

## **Tourism Entrepreneurship – Review and Future Directions**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Entrepreneurship has received increased attention within tourism research, reflecting the important role of entrepreneurs and new firm start-ups within the tourism industry for innovation and value creation. Although it is expanding, the literature on tourism entrepreneurship remains dispersed. It embraces a number of different issues, perspectives and approaches, and thus far, little congruent knowledge has been developed. This paper addresses this gap by reviewing and analysing the current literature on tourism entrepreneurship. We examine the development in published articles from 2000 to 2013 and discuss how the literature on tourism entrepreneurship relates to the mainstream entrepreneurship literature in terms of research questions, theoretical perspectives and applied methods. We differentiate between a convergent approach in which studies build on mainstream entrepreneurship theorising to examine the context of tourism and a divergent approach in which studies consider tourism entrepreneurship to be different from other types of entrepreneurship, thus needing specific theoretical insights. Trends reflecting convergent and divergent approaches are identified. Furthermore, we discuss potential contributions from tourism entrepreneurship research to the mainstream entrepreneurship literature and vice versa. Based on the findings from the review and analysis, we suggest future directions for research on tourism entrepreneurship.*

**KEY WORDS:** Tourism, entrepreneurship, literature review, divergent/convergent

## **Introduction**

Driven by increasing wealth and economic development, tourism is one of the most rapidly growing industries worldwide, with annual growth rates reaching 10 % (Menon, 2010). This development calls for entrepreneurs and new business start-ups to serve growing markets (Lordkipanidze, Brezet, & Backman, 2005) and thereby contributes to value creation. Tourism as an industry is subject to changes due to shifts in consumer preferences and emergence of new technology (Hall & Williams, 2008). In particular, the structural change and transition to more experience-based products in tourism (Sundbo, Orfila-Sintes, & Sørensen, 2007) demand entrepreneurial behaviour to implement needed innovations. Traditional hospitality services related to accommodation, transport and food services are being supplemented and partly replaced by experience-based services and products (Alsos, Eide, & Madsen, 2014). Established firms and larger firms have, to a limited extent been, able to innovate and develop their offerings to meet an increasing demand for unique experiences creating memories, engagement and emotional involvements for tourists. Hence, the tourism industry is largely dependent on new firms both to serve market growth and to support innovation and industry transformation towards the offering of experience-based products. Consequently, entrepreneurship has also been in focus for policies directed towards developing the tourism industry with the aim of increasing innovation and value creation. Furthermore, tourism has increasingly been described as a strategy for economic development in weak regions (Jóhannesson & Huijbens, 2010), and several countries support new business start-ups within tourism, particularly in less developed areas.

Scholars also emphasise the need for increased research attention on innovation and transformation in the tourism sector to better take advantage of opportunities related to the demand for experience-based products (Alsos et al., 2014). The exploration and exploitation of such opportunities demand entrepreneurial action (Sarasvathy, 2008; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). In congruence with this development, various scholars have called for research related to entrepreneurship in the tourism sector (Cheng, Li, Petrick, & O'Leary, 2011; Hjalager, 2010; Li, 2008). As an academic field of study, tourism entrepreneurship has slowly emerged from a few articles published in the 1970s and 1980s, primarily within the area of business economics and economic geography, to a more diverse body of literature with an increasing number of studies (Carmichael & Morrison, 2011). However, until recently, only a small proportion of articles on tourism have been related to entrepreneurship issues. Ateljevic and Li (2009) find that 2 % of articles published in leading tourism journals from 1986 to 2006 addressed entrepreneurship, amounting to 97 articles over this 20-year period, an average lower than five articles per year. The scant attention is also reflected in the limited focus on entrepreneurship in tourism journals, as only one journal has ever listed entrepreneurship as a relevant discipline in its mission statement (Cheng et al., 2011).

Existing studies of tourism entrepreneurship have addressed a number of issues. The topics covered in recent volumes of the present journal illustrate this breadth, as they examine entrepreneurs as a type of tourist guide (Bryon, 2012), strategic entrepreneurship related changes in existing firms (Carlback, 2012), and the importance of entrepreneurship at the regional level (Jóhannesson, 2012; Viken & Aarsaether, 2013). Such variety illustrates the large number of areas of tourism in

which entrepreneurship is relevant, but given the low number of studies in total, it may also result in low levels of accumulated knowledge. To advance theorising on tourism entrepreneurship, more systematic knowledge accumulation is needed. Hence, although an increasing number of studies examining entrepreneurship within the tourism sector are emerging, there remains a lack of synthesised knowledge from which to build on for researchers as well as for policy makers and practitioners.

