

**Mapping the Tourism Entrepreneurial Process:  
A Sampling from Connecticut, USA**

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**Abstract**

The continuous birthing of touristic enterprises contributes to an area's economic vitality and socio-cultural vibrancy. Thus theoretical, empirical, and/or experiential information about how touristic enterprises are created would seem valuable. This study sought to empirically determine the extent of congruency between a conceptual model of the tourism entrepreneurial process and the actual experiences of a sample of tourism entrepreneurs in CT, USA. The findings from fifty three tourism entrepreneurs indicated a moderately high level of concordance (82.7%) between the conceptual model and the field data. If a "personological" factor was added, the model would better account for behavioral variation across individuals and situations. Advice for aspiring tourism entrepreneurs was also provided by the study sample.

**Keywords:** Tourism entrepreneurship, tourism entrepreneurial process

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**Introduction**

*"Entrepreneurship is an infinitely renewable resource" Schramm, C.J., 2006*

A community with a thriving tourist industry enjoys a measurable degree of socio-economic vibrancy: earning of real income, generation of tax revenue, capital investments, infrastructural improvements, refurbishing of projects, job opportunities, leisure opportunities, and a sense of community pride and identity including opportunity for educational institutions to offer tourism-hospitality-culinary programs. To enjoy and sustain these socio-economic benefits, the community must be able to continuously attract and host a significant inflow of visitors (leisure and/or business visitors). To effectively attract and host visitors, a community needs to build a favorable tourism supply, namely, attractions, amenities, transportation, lodging, F&B businesses, and its auxiliaries. Logically, a community with a favorable tourism supply (in terms of variety, quantity and quality) is more likely to attract and host a wider range of visitors from near and afar than a community with an unfavorable tourism supply.

Thus issues relating to tourism supply should be an important subject for tourism studies; in particular, the role, activities, and behaviors of tourism entrepreneurs in determining the quantity, quality, and pace of tourism supply. Despite the call from several

researchers suggesting research on the subject (Shaw and Williams, 1994; Koh, 1996; Page, Forer and Lawton, 1999; Wall, 1999; Lerner and Haber, 2000; Russell and Faulkner 2004), a review of the tourism research literature by Li (2008) reported that tourism entrepreneurship remains an under-studied domain. According to Li's study --- a review of seven established tourism-hospitality journals over a twenty year period (between 1986 and 2006) --- only about 2% of the articles published in these journals contain articles addressing entrepreneurship. Li concluded, "Overall, the findings reveal that entrepreneurship research has not been aggressively pursued in the field of the hospitality and tourism management" (p. 1016).

In this vein, Bruyat and Julien (2000, p. 170) wrote, "If researchers hope to contribute to practical entrepreneurship, we should investigate the individual, the object created, the environment, and the process." In the tourism research literature, Koh (2006) urged the empirical investigation of these three tourism supply themes: E-people (what do we know about people who create touristic enterprises?), E-places (what types of community environs promote the birth of touristic enterprises?), and E-process (How are touristic enterprises created?). On the latter (E-process), Reynolds and White (1997, p. 39) stated,

"Contextual features and general processes (legitimation and competition) do not start new firms; people start new firms. Individuals acting alone or with a team are responsible for launching new businesses. Despite the importance of this activity, how individuals create new firms is one of the least-understood features of modern societies."

Accordingly, if all the stages experienced by an entrepreneur in the creation of a touristic enterprise (from conception to operation) could be charted then intervention programs may be instituted to lubricate and facilitate the transition of each stage, thereby promoting the likelihood of touristic enterprise birth and survival rates. The availability of such information would thus be valuable to communities seeking to develop and grow their tourism industry including communities where their tourist industry is predominantly dominated by alien tourism entrepreneurs since knowledge about the tourism entrepreneurial process would serve as a blueprint to promoting indigenous tourism entrepreneurship, which is more associated with higher economic linkage, economic development, and political autonomy (Britton, 1982; Britton, 1989; Echtner, 1995; English, 1986; Harrison, 1992; Rodenburg, 1980; Samy, 1975). Moreover, as Aldrich (1999) explicated, there is a need to explore entrepreneurial issues and challenges on an industry-by-industry basis: for its own sake and for comparative purposes.

Hence this study sought to empirically determine the tourism entrepreneurial process and compare the extent of congruency between the field data and the conceptual model formulated by Koh (1996). If the conceptual model is supported by the empirical data, community development officers and tourism educators should initiate programs and activities to promote and facilitate the birthing of touristic enterprises. When touristic enterprises are incessantly launched (and hopefully survive and grow), everyone wins: entrepreneurs, job seekers, investors, banks, tax offices, tourists, and other stakeholders in the travel industry. This rationale is well stated by Morrison (2006), "At full intensity this

process will result in outcomes that radically infuse and energize economies, society and industries, creating long term and sustainable benefits for society as a whole” (p. 204).

### **Review of the Literature**

The enterprise creation process has been referred to by different names, such as: gestation phase; pre-launch activities; pre-organization; organizational emergence; organization in vitro, and start-up (Carter et al., 1996). Bygrave and Hofer (1991) defined it as the sequence of activities, functions, or behaviors associated with the perception of opportunities, leading to the creation of a new organization; a process which may take years to evolve and attain fruition.

Learned (1992) conceptualized the entrepreneurial process as comprised of three domains: propensity to found, intention to found, and sense making. Propensity to found: some individuals have a combination of psychological traits in addition to background factors making them more likely candidates for attempting to found businesses. Intention to found: some of those individuals will encounter situations, which when combined with their traits and backgrounds, will cause intentionality. Sense making: an intentional individual engages the environment while attempting to assemble resources to make his/her ideas real. An intentional individual will ultimately make a decision to found, or to abandon the attempt to found, depending upon the sense made of the attempt.

