

Constructing Heritage at the Intersection of Family Business and Place: Heritage Branding in Tourism Family Firms

Tadej Rogelja

University of Primorska, Slovenia
tadej.rogelja@fts.upr.si

Dejan Križaj

University of Primorska, Slovenia
dejan.krizaj@fts.upr.si

Jaka Godejša

University of Primorska, Slovenia
jaka.godejsa@fts.upr.si

Tourism family firms often possess rich historical and place-based resources, yet it remains unclear how these resources are translated into coherent heritage branding and guest-facing communication. This study examines how family-run tourism businesses in less-visited regions construct family- and place-based heritage and how they communicate it to guests. Drawing on a secondary qualitative analysis of open-ended questionnaire responses collected within the Hosted by Family (HbF) Interreg Slovenia–Austria project, the study analyses narratives from 51 owners of family-run hospitality businesses in Slovenia (Gorenjska, Podravje) and Austria (Styria).

Findings indicate that owners most frequently locate their ‘special heritage’ in five domains: gastronomy, seasonal customs, traditional knowledge, family personalities, and built heritage. These domains reflect a layered heritage identity emerging from the interplay of family, place, and business. Heritage is communicated through a diverse but uneven mix of channels, dominated by websites, on-premise signage and blackboards, and personal interaction, while social media use remains limited. Overall, the study reveals a recurring tension between heritage identity and heritage communication: although substantial heritage resources exist, they are often only partially activated through structured, scalable, pre-visit brand touchpoints. The study contributes an empirically grounded account of family–place heritage dynamics in tourism family firms and offers practical insights for aligning heritage resources with brand touchpoints and experience design.

Keywords: tourism family firms, heritage branding, heritage identity, place-based embeddedness, brand communication



<https://doi.org/10.26493/2335-4194.19.211-228>

Introduction

At the core of family businesses lies a unique hybrid identity arising from the overlap of family and business domains (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013). Drawing on the resource-based view (RBV), scholars high-

light the unique, incomparable resources embedded in family firms that can foster sustainable competitive advantage (Astrachan et al., 2018; Galvagno et al., 2022; Spielmann et al., 2022). From a corporate marketing standpoint, these distinct attributes serve as

valuable assets for shaping communication strategies and understanding how corporate identity and brand meaning are formed and conveyed. In this context, scholars are paying increasing attention toward gaining a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of marketing practices in the context of family businesses (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2009, 2013, 2016; Spielmann et al., 2022).

Among the distinctive features of family businesses, the use of history has received growing attention (Bövers & Hoon, 2021). Historical references in family firms are not merely passive reflections of the past; they function as strategic assets that inform a company's identity, influence product development, and enhance customer engagement (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013, 2016; Ge et al., 2022). Scholars argue that communicating a firm's historical character and social memory can be a powerful means of differentiation in competitive markets (Astrachan et al., 2018; Ge et al., 2022; Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024). However, research has yet to fully explain how these elements can be strategically leveraged in branding. Only a limited number of studies have explored how family firms construct and communicate their history to their customers (Fox et al., 2024; Hammond et al., 2016). Previous research has predominantly focused on 'legacy' (a synonym for tradition, heritage, etc.) receivers such as the next generation (e.g. Lumpkin et al., 2008; Rondi et al., 2019), successors (e.g. Barbera et al., 2018; Pauceanu et al., 2025), organisations and employees, leaving customers as an under-researched group (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024). This gap becomes even more pronounced in tourism, where family firms are highly prevalent but research on their specific characteristics and branding practices remains relatively limited (Forés et al., 2021; Kallmuenzer & López-Chávez, 2023). In this context, work on the creation and development of family corporate brands in tourism family firms remains scarce (Presas et al., 2010).

Marketing and organisational literature often examine history through the lens of corporate identity and branding (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2009, 2013). The management of both involves reflective processes through which the firm's core essence and unique

distinctiveness are articulated and defined (Balmer, 2008). In this process, history is among the various identity dimensions that can be chosen as a basis for conveying messages and shaping positioning (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013). Building on the work of Balmer and Greyser (2006), Urde et al. (2007) introduced the concept of brand heritage, arguing that a heritage brand derives its market positioning and value proposition from its historical foundation – evident in its track record, longevity, core values, symbolic elements, and, most notably, the organisation's belief in the significance of its history. Importantly, the authors distinguish between history – understood as past events – and heritage, which encompasses the ongoing relevance and future-oriented meaning of those events. It could thus be said that history captures what happened, while heritage interprets why it matters and how it should inform the brand's future. In marketing, this shows when history becomes a key component of brand identity and positioning (Hudson, 2011).

Spielmann et al. (2021) extend this discussion by emphasising the role of contextual and place-based associations in corporate heritage branding. They argue that heritage identities are closely tied to geographic origin, community connections, and regional symbolism – factors that enhance the authenticity and symbolic resonance of family firm brands. For instance: 'It's nearly impossible to think of California wine without the Mondavi family coming to mind – and vice versa' (Spielmann et al., 2022, 36).

This intersection of family history, heritage branding, and place-based embeddedness becomes particularly salient in tourism, where heritage tourism has become an important source of value creation and differentiation and one of the most prevalent forms of tourism (Chi et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2025). More broadly, heritage tourism reflects social and economic transformations associated with postmodernity, in which the pursuit of authentic experience has become a defining feature of contemporary culture (Presas et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2019). For family-run tourism businesses, this suggests that both family-based and place-based heritage may serve not only as internal identity resources, but also as externally meaningful

assets through which firms shape guest perceptions, experiences, and brand value.

Building on the above discussion, this paper focuses on brand heritage and heritage branding from the perspective of tourism family businesses. It seeks to explore how tourism family businesses being characterised as hybrid identities draw on both intrinsic and place-based heritage – rooted in regional traditions and historical continuity – as a resource for constructing their brand heritage identity. This interconnection appears to offer a distinct foundation for firms to identify, activate, and cultivate heritage-based brands (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013). To address this inquiry, the study integrates insights from family business and marketing literature, investigating how heritage is internally perceived and externally communicated.

This study is deliberately exploratory and qualitative. It aims to illuminate how family-run tourism businesses in less-visited regions construct family- and place-based heritage and translate it into communication with guests, identifying patterns that can inform future research.

The research is guided by the following questions:

- RQ1 *How do tourism family firms being characterised as hybrid identities leverage both intrinsic and place-based heritage as strategic resources in the development of their heritage branding?*
- RQ2 *What types of heritage content and transmission mechanisms do tourism family firms employ to communicate their heritage brand to customers?*

This paper is structured as follows. First, we review the theoretical foundations related to family business identity and branding. Following this, we outline the methodological approach and describe the case context. The subsequent section presents our empirical findings, which inform the development of a conceptual framework. We conclude by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of our study, acknowledging its limitations, and suggesting directions for future research.

