



Article

Sustainability in Tourism as an Innovation Driver: An Analysis of Family Business Reality

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Abstract: Sustainable tourism can be the motivation to manage resources to satisfy environmental, social and economic needs through cultural integrity, biological diversity, ecological processes, social and economic equity, and general enrichment. Based on a systematic literature review conducted on research papers published between 2015 and 2020, and on the case studies contained within them (19 papers), this analysis focuses on the innovation drivers and sustainability drivers identified within family businesses in tourism. This desk-based research has made it possible to highlight how variable sustainability is present, albeit in a limited fashion, within family businesses in tourism; at the same time, it also shows how innovative strategies contribute to sustainable development. From the analysis, the correlations between family businesses, family dynamics, sustainability practices, innovation drivers and case studies were analyzed. The results show the poor implementation of innovative strategies, and at the same time, the presence of other variables that guarantee the adoption of sustainable practices. Important research gaps are identified, and future research priorities are suggested. Furthermore, the article is based on a collection of non-exhaustive literary sources. The implications for both family businesses and sustainable development are discussed.

Keywords: family business; family dynamics; sustainability practices; sustainability performance; innovation drivers; case studies

1. Introduction

The concept of sustainable tourism can be understood as a way to manage resources in order to meet social, economic and aesthetic needs while respecting cultural integrity, biological diversity and essential ecological processes [1,2]. The definition of sustainable tourism varies according to the different dimensions of the terms of tourism and sustainability, and is also influenced by the environmental and political approach used [3–5]. In the tourism industry, most businesses are small and medium-sized family businesses [6–10].

The family business is a business managed and governed by members of the same family—or by a few families—in a sustainable way throughout the family's generations, with the aim of pursuing the vision of the business they hold [11,12]. Family businesses in tourism have a culture of accompanying members in a decision that affects their activity, since such members are often united and ready to engage in business; in this way, they strengthen the sustainability of the business [12]. The importance of innovation in terms of business success has previously been underlined, but a new strand has begun to study business model innovation in terms of sustainability and environmental impact [5,13].

Companies could create value for sustainability through the adoption of more sustainable processes and practices, or through the design and marketing of new technologies; the so-called green technologies (e.g., electric vehicles) for solving sustainability problems [14]. Therefore sustainable development can be promoted either through business practices or by the products of a company, or both [13]. This implies moving away from unsustainable trajectories by implementing innovations that improve the ability to learn, manage and respond to environmental stimuli from dynamic socio-ecological structures [15]. The different theoretical and practical approaches to sustainability agree that an improvement in sustainability implies change, innovation or adaptation to its environment [16]. The ability to innovate has become necessary for companies, taking the form of incremental or real radical innovations [17]. Business model innovation, therefore, represents a potential means to integrate sustainability into a business [18–20]. Consequently, an innovative and sustainable business model should adapt the company's profitability to the economic and non-economic benefits for society [5].

There is a close relationship between sustainable development and innovation in tourism; tourism businesses implement innovative strategies, creating a more sustainable environment [21,22].

Tourism activities are sustainable when they are economically efficient without compromising social well-being and the environment [5,23]. For the creation of a sustainable business, there are two factors—resources and opportunities—which direct family business entrepreneurs to identify innovative elements [24]. Thus, for the development of sustainable tourism, innovation is an essential engine, and can promote the development of sustainable tourism. In the literature, the characteristics of the family businesses are conservative and traditional [25]. At the same time, innovation is crucial for the survival of tourism businesses [8,26]. Moreover, it emerges that family dynamics influence innovation in family businesses, and these dynamics are the result of a strong involvement of the family in the company [8,27]. It is clear how the two concepts—business development and family history—are interrelated and influence each other [28]. To guarantee their existence over time and obtain long-term performance, family businesses must constantly innovate [8,29].

This type of family-oriented entrepreneurship aims to pursue two objectives: business performance and the satisfaction of family interests [28,30]. In the context of family businesses and their vision of being successful across multiple generations, it is even more evident that it is necessary to guarantee the long-term survival of the company through innovation [25,31].

This research intends to investigate the presence of sustainability variables within family businesses in tourism, and at the same time, how innovative drivers help to allocate and use resources, thus increasing the chances of achieving sustainable development. For this reason, we chose to conduct desk-based research. We used the analysis of the literature—focusing on case studies—to analyze how and in which family businesses in tourism there are elements related to innovation and sustainability. First of all, we carried out research about family businessed, taking the 2015–2020 period as a reference, using the keywords "family business", "family dynamics", "sustainability practices", "innovation drivers" and "case studies".