Olson (1985) stated that there are four stages in the entrepreneurial process: opportunity identification; generating and examining ideas and solutions; determining choices; and implementation. Holt (1992) also stated that there are four stages: pre-startup; startup; early growth; and later growth. Pre-startup refers to the period during which entrepreneurs identify a business concept, conduct a product-market study, financial planning, and pre-start-up implementation. During startup, the entrepreneur positions the venture in a market and makes necessary adjustments to assure survival. Early growth may be characterized by rapid development and growth if the venture undergoes major changes in markets, finances, and resource utilization. Later growth describes the evolution of a venture into a large company with active competitors in an established industry when professional management may be more important than the entrepreneurial verve. Hisrich and Peters (1995) also stated that there are four stages although they label them differently: identifying and evaluating the opportunity; developing the business plan; determining the resources required; and managing the resulting enterprise created. A review of the literature by Aldrich and Martinez (2001) reported that the entrepreneurial process consists of four basic phases: conception, gestation, infancy, and adolescence. But not every aspiring entrepreneur successfully undergoes the four stages, only the successful ones. The authors also highlighted the importance of addressing human capital, financial capital, and social capital for any areas seeking to increase levels of entrepreneurship.

An empirical study by Gibb and Ritchie (1982) reported that the entrepreneurial process actually consisted of five stages: finding an idea; validating the idea; identifying the resources; negotiating to get in business; and birth and survival. Baucus and Human (1994) also reported that there are five stages in the entrepreneurial process (from a sample of only

7): search for business ideas, selecting the business opportunity, gathering relevant information, formal specification, and garnering support/logistics.

To Harvey and Evans (1995), the entrepreneurial process involves seven stages: conceptualize new business venture; evaluate alternative entry modes; assess financial ramifications of entering business; prospect capital; finalize company and/or product concept; form an intention to enter venture; and enter/do not enter a new business venture.

Liao and Welsch (2002)'s study of 292 nascent entrepreneurs using a data mining technique also reported that there are seven non-linear dynamic processes involving thirteen convergent and divergent activities: business ideas; startup team; business plan; models/procedures; save money; lease facilities; marketing efforts; raw materials; taken courses; open account; invest money; market opportunity; and first sales. Recognizing the heterogeneity of enterprises, the researchers thus urged future researchers to study the startup process for tech and non-tech based enterprises as well as industry characteristics that may impact the enterprise creation process.

Montanari et al. (1990) however reported empirical support for eight sets of activities: entrepreneurial predisposition; innovation development; environmental assessment; choice of market and start-up strategy; choice of implementation strategy; market entry; control activities; and market development.

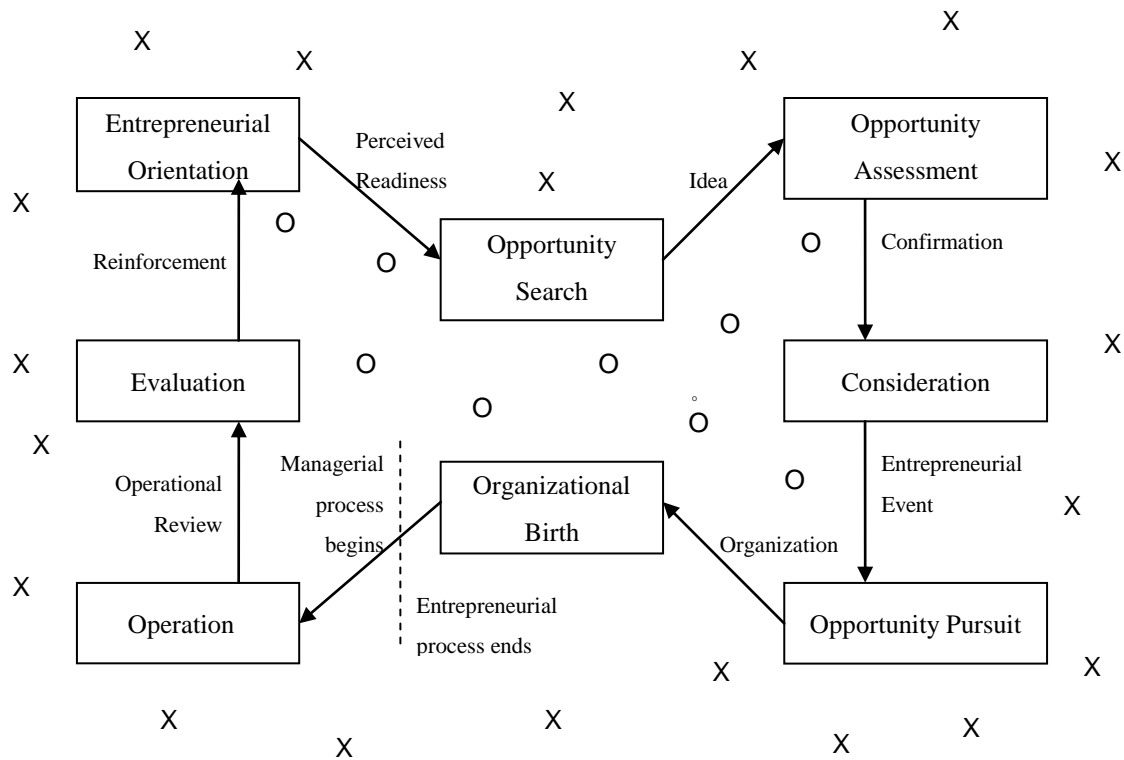
Bhave's (1994) qualitative study (with a sample of 27 drawn from a range of industries) reported that there are actually eleven sequential stages in the entrepreneurial process: decision to start; opportunity recognition; opportunity chosen; opportunity refinement; business concept identified; commitment to venture creation; creation of organization; production technology and product development; sale; customer feedback; and strategic decisions.

This seemingly conflicting information (among and between conceptual and empirical papers) prompted Carter et al. (1996) to write: "The theoretical and empirical literature on entrepreneurial behaviors is very diverse, and few efforts have been undertaken to identify and validate a set of comprehensive and parsimonious behaviors necessary to create new businesses" (p.154). To which, Alsos and Kolvereid (1998) tendered that perhaps the business gestation process varies for different types of entrepreneurs, namely, novice versus experienced founders. To test the validity of their assumption, they sampled 159 Norwegian nascent entrepreneurs. Although they reported that there were few statistically significant differences between novice and experienced founders in terms of personal characteristics, there were several significant differences in their gestational activities: business planning, financing of the new firm, and interaction with the external environment.