Theoretical background

Family firms represent a cornerstone of the global economy (Bird et al., 2002), accounting for nearly 60% of enterprises within the European Union, contributing an estimated 70 to 90% to the world's GDP and more than 40–50% of all jobs in the EU (Birdthistle & Hales, 2023). This significance is particularly pronounced in the tourism and hospitality industry, where firms are predominantly small-scale and family-owned (Altın et al., 2021; Memili et al., 2020). Examining aspects of such businesses is therefore essential to better understand the distinctive dynamics of this service sector and to contribute to both theoretical advancement and practical insights.

Despite their ubiquity, there is no single definition for a family business. Distinguishing between family and non-family firms is inherently complex. Researchers have attempted to make this distinction by applying threshold criteria for family involvement – consequently, multiple definitions of a family business have emerged, each emphasising different dimensions. All in all, a family business is typically characterised by significant family involvement in ownership and/or management, shared control by multiple family members across generations, and a commitment to sustaining the business over time. Definitions vary in emphasis but commonly include criteria such as equity ownership, managerial roles, shared vision, and generational continuity (Abeysekera, 2023; Fernandez, 2023).

The concept of identity has been employed in two distinct theoretical contexts, referring respectively to organisational identity and corporate identity as separate yet related constructs (Galvagno et al., 2022). Organisational identity represents a characterising aspect of the firms – a perception of ‘who we are as a firm’ that reflects enduring values, distinctiveness and a sense of continuity over time (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Organisations leverage their identity to construct a distinctive image that sets them apart from competitors in the perception of both internal and external stakeholders (Zellweger et al., 2012). On the other side, corporate identity represents a set of elements that managers intentionally communicate to external stakeholders, encompassing strategic de-

cisions such as mission, vision, values, and goals, as well as their outward expression through visual identity, brand messaging, brand personality, and overall brand communication (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012). In recent scholarship, the concept of corporate identity has evolved beyond its traditional interpretation as merely the outward visual representation of a company. It is now increasingly understood to encompass intrinsic characteristics that are closely connected to the organisation's internal sense of identity (Balmer & Greyser, 2002; Cornelissen et al., 2007). According to Cornelissen et al. (2007), corporate identity can be thus viewed as an external projection of organisational identity, strategically designed to shape a specific and favourable image in the minds of external stakeholders. Specifically, scholars have identified strategy, organisational structure, culture, and company history as some of the most significant intrinsic characteristics that contribute to the formation of corporate identity (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). This shift in thinking has prompted business scholars to increasingly acknowledge the potential for interdisciplinary integration between organisational theory (Kieser, 1994), marketing (Urde et al., 2007), and historical analysis (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013). While organisational identity and branding are important for all firms, they are particularly salient in family businesses, which can leverage their 'idiosyncratic nature' to strengthen brand meaning (Galvagno et al., 2022). In this context, exploring the role of history and its application in communication by organisational members has emerged as a compelling area of study within management and marketing research (e.g. Balmer, 2011; Blombäck & Brunninge, 2009, 2016).

In bridging internal and external perspectives on family firm branding and adopting multiple perspectives, Astrachan et al. (2018, 5) proposed an all-encompassing definition of a family business brand 'as the formal and informal communication (image) of the family element of firm essence (identity), which includes the family's involvement in a firm, and which leads to associations and expectations in the mind of stakeholders (reputation) that help differentiate these firms from others in the marketplace and other ven-

ues', a definition that will serve as the conceptual baseline for our study.

Within marketing scholarship, history frequently emerges as an important theme in discussions of corporate identity and branding (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2009). Delahaye et al. (2009) highlight the pivotal role of such historical narratives in shaping corporate identity and guiding communication strategies. Building on the work of Balmer and Greyser (2006), Urde et al. (2007) introduced the concept of heritage brand, arguing that a heritage brand derives its market positioning and value proposition from its historical foundation – evident in five core elements that help determine the presence and extent of heritage within a brand. These elements reflect the diverse mechanisms through which family businesses can reference their history and actively engage in uncovering and shaping heritage-based identities and branding (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013). A stronger manifestation of these elements increases the likelihood that a heritage brand will be formed and acknowledged by both internal and external stakeholders (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2016).

1. Longevity: A sustained history of ownership across generations serves as evidence of reliability and product quality. The consistent delivery of value over time reinforces customer trust and signals proven performance, thereby supporting the firm's reputation and legitimacy. (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013; Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2006).

2. Track record: Survival across generations serves as evidence of consistent quality and customer appreciation, reinforcing credibility (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013).

3. Core values: Family-rooted values become embedded in the business, shaping culture, guiding behaviour, and enhancing reputational integrity (Koironen, 2002).

4. History important to identity: Founders significantly influence corporate identity, with their values and legacy persisting through generations and shaping how the firm connects its past to its present (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013).

5. Symbolic elements: Family names, crests, and generational imagery serve as symbolic markers of

authenticity and continuity, supporting brand meaning (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013).

When a family firm incorporates heritage into its branding, it signals a brand heritage identity, defined as the expression of the firm's heritage identity in its branding activities (Macdonald, 2006). The concept of heritage has a dual nature. On one hand, it serves as an anchor that conveys stability and continuity amidst a constantly changing world, offering a sense of consistency and clarity (Spielmann et al., 2022). On the other hand, heritage encompasses tangible artefacts and practices that can be materialised and made observable (Macdonald, 2006). Macdonald (2006) and Radu-Lefebvre et al. (2024) link heritage to legacy – something that endures and can be deliberately carried forward over time. Building on this notion, Radu-Lefebvre et al. (2024) conceptualise legacy as a fundamentally transactional phenomenon, co-created through interactions between senders and receivers, who collectively construct, interpret, and enact it through both family and business mechanisms. These processes typically rely on artefacts as vehicles for transmitting and activating legacy. Their systematic literature review identified four principal categories of such artefacts: verbal artefacts (e.g. stories, conversations, written records), symbolic artefacts (e.g. names, rules, rituals), physical artefacts (e.g. buildings, land), and visual artefacts (e.g. photos, films, etc.). Heritage communication practices thus encompass a range of activities, including the explicit communication of founding dates and company histories, the commemoration of anniversaries, the display of iconic artefacts, and the contextualisation of the firm within its historical milieu. Such practices may further involve the (re)design of products and offerings that integrate visual cues from earlier versions or evoke idealised representations of the firm's past (Hudson, 2015).

Spielmann et al. (2021) highlights the importance of contextual and place-based associations in the construction of corporate heritage brands, thereby extending earlier identity- and history-focused perspectives by situating heritage within a broader socio-spatial context. This perspective aligns with Balmer's (2011, 827) assertion that 'heritage identities are an accretion of various identities, which are var-

iously linked to institutions, places, cultures, and to time frames'.

In this view, heritage emerges not only from what firms have been over time, but also from where they are embedded – how their histories intersect with regional traditions, landscapes, and social practices (Balmer, 2011; Spielmann et al., 2021). Such place-based associations provide an additional layer of meaning that reinforces authenticity and deepens the symbolic resonance of heritage brands, particularly in family firms whose histories are often inseparable from local contexts.