The papers analyzing case studies were selected, as shown in the following. From the 131 papers initially shown, a sample of 35 articles was selected. At the second step, a case study recognition was performed, following a qualitative approach, jointly using the identification of some keywords and the presence of innovative and sustainable factors in family businesses in tourism.

The paper is structured in this way: the next section illustrates the theoretical background upon which the authors based their assumptions. Section 3 reveals the research design, containing the research questions, hypotheses, variable descriptions, materials and method used for the analysis, specifying the characteristics of the data and sources employed. In Section 4, we describe the findingsand the principal outcomes. In Section 5, theresults are discussed, and in Section 6,conclusions are draw up.

2. Theoretical Background

In tourism, most businesses are small and medium-sized, and are owned managed by family members [6–8]. This kind of activity involves family members, and is therefore influenced by family

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conflicts, but at the same time they are also influenced by local culture and commercial interests [12]. Here, the ability to be a resilient transgenerational enterprise is to promote the development of sustainable tourism [12]. In fact, research shows that companies that incorporate sustainability factors are driven by long-term orientation, rather than external factors [32–34].

In order to realize the purposes of our study, the authors defined sustainability as the search for well-being within the company in the context of the external environment [35]; therefore, the sustainability practices implemented by companies aim to achieve success in the long run [36].

Ismail et al. (2019) state that their 'transgenerational model' is founded on the assumption that the entrepreneurial orientation of family business owners is a key factor for their performance [12,37]. In addition, the proposed model suggests innovation, autonomy, proactivity, aggression and risk-taking as pillars for development. All this is associated with the family culture and its life stage [12]. The natural resources owned by the family business are attributable—according to Ireland, Hitt and Sirmon [38]—to human, social and financial capital. In particular, the human capital contains fundamentals—such as reputation, skill and intuition—which reveal the influence of the founder on the family business [12], and which somehow contribute to explain the differences of the exploitation of resources between the family business approach and non-family businesses [39].

In the context of tourism, the literature highlights the need to remain competitive and—at the same time—to adapt to the constantly changing environment [40]. Furthermore, in the tourism industry, the main concern is sustainable development, and companies must take into account not only economic benefits but also social and environmental impacts when developing their activities [22,41].

Sustainable development can be promoted by innovation; by sustainable development, we mean adopting innovative strategies in tourism [22]. Defining innovation as a firm's "will to innovate" [8,42] represents the predisposition of a firm to contribute to the creation of new ideas, and to support experiments and creative processes that lead to the realization of new products or technological processes [8,43].

The necessary innovation for the survival of the family business in tourism depends not only on a constantly evolving environment but also on the presence of many actors offering shared products [8,44]. The literature investigation showed that the innovation driver is weaker within family businesses than non-family businesses [8,44], and this is due to non-economic factors such as aversion to risk, family conflicts [45] and closure towards external sources [25,46].

In the tourism industry, change comes in the form of product or service innovation, process, management, marketing and institutional changes [8,47,48]. Jacob et al., and Pikkemaat, define "product or service innovations as changes that represent novelties for the consumer and/or the company" [49,50]. Process innovations concern new production or delivery methods, or are characterized by significant improvements with the aim of obtaining greater productivity and efficiency; managerial innovations are based on internal collaboration, the guidance and growth of employees, or the guarantee of benefits and remuneration, aiming at employee retention, cost containment, greater job gratification and the creation of specialized resources [47,48,51,52]; marketing innovations consists in the introduction of a new marketing concept based on new approaches in product design, packaging, positioning and promotion [53]; finally, institutional innovations are based on the implementation of a new legal system and new industrial models [22].

With the multiplicity of categories related to innovation, there are few doubts about the importance of innovation in ensuring the long-term survival of businesses in the tourism [8,26,44,48].

In the literature there are also interesting aspects in terms of innovative drivers concerning technologies. The use of technologies—in particular new information and communication technologies (ICT)—guarantees the reduction of the gap between businesses and consumers [22]. At the same time, the use of marketing is limited to marketing functions, as in Lee & Shin (2015), in which the technological driver is based on storytelling intended as a marketing strategy, with the aim of promoting its products online and offering services in a network [54,55]. Furthermore, from a marketing point of view, the implementation of new ecological footprint innovations allow the consumer to be attentive to

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the environment, and at the same time guarantee the conservation of the environment itself [22,56,57]. Finally, neither innovation nor technology falls into these factors.

