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*Corresponding author: Hooi Hooi Lean, School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Gelugor, Penang 11800, Malaysia
Email: hooilean@usm.my

Reviewing editor:
Pier Luigi Sacco, Humanities, IULM University, Italy

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LEISURE & TOURISM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Entrepreneurial orientation of traditional and modern cultural organisations: Cases in George town UNESCO world heritage site

Jin Hooi Chan¹, Intan H. M. Hashim², Suet Leng Khoo², Hooi Hooi Lean^{2*} and Athina Piterou¹

Abstract: George Town World Heritage Site in Penang, Malaysia is well-endowed with creative and cultural resources. This study examines how “innovation culture” is inculcated and embedded within two local organisations with distinct approaches to innovation. This examination adopts and adapts the concept of Entrepreneurial Orientation, using three constructs: i) innovativeness, ii) risk-taking and iii) pro-activeness. This study administered a purely qualitative research approach by conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews and archival study of the chosen case

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jin Hooi Chan is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Business, University of Greenwich. His research builds on the study of industrial organization, industrial policy, entrepreneurship and innovation, and covers sustainability and environment, tourism, creative, cultural/heritage and cleantech industries. He was the Principal Investigator of the UKRI ESRC Newton Fund project [ES/P010377/1] on creative and cultural industries in George Town World Heritage Site and the EU Interreg 2Seas project: FACET on circular economy practices in coastal tourism and leisure sector.

Intan H. M. Hashim is a professor of psychology in the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her research interests are in the combined area of positive and social psychology. She is particularly interested in positive relationships and happiness.

Suet Leng Khoo is an Associate Professor in the Development Planning and Management Programme, School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her research interests are in areas related to creative city/creative economy, placemaking, human capital development and urban heritage conservation.

Hooi Hooi Lean is a professor at the School of Social Sciences (Economics Program), Universiti Sains Malaysia. She has published more than 160 articles in many reputed international journals. Her H-index is 41 and there are more than 7000 citations to her works on Google Scholar.

Athina Piterou is Senior Lecturer in Sustainability at the University of Greenwich. Her research interests include sustainable innovation, renewable energy and the creative industries.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

There is increasing public debate on the value of World Heritage Status and the impact of the inscription on tourism and the lived experience of local residents who embody the intangible heritage of the sites. Penang State Government and GTWHI have engaged in initiatives to support the growth of cultural and creative industries, such as the development of the Penang Art District. The paper illustrates the diversity of creative organisations in George Town by comparing the innovation activities of a traditional clan association and an informal, loose organisation based on the tabletop gaming subculture. Findings suggest that traditional organisations do innovate although within the constraints defined by their mission and their history. Informal organisations do not face the same constraints and engage more with a younger population. However, innovation does not always lead to economic benefits, but it allows for the self-expression of their members.

organisations and their networks. The novelty of this research resides in the choice of case study organisations chosen (i.e. traditional versus modern) where a comparative approach was used to compare innovation culture and gauge the extent upon which entrepreneurship orientation constructs are prevalent and thriving in these organisations. This study concluded that traditional cultural organisations tend to be more cautious and even passive in their business approach and decision-making processes, while modern and newer cultural and creative organisations lean towards a more active and dynamic outlook, albeit sometimes constrained by lack of resources as well as impeded by the nature of their informality.

Subjects: Cities & the Developing World; Culture & Development; Economics and Development

Keywords: innovation; creative industries and cultural sectors; UNESCO world heritage site; entrepreneurial orientation

1. Introduction

In recent decades, creative and cultural industries as catalysts for local economic development have been at the forefront of policy agenda. In advanced economies, major cities such as London have leveraged upon their cities' creative and cultural endowments to sustain their local economies. In fact, forces of globalization have necessitated and accentuated competition amongst cities on a global scale. As a result, cities in today's globalised economy are strategizing and repositioning themselves to capitalize on their creative and cultural assets for value added comparative advantage and competitive edge (AuthentiCity, 2008, p. 22). Currently, many cities in North America, Europe and East Asia are harnessing and commodifying creativity, innovation and culture in their strategic plan, hence, the emergence of creative city aspirations and culture-led urban regeneration (AuthentiCity, 2008, p. 21). At a time, the creation of cultural clusters was over-hyped in the attempt to reposition cities (Mommaas, 2004).

