovator in the process of
50 implementation and post-implementation. This study proposes a five-phase innovation
51 framework of ITT with respective antecedents (See Figure 1): Idea Development (Idea
52 generation, Idea evaluation) and Idea Implementation (Initial, Continuing, Sustaining).
53 The antecedents identified can be categorised into experience corridor, network, and
54 institutional pressure.
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58 **Experience corridors:** Several past contributions mainly linked combinative
59 capabilities to the occurrence of ITT (Petruzzelli and Savino, 2015; Presenza *et al.*,
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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

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

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

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

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 **5.4 Limitations and Future Research**

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32 First, while it is not appropriate to claim generalisability of the findings on a
33 multiple case study, this study would like to offer suggestions for potential applicability
34 of the findings and proposed framework to other locations and in other context, e.g.,
35 city-based heritage sites. The antecedents identified might have a different importance
36 depending on the social-cultural contexts and the existing knowledge and skills of the
37 entrepreneurs. Institutional factors might be applicable in city heritage site (Chanet *al.*,
38 2021). Second, this study based on evidence mainly from interview data of a limited
39 number of rural B&B owners or managers. Despite its contribution to theory
40 development, any generalization of the findings could only be made after more
41 extensive studies. Hence, this study calls for an investigation and test on this process
42 framework and their antecedents on a broader empirical base survey. Finally, a
43 longitudinal study to investigate the unfolding of ITT activities over time would
44 produce even richer data.

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Table 1: Examples of innovation phases as identified in innovation studies in heritage sector

Author	Study subjects	Idea development	Idea implementation
Zaltman <i>et al.</i> (1973)	product innovation process	knowledge awareness, attitude formation, decisions	implementation initiation, and sustained implementation
Ottenbacher and Harrington (2007)	innovation development process of Michelin-starred chefs	strategy and idea formulation, tacit skills in creative thinking, screening, business analysis, concept development, final testing	commercialization
Rodriguez- Sanchez <i>et al.</i> (2019)	innovation of new-to-tourism entrepreneurs	opportunity discovery, opportunity evaluation, coalition building	innovation production, organizational emergence, and transfer or diffusion
Adams <i>et al.</i> (2016)	sustainability- oriented innovation	drawing inspiration from a range of new sources; backcasting; systematically looking to identify, explore and integrate the views of stakeholders from the fringes	implementation

Table 2: A review of studies exploring the ITT processes and antecedents

Authors	No. of cases & subjects	Main content of research	Antecedents
Tourism and hospitality industry			
Prezenza et al. (2019)	11 Italian owner/operators of Albergo Diffuso (AD)	Categorize several sources of tradition that inspire innovation in the Albergo Diffuso: tradition derived from the AD itself, a past industry, a specific period, and the destination; Entrepreneurs can create value for customers through the revitalization, preservation and strategic repositioning of tangible resources of a specific tradition.	Revitalization, preservation, reinterpretation
Palmi and Lezzi (2020)	10 successful Italian agritourism entities	Delve into the multifaceted outcomes that tangible and intangible traditions have on the innovation and how this is accomplished while achieving sustainability.	—
Widjojo and Gunawan (2020)	10 Indonesian social enterprises	The role of indigenous tradition on social enterprises and show its impact when it is optimally explored to create value.	—
Suvittaat (2020)	100 small medium size hospitality industry enterprises in Thailand	The results of this study confirm the model developed by De Massis et al. (2016) that innovation does not have to mean "out with the old" and that traditions are "in the way of innovations".	Interiorization and reinterpretation
Cultural and creative industries			
Petruzzelli and Savino (2015)	5 cases of Italian restaurants awarded with 3 Michelin stars	Traditional elements may be combined with elements coming from different and distant cultures.	Interiorization and reinterpretation
Holmquist et al. (2019)	3 design cases in Sweden	Provide guidance for companies and designers on how to go about actually identifying the elements in the design process that can lead to innovations in meaning.	—
Magistretti et al. (2020)	2 leading Italian design-intensive firms	Design intensive firms may innovate through accessing, using (knowledge search process), interiorizing, reinterpreting (recombination process), and transferring temporally distant knowledge.	Interiorization and reinterpretation