All these heritage dimensions become especially relevant in tourism, where they are not only symbolic resources for organisational identity and branding, but also a lived and interpreted component of the guest experience (Zhu et al., 2025). Heritage tourism research emphasises that visitors encounter heritage through a combination of material settings, interpretive narratives, local practices, and host-guest interaction (Wang, 1999). From this perspective, family and place-based heritage become meaningful not simply because they exist, but because they are staged, mediated, and experienced across multiple touchpoints before, during, and after the visit. This experiential dimension also connects to broader authenticity debates that are central in heritage tourism scholarship. Tourism offerings are often judged as authentic or inauthentic according to whether they are produced or performed by local people in line with established customs or traditions. In this sense, authenticity is associated with traditional culture and origin and conveys a sense of something genuine, real, or distinctive (Moore et al., 2021; Wang, 1999).

Accordingly, in tourism family firms, heritage branding can be seen as both a communication process and an experience-design process through which family and place-based heritage are made visible, credible, and experientially authentic to guests (Tussyadiah, 2014).

Methodology

Considering the limited prior research on how (tourism) family firms construct and communicate their history to customers, an exploratory research design

was deemed appropriate. Exploratory research is particularly suitable for under-researched phenomena and for generating new conceptual insights and theoretical extensions (Stebbins, 2001). It allows for methodological flexibility and inductive reasoning, enabling the identification of patterns and themes that are not yet well established in the literature.

In this article, we conduct a secondary qualitative analysis of open-ended questionnaire responses that were originally collected within the Hosted by Family (HbF) Interreg Slovenia–Austria project, focused on supporting family-run tourism businesses in less-visited regions. The questionnaire was designed and administered by the project team for diagnostic and development purposes, rather than being constructed by the authors around the specific research questions of this study. As the questionnaire was not originally designed for this study, we ensured analytical relevance by focusing only on two open-ended questions that directly address family history, place-based heritage, and communication practices. While this approach provides empirically grounded material aligned with our research questions, some contextual aspects such as strategic intent or customer perception may not be fully captured due to the secondary nature of the data.

Methodologically, the study relies on open-ended, self-administered questionnaires as a qualitative data collection tool. This format is appropriate because it enables the exploration of complex phenomena through participants' own unprompted accounts, supports the identification of recurring analytical themes, and reduces interviewer-related bias and power dynamics (Albudaiwi, 2017; Bernard, 2013; Reja et al., 2003). It also allows respondents to reflect and answer at their own pace, which is particularly relevant when engaging busy family business owners.

Sample and data collection

A purposive sampling approach was employed, involving 51 owners of family-run hospitality businesses across the Slovenian regions of Gorenjska and Podravske, as well as the Austrian region of Styria (Figure 1). Participants were recruited through their involvement in the Hosted by Family (HbF) Interreg Slovenia–Austria project, which applied formal eligibility criteria grounded in widely accepted definitions of family businesses. Specifically, to be admitted into the project, businesses were required to demonstrate family ownership and management involvement across generations, thereby ensuring that all respond-



Figure 1 Location of the study areas in Slovenia and Austria

ents represented authentic cases of family-run firms. Data were collected between March and July 2024 through an open-ended questionnaire administered in an asynchronous, self-completed format. A total of 51 fully completed responses were obtained. The questionnaire was provided in the respondents' native language (Slovene or German). Responses were submitted in written form directly by participants and subsequently translated into English for the purpose of analysis.

The sample included 13 businesses from the Gorenjska region and 7 from the Podravje region in Slovenia, and 31 from the Styria region in Austria. The majority operated as accommodation providers (47), most of them combined with food and beverage services, while 4 ran restaurants only. Most were small, family-managed establishments located in towns of 1,000–50,000 inhabitants, typically within 5 km of community centres, underscoring their embeddedness in regional and rural settings. Generational continuity was a defining feature: 16 firms were in the first generation, while 31 traced their origins to parents, grandparents, or earlier ancestors, including 12 that had been in the same family for five generations or more; 4 businesses did not disclose this information.

Data analysis

The open-ended survey responses were analysed using a hybrid qualitative coding approach combining inductive category development with deductive theoretical positioning (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Swain, 2018). First, all responses were read repeatedly, and inductive codes were assigned to segments of text capturing recurring heritage-related elements and modes of heritage communication. At this stage, codes were assigned to explicitly stated practices, objects, and forms of communication described in the written responses, without introducing higher-level theoretical interpretation.

In a second step, the inductively derived categories were compared with established conceptual frameworks in family business and heritage branding research, including Blombäck and Brunninge's (2013) heritage typology, Spielmann et al.'s (2021) place-based heritage, Radu-Lefebvre et al.'s (2024) legacy vehicles,

and Urde et al.'s (2007) heritage brand elements. The deductive step was used to interpret and contextualise the empirically identified practices in relation to existing theoretical frameworks, rather than to code responses directly into predefined theoretical categories.

The coding process was conducted by one researcher using an inductive thematic approach. Codes were developed and refined iteratively through repeated readings of the data and constant comparison across responses to ensure consistency in interpretation. The analysis was conducted manually using Google Sheets, as the dataset was of manageable size.

The following section presents the findings in relation to the two core research questions: RQ1, how family and place-based heritage serve as resources for constructing corporate heritage identity, and RQ2, what forms and channels family businesses use to communicate this heritage to their guests.

Results

The findings are presented using inductively derived categories that reflect recurring heritage-related elements identified across the open-ended survey responses. In response to the question 'In a family business and in the surrounding region, a rich heritage develops over time that is passed on from generation to generation. In which areas is there a special heritage in your business that you are continuing or have revived?', participants most frequently referred to gastronomy, seasonal customs, traditional knowledge, family personalities, and built heritage.

Gastronomy

Culinary heritage emerged as the most salient domain of identity construction. Owners often emphasised that they 'always have [their] ancestors in mind' or that they 'cook according to old family recipes and still do everything ourselves.' These accounts illustrate how gastronomy operates simultaneously as a transmitter of family values and as a lived practice of continuity across generations. Emotional expressions such as 'gastronomy with heart and passion' further reinforced this link between food, family, and authenticity. Two subthemes stood out. First, special prod-

ucts functioned as markers of differentiation, either through family-linked branding (e.g. Firbasova Williamovka) or through regionally protected foods such as Prekmurska gibanica, which reflect place-based heritage. Second, special recipes served as key vehicles of legacy, often explicitly linked to ancestors (e.g. 'grandma's roast pork' or 'recipes from the previous generation') or preserved in material forms such as a 100-year-old handwritten cookbook. These examples highlight how gastronomy serves as a verbal and physical artefact (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024), transmitting heritage identity through both storytelling and tangible culinary practices.