In dissecting the concept further, creative city scholar Charles Landry argues that creative cities value human creativity and innovation more than physical infrastructure in the quest to champion for vibrant, lively and sustainable cities (Landry, 2008). The way creativity and innovation are embedded in urban locales is further championed by Richard Florida. He contends that the creative energy and synergy found in urban milieus transform them into hubs that attract creative and innovative people to cluster and stimulate innovation for local economic development. In sum, creative cities are incubators and innovation hubs for creative and cultural industries. Despite, this relationship between economic development and the growth of Bohemian community, as proposed by Florida (2004), has not yet to be fully verified and remains a contentious proposition. Readers may see Moeller and Tubadji (2009) and the Culture-based Development concept (Tubadji, 2012) for a further dialogue on different perspectives in the interpretation of this relationship.

Contemporary urban planning policies consider the role of creative districts within the greater city context. Creative districts that develop naturally, as in the case of New York, often have unintended consequences because cultural consumers are drawn into the district because of its association with an artistic, bohemian lifestyle: increase in house prices and rents, and higher capital investment may culminate in displacement of artists and gentrification (Zukin & Braslow, 2011). Hence, cultural entrepreneurs and city planners need to maintain a balance as they deploy cultural/creative assets for urban regeneration while ensuring a sustainable livelihood for artists and population groups that embody the local culture. Following Zukin (1995) the questions "Whose city? Whose culture?" should be at the centre of the policy-making process. These challenges have been under-explored in the case of World Heritage Sites (Lai & Ooi, 2005).

There is ambiguity regarding the definition of cultural and creative industries, particularly the distinction between the terms. Kong (2014) identifies how the debate has shifted from “cultural industry” to “cultural industries” and then to “creative industries”. In the case of the UK, the shift from cultural to creative industries was influenced by the increased importance of the information society, where the cultural sector is positioned as an economic growth driver (Garnham, 2005). In addition, it has been argued that the shift from cultural to creative industries signifies a shift from subsidised arts and broadcast mass media to more flexible and network applications of creativity where SMEs have increased influence (Cunningham, 2002)

Although there is no one universal definition for creative industries, the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport’s (DCMS) definition is often referred to as a key point of departure. Basically, UK’s DCMS has defined creative industries as “those industries that have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), 2010, p. 9). Initially, the UK’s DCMS used a 13-sector classification which comprises the following: advertising, architecture, arts and antique markets, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, television and radio, performing arts, publishing, and software. Subsequently, the latest statistical release by Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (2015) has reorganised these sectors into nine (9) categories as follows: (1) advertising and marketing, (2) architecture, (3) crafts, (4) design (product, graphic and fashion design), (5) film, TV, video, radio and photography, (6) IT, software and computer services, (7) publishing, (8) museum, galleries and libraries; and (9) music, and performing and visual arts.

Based on the brief overview above, it is noted that the creative and cultural industry discourse stretches far, wide and across disciplines like urban planning, regional science, behavioural economics and such. Noticeably, the discourse transcends and spans across multi-disciplines such as culture, creativity and city planning as advocated by Landry (2008) and Florida (2002, 2004)) while scholars like Kong (2014) and Cunningham (2002) have emphasized the need to clearly define and even delineate the cultural industries from the creative industries thus suggesting how conceptually flawed and diverse the concept can be across geographies and contexts. A further discussion on the operational definition and rationale for case selection will be provided in **Section 2.1**.