The purpose of this study is to address this gap by providing a systematic review of studies of entrepreneurship within the tourism industries, analysing the development and contributions from current research, and suggesting directions for future scholarly examination in this area. In particular, we discuss the current literature in relation to two research approaches depending on the extent to which it relates to the mainstream entrepreneurship literature: the convergent versus the divergent approach. In the following section, we briefly account for this framework. We thereafter account for the method applied in reviewing the current literature, including the chosen definitions and delimitations made. The results of this review are then presented and discussed. Finally, directions for the future are suggested.

### **Mainstream Entrepreneurship and Tourism Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship as a research field involves multiple definitions, perspectives and disciplines, and the task of defining mainstream entrepreneurship research is not straightforward. However, the last decade has witnessed considerable progress towards the achievement of conceptual clarity regarding the distinctiveness of entrepreneurship research (Davidsson, 2008). Broadly, at least three views of entrepreneurship can be identified (Alsos, 2007). First, *the innovation-based*

*perspective* on entrepreneurship relates to the work of Schumpeter (1934). He regarded entrepreneurs mainly as innovators, who combine resources in new ways to create innovations and introduce them to the market, thereby differentiating themselves from other companies (Landström, 2000). Second, *the business formation perspective* views entrepreneurship as the creation of new business organisations (Gartner & Carter, 2003). In this view, entrepreneurship is regarded as the process from the entrepreneurial intention to the development and establishment of new organisations. Both innovating and imitating new businesses result from entrepreneurial action, although they may play different roles in society (Aldrich & Martinez, 2001). Third, *the opportunity-based perspective* places the pursuit of an opportunity at the core and defines entrepreneurship as the discovery and exploitation of business opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). The opportunities in question are related to bringing future goods and services into existence (Venkataraman, 1997). Opportunities are seen as recognised, discovered or created by entrepreneurs (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri, & Venkataraman, 2011) and are then exploited to bring products and services to the market. There are different possible modes of exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities, including new business start-ups and exploitation through existing firms (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2008). Hence, the opportunity-based view broadens the focus from new business start-ups only to additional ways of organising opportunity exploitation. The broadening of entrepreneurship as a field of research has also led to several new subtopics, such as sustainable entrepreneurship (Dean & McMullen, 2007; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011), social entrepreneurship (Dees, 2001; Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum, & Shulman, 2009), community entrepreneurship (Cooney, 2008; Johannisson & Nilsson, 1989) and institutional entrepreneurship (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007);

all of these topics have received attention as topics for special issues of the leading entrepreneurship journals in recent years.

To examine how the tourism entrepreneurship literature relates to mainstream entrepreneurship theorising, we follow Hjalager (2010), who differentiates between two strategies for further development in tourism research. She argued that research can follow a convergent or divergent track when examining specific issues within tourism, such as innovation or entrepreneurship. Following the convergent track involves transferring theories, models and measurements from mainstream disciplinary research and adapting it to the tourism sector, a strategy that provides advantages in terms of comparability and theoretical advancement for tourism studies. For tourism entrepreneurship research, this may also create greater visibility for tourism researchers in mainstream entrepreneurship academia and a possibility to influence entrepreneurship policy. By contrast, the divergent approach treats “*tourism as a phenomenon rather than an industry*” (Hjalager, 2010, pp. 8-9). The investigation of entrepreneurship is based partly or fully upon research angles and instruments specifically developed for tourism, and context-sensitive theories and measures are developed. Consequently, a divergent approach to tourism entrepreneurship implies to develop methodologies and reach out in a cross-disciplinary manner, and not to engage extensively into debates within mainstream entrepreneurship research. A mixed approach can also be taken, where mainstream concepts are used as the starting point, but supplemented, challenged and further developed through studies of tourism taking into account its specific characteristics (Alsos et al., 2014). The present study analyses the current literature on tourism

entrepreneurship to identify indications of convergent and divergent developments and examines the research following these two approaches.