In the field of tourism research, Koh (1996) explained that the tourism entrepreneurial process involves eight sequential stages: cognitive orientation; opportunity search; opportunity assessment; consideration; opportunity pursuit; birth; operation; and evaluation. The stages were moderated by two types of environmental events: personal environmental events and community environmental events. Koh further explained that the first six stages constitute the entrepreneurial process while the last two (operation and evaluation) constitute managerial activities (thus, they could be performed by hired hands). However,

Koh did not furnish empirical data to substantiate the existence of the stages as conceptualized (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** The Conceptual tourism entrepreneurial process model



Legend

- O micro-exogenous events
- X macro-exogenous events

Russell and Faulkner (1999) countered that the tourism entrepreneurial process is a highly individualistic process, not one with structure and logic, nor consistent with the behavior of tourism entrepreneurs found in their study (p. 412). Hence they urged the adoption of Bygrave’s (1989) chaos theory to explain tourism entrepreneurial processes.

The entrepreneurship research literature reviewed indicated that there is still no consensus on the number of stages and/or types of activities engaged by entrepreneurs in

their enterprise creation process. The same scenario is reflected in the tourism research literature. With regards to the opposing view between Koh (1996) and Russell and Faulkner (1999), Russell and Faulkner's proposition seemed weaker for the following reasons:

- Their unit of analysis was a destination (macro-level) whereas Koh's unit of analysis was individual enterprises (micro-level).
- The number of tourism entrepreneurs studied by Russell and Faulkner was small, "Two entrepreneurs have been selected as representative of the movers and shakers genre, who were active in initiating innovations in tourism development on the Gold Coast [Australia] during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The individuals concerned are Bernard Elsey and Keith Williams" (p. 420). Since their findings were from only two subjects, a larger sample study seems warranted.
- Empirical studies of entrepreneurial processes consistently found common activities and logical sequences in the enterprise creation process. For example, Van de Ven and Venkataraman (2000) concluded that creating a business entails many common core processes irrespective of organizational and industry settings. Aldrich and Martinez (2001) similarly reported that the entrepreneurial process consisted of certain basic phases although the variety of tasks may differ between types of businesses and experience of the founders. And in the words of Kaulio (2003),

"First, among the methods reviewed there seems to be a consensus that the process of new venture creation follows a 'staged' process. Second, there exists evidence that these stages are defined in terms of the problems the new venture encounters. Three, these stages represent in a way milestones to work against" (p.169).

Liao and Welsch's (2002) empirical study using data mining technique also reported structure and order in the entrepreneurial process:

"It is widely held that organizational structure and processes of business creation are different for small company startups, joint inter-organizational ventures and within the large diversified companies. Our findings of no significant differences in association and sequencing patterns are surprising and counterintuitive. Instead, they share a common set of core activities and the sequencing patterns for these core activities are highly similar" (p.10).

In a follow-up report, Liao and Welsch (2003) wrote:

"... there was a high degree of similarity in the sequencing patterns of startup activities, and T-tests suggested that what differentiated nascent entrepreneurs who launched technology-based enterprises versus non-technology based enterprises were not so much about who they are, but what and how they do in firm gestation processes" (p. 9).

In short, if the tourism entrepreneurial process is really a unique process or characterized by chaotic events that could not be “...understood using reductionist approaches...” as asserted by Russell and Faulkner (1999, p.416), then what is the value of social research? Is it not one of the goals of social research to search for patterns in a world of seemingly overwhelming and random complexity? And in view of the consistent conclusions from empirical studies --- that the entrepreneurial process exhibits structure and orderliness --- could the tourism entrepreneurial process really be significantly different as claimed by Russell and Faulkner? If so, what are the differences, and how significantly different is it? On the other hand, Koh (1996)’s conceptual model seems more aligned with published empirical findings and possesses the qualities of a “good” social science model as characterized by these features:

- Positivistic --- logically explains observed occurrences at point-in-time;
- Parsimonious --- identifies salient factors for comprehension and actions;
- Predictive --- reasonably projects future likely occurrences;
- Prescriptive --- offers practical actions to stimulate/inhibit future occurrences; and
- Perishable --- could be empirically challenged.

Brunner-Sperdin and Peters (2004) also expressed merit in Koh’s model, “Koh (1996) derived a unique conceptual model of the entrepreneurial and later managerial process in tourism to occur in eight stages [sic]. The entrepreneurial process is perceived as eight interacting stages, with each stage being impacted by unfolding environmental events...” (p. 76).

Hence the purpose of this study was to determine the level of concordance between Koh’s conceptual model and reality (actual experiences of tourism entrepreneurs).

### **Study Methodology**

This study was guided by these philosophical beliefs.

- 1) “Entrepreneurship should be defined as the creation of new enterprises, and the purpose of entrepreneurship research should be to explain and facilitate the role of new enterprise in furthering economic progress” (Low and MacMillan, 1988, p. 141).
- 2) “The ethic of research must be that of increasing knowledge” (McCormick, 1996, p. 368) and “Creating economic value is socially responsible” (Ma and Tan, 2006, p. 715).
- 3) Science is “a systematic inquiry into some aspect of reality that is communicated in a way that will allow an interested person to make an informed evaluation of the process of inquiry and its conclusions” (Pieper, 1994, p.72).
- 4) “The rules and procedures for engaging in quantitative research, are, for the most part, institutionalized and accepted as the standard for how academic scholars will agree that a finding is a fact, rather than an opinion” and that “many of the important questions in entrepreneurship can only be asked through qualitative methods and approaches” (Gartner and Birley, 2002, p. 387).

5) “Triangulation is not the only criterion for good qualitative research and it does not ensure that findings are interesting and give appropriate answers to research problems” (Decrop, 1999, p. 160).

