

Innovation capability and pioneering orientation in Peru's cultural heritage tourism destinations: Conflicting environmental effects

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ABSTRACT

This study responds to the demand for works on the antecedents of pioneering orientation in firms in tourism destinations. Specifically, the article analyzes the effect of two contingent environmental factors, namely competitive intensity and technological dynamism, on the relationship between innovation capability and pioneering orientation in hospitality and tourism firms. We analyze a sample of 238 firms in cultural heritage tourism destinations in Peru. The results show that innovation capability is a key antecedent of pioneering orientation in hospitality and tourism firms. Additionally, while competitive intensity strengthens the positive relationship between innovation capability and pioneering orientation, technological dynamism weakens it. The conclusions suggest various theoretical implications and practical recommendations for managers of firms located in cultural heritage tourism destinations.

1. Introduction

Growing international competition has led to tourism destinations playing a key role as agglomerations that attract visitors to an integrated tourism experience, and with unquestionable contributions to economic growth and development (Ratten & Braga, 2019; Bazargani & Kiliç, 2021). These tourism destinations can be viewed as open systems with a competitive supply of services to attract tourists, based on their resources, infrastructure, supply chain, accommodations, restaurants, cultural events and shopping centers (Weng et al., 2020). In recent decades, there has been a growth in the prominence of cultural heritage tourism destinations (CHTDs) in developing countries as focal points for international tourism (Herrera, 2013). Despite this interest, the literature is scant and calls have been made for studies addressing the strategic orientations of hospitality and tourism firms (HTFs) in destinations, especially in developing countries in Latin America (Pikemaat et al., 2019). In the last ten years, tourism's importance in the economic activity of Peru has grown considerably, primarily due to the interest in CHTDs in locations recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites. Furthermore, Peru was recognized as the world's leading culinary, cultural and tourism destination at the 2019 World Travel Awards. The

weight of tourism in the gross domestic product grew to 3.8% in 2019 (National Institute of Statistics and Informatics, 2019). The most outstanding CHTDs in Peru are the cities of Arequipa, Cusco and Lima, which have all been awarded world heritage status by UNESCO. According to a study by BADATUR, the Peruvian tourism database (2018), historical/cultural tourism is predominant in the three cities. Such tourism accounts for 84% of tourists visiting Arequipa, who mainly visit churches, temples, convents and monasteries. In Cusco, 99% of foreign visitors are historical and cultural tourists, with 99% visiting Machu Picchu. In the case of Lima, 80% of tourists visit the city as a cultural destination, with the most popular activities being visits to museums (62%) and city tours (55%). Given this scenario, we consider it interesting to examine what drives HTFs to develop a concrete strategic orientation in order to leverage the potential advantages of being located in CHTDs, specifically in Peru's world heritage cities.

Over the last two decades, the entry timing literature has seen an increasing interest in pioneering orientation (PO), as a key strategic orientation to compete in turbulent and competitive environments (Mueller et al., 2012). Drawing on Covin et al. (2000), we can consider PO as a firm's tendency to be one of the first in its industry to identify new market opportunities and to launch new products and services

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ahead of its competitors. The entry timing literature has witnessed an extensive debate, still unresolved, on whether being the first to enter a market with a new product or service brings greater advantages or disadvantages (Zachary et al., 2015). The considerable literature on entry timing presents various gaps that authors have called to be addressed. First, rather than the biases of identifying the extremes of being a pioneer or follower when entering a market, we focus on PO as a strategic position, constituting a continuum extending from the tendency to be a market pioneer to a slow follower orientation (Mueller et al., 2012). Second, in contrast to works on the consequences of early market entry, we address the factors that determine PO (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2019). Third, in a move away from the numerous works conducted in the manufacturing industry, we analyze the antecedents of PO in the tourism industry (Lee & Jang, 2017). Given the above, our aim is to contribute to filling the gap in the early timing and tourism literature on the key determinants of PO in HTFs.

To resolve this question, counter to the works focusing on the determinants of PO that are either internal or external to a firm (Schoecker & Cooper, 1998), there have been few and interesting works that have analysed the interaction between these determinants (Song et al., 2013). The study of the interaction between internal and external determinants of PO is relevant in tourism industry (Lee & Jang, 2017), especially in tourism destinations, because the positive externalities of firms' agglomerations can foster first-mover advantages that certain HTFs could achieve by generating adequate resources and capabilities, relating to each other and better interpreting the opportunities of the environment. From this approach, we respond to the call from García-Villaverde et al. (2020) for a better understanding of the heterogeneous nature of the firms that interact in CHTDs, which makes such places interesting ecosystems for an analysis of how the combination of the firms' capacities and the perception of the conditions of the environment drive them to develop a specific PO. This approach leads us to propose the following research question: What role does the interaction between firms' capacities and the perception of environmental conditions play in explaining the PO of HTFs located in CHTDs?