### **Method**

The Scopus database was used to search for articles for the systematic literature review. Scopus is one of the most comprehensive abstract databases of research publications. Search terms representing 'tourism' and 'entrepreneurship' in the title, abstract or keywords were combined to find relevant articles. The following terms for tourism were included: tourism, hospitality industry, hospitality business, travel industry and travel business. To represent 'entrepreneurship', the following terms were included: entrepreneur\*, new firm, new business, business start-up, new venture, nascent venture, nascent firm and nascent business. Selecting search terms for a systematic literature review always demands some judgement on what to include. We sought to include several alternative search terms to take into account variations in concepts both related to tourism and entrepreneurship. At the same time, we wanted to limit the search terms to avoid the identification of too many articles that do not fall into tourism entrepreneurship. Hence some terms that might retrieve some relevant articles but a lot of not relevant ones too, were not included. Terms such as 'tourism innovation', 'tourism enterprise' and 'local network tourism' might also give some publications relevant to entrepreneurship (see, e.g. Hall & Williams, 2008; Novelli, et al., 2006), but will also result in a large number of publications which do not fall into the scope of this review. The review still covers the largest part of published journal articles on tourism entrepreneurship and is in accordance with previous reviews.



Departing from previous reviews (Ateljevic & Li, 2009; Li, 2008) we did not limit the review to tourism journals, but included publications on tourism entrepreneurship in any journal listed in the Scopus database as long as it met the selection criteria. The search retrieved 663 unique articles that were downloaded. Double manual checking based on the reading of titles and abstracts was used to remove articles that did not address tourism entrepreneurship or that were not research articles. Only articles presented in the English language were included. Furthermore, as we wanted to review the latest developments in the field, we decided to exclude articles published before 2000. After this sorting, we ranked the remaining articles by journals according to the SJR 2011 impact factor, and we included articles from journals with impact factors of 0.5 and above. This procedure left us with 267 articles. These articles were then scanned to identify focus and research questions. Articles that were identified as not addressing with tourism entrepreneurship were then excluded, which yielded 136 remaining articles for this review.

The 136 articles were read, systematised and coded. All articles were coded using the following categories: authors, title, year of publication, journal, research questions, theoretical framework, method, congruent versus divergent approach, country of origin of empirical data and authors, key findings and implications. Furthermore, all articles were read for content analysis. Topic areas were identified and reviewed. Trends in theoretical perspectives and empirical methods were examined. Subsequently, the articles were categorised in relation to the divergent/convergent framework, and important contributions related to each category were identified. The following parts of this article present and discuss the findings from this review.

## **Tourism Entrepreneurship Research – Divergent or Convergent Approach?**

A content analysis of the 136 articles was conducted to identify emergent trends and to account for current knowledge on tourism entrepreneurship. First, we examined the development of studies on the topic. Second, we examined the current literature to identify convergent and divergent approaches to the field in relation to the topics covered, theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches. The results are reported below.

### *Development of Studies on Tourism Entrepreneurship*

Table 1 summarises the number of identified articles on tourism entrepreneurship specified by journal. The results show that there has been an increase in studies on tourism entrepreneurship during the period, with a total of 40 identified articles published in the 2000-2006 period, while 96 articles have been published in the 2007-2012 period. Hence, there is an increase in research interest in this area, particularly because of the growth in European research in tourism entrepreneurship, which challenges the previously dominating role of scholars from North America and Oceania.

Insert Table 1 here

Table 1 shows that studies are spread over a large number of journals, with tourism journals dominating the list. Both *Tourism Management* and *Annals of Tourism Research* are among the journals publishing the highest number of articles on tourism entrepreneurship, indicating that entrepreneurship is a relevant topic for

leading tourism journals. *Tourism Planning and Development* published a special issue on Tourism Entrepreneurship in 2011, leading it to be the second most published journal on the topic after *Tourism Management*. Considering the last period only, the *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* is ranked third on the list, as this journal published nine articles in 2007-2012, all with different first authors, indicating that research interest in tourism entrepreneurship is also increasing in the Nordic countries. Relatively few studies are published in entrepreneurship journals, and only a handful is published in high-ranked entrepreneurship journals. There are also studies on tourism entrepreneurship published in a large variety of other journals, but with a low number in each journal.