Against this backdrop, this paper endeavours to fill a significant research gap by angling the discussion from a business management perspective—an angle that is vastly under-explored in the George Town context given that no local studies have endeavoured to explore this viewpoint. On this note, this study also contributes significantly to the existing body of literature related to creative and cultural industries. To unpack this scenario, this paper will administer a comparative case study approach by examining the innovation culture and the extent upon which Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) are prevalent and flourishing in two organisations in George Town World Heritage Site. Unlike studies focussing on “creativity” of a firm or individual in a firm, there are some studies that investigate innovation processes of firms in the creative and cultural sectors (e.g., Handke, 2007; Miles & Green, 2008). In this study, we adopt the firm-level construct of EO to understand how traditional and modern organisations deploy entrepreneurial strategies and activities. The EO theorises entrepreneurial strategy-making processes and actions (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003), comprising of management-related preferences (attitude towards risk), actions and behaviours (innovativeness and proactiveness), which have been proposed as essentials in pursuance of firm’s performance by Miller (1983). The deployment of EO in this study enables a better understanding of innovation activities and challenges of different types of organisations.

Broadly, this paper is organised into five (5) sub-sections. It begins by introducing the background, problem statement and research objective of this paper. Subsequently, **Section 2** will review the creative and cultural scenario in Malaysia and discusses the entrepreneurial orientation constructs adopted for this study. **Section 3** will briefly describe the research methodology for this paper and **Section 4** will illustrate the two case study organisations in turn. **Section 5** will discuss key points and conclude the paper.

2. Literature review

2.1. Creative and cultural scenario in Malaysia

On the Malaysian front, the receptiveness and recognition towards the importance of creative industries/economies for the nation's economic development was recently highlighted by Prime Minister Najib Razak by declaring the “cultural economy” as the new asset for Malaysia (Abas, 2017). Besides aspiring for the culture and arts industry to be an impactful sector that promises employment opportunities and high returns for Malaysians and the country's economy at large, Najib also pointed out that development of cultural industries is instrumental towards leading Malaysia to achieve a developed nation status.

In the UNESCO historic city of George Town which is also capital city of Penang State, the availability, vibrancy and dynamism of cultural assets within the World Heritage Site (WHS) is undisputed. In fact, George Town's inscription into the UNESCO World Heritage List on 7 July 2008 is attributable to fulfilment of three out of 10 criteria related to cultural heritage, namely, criteria (ii) George Town's historic role as a mercantilist port city; (iii) George Town's rich and unique cultural diversity; (iv) George Town's unparalleled and unique ensemble of built heritage. Clearly, these criteria are manifestations of creative and cultural assets and industries that are existent in George Town till today. Subsequently, local state think-tanks (i.e. formerly SERI, now known as Penang Institute) have further echoed the notion of keeping Penang's culture alive by urging the public to think of “Penang as a Culture Capital, and by thinking of Culture as Capital” (Ooi, 2011).

No doubt, the macro strategic direction of Penang State is inclining towards creativity and culture, but to really understand whether these broad visions are being translated to the meso- and micro-levels would warrant further exploration. This study fills this research gap by exploring to what extent innovation is embraced in creative and cultural organisations in George Town WHS. This study also attempts to find out how and where these organisations acquire knowledge, funding and talents to enhance innovation and growth.

For the purpose of this paper, we look at the situation by comparing two significantly different creative and cultural organisations in George Town, i.e. a traditional cultural organisation—a Chinese clan association— and a modern one—an informal subcultural group that thrives on creativity. While the case selection strategy is to be discussed in [Section 3.0](#), a dialogue and critical review on what constitute a creative and cultural organisation is deemed necessary here. In the Introduction Section, the classic DCMS classification of the creative and cultural industries was reviewed. This paper adopts a broader definition after reviewing other diverse sources (i.e., Florida, 2002, 2004; Habitat, 2015; Landry, 2008; Sasaki, 2010) which would be more suitable for the geographical context of this research as illustrated above. This study thereby has derived at a suitable operational definition of creative and cultural sectors: sectors that engage in cultural, artistic and/or economic pursuits that involve creativity and innovation to ensure urban sustainability, inclusivity, well-being and good quality of life. In the George Town WHS specifically, creative and cultural industries would include traditional livelihoods, businesses, practices and rituals that enhance “sense of place” yet stimulate economic innovation.