Framed by these five philosophical beliefs/biases, the study was conducted as follows:

### ***Sampling Unit***

A touristic enterprise was defined as a venture created primarily to serve the needs and wants of travelers and visitors with the goal of ultimately producing a favorable return on investments. And in accordance with Smith’s (1989) categorization, two types of touristic enterprises could be identified: the Type-1 touristic enterprise is highly dependent on travelers’ and visitors’ purchases (such as an airline or a hotel) while a Type-2 touristic enterprise is moderately dependent on travelers’ and visitors’ purchases (such as a restaurant or a shopping mall). In this study, only brick and mortar stores were sampled while click stores and franchised enterprises were excluded. The reason for excluding click stores was difficulty of access to their founders. Franchised enterprises were also excluded because this paper’s authors regard them as “recipe businesses” which merely follow prescribed and time-tested business practices.

### ***Sampling Area***

The sampling area was limited to new touristic enterprises created in Hartford County, Connecticut, USA, within the last five years (2008 – 2012). The study area was chosen not based on scientific sampling principles but of convenience --- both researchers work at a public university in the State of Connecticut.

### ***Sample Selection***

Three sets of referral activities were undertaken to select the study samples. The first referral activity involved contacting the directors of local Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Administration offices for qualified subjects to invite as study subjects: (a) the business has to be a touristic enterprise as defined by Smith (1989), (b) the enterprise was created within the last 5 years (to minimize recall error); (c) the enterprise was a real birth in the community and not a transfer of ownership through sale or inheritance, and (d) the owner was actually involved in the founding of the enterprise and continued to be significantly involved in managing the enterprise (defined as involving at least 30 hours a week). The second referral activity involved requesting colleagues and students at our campus to suggest people and businesses that fit the same sample criteria. Three, our research assistant compiled a list of touristic enterprises extracted from internet sites and the Yellow Pages in the study area (Hartford County, CT). These three sets of efforts yielded 53 willing participants for this study.

### ***Data Collection Method***



The *a posteriori* approach (that is, no previous knowledge is assumed by researchers) was used in this study as opposed to the *a priori* approach (study subjects are asked to validate the furnished information). The chosen data collection method was the face-to-face interview method whereby each study participant was asked to recall his/her entrepreneurial story as experienced as opposed to asking them to rate/check a list of predetermined sets of activities (the *a priori* approach). The face-to-face interview format also permitted the investigators to probe thereby possibly discovering idiosyncratic information.

As was used by Evangelista (2005), the basic inquiry was, “Recall and describe as accurately as you could, how you became interested in starting your own business, the stages and activities involved, types of problems encountered in each stage and how these problems were resolved, time frame for each stage, the role of certain individuals, up to your present involvement in this business.” All interviews were conducted at each respective study participants’ premises, and all interviews were conducted by the two investigators. Responses were hand recorded as well as audio taped (when consent was granted). Each field interview lasted between 1.5 and 2.5 hours. Interestingly, study subjects who had previous entrepreneurial experience tended to be less elaborative in their “stories” than neophytes. At the conclusion of each field interview session, the study subject was asked this closure question, “Based on your entrepreneurial experience, what knowledge/skill should university students majoring in travel-tourism studies acquire if they aspire to be a commercial tourism entrepreneur?”

### ***Data Treatment***

Within seven days after each field interview, hand-recorded transcripts and/or audio recordings were transcribed into typed scripts. To determine the presence/absence of each stage as conceptualized by Koh (1996), three established social science researchers at the investigators’ university were invited to serve as judges. Each judge independently scored the absence/presence of each entrepreneurial stage cell using this scale format whereby 0 = the stage was definitely not experienced by the subject; 1 = the stage was somewhat experienced; 2 = the stage was moderately experienced; and 3.0 = the stage was definitely experienced by the subject. All judges’ scores were then aggregated to determine each cell score. This data treatment procedure seemed to satisfy the credibility and objectivity criteria for qualitative research as explained by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as well as the triangulation technique elucidated by Decrop (1999), and Denzin and Lincoln (1994). Liao and Welsch (2003) also applied this technique in their study.

**Study Findings**

**Table 1:** Sample of tourism entrepreneurs (N = 53)

1. <u>Race</u>	Total	%	60s	2	3.80
Anglo	39	73.6			
Asian	5	9.4			
Other	4	7.6			
Hispanics	3	5.7			
African	2	3.7			
2. <u>Gender</u>					
Male	39	73.6			
Female	14	26.4			
3. <u>Country of birth</u>					
USA	44	83.0			
Foreign	9	17.0			
4. <u>Community residency status</u> when present enterprise was launched (5 years or more):					
Resident	40	75.5			
Non-resident	13	24.5			
5. <u>Marital status</u> when present enterprise was launched:					
Married with children	27	50.9			
Married with no children	11	20.8			
Single with no children	9	17.0			
Single with children	6	11.3			
6. <u>Age group</u> when present enterprise was launched:					
20s	6	11.3			
30s	9	17.0			
40s	22	41.5			
50s	14	26.4			
7. <u>Highest educational level</u> when present enterprise was launched:					
High school	15	28.3			
Associate degree	6	11.3			
Baccalaureate degree	24	45.3			
Graduate/professional degree	8	15.1			
8. <u>Employment status</u> prior to present launch					
Employee	40	75.5			
Employer	13	24.5			
9. <u>Primary motivation</u> for present launch					
Pull-reasons only	8	15.1			
More pull than push reasons	11	20.8			
Pull-and-Push reasons	18	33.9			
More push than pull reasons	11	20.8			
Push-reasons only	5	9.4			
10. <u>Primary involvement</u> with present enterprise					
Management	29	54.7			
Marketing	11	20.8			
Technical	7	13.2			
Financial	5	9.4			

Advisory	1	1.9		
<u>11. Feeling of success at launch</u>			<u>12. Feeling of success at present</u>	
High	19	35.8	High	11 20.8
Medium	31	58.5	Medium	35 66.0
Low	3	5.7	Low	7 13.2