The results indicate that most authors in the field have chosen a divergent strategy as most articles are published within the journals dedicated to tourism. The lack of studies published in mainstream entrepreneurship journals indicates not only a limitation in engaging with the mainstream entrepreneurship debates but also reflects that mainstream entrepreneurship has not embraced the tourism industry as a relevant context for entrepreneurship research.

### *Topics and Research Questions*

The review of articles revealed a large variety of topics and research questions. Entrepreneurship is embedded in a variety of issues related to tourism, either as a core issue or as a supplementary issue added as part of other main topics. Hence, for further content analysis of topics and research questions in tourism entrepreneurship research, we decided to examine the most influential publications and divide the most cited articles into three groups based on the main object of analysis: 1) studies

in which tourism entrepreneurship was not the main focus of research but was included because tourism entrepreneurs were stakeholders in the topic in focus; 2) studies in which tourism entrepreneurship is the focus of research following a divergent approach (tourism entrepreneurship is regarded as something particular and not strongly related to mainstream entrepreneurship) and 3) studies in which tourism entrepreneurship is the focus following a convergent approach, that is building on mainstream entrepreneurship research (where tourism entrepreneurship is viewed as a context of entrepreneurship providing some contextual insights but, in principle, not very different from other types of entrepreneurship). Table 2 categorises articles with more than 10 Google scholar citations per year according to these three groups. The categorisation is made for analytical purposes and is not straightforward, as some articles rely on several approaches or combine them. Hence, this categorisation should not be viewed as definite and clear-cut but rather as an analytic tool for the content analysis.

Insert Table 2 here

The articles in Group 1 view entrepreneurship as part of another phenomenon, and include 10 of the 32 most cited articles. These articles include entrepreneurship as an important factor when studying development in rural tourism (Sharpley, 2002; Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001), destination branding (García, Gómez, & Molina, 2012), migration (Williams & Hall, 2000) and poverty reduction (Manyara & Jones, 2007), or as stakeholders when examining issues such as community development (Byrd, Bosley, & Dronberger, 2009) or wildlife conservation (Thompson & Homewood, 2002). This literature introduces

entrepreneurship as an important aspect of tourism knowledge, but does neither build on nor contribute to the entrepreneurship literature, as the studies are designed to give contributions in other areas.

The articles in Group 2 follow a divergent strategy in which the researchers embrace the unique characteristics of the tourism industry and attempt to gain knowledge of the phenomenon of entrepreneurship in this industry as something distinctive from how it appears in other fields. A total of 12 articles were categorised in this group. At the micro level, studies investigate motivations for starting a new tourism business with a focus on the benefits of rural or agri-tourism entrepreneurship in particular (Di Domenico & Miller, 2012; Iorio & Corsale, 2010; McGehee & Kim, 2004; McGehee, Kim, & Jennings, 2007; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Entrepreneurs' motivation has also been a key issue within mainstream entrepreneurship research. These studies do only limitedly build upon this knowledge, but examine motivation to start a tourism business as something strongly related to this specific industry context. At the meso level, studies highlight issues such as the important role of the tourism entrepreneur in destination management (Russell & Faulkner, 2004) and the influence of place identity of tourism entrepreneurs' self-efficacy and support for the community (Hallak, Brown, & Lindsay, 2012). These studies reflect the importance of place and destination in tourism entrepreneurship also reflected in other studies (e.g., Daskalopoulou & Petrou, 2009; Ioannides & Petersen, 2003; Paniagua, 2002; Wilson et al., 2001), issues which are more seldom discussed in mainstream entrepreneurship research (Johnstone & Lionais, 2004). A small but growing area of mainstream entrepreneurship can be seen as related; the literature on community entrepreneurship (Borch, Førde, Rønning, Vestrum, & Alsos, 2008; Johannisson,

1990; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006; Vestrum & Rasmussen, 2013), though this link is seldom made.