This paper, as in the above definition and the selection of cases, embraces a broader definition of culture. The concept of culture is complex; the definitions are contentious. The Culture Based Development (CBD) concept (Tubadji, 2012) defines culture as “the ruling group of attitudes belonging to a critical mass of residents—typically the majority of the population in a locality.” Tubadji (2013) further classifies culture into material and immaterial forms as well as taking a temporal perspective to differential living culture and cultural heritage. The first selected case of traditional cultural organisation falls within the remit of this category of cultural heritage, as the organisation and its activities represent living culture surviving the “test of time.” While it could “belong” to the majority, but it is not necessary still practiced by

the majority. This organisation is relatively large, well-respected and influential in the locality, and very well-endowed.

Similarly, the second case is not an example of the dominant culture practiced by the majority but a living subcultural group practicing or playing tabletop games. Equally contentious in defining subculture, this subcultural group under examination in this study is neither the deviant characterisation of subcultures by the Chicago School since the 1920s' (Williams, 2007) nor the Birmingham School of structural perspective of class resistance emerged in the late 1960s (Nayak, 2003). It is a distinct social group with their specific objectified subcultural capital such as fashionable haircut, fancy costumes, and miniature figures.

“Subcultural ideologies are a means by which youth imagine their own and other social groups, assert their distinctive character and affirm that they are not anonymous members of an undifferentiated mass” (Thornton, 1995: 24).

In the research site, there is an increasing number of creative and cultural workers, coalescing in various forms and sizes of formal organisations and informal groups, where the number is rapidly growing after the inscription of George Town as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Chen et al., 2018). The second case is a relatively small organisation (but sits within a larger subcultural group), less organised and operating on a low budget.

2.2. Innovation culture and entrepreneurial orientation

To examine the extent upon which the innovation culture is inculcated and embedded within the organisation, this study borrows the concept of Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO), which is a widely accepted firm-level measurement of entrepreneurial strategy-making processes and actions (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003) involving innovation and risk propensity. A high degree of EO of a firm is found to lead to a higher and sustainable performance (Rauch et al., 2009; Wales et al., 2013). While EO is being applied on profit-orientated businesses, this research adopts this framework for non-profit cultural organisations.

In the literature, the measurement scales of EO have been developed and widely adopted, and their relationships with some moderators have been examined in the literature (e.g., Covin & Slevin, 1991; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Miller, 1983). Three dimensions of EO have been adopted by this study, i.e. innovativeness, risk-taking behaviour, and pro-activeness:

- (1) Innovativeness is the predisposition to experimentation with developing new ideas, new products and services departing from established practices, products, and technologies (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).
- (2) Risk taking involves taking bold actions by committing significant resources under uncertain environments where costs of failure might be high (Miller & Friesen, 1984).
- (3) Pro-activeness is an opportunity-seeking behaviour anticipating and acting on future market demands in introducing new products and services ahead of competitors (Miller, 1983), including the competitive aggressiveness—the intensity of effort to outperform competitors (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

3. Methodology

Given the exploratory nature of the research enquiry in this paper, a purely qualitative technique was engaged to comprehend innovation culture and the extent upon which entrepreneurial orientation constructs are prevalent within two diverse creative and cultural organisations found in George Town World Heritage Site. A comparative case study approach was deployed given that it, according to case study seminal scholars like Robert Yin (2002), will allow the “how” or “why” questions pertaining phenomenon of interest to be unearthed. In this paper, the use of case study approach is apt to investigate how innovation culture and

entrepreneurial orientation constructs are understood and why these aspects are instrumental towards the overall organisation performance of creative and cultural organisations and their long-term sustainability. Case study often provides insights into “the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences” (Flyberg, 2006, p. 229), rather than an attempt to determine with a high confident level the degree of proliferation of the symptoms of problems or phenomena.