Seasonal customs

Owners also emphasised customs and celebrations tied to the agricultural and religious calendar. Examples included community events such as the *Jakobi-wanderung village hike with the setting up of Klapotzen (traditional wind rattles)*, as well as *bonfires, erecting the maypole, and slaughter days according to old tradition*. Food-related rituals were especially prominent, such as the use of a *special smoking mixture for Easter meat* or festive meals during *St. Martin's Day*. Other recurring practices mentioned were *harvest celebrations* and *carnival*. These customs represent a form of place-based heritage, embedding family businesses in the seasonal rhythms and communal life of their regions. They also operate as symbolic and physical artefacts (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024), where material practices are imbued with cultural meaning and transmitted as shared traditions. Seasonal customs are not unique to individual families but are rooted in the shared heritage of the wider community. Preserving and revitalising these traditions allows family businesses to reinforce authenticity and highlight their strong ties to the local cultural context (Spielmann et al., 2021). At the same time, these practices embody continuity and stewardship, marking family firms as distinct from non-family competitors and resonating with guests who value authentic cultural experiences.

Traditional Knowledge

Another important expression of heritage identity concerned intergenerational know-how, especially

in agriculture and winemaking. Owners referred to practices such as *preparation and pruning according to lunar and peasant calendars*, as well as skills in *wine-making, viticulture, and cellaring*. Broader aspects of *farm life as it used to be* were also emphasised, with some businesses noting that tourists are welcome to observe or occasionally help with daily tasks. Such practices represent intangible heritage, transmitted through family mechanisms such as role modelling and direct teaching. They illustrate how agricultural knowledge, accumulated over generations, remains integral to the family business identity. However, these practices were usually described as part of everyday life rather than as structured guest experiences. In this sense, traditional knowledge currently functions more as a background signal of authenticity than as a deliberate branding strategy.

Family Personalities

Narratives about family members, both past and present, played a crucial role in constructing heritage identity. Grandparents were frequently invoked as symbolic carriers of tradition and authenticity, for example through references to '*grandma's cooking*' or '*recipes from great-grandmother and her story to the dishes*'. In some businesses, grandparents were remembered by guests themselves, reinforcing continuity and creating a sense of personal connection across generations. Everyday images such as '*grandma sitting in the dining room peeling potatoes*' conveyed intimacy and authenticity, presenting the family not only as historical figures but as living participants in the guest experience. In some cases, the distinctive achievements or backgrounds of family members were also emphasised, for instance, mentioning family members with professional or sporting careers as elements that add individuality and narrative richness to the business. These stories about family personalities function as verbal and symbolic artefacts (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024), anchoring values such as resilience, hospitality, and continuity in concrete individuals. From a branding perspective, they serve as strong signals of longevity and track record (Urde et al., 2007), making the family's presence visible and credible to guests.

Built Heritage

Material traces of the past featured prominently in owners' accounts of heritage identity. Many highlighted historic houses, inns, and farm buildings, often more than 100 or even 200 years old, that had been renovated in their original style. In some cases, individual features, such as *a tram ceiling from 1754* or *a doorframe from 1878*, were emphasised as tangible links to the past. Several businesses also referenced the cultural or symbolic significance of their sites, such as *the former Kurtheater from 1870*. These material settings function as physical artefacts (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024), providing visible, enduring cues of authenticity. By foregrounding architectural continuity, family businesses communicate both longevity

and embeddedness in place, two central dimensions of heritage branding (Urde et al., 2007). At the same time, some owners acknowledged that even newer buildings can embody heritage when built in traditional styles or with distinctive materials, suggesting that the meaning of built heritage is not restricted to age alone but to the ways in which structures embody and transmit identity over time.

Taken together, these findings illustrate how family businesses construct a hybrid heritage identity by combining family, place, and business dimensions. In this way, verbal, symbolic, physical, and visual artefacts converge to communicate both family heritage and place-based heritage. This interplay reflects what Blombäck and Brunninge (2013) describe as the en-

Table 1 Synthesis of Heritage Domains, Corresponding Artefacts, and Communication Mechanisms in Tourism Family Firms

Heritage domain	Typical heritage content/examples	Corresponding artefacts ('legacy vehicles')	Main communication mechanisms / touchpoints
Gastronomy	Old family recipes, ancestor-linked dishes, regionally protected foods, family-named products, historic cookbooks	Verbal (stories about dishes, ancestral recipes); Physical (food itself, cookbook, ingredients/practices); occasionally Symbolic (family name embedded in product identity)	Personal storytelling with guests; menus referencing family or regional dishes; websites; marketing materials; multimedia presentations
Seasonal customs	Agricultural and religious calendar events, harvest celebrations, carnival, St. Martin's Day meals, Easter rituals, maypole, bonfires, slaughter days, Klapotzen-related traditions	Symbolic (rituals, customary meanings); Physical (material enactment of celebrations, festive foods, objects used in rituals)	On-site enactment and observation; personal explanation/storytelling; websites and promotional materials when these customs are described in advance; occasional signage/blackboards
Traditional knowledge	Lunar and peasant calendars, pruning, winemaking, viticulture, cellaring, everyday farm know-how, traditional work practices	Primarily Verbal (explanations, teaching, stories) and Physical/embodied (demonstrated skills, tools, practices, work environments)	Personal interaction with guests; guest observation or occasional participation in daily tasks; on-site demonstration; only limited formalisation in digital or printed communication
Family personalities	Grandparents and ancestors, 'grandma's cooking', family members remembered by guests, distinctive careers/achievements, everyday family scenes	Verbal (family stories, anecdotes); Symbolic (named references, generational continuity, family identity markers)	Personal interaction and storytelling; menus or texts referencing family members; websites; company booklets/books; multimedia presentations
Built heritage	Historic houses, inns, barns, black kitchens, listed buildings, farmhouses, old wine cellars, preserved materials, dated architectural elements, culturally recognised sites	Predominantly Physical (buildings, spaces, décor, preserved features); also Visual when represented through images or digital media	On-site cues and material environment; signs/blackboards; websites; photographs; multimedia presentations; printed materials

twinement of family and business histories, and resonates with Spielmann et al.'s (2022) argument that brand heritage identity is strengthened by contextual and geographic associations. The result is a layered identity that is at once familial and territorial, past-oriented yet framed as meaningful for present and future guest experiences.

In response to the question 'Do you present the special history of your family business to your guests? If so, in what form?', participants described a variety of ways in which heritage was communicated. The frequencies reported below refer to the number of respondents mentioning each communication form, not to the number of coded references. As individual responses could mention more than one form, the total exceeds the number of participants. The most frequently mentioned forms were websites (36 mentions), business premises such as signs or blackboards (23 mentions), and personal interaction with guests (20 mentions). Other vehicles included multimedia presentations (19 mentions), marketing materials (13 mentions), menus that referenced family history or regional dishes (10 mentions), and, less commonly, books about the company (5 mentions) or social media (1 mention).

When mapped against the framework of legacy vehicles (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024), these practices can be classified as verbal artefacts (personal storytelling, narrative descriptions in menus), symbolic artefacts (logos, company books, branding elements referencing generational continuity), physical artefacts (historic premises, décor, blackboards), and visual artefacts (websites, photographs, multimedia shows). These forms represent a diverse repertoire of heritage communication practices through which businesses express and materialise their heritage identity.