Erdogan et al. (2020)	8 cases of long-established family firm in Turkey	Identify different equifinal strategies through which they manage the tradition and innovation paradox.	—
Food and beverage industry			
Bråta (2017)	A craft beer imitation of a beer produced in the early 19th century	Different knowledge bases must be used to create 'fictive terroir', which is vital for activating heritage.	Traditional knowledge
Della Corte et al. (2018)	3 cases of Italian food family firms	Successful family food firms leverage their deep-rooted knowledge of both family and local traditions to innovate. At same time, they establish continuous info exchange flows with all of the firm's stakeholders by adopting an open innovation approach.	Interiorization and reinterpretation
Gorgoglione et al. (2018)	4 brands operating in the	Recombinative category that can be efficient and effective in communicating the balance between tradition and innovation.	Interiorization and reinterpretation
Luxury industry			
Pérez et al. (2020)	3 case studies of a luxury champagne house in Spain	Codified knowledge shared among marketing and design member can overcome tensions between innovation and tradition.	Knowledge sharing
Mixed industries			
De Massis et al. (2016)	6 Italian long-lasting family businesses	Conceptualize a new product innovation strategy called innovation through tradition (ITT) and identify its underlying capabilities of interiorizing and reinterpreting past knowledge.	Interiorization and reinterpretation
Sasaki et al. (2020)	25 Japanese companies	Corporate leaders use a variety of strategies to deal with revered past when moving on with strategic change.	—

Table 3: Summary of data sources

Data source	Main contribution
<p style="text-align: center;">Archival sources</p> <p>8 journals published by local government about rural B&B 22 on-line news articles and 6 magazine articles B&Bs' material such as brochures and posters (14 items) Video material including two official documentaries, one film and one reality show made by Discovery Channel (4 items)</p>	<p>Confirmation of the degree to which these B&Bs make use of tangible and intangible aspects of tradition to innovate</p> <p>Tailor the interview questions</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Documentation</p> <p>Administrative regulations, regulatory documents, and announcements (15 items) County magistrate's speech (3 items)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Field data</p> <p>Direct visits on site (Mar. 2018 to Apr. 2019)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Interview data</p> <p>9 interviews with owners and managers of B&B 3 interviews with other stakeholders (2 government agency supervisors; 1 representative from B&B-related industry associations)</p>	<p>Examine more in-depth the process and antecedents of ITT</p> <p>Supplement interviews and mitigate potential bias.</p>

Table 4: Coding Structure

First-order concept	Second-order themes	Aggregate dimension
new insights and new information gained through observation during their personal traveling journeys	The insightful tourism experience	Experience corridors
sensitive to the potential of traditional elements in innovation		
ideas about how to utilize and re-configure traditional elements		
receive tacit knowledge and learn about the skill of making traditional crafts from family members	Family background	
develop a personal affinity for local traditions, embedded in their everyday life		
the affective bond between local traditional resources and family		
Impose direct constraints through explicit rules and regulations	Regulatory pressure	Institutional pressure
Illegal buildings will be demolished		
Specific license requirements		
undertake efforts that align with the media's expectations	Normative pressure	
recognition by the government		
reputation in the community		
'typical' or 'normal' practices of benchmarking enterprises in the local areas	Cognitive pressure	
recognized successful experiences		
gain professional assistance from experts and relevant scholars	External business networks	
outsourced design and detailed planning tasks to a design firm		
locals are the people who master the traditional knowledge and skills	Local business networks	
gain human resources and local unique resources for their innovation		
reduce the objective risks of a failed innovation		

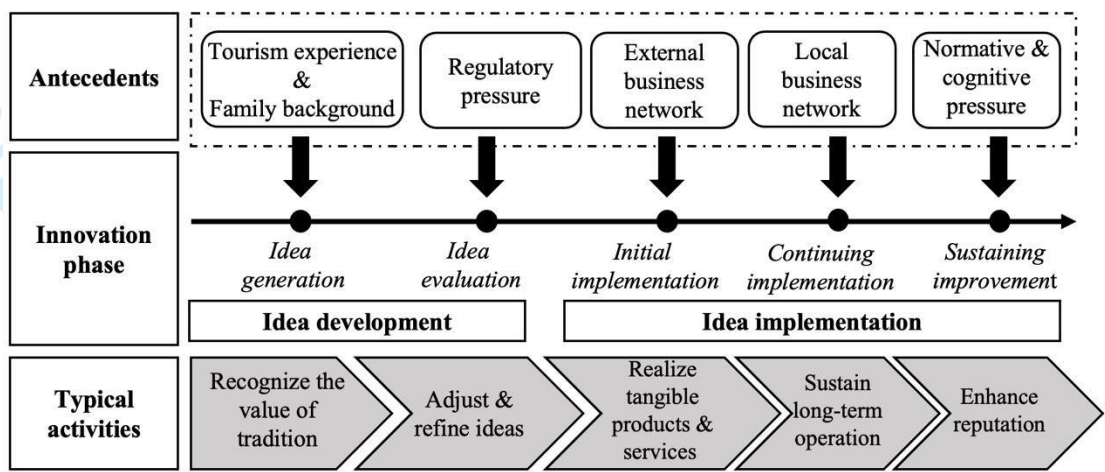


Figure 1: Process framework for innovation through tradition and its antecedents in rural heritage B&B innovation (Proposed by the authors)