This study adopted the *maximum variance case* selection strategy in accordance with the suggestions given by Flyberg (2006, p. 229) that this strategy is useful for obtaining “information about the significance of various circumstances” for case processes and outcomes, i.e. the two selected cases are very different on a number of dimensions such as size and form of the organisation, length of formation, operating budget, social status and recognition, cultural representation. This strategy would enable the revelation of more information, providing better contrast on innovation culture and entrepreneurial orientation.

Primary data collection in this study involved several sessions of reiterative and follow-up in-depth interviews with the same and different key informants from the same organisation for both cases. The interviews were recorded upon consent from the key informants and each interview normally lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Similar open-ended questions were asked for both case study organisations that touched on dimensions related to innovation culture, innovativeness, risk-taking endeavours and proactive behaviour of each firm. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using manifest and latent content analysis where themes were coded and tabulated. Subsequently, emerging themes across both case study organisations were compared to decipher and dissect the nature and magnitude of innovation culture and entrepreneurial orientation in both case study organisations.

Apart from in-depth interviews, this study also collected and referred to secondary resources in the form of academic journals, technical reports, brochures, pamphlets and such regarding the case study organisations and also GTWHS. The primary and secondary evidentiary sources were analysed and triangulated to provide a holistic depiction of the phenomenon under study.

4. Findings

This section will discuss the findings from the two case study organisations, namely, a traditional clan organisation and a modern informal sub-cultural group.

4.1. Case study 1: traditional clan organisation

Clan organisations are formed based on localised lineage in blood, geographical and/or dialect ties (Freedman, 1958). The formation of Chinese clan organisations was the result of practical needs of the early immigrants. This type of kinship organisation is the second line of defence (Freedman, 1958) as well as for establishing prestige and social status among the community by the rich (Yen, 1970). The formation of clan organisation in Penang could be traced back to the first half of the 19th century. Throughout two centuries, clan organisations serve cultural and welfare needs of the Chinese community in Penang. In the 19th Century, the clan complex resembled a miniature clan village, with its own self-government as well as educational, financial, welfare, social security and other social and cultural functions. There were rivalry and conflicting political and economic interests among the organisations.

By the early 21st century, there remain more than 50 clan associations in George Town and the surrounding areas. As economic structure of the Penang overseas Chinese society has transformed away from the traditional agriculture, trade and shipping sectors, the significance of the roles of these organisations is diminishing. The maturity and enhanced roles of the modern state has also replaced some functions of the organisations, for instance, in education, social security and banking (Chan et al., 2017).

Clan associations have encountered substantial challenges in searching for their roles and identities in the modern industrialised society. They are no longer the centre of important social

activities and functions that they once held. They are facing uphill challenges in attracting young people to participate in their organisation. Different strategies and ideas are being implemented to redefine the place of clan associations in the 21st Century. The development of tourism industry, and thereby the creative and cultural sector, emphasising on cultural heritage, creates many new opportunities for them to innovate and transform themselves. It is noted that these Chinese associations in Malaysia are trying to balance between tradition and modernity as they move beyond their role of preserving traditions and language education, while they contribute to a new sense of locality: initially locality was linked to the clan's ancestral origins and language group in China, while the new sense of locality results from their attachment to particular regions in Malaysia and the locally developed traditions and networks (Lim, 2006).

AA Clan Association is one of the important clan associations in George Town. It was established in the early 19th century by members of clan coming from Fujian province in China. Today, it is still representing the clan family's social and spiritual commitments between extended relations, ancestors and those beyond the community. The association also acts as an important means of solidarity and plays supportive roles such as helping with the education of children of their members, disputes settlement, and extending personal loans.