Moreover, it is possible to affirm that the literature on family businesses is characterized by the debate about the less innovative nature of family businesses compared to non-family businesses [58], despite the fact that, at the same time, the literature firmly agrees on the positive effect of innovation on financial performance [8,29,59].

3. Methodology

The desk-based research design consists in four main stages. These stages include several steps that are part of the method which was designed specifically to address the research question: "Can innovation variables be considered drivers for the implementation of sustainable practices?", as show in Figure 1.

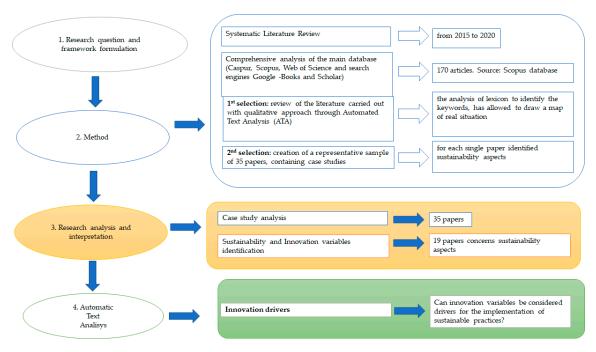


Figure 1. Research framework. Source: authors' elaboration.

The first step for this analysis consisted of a holistic approach to the identification of the research question and its correct formulation. After that, the second step consists in the method's exploitation. For this second phase, a systematic literature review was conducted. The systematic literature review overcomes the limitation of a more generally narrative review. After a comprehensive analysis of the main databases (Caspur, Scopus, Web of Science, and search engines Google-Books and Scholar), the authors choose to focus the analysis on the Scopus database. The analysis carried out for the systematic literature review conducted by the authors consisted in a preliminary investigation into case studies about the presence of sustainability drivers within family businesses in the tourism industry between 2015 and 2020, with the aim of identifying how strategy innovations could contribute to the adoption of sustainability practices (131 papers was isolated by the Scopus database).

Systematic literature review was defined by Kitcharoen (2004) as a form of secondary study with the aim of "identifying, evaluating and interpreting all available research relevant to a particular research question, or topic area, or phenomenon of interest" [60].

The desk-based research was conducted using bibliometric indicators. The selection of the items was made based on the presence of the words "family business" and "sustainability" and "family business" and "innovation". In this step, 35 papers that included case studies and application were analyzed.

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From this study, we selected a total of 19 works in which sustainability and innovation variables were performed. The main result of this operation and the key variables extraction is shown in Table 1. Subsequently, some documents which were not focused on the analysis of a case study, and those that focused on strictly particular aspects, were exempted. A careful look at the 19 contributions clearly shows the preference and orientation for qualitative studies. This would be explained by the fact that the present search flow is quite recent. Only in seven contributions was the innovation variable highlighted as a guarantee of the presence of sustainability within the companies. Other variables have been identified.

The study proceeded with the analysis of the identified lexicon and strategic keywords through the use of Automatic Text Analysis (ATA).

ATA uses qualitative approaches and empirical analysis based on phenomena in organized data. For this analysis, there is no need for numerical quantification. The most common approach used to conduct ATA is based on Grounded Theory; it does not precede the empirical research, and the study passes stepwise through the analysis of empirical data.

The use of ATA tools and vocabulary analysis were useful for identifying keywords. It allowed us to draw the main topics discussed and articles published in various periods to select those of interest; that is, those that contain innovation and sustainability aspects, in order to answer our research question concerning the identification of innovation variables to be considered drivers for sustainable development. In this context, a review of the case study-focused literature was an adequate and workable research methodology. The narrative approach—also known as storytelling—was using to develop the case study analysis.

Table 1. Articles and variable sustainability. Source: authors' elaboration.