At the macro level, studies are concerned with how tourism entrepreneurship differs from other types of entrepreneurship. It is argued that tourism entrepreneurs are motivated more by the opportunity to attain higher quality of life than by the aim of earning profits (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000), at least a substantial part of tourism entrepreneurs (Getz & Petersen, 2005), hence explicitly arguing for a divergent approach. At the macro level, studies also include studies of how entrepreneurs shape sub-sectors within the tourism industry (Iorio & Corsale, 2010; Yang & Wall, 2009; Yang, Wall, & Smith, 2008) and studies of how to best facilitate for tourism entrepreneurs (e.g. Lordkipanidze et al., 2005).

The third group includes articles adopting a convergent strategy to tourism entrepreneurship, and this group includes 10 of the 32 selected articles. Here, the researchers build on existing knowledge within the field of entrepreneurship and examine entrepreneurship-related research questions using the tourism industry as a context. For instance, Lerner and Haber (2001) investigate which factors influence performance in small tourism ventures and find that tourist related infrastructure, options for excursions and scenery are the most important factors. Furthermore, (Haber & Reichel, 2007) find that entrepreneurial human capital is the strongest contributor to the performance of small tourism venture. This group also includes reviews and studies of how entrepreneurship relates to innovation (Hjalager, 2010; Sundbo et al., 2007) and family business (Getz & Carlsen, 2005; Morrison, 2006), as well as studies measuring entrepreneurial intentions and their antecedents (Altinay,

Madanoglu, Daniele, & Lashley, 2012; Gurel, Altinay, & Daniele, 2010), issues which are core issues also in mainstream entrepreneurship research. This group also includes issues related to the strategic entrepreneurship literature involving managerial approaches (Denicolai, Cioccarelli, & Zucchella, 2010; Hall, Matos, Sheehan, & Silvestre, 2012).

### *Theoretical Perspectives*

The review of the 136 articles also showed that a variety of theoretical frameworks is applied in studies related to tourism entrepreneurship. First, it should be noted that many articles are inductive and empirically driven and lack an explicit theoretical framework, and in many studies contributions to theory are not made explicit. These characteristics also described early stage mainstream entrepreneurship research, a field that was initially primarily empirically driven (Bygrave & Hofer, 1991). However, here the drive towards theoretical advancement has been strong during the last decade (Davidsson, 2008). The influence of this development can also be observed in the field of tourism entrepreneurship (e.g. Denicolai et al., 2010; Hallak et al., 2012). Second, there is a great variety of articles with explicit theoretical frameworks, reflecting the wide array of topics and research questions as discussed above. Quite a few studies rely on frequently used management theories, such as stakeholder theory (e.g. Byrd et al., 2009; Ryan, 2002) and resource-based view (e.g. Andreu, Claver, & Quer, 2009; Denicolai et al., 2010; Haber & Reichel, 2007) or theories from economic geography such as actor-network theory (e.g. Jóhannesson, 2012) theoretical perspectives which are also commonly used within mainstream entrepreneurship research. Other perspectives related to the entrepreneurship literature, such as the concept of entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurial goals,

entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial learning and creative destruction, are used and tested in several different contexts (Crick, 2011; Fan, Wall, & Mitchell, 2008; Mitchell & de Waal, 2009; Arch G Woodside, 2006). There is little evidence of the use of specific theoretical perspectives related to tourism entrepreneurship. Hence, the evidence points in direction of a convergence approach when it comes to theoretical framework.

#### *Empirical data and methodical approaches*

A review of the methodological approaches adopted in tourism entrepreneurship studies indicates that there has been a development in the use of research methods over time (see Table 3).

Insert Table 3 here

Table 3 reports that the number of quantitative studies has increased dramatically from the first period to the second period. We observe this finding as an indication of the maturing of tourism entrepreneurship as a research field and as a response to Li's (2008) call for more empirical studies. This result is also consistent with mainstream entrepreneurship research and can thus serve as an argument for a convergent approach. Further examination shows that among the qualitative articles, the number of comparative case studies appears to have grown the recent years (e.g. Carlisle, Kunc, Jones, & Tiffin, 2013; Johns & Mattsson, 2005; Nissan, Galindo, & Méndez, 2011; Sundbo et al., 2007; Woodside, 2006). Another trend is the use of multiple sources of data and the combination of methods (e.g. Denicolai et al., 2010; Fan et al., 2008; Hallak et al., 2012). Among the quantitative studies, surveys are most



common method, with an increase in sample sizes over the years (e.g. García et al., 2012; Sandell & Fredman, 2010).