To enhance analytical transparency, Table 1 synthesises the five heritage domains identified in the data, the corresponding artefacts through which they are materialised, and the communication mechanisms through which they are conveyed to guests.

At the same time, the data reveal important gaps. While websites were the most frequently mentioned channel, this reliance on a single digital touchpoint suggests that many businesses may not be fully acti-

vating the broader opportunities offered by contemporary heritage branding. In today's tourism environment, visibility and differentiation are increasingly shaped by a wider ecosystem of communication channels – including social media, booking platforms, and traditional or influencer media – yet only one participant reported using social media for heritage communication. This matters because social media lets businesses share their heritage creatively and expand their branding into new formats that reach guests ahead of their visit.

This gap is even more pronounced when considered alongside the findings from the previous section, where gastronomy and special recipes emerged as the most prominent expressions of heritage. Although these elements frequently appear in direct guest interaction, they are not consistently translated into written menus, promotional materials, or digital media. As a result, much of the brand's heritage remains embedded in face-to-face storytelling, rather than being strategically incorporated into communication materials that could enhance recognition, appeal, and brand coherence across guest touchpoints.

Findings show that tourism family firms construct rich heritage identities through layered family, place-based, and material practices, yet rely predominantly on traditional, interpersonal modes of communication to convey these identities to guests. Gastronomy, seasonal customs, traditional knowledge, family personalities, and built heritage provide a substantial reservoir for shaping brand heritage identity, but these elements are rarely activated through scalable communication channels capable of reaching audiences before arrival. This creates a tension between the abundance of heritage resources and the limited scope of their communication, suggesting that many family firms possess strong heritage assets but have yet to fully translate them into a cohesive and outward-facing heritage branding strategy.

We synthesised these findings into a conceptual framework (Figure 2) that illustrates how heritage branding functions in tourism family firms and where it most commonly fails. Figure 2 highlights the central identity–communication tension identified in the data: although many firms have rich heritage re-

Conceptual framework: Heritage branding in tourism family firms

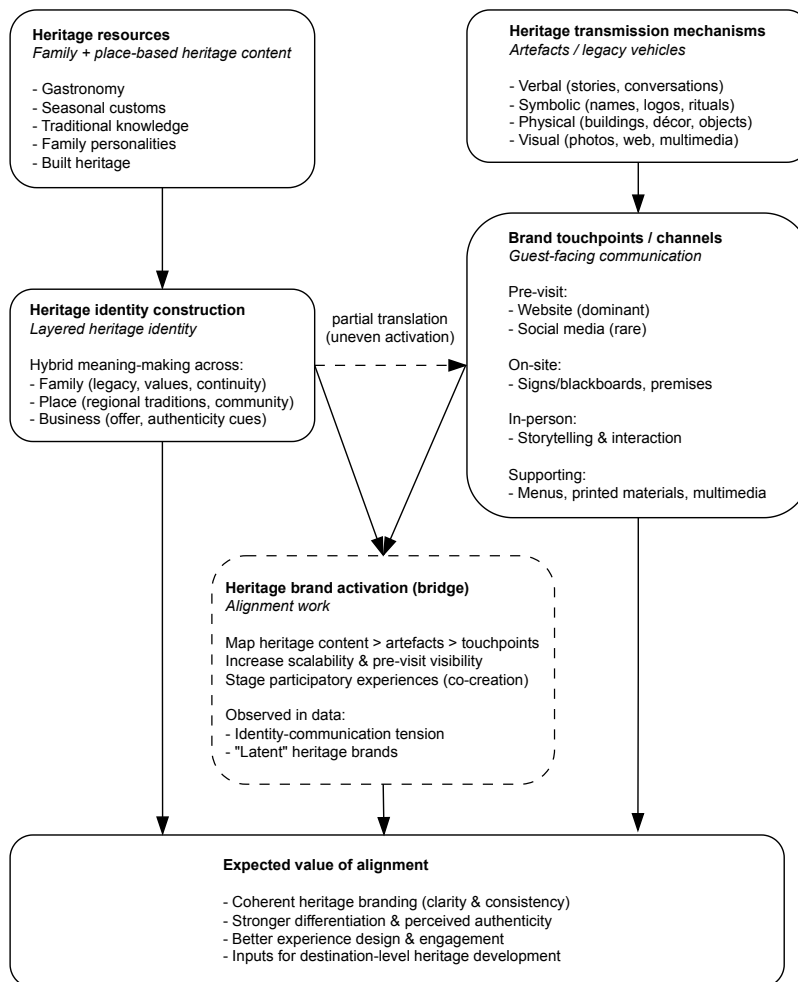


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

sources and express strong heritage identities, these meanings are often only partially conveyed through structured, scalable, and pre-visit communication. It therefore emphasises the alignment of resources, heritage identity, artefacts, and touchpoints as the key mechanism by which firms can enhance coherence, differentiation, and experience design.

The conceptual framework is grounded in four complementary strands of literature discussed in this paper. First, family business identity and branding research explains how family involvement, continuity, history, and values become part of firm identity

and are projected into external communication (As-trachan et al., 2018; Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013; Cornelissen et al., 2007). Second, heritage branding literature explains how historical resources become present- and future-relevant sources of brand meaning through elements such as longevity, track record, core values, symbolic elements, and the perceived importance of history to identity (Urde et al., 2007; Hudson, 2011). Third, place-based heritage research shows that heritage in family firms is not only familial but also territorially embedded, shaped by regional traditions, landscapes, and community associations

(Balmer, 2011; Spielmann et al., 2021). Fourth, legacy and tourism experience research explains how these meanings are externalised through artefacts or legacy vehicles and encountered by guests across multiple touchpoints before, during, and after the visit (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024; Wang, 1999; Tusseyadi, 2014). In this sense, Figure 2 is not proposed as a wholly new theory, but as an empirically grounded integration of these established perspectives in the specific context of tourism family firms.

More specifically, the framework can be read as a four-step process. First, firms draw on heritage resources rooted in both family history and place-based embeddedness. Second, these resources are interpreted into a heritage identity that defines what the firm sees as distinctive, meaningful, and worth carrying forward. Third, this identity is externalised through heritage transmission mechanisms or legacy vehicles, such as stories, symbols, physical spaces, objects, and visual representations. Fourth, these artefacts are communicated through brand touchpoints across the guest journey, including pre-visit, on-site, and interpersonal encounters. The framework therefore links existing literature to the empirical findings by showing that heritage branding depends not only on the presence of heritage resources, but on the alignment between resources, identity construction, artefacts, and communication. When this alignment is strong, heritage becomes a coherent branding and experience resource; when it is weak, an identity-communication tension emerges.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine how tourism family firms draw on family- and place-based heritage in shaping their heritage branding, and how these meanings are communicated to guests. Rather than treating heritage as a static collection of historical facts, the findings show that heritage functions as an active identity resource, continuously interpreted through family narratives, regional embeddedness, and everyday business practice. In this sense, the study extends existing work on family business branding by demonstrating that, in tourism, heritage is something firms possess and also something they enact and make available for experience.