Authors	Article	Year	Key Aspects	Sustainability Variables	Innovation Variables
Glowka, G., Zehrer, A. [40]	Tourism family-business owners' risk perception: Its impact on destination development	2019	Theory of the parties and sustainable development: stakeholder's satisfaction and risks insurance of destination	x	
Hamed, S. [61]	Habiba Community: brand management for a family business	2019	Eco-branding in the tourism sector	х	
Ismail, H.N., MohdPuzi, M.A., Banki, M.B., Yusoff, N. [12]	Inherent factors of family business and transgenerational influencing tourism business in Malaysian islands	2019	Resilient factors for sustainability of long-term tourism development.	x	
Mhlanga, O. [62]	Factors impacting airline efficiency in southern Africa: a data envelopment analysis	2019	Regions' potential for tourism growth and regional sustainability.	x	
Ertuna, B., Karatas-Ozkan, M., Yamak, S. [63]	Diffusion of sustainability and CSR discourse in hospitality industry: Dynamics of local context	2019	CSR in the collaboration of multinational companies with local hotels in developing countries.	x	
Candelo, E., Casalegno, C., Civera, C., Büchi, G. [64]	A ticket to coffee: Stakeholder view and theoretical framework of coffee tourism benefits	2019	Sustainability of coffee tourism development	x	
Saganeiti, L., Pilogallo, A., Izzo, C., Piro, R., Scorza, F. [65]	Development Strategies of Agro-Food Sector in Basilicata Region (Italy): Evidence from INNOVAGRO Project	2019	Intraregional approach for agri-food promotion of environmentally friendly agricultural practices	x	x
Liu, CW., Cheng, JS. [22]	Exploring driving forces of innovation in the MSEs: The case of the sustainable B & B tourism industry	2018	Drivers support innovations and sustainable development	x	x
Tortora, M. [66]	Humanism and business: The case of a sustainable business experience in the Florentine tourist sector based on the civil economy tradition	2018	Sustainable tourism experience through the humanities	x	x
Kallmuenzer, A., Nikolakis, W., Peters, M., Zanon, J. [34]	Trade-offs between dimensions of sustainability: exploratory evidence from family firms in rural tourism regions	2018	Sustainability in rural tourism family businesses (RTFF)	x	
Kuo, CM.M., Tseng, CY., Chen, LC. [24]	Choosing between exiting or innovative solutions for bed and breakfasts	2018	Innovative solutions for the sustainability of their B&B	x	х
Memili, E., Fang, H.C., Koς, B., Yildirim-Öktem, Ö., Sonmez, S. [36]	Sustainability practices of family firms: the interplay between family ownership and long-term orientation	2018	Relationship between sustainability practices and business continuity	х	
Mustapha, M., Awang, K.W. [67]	Sustainability of a beach resort: A case study	2018	Analysis of the performance of a resort for sustainability insurance of the beach	x	
Arteaga Estrella, Y.M., Espinoza Toalombo, R.A., ZuñigaSantillán, X.L., Espinoza Solís, E.J., VillegasYagual, F.E., Campos [68]	Tourism start-ups; an alternative for the development of sustainable tourism in Milagro city: Plant nurseries, an entrepreneurial opportunity	2018	Relationship between tourism start-ups and sustainable tourism	x	x
Broccardo, L., Culasso, F., Truant, E. [5]	Unlocking value creation using an agritourism business model	2017	Success factors of the Italian farm business model considering sustainability variables	x	x
Banki, M.B., Ismail, H.N., Muhammad, I.B. [37]	Coping with seasonality: A case study of family owned micro tourism businesses in Obudu Mountain Resort in Nigeria	2016	Effects of seasonality on the survival and sustainability of tourism businesses	x	
Rodríguez-Antón, J.M., Alonso-Almeida, M.M., Rubio-Andrada, L., Pedroche, M.S.C. [69]	Collaborative economy. An approach to sharing tourism in Spain	2016	Sharing economy in tourism	x	х
Banki, M.B., Ismail, H.N. [70]	Understanding the characteristics of family owned tourism micro businesses in mountain destinations in developing countries: Evidence from Nigeria	2015	Long-term sustainability and succession planning	х	
Lloyd, K., Suchet-Pearson, S., Wright, S., Tofa, M., Rowland, C., Burarrwanga, L., Ganambarr, R., Ganambarr, M., Ganambarr, B., Maymuru, D. [71]	Transforming tourists and "culturalising commerce": Indigenous tourism at Bawaka in Northern Australia	2015	Indigenous tourism as a means of economic growth and development	x	

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4. Findings

Starting from the evidence highlighted in the literature, the results of our analysis showed a predominance of articles related to the sector of accommodation of the value chain. Therefore, in this part of the work, the objective is to show, based on the exploration of the articles resulting from our analysis, how the sustainability variable is applied within the accompanying sector, and at the same time, in relation to the latter, whether there are innovative elements.