Europe has been the empirical context for a large share of the studies, also showing a marked increase from the first period to the last period (cf. Table 3). More than 6 of 10 articles published during 2007-2012 represent studies of tourism entrepreneurship in Europe. This body of work is different from the mainstream entrepreneurship research, which North America is dominating. In summary, the findings reveal that the current knowledge of tourism entrepreneurship has developed from the European context and that we have limited knowledge of its applicability to other contexts.

#### *Contributions from convergent and divergent approaches*

The above review shows great breadth in the studies of tourism entrepreneurship with regard to the research questions examined and the approaches adopted. Both the divergent and the convergent approaches provide important contributions to tourism entrepreneurship. The divergent approach takes the characteristics of the tourism industries as the starting point for identifying research questions and core concepts and builds on these aspects for knowledge development. Specific issues related to the industry, such as the high degree of seasonality (Ioannides & Petersen, 2003; Pegg, Patterson, & Gariddo, 2012) or the fact that some parts of the industry are characterised by high investment and a need for advanced technical solutions (Carlbäck, 2012), are the focus of analyses. Hence, the divergent approach yields highly relevant research for the industry, but it may also encounter deficits related to its inability to build on previously developed knowledge within entrepreneurship, which may limit theory development.

The convergent approach more clearly builds on prior entrepreneurship literature and adapts it to the specific context of tourism. Research questions are chosen in relation to core issues of entrepreneurship and empirical examinations are more often based on prior theorising within entrepreneurship. Although building on prior knowledge in this manner, obviously has important strengths, it may also cause bias towards issues that are particularly relevant to the context. Based on the most cited studies, it appears that the divergent approach is only slightly more dominating than the convergent approach, but if literature reviews are excluded, the divergent approach is more dominant. However, both streams exist side by side and continue to be developed.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research**

The aim of this paper has been to review the literature on tourism entrepreneurship and analyse trends and developments. We found both weaknesses and potential strengths of the current literature. Despite the increase in the number of articles published in recent years, the articles are still largely published in tourism journals, and few are published in other high-ranked journals. This finding indicates either that the quality of this research is lower than the standards for high-impact journals or that the topics explored are not considered to be of interest outside of the tourism field. Li (2008) notes that that theoretical work on tourism entrepreneurship has remained at a consistently low level. Despite recent examples of theoretically well-developed articles and several more sophisticated empirical studies, this review indicates that studies are still often lacking theoretical grounding, and many suffer

from weak methodological designs, low data quality and lack of methodical sophistication. However, the field has generated increased interest and has recently experienced strong growth in the number of studies. As a result, the field of tourism entrepreneurship is rapidly changing. Not only is there a higher number and larger variety of studies, but there are also indications of stronger theoretical anchoring and more well-developed methodological designs in some studies. Furthermore, many studies adopt a practical approach in seeking to respond to real-life problems confronted by tourism entrepreneurs or agencies seeking to develop the tourism sector. Hence, many studies contribute with applied knowledge, which is relatively easily accessible for practitioners and policy makers.

This review has particularly focused on the relationship between tourism entrepreneurship and mainstream entrepreneurship literature. The review showed that both convergent and divergent approaches to mainstream entrepreneurship literature are applied. Indications of divergent strategies are found in publication outlets, as tourism entrepreneurship articles are primarily published in tourism journals and seldom in entrepreneurship journals. Such indications are also found in theoretical perspectives, as only a few studies build on or aim to contribute directly to the mainstream entrepreneurship literature. However, the topics and research questions in focus touch on ongoing debates in the entrepreneurship literature, such as sustainable entrepreneurship (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011), the role of place and space in entrepreneurship (Johnstone & Lionais, 2004), or the influence of social capital on entrepreneurial performance (Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Tötterman & Sten, 2005), but these linkages are seldom made. Overall, this finding indicates that tourism entrepreneurship is disconnected from the more mainstream entrepreneurship

literature and differs from other areas of tourism research that are more clearly embedded within the discipline-oriented literature, for example within consumer behaviour where studies on tourism is covered also in the mainstream journals (e.g. Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013; Hosany & Martin, 2012; Woodside, Hsu, & Marshall, 2011).