4.1.1. *Innovativeness*

The leadership of AA places strong emphasis on tried and tested practices, rather than innovative and new ways of doing things. Traditionally and culturally, they follow ancestors' rules and practices handed down to them from generation, and do not deviate from such practices. They are confined by their constitution and need to be prudent in any investment. For instance, they continue to provide support and scholarships for the children of their members. Similar observation is found by a wider survey in the same research site (see Chan & Lean, 2018).

Nonetheless, AA have taken some steps to be involved in the emerging tourism sector. They have marketed or conducted some new products or services in the last three years. For instance, they have gradually been engaging with the wider community rather than solely serving their members, particularly in promoting cultural tourism and charities.

They did some changes in order to improve their area and provide extra function. They collaborate with quasi-governmental organisations in Penang such as Penang Global Tourism and George Town World Heritage Incorporated for cultural performances, events and celebrations. They allowed film production companies to shoot movies in their clan house. They set up an art gallery house and museum where they display their collections and history. AA has sourced for advice and worked with heritage architect and other heritage restoration companies, engaged an established curator to design and run their museum and art gallery, as well as appoint consultants to develop tourism-related businesses.

In the last few years, they have successfully attracted more than 100,000 visitors annually to their clan house. Some of the proceeds from tourism products have been used for charity purposes beyond the scope of their constitution to serve solely their members. In terms of organisation, they have increasingly been using technology and digitisation of their records. They have also worked with a virtual 360-degree tours video maker. Despite adopting some of these digital innovations, the young clansmen do not take sufficient interest in what the association are doing in general.

4.1.2. *Risk-taking behaviour*

AA remains risk averse in many aspects. They are involved in very low risk projects in order to be financially prudent and to preserve their good financial standing. Hence, they explore potential opportunities gradually through cautious incremental behaviour. They are very careful with everything they do including spending money. The entire board of directors is responsible for assessing the risk of any investment or a project.

When confronted with decision-making situations involving uncertainty, AA adopts a cautious “wait and see” posture in order to minimize the probability of making costly decisions. They are very cautious, and do not rush into it. Sometimes they have to reject a lot of propositions especially when they do not feel safe enough to go into the new venture.

4.1.3. *Pro-activeness*

AA stated that they always initiate actions to which their competitors (in this case, other clan associations) then respond. Nonetheless, they seek to avoid competitive clashes, preferring a “live and let live” posture. They do not compete very much with other associations. They do their own stuff and allow other to operate as desired. They have very close tie with each other, working together with each other.

Amish saying, “The old is the best, and the new is of the devil!”
(Palmer, 2010, p. 161)

Based on the analysis, the organisation is seemed to be more conservatively managed with a low level of innovativeness, more cautious towards taking risk, and less pro-actively seeking opportunities or adopting less aggressive strategy in confronting competitors. It might also be influenced by the composition of the managing team or board of director. In this case, key decision-makers are well into their 70s. Other studies on firms and individual entrepreneurs have also identified the similar impact of traditions and heritage on entrepreneurial behaviours and innovativeness. For instance, Tubadji et al. (2016), based on the perspective path-dependence, proposes cultural hysteresis does exist in certain communities when decision is to be made on entrepreneurial activities particularly during crisis time. On a broader local level perspective, traditionalism and cultural closure might have a negative effect on the growth of human and cultural capital, and thereby innovation and local economic development (Tubadji & Nijkamp, 2015).

Nonetheless, Palmer (2010) argues that contemporary society, alike indigenous communities, does also consider any innovation that could lead to cultural change very carefully (162). Thereby, a mutual exclusive dichotomized view on cultural heritage verse innovation might not be convincing. This case also indicates the willingness to adopt innovations but at a different pace and cautious manner. There is also other evidence of heritage sector embracing changes, modernization, and upgrading (e.g., Chan et al., 2016).