**Table 2:** Sample of touristic enterprises (N = 53)

<u>1. Types of touristic enterprises</u>			<u>6. Number of employees</u>		
F&B	19	35.8	Full time	111	36.9
Attractions	12	22.6	Part time	190	63.1
Auxiliary	7	13.2			
Facilitation	7	13.2	<u>7. Sources of finance</u>		
Lodging	6	11.3		<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Transport	2	3.8	Equity	17	32.1
			Equity & Loan	30	56.6
			Equity-loan-grant	6	11.3
<u>2. Operational season</u>			<u>8. Gestation period (months)</u>		
Year round	45	84.9	6-12	12	22.6
Seasonal	8	15.1	13-24	29	54.7
			25-36	8	15.1
<u>3. Age of enterprise (months)</u>			37-48	4	7.6
1-12	11	20.7	<u>9. Business plan</u>		
13-24	17	32.1	No	30	56.6
25-36	14	26.4	Informal	7	13.2
37-48	8	15.1	Formal	16	30.2
49-60	3	5.7	<u>10. Annual gross revenue</u>		
<u>4. Number of owners</u>			Less than \$100,000	8	15.1
One	16	30.2	\$100,000 – 149,999	21	39.6
Two	19	35.8	\$150,000 – 199,999	13	24.5
Three	10	18.9	\$200,000 – 249,999	7	13.2
Four	4	7.5	Above \$250,000	4	7.6
Five	3	5.7	<u>11. Enterprise's financial performance</u>		
Six/more	1	1.9	Above expectation	12	22.6
<u>5. Composition of owners</u>			Within expectation	23	43.4
Self	16	30.2	Below expectation	18	34.0
Husband-wife	9	17.0	<u>12. Enterprise primary competitive strategy</u>		
Family	5	9.4	Value	21	39.6
Family-friends	4	7.5	Personnel	6	11.3
Friends	18	34.0			
Business angel	1	1.9			

Service	3	5.7	Location	2	3.8
Word-of-mouth	4	7.6	Operating day/time	1	1.9
Price	6	11.3	Uniqueness	7	13.2
Product	3	5.7			

**Table 3:** Tourism entrepreneurial process: Stage concordance matrix (N = 53)

Type	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	PE	CE	ISC
A1	3.00	2.33	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.67	2.80
A2	3.00	2.67	3.00	3.00	2.67	3.00	2.67	2.00	2.00	2.67	2.67
A3	3.00	2.33	2.00	3.00	2.67	2.67	3.00	2.67	2.00	2.67	2.60
A4	2.67	2.33	2.67	3.00	2.00	2.67	3.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.53
A5	3.00	1.67	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.47
A6	2.33	2.00	2.67	2.67	2.33	3.00	2.67	2.00	3.00	1.67	2.43
A7	2.67	1.67	2.00	2.33	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	1.67	1.33	2.33
A8	3.00	1.67	2.00	1.67	2.00	2.67	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.20
A9	2.33	0.67	2.00	2.67	3.00	2.33	3.00	3.00	1.67	2.00	2.27
A10	2.67	1.33	2.67	0.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.23
A11	3.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	1.67	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.17
A12	3.00	0.00	1.67	2.33	2.67	2.00	2.33	2.67	2.00	2.00	2.07
AX1	3.00	1.67	2.00	2.67	2.67	2.67	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.57
AX2	3.00	2.00	2.67	3.00	1.67	3.00	2.00	2.67	3.00	2.00	2.50
AX3	2.67	2.00	2.33	3.00	1.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.67	2.50
AX4	2.67	2.00	2.00	1.67	1.33	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	2.37
AX5	2.67	2.67	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.33
AX6	2.33	1.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.33	2.00	2.23
AX7	3.00	0.00	1.00	1.67	2.00	1.67	3.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	1.93
F1	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.67	2.00	3.00	2.77
F4	2.67	2.67	2.67	2.00	2.00	2.33	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.63
F5	2.33	3.00	1.67	2.67	2.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.33	3.00	2.57
F3	3.00	2.33	2.33	1.67	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.50
F6	2.33	2.00	2.67	2.67	2.00	2.67	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.43
F2	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.33	2.67	2.67	3.00	3.00	1.67	2.00	2.43
F7	3.00	0.67	1.67	2.33	2.67	2.33	3.00	2.00	2.00	1.67	2.13
FB1	3.00	2.67	2.33	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.87
FB2	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	3.00	2.67	2.67	2.33	2.73
FB3	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.67	2.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.73
FB4	3.00	2.67	2.67	2.67	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.33	2.00	2.73
FB5	3.00	1.33	2.33	2.67	3.00	2.67	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.70
FB6	2.67	1.67	2.67	3.00	2.67	2.67	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.70
FB7	3.00	1.67	2.67	2.00	2.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.60
FB8	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.50
FB9	3.00	1.67	2.33	2.67	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.57
FB10	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.33	2.33	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.67	2.50
FB11	3.00	1.00	2.00	2.67	2.67	2.67	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.33	2.43

FB12	3.00	1.67	2.33	2.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.40
FB13	3.00	1.33	2.00	2.67	2.67	2.67	3.00	3.00	2.33	2.00	2.47
FB14	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	2.67	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.00	2.33
FB15	2.33	1.00	1.67	2.67	2.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.40
FB16	3.00	0.67	2.67	2.67	2.33	2.33	3.00	3.00	2.00	1.67	2.33
FB17	3.00	1.00	2.67	1.67	2.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.40
FB18	2.67	0.00	2.33	2.00	2.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.27
FB19	2.33	0.00	1.33	2.00	2.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.13
L1	2.33	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.93
L2	3.00	2.67	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.33	2.87
L3	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.67	3.00	2.00	2.67	2.53
L4	3.00	1.00	2.33	2.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.43
L5	2.33	1.33	2.00	2.67	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.50
L6	3.00	1.67	1.67	2.00	2.00	1.67	3.00	2.67	2.67	2.00	2.24
T1	2.33	1.67	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.70
T2	2.33	2.00	2.67	2.67	2.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.63
<b>ASC</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>1.68</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>2.48</b>