The conceptual basis of the research purpose was inspired—as shown in Figure 2, based on [72]—by the concept that resources, capabilities and activities enable the creation of persistent competitive advantages that are difficult to imitate and substitute by current or potential competitors [73].

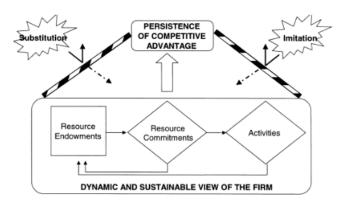


Figure 2. The dynamic firm's point of view [61].

In the tourism industry, sustainable development is the main concern. Three dimensions of sustainable development were identified: economic, environmental and social [41]. These three dimensions allow companies to achieve greater productivity, and at the same time, allow the reduction of the use of resources and of environmental impact, and they attach an important value to innovation for the realization of sustainable development [22].

The concept of sustainable development in tourism is therefore considered an innovation to support both economic growth, and at the same time, to guarantee environmental protection [22,74].

Concerning the creation of a sustainable business, family entrepreneurs are guided by several elements that make innovative changes, consisting of two points: resources and opportunities [24]. The resources of family businesses are acquired and exploited in different ways than resources that are not proper to the family [12,39]. These unique resources derive from the direct management of the family in the company; therefore, familiarity is an intangible factor that distinguishes family businesses from non-family businesses, and can represent a competitive advantage, but at the same time, these unique family resources can inhibit growth and therefore represent a disadvantage [12,75]. The main objective for tourism companies is represented by financial performance [6], and a fundamental element which contributes to financial performance is the innovation factor [2,8]. At the same time, innovative factors, such as the strong will to maintain the reputation of the family, the high level of communication between the members of the family, and the constant commitment to the company of the family members, are the enabling factors for innovation related to the family [25,76]. Therefore, family dynamics are a relevant factor and must be kept under control in the management of innovation in family businesses [27]. Moreover, this shows how the different behavior and innovative approach of the different family businesses depends on socio-emotional factors, and therefore non-economic factors [25,77]. We can conclude that business development and family history are two related concepts that influence each other [28].

Another interesting aspect concerns the relationship between innovation and succession. It can be said that the involvement of the successor can act as a "catalyst for change" or innovation opportunities [25,78]. In fact, defending one's family-based traditions and guaranteeing a legacy between generations represents an important non-economic objective of family businesses [36,79]. The innovation process is likely to occur after succession periods and changes of ownership within

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the family. In this context, in fact, the successors for the company represent new opportunities [80], resources, knowledge and information capable of implementing innovative forms [25,81,82].

The successor will aim for different objectives and will also be characterized by different conflicts [83]. The conflict represents a positive aspect, capable of overturning the rigid traditions characterized by beliefs and attitudes that hinder innovation [25,84]. The successor will also aim to create his own entrepreneurial reputation by changing the status quo [25,84]. In conclusion, it is possible to affirm that the collaboration between generations represents an essential resource to orient the company towards an innovative approach, and it should be considered a real engine of innovation [25,85].

Empirical Evidence

In the case study analysis, it emerged that, within family businesses in the tourism industry, innovation is limited and is not the only driver to ensure sustainable development. Table 2 shows the main key variables and drivers identified by our analysis to ensure sustainable tourism development.

Table 2. Key variables and drivers. Source: authors' elaboration.