Nevertheless, both divergent and convergent approaches are adopted by the most influential studies. Both streams provide important contributions. Based on the findings from this review, we argue the following. First, the literature on tourism entrepreneurship can be advanced by adopting a convergent approach and more explicitly by building on theorising within the more developed fields of entrepreneurship. Second, the specific context and characteristics of tourism are important to develop further, both to advance theorising on tourism entrepreneurship and to inform the mainstream entrepreneurship literature. Hence, we suggest a combination approach.

Recent theorising in entrepreneurship has focused on entrepreneurial opportunities and how they come into existence (Sarasvathy et al., 2011) as well as on entrepreneurial behaviour (Dew, Read, Sarasvathy, & Wiltbank, 2008; Wright & Marlow, 2012). However, these and other recent developments are not reflected in the tourism entrepreneurship literature. We suggest that research on tourism entrepreneurship can be further advanced by building on the knowledge development within mainstream entrepreneurship research as well as other special areas of entrepreneurship such as social and community entrepreneurship (Haugh, 2007; Zahra et al., 2009) or financing entrepreneurial ventures (Rasmussen & Sørheim,

2012). Although we acknowledge that there are special characteristics of tourism that may make it necessary to adapt theories, concepts and methods before they are used in this context, the field will benefit from the stronger theoretical development within other areas of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the entrepreneurship literature provides inspiration for areas of further development related to tourism entrepreneurship.

These areas include the following:

- entrepreneurial opportunities within tourism, their origins and their development
- entrepreneurial behaviours in the start-up of tourism ventures and consequences for the further development of tourism firms
- types of tourism entrepreneurs and implications for venture development
- processes of corporate entrepreneurship in tourism firms, including spin-off ventures and
- resource acquisition, resource configuration and capability development in tourism firms

Recently, calls have been made for more context-sensitive analyses within entrepreneurship research to advance theory building (Welter, 2011; Zahra, 2007).

The tourism context includes specific characteristics that give room for scholarly analyses that could advance entrepreneurship theorising, in addition to the importance for understanding the phenomenon of tourism entrepreneurship. These characteristics include the following:

- The seasonality that characterises the sector generates particular challenges for entrepreneurs with regard to resource endowments. There is need for scholarly knowledge related to how seasonality influences venture

development, including issues such as retaining and building a flexible resource base adjustable for seasonal variations, strategies for combining business activities and dual business models. Furthermore, the issue of temporary organisations (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995) may be relevant to explore in this context.

- The role of destinations in venture development is an important area as many new tourism firms will be dependent on other offerings or characteristics of destinations as part of the tourism product that they offer to their customers. The value perceived by consumers is dependent on the full experience, while entrepreneurs largely influence their own product. There is currently a limited understanding of venture development in these types of context in which the basis of opportunity exploitation also includes offerings and other resources that are not controlled by the entrepreneur or new firm but are rather controlled by other firms or public bodies at the destination or to the community as such. This challenges the current entrepreneurship literature, which generally views opportunities as being discovered or created by single entrepreneurs. Recent theorising related to collective entrepreneurship (Etzkowitz, 2003) or the value of building committed relationships to other stakeholders (Dew & Sarasvathy, 2007) may be fruitful anchors for such development. Valuable contributions can also be gained from the service network literature within tourism which conceptualises destinations as networks of connected organisations (Baggio & Cooper, 2010), and which describes how a group of small firms organised in interdependent systems can be self-governing and together develop a competitive tourism cluster (Pavlovich, 2003). For new businesses, a network may be an opportunity to

retrieve information about the market, the environment, potential partnerships and possible value chains (Novelli et al., 2006). Hence, well-developed networks may foster entrepreneurial activity.