Legend

S1 Cognitive orientation	S8 Enterprise evaluation	ASC Aggregate stage concordance
S2 Opportunity search	PE Personal environmental events	A Attractions
S3 Opportunity assessment	CE Community environmental events	AX Auxiliaries
S4 Consideration	ISC Individual stage concordance	F Facilitation
S5 Opportunity pursuit		FB Food & Beverage
S6 Enterprise birth		L Lodging
S7 Enterprise operation		T Transportation

Finally, recall that at the conclusion of each field interview, each respondent was asked, “Based on your entrepreneurial experience, what knowledge/skill should university students majoring in travel-tourism studies acquire if they aspired to be a commercial tourism entrepreneur?” The findings are summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Select advice from study respondents to aspiring students  
(Statements edited and arranged in relatedness)

<p>Anyone could be an entrepreneur if you have an idea and the money to start a business. The challenge is: can you keep the business alive and grow it?</p>
<p>To be a successful [tourism] entrepreneur, you must first have a product. Identify a unique business idea then make sure you can attract enough customers --- locals and tourists --- only then will you attract the capital.</p>
<p>Learn as much business knowledge and as many skills as possible especially marketing. Everything is marketing. You need to market your business idea to yourself, your partners, investors, bankers, customers, and suppliers. So, learn to communicate well --- verbal and written.</p>
<p>Making money should not be your sole motive. You should launch a business because you are passionate about launching and operating such a business. Of course, making money should be a goal but it should not be your only goal for launching the business, otherwise, you will be an unhappy entrepreneur.</p>
<p>Learn to write a business plan. The banker is not really interested in discussing with you further if you don't have a business plan to share.</p>
<p>Try to get as much hands on experience as possible before you become an entrepreneur because the cost of learning when you are a business owner may be too much.</p>
<p>All customers, whether they are locals or tourists, expect a good product and good service from any business. So, make sure you can deliver a good product along with good services.</p>
<p>You must be a good problem solver. Creating and operating a business requires lots of problem solving --- customers, employees, government, and money. If you are not a good problem solver, you are unlikely to become a successful entrepreneur or for that matter, a successful person.</p>
<p>Be willing to work very-very hard, and to deal with many unexpected problems. So, need to balance your time, health, and sanity otherwise the business will kill you.</p>
<p>Learn how to prepare payroll activities and tax related issues... Get a good accountant but don't trust them totally!</p>
<p>Don't trust anyone easily including your partners! It is your business so you had better keep a sharp eye on everything --- money, workers, supplies, contractors... And you better ask questions whenever you think something is amiss.</p>
<p>Learn to delegate. Don't expect others to be like you. If you do, you will end up doing all the things yourself. Trust me, you don't have the time or the energy!</p>
<p>Hire good workers and pay them better than your competitors if you want to keep them. Treat them well too. If you hire workers that lack the right attitude or work habit, you will pay more than you think they cost you --- money, lost business, hassles, stress, time, etc.</p>
<p>Build your social network. They are valuable resources. Join the chamber of commerce, and meet other business people. And try to cultivate a good relationship with your banker. A good banker could really help you in all kinds of ways.</p>
<p>Attract enough customers, manage your money, have reliable workers, watch your competitors, and don't forget the government!"</p>

## Discussion & Implications

### *Select findings reported in Table 1*

As was expected, Anglo, male, US born residents created most of the touristic enterprises in the study area. The entrepreneurs were also more likely to be married with children, and launched their respective enterprises in their 40s (41.5%). However, we were surprised that most of them did not major in business in their college education given that tourism entrepreneurship is a business undertaking (#7). Although more than half of the respondents had tertiary education (baccalaureate and graduate degrees: 60.4%), only a few majored in business or tourism-hospitality education; and none had a course in entrepreneurship. In view of this finding, tourism-hospitality curriculum designers may need to rethink their curriculum if developing potential entrepreneurs for the industry is a social responsibility. In this connection, teaching students how to explore new business ideas beyond what is familiar to them would seem important as found in Table 3 (see ASC for S2) --- a significant proportion of the study participants did not actively explore alternative opportunities other than pursuing familiar or “traditional” businesses. It is understandable that following a familiar business is less risky and psychologically comfortable to individual entrepreneurs but from a macro perspective, a community is unlikely to achieve competitive advantage if what it offers is not significantly different from other community offerings. Further, given that many of the entrepreneurs were primarily involved in managing and/or marketing of their neonate businesses (#10), offering specialized courses such as Creating Touristic Startups, Managing Newly Created Touristic Enterprises, and Marketing Small Touristic Enterprises could be attractive college/university course offerings.

Racial minorities (#1) and females (#2) remained minor participants in tourism entrepreneurship. If one of the goals of community tourism development is to be more inclusive, then policies that seek to promote racial minorities and female entrepreneurship in the industry would seem prudent. Thus, studies should be conducted to determine the types of constraints perceived by these two groups of potential tourism entrepreneurs. Also, 11.3% of the enterprises were launched by “single with children” while 50.9% were launched by “married with children” (#5). Since creating and operating a touristic enterprise is a highly demanding undertaking thus studies should also be conducted to learn how tourism entrepreneurs cope with their daily lives and whether their family/children’s quality of life is negatively impacted by their entrepreneurial pursuit.

As for motivation to entrepreneur (#9): the distribution was almost equal among the three categories: more pulled (35.9%), pulled-and-pushed (33.9%), and more pushed (30.2%). Whereas pull-reasons included the expectation of earning more money than being an employee, the belief they could succeed as an entrepreneur, autonomy in work decisions, a more flexible lifestyle, and pursuing hobbies; push-reasons included unsatisfying employment work situation, low/under employment compensation, changes in life’s situation, and marital disharmony. Since motivation is an individualistic drive, community tourism development offices are unlikely to influence their populace’s motivation to entrepreneur. However, community tourism development offices could foster a more



conducive and facilitative environment for tourism entrepreneurship, such as tourism marketing, designating tourism enterprise development zones, subsidized leases of space, buildings, and equipment, labor pool training and development programs, financial aid programs, and other complimentary help services.