Authors	Variables and Drivers for Sustainability		
Glowka and Zehrer (2019) [40]	Glowka and Zehrer (2019) applying the "theory of the parts" to the development of sustainable tourism, identify the incorporation of the needs of the stakeholders in the objectives and in the corporate vision as a means of ensuring sustainability in the company.		
Hamed, S. [61]	Hamed (2019) highlights how sustainable development can be achieved through the generation of new ideas and trends in the field of marketing and branding: eco-branding and branding of family businesses.		
Ismail, H.N., MohdPuzi, M.A., Banki, M.B., Yusoff, N. [12]	Ismail et al. (2019) highlight how resilient factors are a determining factor of sustainable development confirming that non-economic factors are an example of family values, the direct involvement of family members in business and corport conflicts themselves, are crucial in the implementation of sustainable measures that guarantee the long-term survival of trompany.		
Mhlanga, O. [62]	Mhlanga (2019) highlights how an improvement in air performance in southern Africa will lead to an improvement in tourism growth and regional sustainability.		
Ertuna, B., Karatas-Ozkan, M., Yamak, S. [63]	Ertuna et al. (2019) they aim at identifying the institutional logics that determine CRS and act as sustainability drivers in Turkish tourism companies, and to what extent sustainability practices and CRS align with local institutional logics and needs.		
Candelo, E., Casalegno, C., Civera, C., Büchi, G. [64]	Candelo et al. (2019) through a case study on Costa Rica on the benefits of coffee tourism on local farmers, they underline how the 4 main advantages for local farming communities are represented by empowerment and cooperation, business diversification, sustainability and the creation of a target image.		
Saganeiti, L., Pilogallo, A., Izzo, C., Piro, R., Scorza, F. [65]	Saganeiti et al. (2019) through the project "Development of an innovative network for the promotion of extroversion of agro-food companies in Adriatic-Ionian Area" (INNOVAGRO), highlight the need to implement new strategies based on the adoption of ITC technologies combined with the implementation of environmentally friendly agricultural activities.		
Liu, CW., Cheng, JS. [22]	Liu and Cheng (2018) identify emerging external and internal factors as key factors of innovation. External factors are represented by customers and in particular by their preferences and needs which represent a guide for the creation of new ideas, therefore customers represent an important source of innovation. Other external sources of innovation are external knowledge and market trends. Regarding internal factors, the results show that the central source of innovation is represented by the lifestyles of the owners, i.e., interests, opinions, attitudes, experiences and context in which they live.		
Tortora, M. [66]	Tortora (2018) identifies a new approach represented by the possibility of obtaining a sustainable tourist experience in a city of art through the humanities: museums, paintings, statues, the history of some families represent an example of practices of responsibility for society and for the environment itself.		
Kallmuenzer, A., Nikolakis, W., Peters, M., Zanon, J. [34]	Kallmuenzer et al. (2018) show how in family businesses, particularly in the rural tourism sector, decision-making in terms of sustainability, once economic performance is ensured, is guided by ecological and social aspects and observations. The unique family resources and dynamics and the intergenerational nature of family businesses lead to a greater sensitivity of these companies to the social and ecological dynamics that manifest themselves in the decision-making process.		
Kuo, CM.M., Tseng, CY., Chen, LC. [24]	Kuo et al. (2018)underline the importance for sustainability in tourism and in particular in the B&B sector of innovative practices combined with differentiation strategies, especially when the market is saturated or the product is in a phase of decline in its life cycle		
Memili, E., Fang, H.C., Koς, B., Yildirim-Öktem, Ö., Sonmez, S. [36]	Memili et al. (2018) highlight how the long-term orientation LTO) reduces the negative effects of family ownership by promoting and encouraging the adoption of sustainability practices		
Mustapha, M., Awang, K.W. [67]	Mustapha et Awang (2018) through a resort on an island in Terengganu, they identify the guarantee of business sustainability in performance management		
Arteaga Estrella, Y.M., Espinoza Toalombo, R.A., ZuñigaSantillán, X.L., Espinoza Solís, E.J., VillegasYagual, F.E., Campos [68]	Y. Arteaga, R. Espinoza, X. Zuñiga et al. wonder if entrepreneurs are methodical in taking care of the environment, when it comes to meeting the needs of their customers; therefore an analysis of tourism micro-enterprises emerges and their current and future impact in terms of social, economic, environmental factors and in particular on sustainable development.		
Broccardo, L., Culasso, F., Truant, E. [5]	Broccardo et al. have a new appearance represented by the concept of agro-ecological tourism linked to the concept of tourism which aims to strengthen the link between tourism and agriculture while promoting principles of sustainability		
Banki, M.B., Ismail, H.N., Muhammad, I.B. [37]	Bancki, Ismail et Muhammad (2016) highlight how seasonality in tourism plays an important role and has significant effects on the survival and sustainability of tourism businesses		
Rodríguez-Antón, J.M., Alonso-Almeida, M.M., Rubio-Andrada, L., Pedroche, M.S.C. [69]	Rodríguez-Antón et al. (2016) highlight how in many economic sectors but in particular in the traditional tourism sector as well as in the housing and transport sub-sectors, a new economic model is becoming increasingly important. and social: the collaborative economy. This model is based on the temporary sharing of goods and services in exchange for money or other services by online platforms. In relation to this work, with a view to sustainability, the European Economic and Social Committee, through an opinion issued in 2014, defined the "Collaborative or participatory consumption: a sustainability model for the 21st century".		
Banki, M.B., Ismail, H.N. [70]	Banki et Ismail (2015) stress that a lack of succession planning in family tourism businesses can have an impact on sustainability		
Lloyd, K., Suchet-Pearson, S., Wright, S., Tofa, M., Rowland, C., Burarrwanga, L., Ganambarr, R., Ganambarr, M., Ganambarr, B., Maymuru, D. [71]	Lloyd et al. (2015) explore how the tourist activities managed by the ECB aim at social change through the sharing of indigenous knowledge, ways of being and practices with non-indigenous people during the tours, while ensuring that the company is sustainable		