A first contribution concerns the nature of heritage identity in tourism family firms. Prior research has emphasised the hybrid character of family firms, usually describing this hybridity as the overlap of family and business systems (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013; Krappe et al., 2011; Pieper & Klein, 2007). The findings suggest that, in tourism, this view is too narrow unless place is treated as a constitutive dimension of identity rather than merely a contextual backdrop. The heritage described by owners is not confined to family lineage or internal organisational memory. It is equally rooted in regional customs, local gastronomy, agricultural rhythms, vernacular architecture, and culturally meaningful landscapes. The result is a family-place heritage nexus in which family continuity and territorial embeddedness reinforce each other. This aligns with Spielmann et al.'s (2021) emphasis on place as a key source of corporate heritage identity and with Balmer's (2011) argument that heritage identities are layered accretions of temporal, cultural, and spatial meanings. For tourism family firms, heritage branding therefore appears to rest on a triadic intersection of family, business, and place.

A second contribution lies in clarifying what counts as heritage resources in these firms. The findings indicate that gastronomy, seasonal customs, traditional knowledge, family personalities, and built heritage are mutually reinforcing forms through which heritage becomes tangible and credible. Gastronomy, for example, does more than preserve recipes: it materialises continuity, values, and affective memory. Seasonal customs connect the business to wider communal rhythms and local tradition. Traditional agricultural and craft knowledge signals embody continuity across generations. Stories about family members personalise the business and attach heritage to recognisable human figures. Built heritage, in turn, anchors these meanings materially by offering visible evidence of longevity and embeddedness. Taken together, these elements support the view that heritage branding in family firms is not limited to symbolic claims about the past, but emerges through a combination of verbal, symbolic, physical, and visual artefacts (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2024). In this respect, the findings give empirical depth to Urde et al.'s

(2007) heritage brand elements by showing how they are instantiated in small tourism businesses through mundane but meaningful practices.

At the same time, the study shows that the mere presence of heritage resources does not automatically result in strong heritage branding. The central analytical insight is the persistent misalignment between heritage identity and heritage communication. Owners describe rich reservoirs of heritage meaning, yet these are only partially translated into structured, outward-facing communication. Heritage is most often conveyed through websites, on-site cues, and interpersonal interaction, while broader pre-visit and scalable channels remain underused. This is significant because, in tourism, brand meaning is formed not only on site but across a sequence of touchpoints before, during, and after the visit. When heritage remains embedded mainly in face-to-face storytelling or tacit everyday practice, much of its branding potential remains latent. The concept of latent heritage brands is useful here: many firms appear to possess the core ingredients of a heritage brand but lack the communicative alignment needed to project these meanings consistently into the market. This sharpens existing discussions of corporate identity by showing that the issue is not only whether heritage exists, but whether it is sufficiently externalised through coherent brand touchpoints (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Cornelissen et al., 2007; Blombäck & Brunninge, 2016).

This misalignment also helps explain an important paradox in the findings. The firms often appear highly authentic, yet this authenticity is communicated mainly as background atmosphere rather than as a consciously designed heritage proposition. Guests may encounter old buildings, traditional dishes, family stories, and traces of local customs, but these elements are not always curated into a clear pre-visit narrative or a coherent cross-touchpoint experience. In tourism terms, heritage is therefore often present as a lived environment but not fully activated as an experience design resource. This point links the findings to work on authenticity and the experience economy (Wang, 1999; Tussyadiah, 2014; Zhu et al., 2025). Authenticity in these settings does not stem from theatrical staging alone, but from the perceived continuity

between the family, the place, and the offer. However, the findings suggest that authenticity becomes strategically valuable only when it is translated into forms that guests can recognise, anticipate, and engage with across the customer journey.

Relatedly, the data indicate that most firms position guests more as witnesses to heritage than as participants in it. Traditional knowledge, seasonal rituals, and gastronomy are often present, but only loosely structured as interactive or bookable experiences. This points to a second gap: not only between identity and communication, but also between heritage as a lived practice and heritage as a co-created experience. Following Radu-Lefebvre et al. (2024), legacy is interpreted and enacted through interaction between senders and receivers. From this perspective, heritage branding in tourism family firms may be strengthened when guests are invited to move beyond passive observation towards forms of participation, interpretation, and emotional engagement. The contribution here is not to argue that all firms should commercialise heritage intensively, but to highlight that even modest forms of guided participation may help convert tacit authenticity into more legible and memorable brand meaning.

This identity–communication tension appears to arise for three interrelated reasons. First, much of the heritage described by owners is tacit, embodied, and relational rather than already formatted for communication: recipes, agricultural know-how, seasonal rituals, and family stories exist in practice but are not always translated into menus, websites, or bookable experiences. Second, small family firms often rely on channels that are immediate and authentic but difficult to scale, especially interpersonal storytelling and on-site material cues. Third, heritage communication seems to remain fragmented across touchpoints, so what guests encounter on site is richer than what they can recognise before arrival. The empirical material illustrates this clearly: gastronomy and special recipes emerged as prominent expressions of heritage, yet they were often communicated directly to guests rather than consistently formalised in written menus, promotional materials, or digital media; similarly, old buildings, blackboards, and preserved premises con-

veyed strong authenticity on site, but their branding value remained partly dependent on physical presence. Firms can begin to overcome this tension not by inventing new heritage claims, but by converting existing heritage resources into a small number of repeatable communication formats across the guest journey, for example by translating family recipes into short menu narratives, turning seasonal customs into pre-visit storytelling content, and presenting traditional knowledge through guided demonstrations or light-touch participatory experiences.

These findings also relate more explicitly to previous empirical research. They are consistent with studies showing that family firms derive branding strength from continuity, tradition, and the symbolic value of family identity, but they extend this work by demonstrating that, in tourism, such meanings are inseparable from place-based heritage and the experiential settings in which they are encountered. They also support earlier research suggesting that authenticity acquires value through narrative and sensory enactment rather than through abstract historical claims alone. At the same time, our findings complicate prior work that tends to treat heritage identity as a relatively coherent resource once it exists. In this study, heritage resources were often abundant, but their communication remained partial, uneven, and highly dependent on interpersonal interaction. The conceptual contribution, therefore, lies in identifying heritage branding in tourism family firms not simply as a matter of possessing heritage, but as a question of alignment between family-place resources, heritage identity construction, artefacts, and touchpoints. This is where the idea of latent heritage brands becomes analytically important: firms may have a strong heritage base without yet converting it into a fully legible, market-facing brand.

The findings also have practical implications. For tourism family firms, the main managerial challenge is not to discover heritage from scratch, but to make existing heritage strategically visible. A useful starting point is to map heritage resources against guest touchpoints: which elements of family and place are communicated before arrival, on site, and after the stay? Which meanings remain implicit? Such map-

ping can help firms identify underused assets and areas of inconsistency. In particular, the results highlight the need for stronger pre-visit communication. Websites are already widely used, but they often function as static information channels rather than as active heritage storytelling platforms. Similarly, the near absence of social media in the findings suggests missed opportunities to extend family storytelling, local customs, and everyday heritage practices into the digital sphere. For small firms with limited resources, this does not require sophisticated branding campaigns. Rather, it calls for a more deliberate translation of existing practices into concise, repeated, and recognisable narratives across a limited number of channels.