*Select findings reported in Table 2*

All 53 businesses were small-scaled (employing less than 100 workers) and comprised more of Type-2 (66%) rather than Type-1 (34%) touristic enterprises. Smith (2006) similarly reported that most touristic enterprises created each year (in Canada) were small scaled and Type-2 enterprises. From an entrepreneur's perspective, launching a Type-2 touristic business would be more prudent since they cater to both residents and tourists (thus higher rate of survival). But from a community tourism development perspective, it is Type-1 touristic businesses that should be promoted since they are the ones that really attract visitors (leisure and/or business) and earn real income (i.e., income from outside the community) for the community. Further, if Type 1 businesses are successful in attracting visitors, Type-2 businesses benefit consequently. As such, community tourism development offices should think creatively on how to promote the birthing of Type-1 touristic enterprises especially year-round attractions.

In terms of ownership (#4), 68% of the enterprises were launched by teams (#4) rather than solo. This means that instructors of tourism entrepreneurship courses at tertiary institutions may want to design learning activities that are more team-based rather than individually oriented.

The gestation period (i.e., from conception to the birth of the enterprise) ranged from 6 to 48 months with an average length of 18.1 months (#8). If one were to plant a fruit tree, it would probably take about two to three years before one could enjoy the first fruit yet it takes less than two years to launch a touristic enterprise. Thus it would seem prudent that community development offices should promote tourism entrepreneurship.

With regard to business plan, again, we were surprised that only about a third (30.2%) of the enterprises was created with a formal business plan (#9) yet 66% reported that their enterprise was performing within or above expectation (#11). The proverb: "proper planning prevents poor performance" thus does not seem to hold true in tourism entrepreneurship. Based on this finding, tourism entrepreneurship instructors may want to accord less course time to teaching and challenging students to develop a formal business plan but instead use the time for students to gain experiential learning (such as shadowing and internship).

*Select findings reported in Table 3*

At the case level, of the 53 study participants, 27 (50.9%) cases had high concordance (ISC equal/higher than 2.50/3.00), 25 (47.2%) cases had medium concordance (between 2.00 and 2.49), and 1(1.9%) case had low concordance (less than 2.00). In terms of range,

the highest case concordance was 2.93 (L1: a B&B) while the lowest was 1.93 (AX7: an auxiliary enterprise).

In the case of the B&B, the husband recalled how extensively and thoroughly he and his wife discussed the venture, read up, made field visits, consulted relevant others, drafted plans, created designs, made revisions, modifications, etc... before finally launching their “retirement business” (as explained by the husband: a business that generates enough income to sustain their lifestyle --- to live in a pleasant place, nice property, opportunity to meet and socialize with others, and work that does not require too much stress and hassle). It should be noted that both husband and wife had prior experience in entrepreneurship. For the husband, the present enterprise was his third venture. The first was a security consulting company he launched after he retired from the US military. The business did not take off so he folded it (in California). The second was a computer software company which he eventually sold (in California). With the money he got from his second business, he decided to pursue a “retirement business” (his present B&B in Colorado). As for the wife, this is her second venture. When she agreed with her husband to retire in Colorado, she sold her hair styling and manicure business.

As for the souvenir shop, it was launched by a mother-son team. The mother had worked for a souvenir store for about thirty years (she was the general manager of the store before she decided to launch her own). Encouraged by her son (a marketer), she eventually launched the company based more on her “feel” and experience in this type of business rather than process of due diligence.

At the sector level, the transportation sector exhibited the highest concordance with a mean concordance score of 2.67/3.00 (89%). The sector with the least concordance score was the auxiliary sector with a mean concordance of 2.35 (78.3%). The remaining sectors: attraction = 2.40 (80%); facilitation = 2.50 (83.3%); F&B = 2.52 (84%); and lodging = 2.58 (86%).

### *Model Concordance*

Of the ten stages conceptualized by Koh (1996), five stages exhibited a high concordance score (2.5-3.0/3.0 scale): S1, S5, S7, S8, and PE; four stages had a moderate concordance score (2.0-2.49/3.0 scale): S3, S4, S6, and CE; and one stage had a low concordance score (less than 2.0): S2. In terms of range, S7 (operation) had the highest concordance score (2.92) while S2 (opportunity search) scored the lowest (1.68).

The findings pertaining to S7 was not unexpected since all the entrepreneurs had invested a significant amount of money, energy, time, and opportunity cost to launch their enterprise they would want to ensure that their enterprise survive and grow. However, we were a little surprised that several of them did not expend much time and effort to exploring alternate businesses (S2). Instead, they seemed to found their businesses based on what they were most familiar with as represented by one respondent’s statement, “I spent almost my whole adult life working in a travel & tour company so obviously I enjoy this kind of business. What is the advantage of going into a business that I don’t know much about?” We agreed and disagreed. Agreed because indeed, what advantage is there to start a

business when one lacks in depth knowledge of the business? Yet we disagreed because if one does not explore other possible businesses, one could be missing out on a niche market. Besides, little/no differentiation is achieved when one launches a familiar business --- just another seafood restaurant, another travel-tour company, another B&B, etc....