4.2. *case study 2: modern informal sub-cultural group*

Glass (1964) coined the term “gentrification” to describe the phenomenon of changing housing stock in Islington, London, Gentrification lead to displacement of long-term residents who mostly belonged to disadvantaged groups. Since then, gentrification has been extensively studied (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990; Hines, 2010; Smith & DeFilippis, 1999). Many of these cases are primarily examples illustrating “defensive” strategies, where the residents are victims struggling to retain their rights and protect their neighbourhood. But there is an under-explored area on how long-term residents appropriate the process of gentrification for their own ends (Ocejo, 2011). Chan et al. (2016) have proposed a novel concept of “self-gentrification”, where under the pressure of gentrification, local residents are mobilising, especially through entrepreneurship and innovation to take advantage of this wave of change, to improve their own socio-economy and political status.

Since the 1990s, gentrification nonetheless has become an increasingly contentious development “ideology” for many governments at city level, intending to “regenerate” urban areas, inviting private capitals (Smith, 2002, p. 441), restructuring the economy, improving the housing stock and probably the “compositions” of the local residents. Many Asian cities have also adopted this urban regeneration policy that “intensifies the homogenisation of urban landscapes” in which local governments led visual and conspicuous urban transformations by incentivise the formation of the creative and cultural industries through their support of activities such

as festivals, exhibitions, and various cultural events (Kim, 2016, p. 134). After it has been inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008, this research site, George Town, a post-British colonial town in Penang, Malaysia, is also sharing a similar experience, especially due to the growth of tourism and influx of external capital investment in the housing stock related to the tourism economy.

Under this backdrop, George Town has attracted increasingly higher numbers of local and regional creative and cultural workers. Many of these workers are young with their passion in arts and creative industries and/or the local heritage. Some are working full-time in a more established organisation in the sector; some work part-time or hopping from one short-term contract to another contract. There are also local people, who might have other profession but are involved in and affiliated to various kinds of bohemian subcultural groups.

“... that culture arises in the form of play, that it is played from the very beginning.” ~
(Huizinga, 1980, p. 46)

The selected Case Study 2 is one of these subcultural groups (thereafter called ST). The members of ST congregate primarily as a group to play table-top miniature games. Similar to other types of modern subcultural groups, for example, the better studied “cosplay” subculture (e.g., Crawford & Hancock, 2018; Ferguson, 2011; Peirson-Smith, 2013), it belongs to a highly participatory culture embodied in a loosely organised but diverse (young) adult community. The key members might not necessary work full-time in the organisation or in the wider creative sector. For example, one of the key informants from the group, ST1, has another main occupation: he owns and operates a coffee shop in George Town. Other members of the group might have an occupation more closely related to the key activities of ST, for examples, toy company owners and employees, and suppliers of arts and painting materials. Those are some key accessories for the table-top games. Our informant, ST1, has begun to play this game approximately 4 years ago after he came across a table-top gaming shop in a shopping complex. ST1, at the time of the research, acts as an ambassador in promoting table-top gaming in the city.

The table-top game is played on a table or any flat surface. The players need to have a variety of game accessories, such as card, dice, tiled-based, and particularly miniature figures. A group of people who are interested in such games will get together to play them and some of these games may take up to a year to finish. Playing this game is not a low-cost undertaking, particularly in the developing world. One of the main designers and manufacturers in this market is based in the United Kingdom and listed in the London Stock Exchange. It has been a highly performing stock for the past few years preceding 2020 and in the first half of 2020 despite difficult market conditions due to Covid-19 pandemic.

4.2.1. *Innovativeness*

ST is an innovative grouping and can be seen as a part of the new scene in creative and cultural industry. They set on promoting new kind of activities and invest resources (time and money) on newly developed products such as new table-top games. For example, other than organising the group’s activity, ST1 also tests out new games and at times altered them to suit local culture.