The study should be interpreted in light of several limitations, which also suggest directions for future research. The analysis is based on owner narratives collected through open-ended questionnaires originally developed for project purposes rather than for this specific study. While this provides rich comparative material, it offers limited opportunities for probing and follow-up. The findings are owner-centred and therefore reveal more about heritage identity construction than about how such meanings are received by guests, employees, or local communities. Additionally, translating responses from Slovene and German into English may have reduced some nuances of expression, and the context-specific sample of small family tourism firms in cross-border regions of Slovenia and Austria limits broader generalisation.

Future research could use multi-stakeholder designs to compare owner intentions with guest and community interpretations, combine interviews with systematic analysis of touchpoints such as websites, menus, booking platforms, and on-site environments, and examine whether the family-place heritage nexus identified here also appears in urban hospitality or non-tourism family firms. Longitudinal research could further explore how heritage branding evolves through succession, digitalisation, and changing tourism demand.

Overall, the discussion suggests that tourism family firms possess a distinctive heritage advantage, but that this advantage becomes strategically meaningful only when family history, place-based embeddedness,

and guest-facing communication are more tightly aligned. The main contribution of the study is therefore to explain how heritage matters: as a layered identity resource whose branding value depends on its translation into coherent, credible, and experientially accessible forms.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine how tourism family firms in less-visited regions construct family- and place-based heritage and how they translate this heritage into guest-facing communication. Drawing on open-ended responses from 51 family-run tourism businesses in the Slovenia-Austria cross-border context, the analysis shows that owners frequently understand heritage as a hybrid resource: it is simultaneously rooted in family history, values, and continuity, and embedded in place through local traditions, gastronomy, customs, and tangible elements of the built environment. In this sense, heritage is not treated merely as 'the past', but as an active, meaning-laden foundation for identity and differentiation.

A central insight is the recurring tension between heritage identity and heritage communication. While owners often articulate rich heritage narratives internally (who they are, what they stand for, and how family and place shape the offer), these meanings are not always consistently translated into explicit communication through channels and touchpoints that guests can readily access. Communication tends to rely heavily on interpersonal storytelling and on-site cues, whereas digital and structured brand narratives are more unevenly developed. This points to a gap between the depth of heritage resources available to the firm and the extent to which these resources are strategically activated as coherent heritage branding.

The study contributes to research on family business branding and heritage tourism by empirically illustrating how heritage identity in tourism family firms emerges from the intersection of family and place, and by clarifying the mechanisms through which owners attempt to transmit heritage meanings to guests. Practically, the findings suggest that small family-run tourism businesses can strengthen their market positioning by deliberately mapping heritage

content to guest touchpoints (such as digital storytelling, curated artefacts, experience design, and consistent narrative cues across channels), thereby making heritage more visible and easier for guests to perceive and engage with. At the destination and policy level, initiatives such as mentoring, toolkits, and collaborative heritage-themed product development can help smaller firms translate embedded, experience-based heritage knowledge into communicable and market-relevant forms.

At the same time, the conclusions should be interpreted in light of the study's constraints, including its reliance on self-reported owner narratives and the absence of interactive probing or triangulation with additional sources (such as guest perspectives or systematic analyses of communication materials). The study should therefore be read as an exploratory qualitative contribution that opens up directions for more extensive and triangulated research. Future work could build on these insights through dedicated interview-based designs, guest-side studies, direct observation of service encounters, and longitudinal approaches that trace how heritage branding evolves through succession, market shifts, and digital transformation.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Andraž Šiler and Nastija Podobnik of BSC, poslovni podporni center, d.o.o., PE Kovačnica, as well as Herbert Mayrhofer, who, as co-organisers and partners of the Hosted by Family project, shared the anonymised data analysed in this manuscript. This analysis is part of the research activities of the VIPSL0T project (Evaluation and Interpretation of the Innovation Potential of Slovenian Tourism). VIPSL0T is included in the Targeted Research Programme 2024–2026, funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS) and commissioned by ARIS and the Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport, Directorate for Tourism (project designation V5-24016).

References

- Abeysekera, I. (2023). Sensemaking of family enterprise business model. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 9(3), 100115.

- Abratt, R., & Kleyn, N. S. (2012). Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate reputations: Reconciliation and integration. *European Journal of Marketing*, 46(7–8), 1048–1063.
- Albert, S., & Whetten, D. A. (1985). Organizational identity. In L. L. Cummings, & B. M. Straw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 7, pp. 263–295). JAI Press.
- Albudaiwi, D. (2017). Survey: Open-ended questions. In *The Sage encyclopedia of communication research methods* (Vol. 4, pp. 1716–1717). Sage Publications.
- Altın, H. O., Pirnar, I., Eriş, E. D., & Gunlu, E. (2021). Family businesses in the tourism industry: A research agenda. *Journal of Family Business Management*, 12(3), 468–493.
- Astrachan, C. B., Botero, I., Astrachan, J. H., & Prügl, R. (2018). Branding the family firm: A review, integrative framework proposal, and research agenda. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 9(1), 3–15.
- Balmer, J. M. T. (2008). Identity based views of the corporation: Insights from corporate identity, organisational identity, social identity, visual identity, corporate brand identity and corporate image. *European Journal of Marketing*, 42(9–10), 879–906.
- Balmer, J. M. T. (2011). Corporate heritage identities, corporate heritage brands and the multiple heritage identities of the British Monarchy. *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(9/10), 1380–1398.
- Balmer, J. M. T., & Greyser, S. A. (2002). Managing the multiple identities of the corporation. *California Management Review*, 44(3), 72–86.
- Balmer, J. M. T., & Greyser, S. A. (2006). Corporate marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(7/8), 730–741.
- Barbera, F., Stamm, I., & DeWitt, R.-L. (2018). The development of an entrepreneurial legacy: Exploring the role of anticipated futures in transgenerational entrepreneurship. *Family Business Review*, 31(3), 352–378.
- Bernard, H. R. (2013). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (2nd ed). Sage Publications.
- Bird, B., Welsch, H., Astrachan, J. H., & Pistrui, D. (2002). Family business research: The Evolution of an academic field. *Family Business Review*, 15(4), 337–350.
- Birdthistle, N., & Hales, R. (2023). The meaning of being a family business in the 21st century. In N. Birdthistle & R. Hales (Eds.), *Attaining the 2030 sustainable development goal of responsible consumption and production* (pp. 11–20). Emerald Publishing.
- Blombäck, A., & Brunninge, O. (2009). Corporate identity manifested through historical references. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 14(4), 404–419.
- Blombäck, A., & Brunninge, O. (2013). The dual opening to brand heritage in family businesses. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 18(3), 327–346.
- Blombäck, A., & Brunninge, O. (2016). Identifying the role of heritage communication: A stakeholder-function framework. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 46(4), 256–268.
- Bövers, J., & Hoon, C. (2021). Surviving disruptive change: The role of history in aligning strategy and identity in family businesses. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 12(4), 100391.
- Chi, X., Cheng, X., Zhou, H., Zheng, X., Cao, J., & Han, H. (2024). Investigation on driving mechanism of heritage tourism consumption: A multi-method analytical approach. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 41(8), 1141–1160.
- Cornelissen, J. P., Haslam, S. A., & Balmer, J. M. T. (2007). Social identity, organizational identity and corporate identity: Towards an integrated understanding of processes, patternings and products. *British Journal of Management*, 18(s1), S1–S16.
- Delahaye, A., Booth, C., Clark, P., Procter, S., & Rowlinson, M. (2009). The genre of corporate history. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 22(1), 27–48.
- Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 80–92.
- Fernandez, V. (2023). Family entrepreneurship around the world. *International Review of Financial Analysis*, 89, 102808.
- Forés, B., Janssen, Z. B., & Kato, H. T. (2021). A bibliometric overview of tourism family business. *Sustainability*, 13(22), 12822.
- Fox, M., Wade-Benzoni, K. A., & Covin, J. G. (2024). Legacy: The meaning of lasting impact for family, business, and beyond. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 15(3), 100633.
- Galvagno, M., Pisano, V., & Strano, S. M. (2022). Family business branding from a signaling theory perspective: An integrative framework. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 32(5), 681–696.
- Ge, B., De Massis, A., & Kotlar, J. (2022). Mining the past: History scripting strategies and competitive advantage