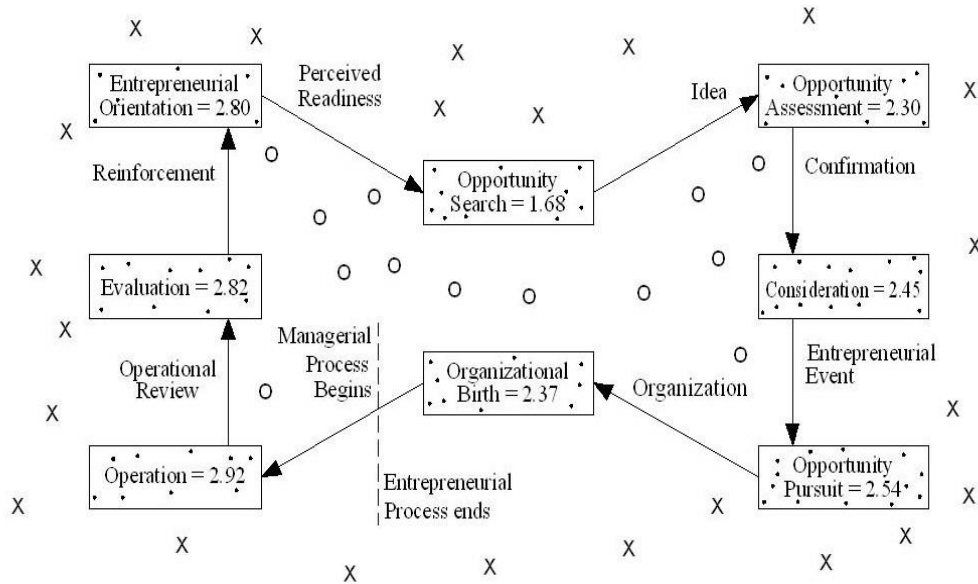
We were also surprised that “opportunity assessment” (S3) was not rated as a highly important factor in launch decisions but only moderately (stage concordance = 2.30). Our reasoning was that if entrepreneurs failed to perform due diligence (e.g., market research, supply and demand analysis, writing a business plan, etc.), they would face higher risk of failure. The response of this F&B entrepreneur seemed to represent entrepreneurs’ perspective as opposed to that of the researchers, “Of course we know we face risks but if we hold back because of risks then when will we launch our business? Tell me where is a place where there is no risk to start a business?” Tan and Tan (2003) also found that entrepreneurs generally act first before formalizing their businesses as captured in their statement, “When opportunities emerge, they get on the bus and buy the ticket later.”

The overall concordance from this sample of 53 subjects was 2.48 (82.7%) with a standard deviation of .63 (meaning: about 83% of the conceptual model was supported by the study data). Truncating the model to comprise only the first six stages as explained by Koh would yield a concordance of 2.36 with a standard deviation of .64 (meaning: about 78.7% of the conceptual model was supported by the data). Baucus and Human (1994) also reported a 6-stage model. However, their findings were derived from a sample of only seven participants who had created technology and management consulting businesses.

The findings in Table 3 also seemed to support Ajzen’s (1994) Theory of Reasoned Actions: people who have a high interest for certain activities or objects are more likely to pursue or acquire them than those who have a low interest. Herron and Sapienza (1992) expressed the same conclusion: while the extent of involvement in specific tasks may vary between entrepreneurs (due to differences in personality and experience), there is a “high level of rationality and linearity of thought processes rather than unplanned, and disjointed activities, and/or a detached disposition” (p.53).

In this connection, our analysis of the qualitative data indicated that adding another variable to Koh’s conceptual model would more accurately describe the tourism entrepreneurial process --- to account for individual variations: personological variables (namely, personality, experience, education, age, life’s situation, decision style, etc....). Adding the personological variables into each stage would not only better account for individual case differences but also more reflect the findings reported by Liao and Welsch (2002; 2003). Figure 2 shows the revised tourism entrepreneurial process model based on empirical data obtained in this study.

Figure 2: Revised tourism entrepreneurial process model



**Legend**

- O Micro-exogenous events (2.56)
- X Macro-exogenous events (2.34)
- Personological variables

**Conclusion**

The mere endowment of resources or the availability of capital per se does not create touristic enterprises. Touristic enterprises are created by “E-people” (Koh, 2006). When touristic enterprises (commercial and/or social) are constantly created, survive, and grow, an area is enriched economically and socio-culturally. Although some tourism scholars called for the limit to growth, our study sought to promote “healthy growth” (increase in quantity and equal opportunity). That is, we believe the continuous birthing and survival of touristic enterprises in an area is desirable (for socio-economic reasons), and that the tourism entrepreneurship should be an equal opportunity process (all social classes of people should be able to participate). Towards this goal, mapping the tourism entrepreneurial process would seem a valuable start as once the process is charted; the plethora of actions that an area could take to promote and facilitate indigenous tourism entrepreneurship is limited only by innovative thinking and the willingness to act. For

policy makers, empirical evidence serves as pointers for refining their intervention activities thereby enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. For educators, their instructions and assignments would be more credible.

Accordingly, the findings in this study indicated that although the circumstances and intensity that led each study participant to launch his/her present enterprise were quite different, there was much similarity in the types of activities undertaken and challenges experienced. For example, an early or growing interest to own a business, a preference for a certain type of business, period of incubation-inertia, onslaught of a triggering event, and feelings of uncertainty and frustrations in their quest to launch their own business. Overall, the data indicated high support for Koh's (1996) conceptual model. With our suggested addition of a "personological" factor to the tourism entrepreneurial model, the model would be a more valued tool for tourism development intervention.

In closing, if entrepreneurship research is about serving people as advocated by Ma and Tan (2006), and if "Developing the most appropriate techniques, theories and evidence for others to use are the most significant contributions researchers can give to the [tourist] industry" as urged by Wanhill (1995, p. 3); then this study should be viewed as a socially responsible effort even if some readers disagree with our research methodology and/or findings. Realize, as Gartner (2007, p. 616) stated, data obtained by social researchers (quantitatively, qualitatively, or both) are only temporal information and were "sought, collected, interpreted and analyzed" by researchers; thus they are not "facts as given" but "facts as made." To economists, they are called "stylized facts" (Wikipedia, 2012). If readers agree with Gartner, and that tourism entrepreneurship warrants scientific investigation, then studies that replicate our study would be flattering. Certainly, studies that use different research design, sampling frames, sample composition, sample size, and advanced statistical techniques (e.g., SPSS's Capri 2002) would enrich our knowledge of the tourism entrepreneurial process. Regardless of their findings (support or refute our findings), the state of the art on tourism entrepreneurship will be advanced.

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