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5. Discussion

The present study used a retrospective perspective to analyze the relationship between innovation and sustainability. The case study analysis and the research design contributed to our critical examination.

From the general results obtained from the systematic literature review, the direction of business strategies in this type of company towards sustainability is evident. The impact of innovative strategies was less evident. For this, the contribution of the case study analysis and the ATA helped the author to define the innovation variables and the extent to which they are present to guarantee sustainable development. In the same way, other variables than the innovative one which promote sustainable development have been identified (see Table 2). In fact, from the results, it seems evident that, in family businesses in the rural tourism sector, the decision-making process, in terms of sustainability, once economic performance was ensured, is guided by ecological and social aspects and observations [86]. The unique family resources and dynamics, and the intergenerational nature of family businesses, entails the greater sensitivity of these companies to the social and ecological dynamics that manifest themselves in the decision-making process [34,87]. Therefore, an analysis of tourism micro-enterprises emerges, and their current and future impact in terms of social, economic and environmental factors particularly favors sustainable development [2].

Moreover, the results show that resilient factors are a determining factor in sustainable development. An enterprise's resilience is essential to sustainable tourism management, for environmental, economic and sociocultural reasons, and for the survival of the business [12,70].

The long-term orientation is characterized by the intention to continue and maintain the family control of a company. It leads owners to direct their efforts towards long-term investments, such as sustainability practices, highlighting how sustainability is also fundamental for prosperity in this time horizon [36,71].

Furthermore, the importance of innovative practices combined with differentiation strategies for sustainability in tourism, and in particular in the B&B sector, has been underlined, especially when the market is saturated or the product is at the declining stage in its life cycle [24]. The results of our research show that innovation within family businesses is not very present, and is limited to branding strategies. The brand is intended as a means of improving the reputation of the destination [40]. Similarly, at the corporate level, the branding strategies implemented by the employer of a family business aim to solve an increasing risk related to the lack of manpower [40]. Moreover, in the tourism industry and in the hospitality sector, the marketing and branding function is associated with the logic of Corporate Responsibility, rather than sustainability, which seems to be more layered and integrated within organizations [87].

The results also show that we have barely explored and systematized in application models the links between the variables of sustainability and innovation.

Another important result can be seen from the small number of scientific contributions in which these elements are present, and how, even in the case studies, there are no relevant elements except in seven contributions (see Table 1).

Although the tourism industry has been considered a traditional and mature industry, the application of innovative strategies has shown that it could be an incremental resource for sustainable tourism development. Therefore, more research can be suggested to gain a better understanding of 'how' innovation could become an engine for implementing sustainable practices, and could eventually have a positive influence on tourism chains' income.

6. Conclusions, Limits and Future Research

With this contribution, we offer an overview of the implementation of sustainability practices in family touristic businesses, and the factors which determine their sustainable development. This study has limitations. The analysis was carried out over a 5year period from 2015 to 2020; therefore, in the future, replicating it would be advisable, in order to extend the research period. Furthermore,

the choice and selection of the case study's object of analysis have been identified, taking into account the sustainability variable in relation to the innovation strategies; in the future, it would be advisable to extend the research by also taking into account other variables that push family businesses to adopt sustainable practices. The lack of theoretical basis is also highlighted by the limited number of case studies and empirical analyses in the field. Furthermore, the limited number of case studies makes it difficult for companies to understand how to innovate their business models, to design and implement alternatives, and therefore to evaluate and adopt the most appropriate.

In the future, it would also be desirable for authors to analyze a case study which is relevant to the work done.

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