- in a family business. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 46(1), 223–251.
- Hammond, N. L., Pearson, A. W., & Holt, D. T. (2016). The quagmire of legacy in family firms: Definition and implications of family and family firm legacy orientations. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 40(6), 1209–1231.
- Hudson, B. T. (2011). Brand heritage and the renaissance of Cunard. *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(9/10), 1538–1556.
- Hudson, B. T. (2015). Brand heritage. In C. L. Cooper, N. Lee, & A. M. Farrell (Eds.), *Wiley encyclopedia of management: Vol. 9. Marketing*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118785317.wem090025>
- Kallmuenzer, A., & López-Chávez, B. A. (2023). Tourism/Hospitality and family business: A perspective article. *Journal of Family Business Management*, 14(4), 852–859.
- Kieser, A. (1994). Why organization theory needs historical analyses-and how this should be performed. *Organization Science*, 5(4), 608–620.
- Koiranen, M. (2002). Over 100 years of age but still entrepreneurially active in business: Exploring the values and family characteristics of old Finnish family firms. *Family Business Review*, 15(3), 175–187.
- Krappe, A., Goutas, L., & von Schlippe, A. (2011). The “family business brand”: An enquiry into the construction of the image of family businesses. *Journal of Family Business Management*, 1(1), 37–46.
- Lumpkin, G. T., Martin, W., & Vaughn, M. (2008). Family orientation: Individual-level influences on family firm outcomes. *Family Business Review*, 21(2), 127–138.
- Macdonald, S. (2006). Undesirable heritage: Fascist material culture and historical consciousness in Nuremberg. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 12(1), 9–28.
- Melewar, T. C., & Karaosmanoglu, E. (2006). Seven dimensions of corporate identity. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(7/8), 846–869.
- Memili, E., Patel, P. C., Koç, B., & Yazıcıoğlu, İ. (2020). The interplay between socioemotional wealth and family firm psychological capital in influencing firm performance in hospitality and tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 34, 100651.
- Miller, D., & Le Breton-Miller, I. (2006). Family governance and firm performance: Agency, stewardship, and capabilities. *Family Business Review*, 19(1), 73–87.
- Moore, K., Buchmann, A., Månsson, M., & Fisher, D. (2021). Authenticity in tourism theory and experience. Practically indispensable and theoretically mischievous? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 89, 103208.
- Pauceanu, A. M., Zaharia, R. M., & Benchis, M. P. (2025). The old, the new, and the used one – Assessing legacy in family firms. *Administrative Sciences*, 15(3), 106.
- Pieper, T. M., & Klein, S. B. (2007). The bulleye: A systems approach to modeling family firms. *Family Business Review*, 20(4), 301–319.
- Presas, P., Muñoz, D., & Guia, J. (2010). Branding familiness in tourism family firms. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18(4), 274–284.
- Radu-Lefebvre, M., Davis, J. H., & Gartner, W. B. (2024). Legacy in family business: A systematic literature review and future research agenda. *Family Business Review*, 37(1), 18–59.
- Reja, U., Lozar Manfreda, K., Hlebec, V., & Vehovar, V. (2003). Open-ended vs. close-ended questions in web questionnaires. In A. Ferligoj, & A. Mrvar (Eds.), *Developments in applied statistics* (pp. 159–177). Fakulteta za družbene vede, Univerza v Ljubljani.
- Rondi, E., De Massis, A., & Kotlar, J. (2019). Unlocking innovation potential: A typology of family business innovation postures and the critical role of the family system. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 10(4), 100236.
- Spielmann, N., Discua Cruz, A., Tyler, B. B., & Beukel, K. (2021). Place as a nexus for corporate heritage identity: An international study of family-owned wineries. *Journal of Business Research*, 129, 826–837.
- Spielmann, N., Discua Cruz, A., Tyler, B. B., & Cerrato, D. (2022). Signaling stewardship and the value of family in a brand heritage identity: A cross-cultural study of wineries. *Journal of Business Research*, 153, 35–45.
- Stebbins, R. A. (2001). *Exploratory research in the social sciences*. Sage Publications.
- Swain, J. (2018). A hybrid approach to thematic analysis in qualitative research: Using a practical example. In *Sage research methods case: Part 2*. Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435477>
- Tussyadiah, I. P. (2014). Toward a theoretical foundation for experience design in tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 53(5), 543–564.
- Urde, M., Baumgarth, C., & Merrilees, B. (2013). Brand orientation and market orientation –From alternatives to synergy. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(1), 13–20.
- Urde, M., Greyser, S. A., & Balmer, J. M. T. (2007). Corporate brands with a heritage. *Journal of Brand Management*, 15(1), 4–19.
- Wang, N. (1999). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2), 349–370.
- Zellweger, T. M., Kellermanns, F. W., Eddleston, K. A., & Memili, E. (2012). Building a family firm image: How

- family firms capitalize on their family ties. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 3(4), 239–250.
- Zhang, S.-N., Li, Y.-Q., Liu, C.-H., & Ruan, W.-Q. (2019). How does authenticity enhance flow experience through perceived value and involvement: The moderating roles of innovation and cultural identity. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 36(6), 710–728.
- Zhu, P., Chi, X., Ryu, H. B., & Han, H. (2025). Experience economy and authenticity in the heritage tourism sector: A multiple-dimensional approach. *Acta Psychologica*, 257, 105118.