It will be involved in some sorts of creative and artistic endeavours in designing and painting of the game miniatures, e.g., characters and other sets in the game. With a background in creative and painting, ST1 leads the group in creative endeavours, and provides art and creative advice, specifically on painting methods, paper-usages, and paper cutting related to the games. The innovative activities might not generate any economic value in the short-term, but those will exert influences and attract membership, particularly young adults.

4.2.2. Risk-taking behaviour

ST1 described himself as a low-risk taker but open to take more risks when working on a particular project. He tends to take cautious but sustainable steps which he thinks is important in promoting the table-top game. This effort can ensure a “long-lasting passion” for the games.

Analysing the funding and information network of ST1 as a single person in the area of table-top gaming, it is observed that he is part of a relatively small network. The area itself is relatively small with about only four or five events organized per year. The cost of organizing the events is relatively low and most of the time, people who are active in this area fund the activities using their own personal resources. But the group was willing to invest in renting a club house where they conduct their activities.

4.2.3. Pro-activeness

ST is not an officially formed group attaching to any formal organization in the creative and cultural industry. Their members are loosely affiliated. There are many such groups of various sizes, including those active in various online platforms. Some of the ST members are also supporters of other similar groups such as Penang Table-Top Gamers and collaboratively involved in events organized to promote table-top gaming. Even though there are competition between groups, collaboration to promote common goals is a highly appreciated altruistic act in the wider community.

5. Discussion and conclusions

As a positive response to the inscription of George Town as a UNESCO WHS, the awareness of heritage conservation among the local people has been enhanced. Traditional and new organisations are seeking their own space and opportunities in the rising tide of creative and cultural sector.

The traditional cultural organisations, even though they hold more resources, have more historical baggage which somehow constrained them to be innovative and taking more risks. There is evidence that traditional organisations in George Town have taken steps to be involved in the new sector. They have been working collaboratively with many organisations to promote cultural and creative activities. Nonetheless, their approaches are mostly cautious and at time merely passive involvement. It remains difficult for them to energise and engage with young people.

There are increasing number of local groups working in various aspects of heritage conservation, cultural revitalisation and education. They are passionate with their causes, primarily young people, enthusiasts, and with part-time involvement. Even though they are innovative and creative in their approach, they are mostly informal and semi-professional, and usually under-funded. Are those young residents, such as ST's group, just an insignificant sub-cultural group? As local residents reclaiming their space in the old town, they re-define who they are and how they lead their life, their hobbies, their culture. Even though this group or similar has yet to become an economic force in the rising tide of tourism and creative sector, they no doubt lay the innovative seeds within the community.

The limitation of this paper is addressed where it is deemed insufficient to propose any generalisable conclusion on the EO of creative and cultural organisations in George Town, Penang. But it opens avenues for future research by examining more creative and cultural firms in GTWHS as well as replicating this study for other world heritage sites in Malaysia, for instance, in Malacca. Nonetheless, this study is a novel effort that shed lights on the challenges these organisations encountered in the transformation to be more innovative. In turn, this would generate more impacts on the creative and cultural sector. It also reveals the potential scope for more collaborations among various actors within this space. It should also be noted that exogenous factors were not considered in this analysis, but these could be a potentially important factor requiring further analysis (see Tubadji et al., 2016). In addition, personal psychological traits of the managers might also influence the EO of the organisation.

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Author details

Jin Hooi Chan¹
E-mail: J.H.Chan@greenwich.ac.uk
Intan H. M. Hashim²
E-mail: hashimah@usm.my
Suet Leng Khoo²
E-mail: slkhoo@usm.my
Hooi Hooi Lean²
E-mail: hooilean@usm.my
E-mail: learnmy@gmail.com
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6847-0274>
Athina Piterou¹
E-mail: A.Piterou@greenwich.ac.uk
¹ Business School, University of Greenwich, London, UK.
² School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Gelugor, Penang 11800, Malaysia.

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