- Experience products are characterised with the role of co-creation in value creation for customers. Such products present important challenges to product development and opportunity exploitation in existing and new firms (Alsos et al., 2014). The extent to which this important characteristic influences processes of opportunity discovery or creation, as well as opportunity exploitation and the chosen business models, has scarcely been explored. Future research into these aspects may have the potential not only to help us understand entrepreneurial processes related to tourism and experience industries but also to provide important insights related into entrepreneurial processes more generally.
- The tourism entrepreneurship literature has focused on sustainability issues, which is also a growing area of interest related to mainstream entrepreneurship research. Because of the dependency on the destination and often of nature or local culture as the basis of experience products, particular attention has been devoted to sustainability in relation to tourism ventures. The literature on sustainable entrepreneurship may profit from examining these issues in relation to tourism development in the future.

In conclusion, there are several fruitful angles in the future development of tourism entrepreneurship research. In particular, taking advantage of the currently strong theoretical and methodological developments within the entrepreneurship literature will be important to further improve tourism entrepreneurship research. Hence, the

field will benefit from research strategies in which tourism entrepreneurship research is more related to the ongoing debates in entrepreneurship research. However, there is also great potential for utilising the potential related specific characteristics of the tourism sector context to further inform tourism entrepreneurship knowledge in particular and the field of entrepreneurship in general.

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## Tables

**Table 1.** Published articles on tourism entrepreneurship 2000-2012

<b>Journals</b>	<b>2000-2006</b>	<b>2007-2012</b>	<b>Total</b>
Tourism Management	5	13	18
Tourism Planning and Development	0	12	12
Current Issues in Tourism	4	7	11
Annals of Tourism Research	3	7	10
Tourism Geographics	6	4	10
Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	0	9	9
Journals of Travel Research	4	2	6
International Journal of Hospitality Management	2	3	5
International Journal of Contemp. Hospitality Man.	1	3	4
International Journal of Tourism Research	0	5	5
Tourism Economics	2	2	4
<b>Sum tourism journals</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>94</b>
Journal of Management Studies		1	1
Journal of Business Venturing	1	1	2
Journal of Small Business Management		1	1
Journal of Business Research		1	1
Entrepreneurship and Regional Development		1	1
International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research	1	3	4
International Small Business Journal	1		1
<b>Sum business journals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>
Service Industries Journal	1	3	4
Other journals with three articles or less	9	18	27
<b>Sum other journals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Sum articles</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>136</b>

**Table 2.** Tourism entrepreneurship articles categorised according to their relationship to the mainstream entrepreneurship literature

<b>As part of another phenomenon</b>	<b>Divergent approach</b>	<b>Convergent approach</b>
Byrd et al., 2009;	Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000;	Altinay et al., 2012
García et al., 2012	Di Domenico & Miller, 2012;	Denicolai et al., 2010;
Manyara & Jones, 2007;	Getz & Petersen, 2005;	Getz & Carlsen, 2005;
Ryan, 2002;	Hallak et al., 2012;	Gurel et al., 2010;
Sharpley, 2002;	Iorio & Corsale, 2010;	Haber & Reichel, 2007;
Thompson & Homewood, 2002;	Lordkipanidze et al., 2005;	Hall et al., 2012;
Williams & Hall, 2000;	McGehee et al., 2007	Hjalager, 2010;
Williams & Shaw, 2011;	Russell & Faulkner, 2004;	Lerner & Haber, 2001;
Wilson et al., 2001 and	McGehee & Kim, 2004;	Morrison, 2006 and
Zapata, et. al, 2011.	Tew & Barbieri, 2012;	Sundbo et al., 2007.
	Yang & Wall, 2009 and	
	Yang et al., 2008.	



**Table 3.** Number of articles in terms of methods and geography

	<b>2000-2006</b>		<b>2007-2012</b>		<b>Change</b>
	no	%	no	%	no
<b>Methods</b>					
Qualitative	23	58 %	44	46 %	21
Quantitative	7	18 %	30	31 %	23
Conceptual	6	15 %	9	9 %	3
Mixed methods	4	10 %	13	14 %	9
Total	40	100 %	96	100 %	56
<b>Geography of data</b>					
Africa	3	6 %	7	6 %	4
Europe	25	52 %	70	64 %	45
North America	7	15 %	9	8 %	2
South/Middle America	3	6 %	3	3 %	0
Oceania	5	10 %	6	5 %	1
Asia	5	10 %	15	14 %	10
Total*	48	100 %	110	100 %	62

\*some papers study several continents, which makes the total number of countries investigated higher than the numbers of articles in the review