The entry timing literature has drawn on the dynamic capabilities approach, suggesting they are determinants of PO as they generate high expectations of gaining first-mover advantages (Helfat & Martin, 2015). Dynamic capabilities can be understood as a combination of processes and resources that render each firm unique (Teece et al., 1997). Following the classification proposed by Jantunen et al. (2012), we distinguish between three types of dynamic capabilities: adaptation capability, absorption capability and innovation capability (IC). IC is the ability to develop new products and services by effectively transforming the firm's stock of knowledge (Zahra & George, 2002). IC is a relevant concept, although scarcely analysed, in the field of tourism, due to the lag that has occurred in innovation research in tourism over other industries (Hjalager, 2010) and the special attention paid in recent years to other types of dynamic capabilities, mainly absorptive capability (Kale et al., 2019). Despite this, relevant papers have recently appeared addressing the antecedents of IC related to time orientation in small and medium enterprises (Muskat et al., 2021), the consequences of IC on tourism firms' performance (Pongsathornwivat et al., 2019) or the role of IC as a driver between organisational factors and hotels' performance (Pascual-Fernández et al., 2021). However, we found a relevant gap in the tourism literature regarding the influence of IC on strategic orientation in general and on PO in particular. In the field of PO in HTFs, IC is especially important, being a firm's ability to mobilize and combine its knowledge to create new knowledge that allows a new product, process or service to be developed (Kogut & Zander, 1992). This approach argues that IC encourages HTFs to leverage the identified opportunities and the new knowledge generated when developing novel products and services to embrace early market entry. This relationship is especially significant in destinations, where agents generate tension in firms that drives them to constantly refresh their products and services and introduce them to the market (Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020). A

number of authors, however, suggest that the impact of a firm's IC on PO depends on how its managers perceive the environment (Ambrosini et al., 2009).

Under this approach, the effect of IC on the PO of HTFs in destinations depends on the managers' perception of the environmental conditions they have to deal with (Ratten & Braga, 2019). Of the environmental factors that can most affect PO, two of the most significant are competitive intensity and dynamism (García-Villaverde & Ruiz-Ortega, 2007). We have selected competitive intensity and technological dynamism because of their special links¹ with the market entry decision and with the literature on PO (Aaker & Day, 1986; Lieberman and Montgomery, 1988, 1998; Shepherd & Shanley, 1998; Zahra & Bogner, 2000; Covin et al., 2000; Ruiz-Ortega & García-Villaverde, 2010; Mac Cawley et al., 2019). Competitive intensity can be defined as the degree of market competition faced by a firm (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). This intensity is associated with aspects such as market share, profitability and business growth. Several authors have suggested that competitive intensity can boost the relationship between IC and PO as, when faced by massive competitive pressure, firms tend to draw more on their capabilities to develop new products and services and enter early in the market (Auh & Menguc, 2005). This competitive intensity is particularly key for the PO of HTFs located in destinations, as they perceive the intensity of the actions of competitors from both inside and outside the destination, actions which impact on the exploitation of their ICs.

Dynamism is one of the factors that has been most frequently associated with a firm's IC together with PO, especially in the field of destinations (García-Villaverde et al., 2020). The literature typically differentiates between two types of dynamism, market and technological (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Technological dynamism, understood as the perception of swift changes in the technological development of an industry, is of special interest due to the growing deployment of new technologies in the tourism industry (Buhalis, 2019) and its strong interlinkage with firm IC. We propose that technological dynamism may reduce the positive effect of IC on PO, given that continuous changes in technology in the tourism industry may interfere with destination firms' expectations of utilizing their IC to gain first mover advantages.

The aim of this work is to study how competitive intensity and the technological dynamism of the market affect the relationship between IC and PO in HTFs located in CHTDs. More specifically, we analyze the divergent moderating role of competitive intensity -positive- and technological dynamism-negative- in the relationship between IC and PO.

This work makes three main contributions to the literature. The first one is the analysis of the linkage between internal and external antecedents of PO in HTFs in tourism destinations. Thus, we respond to the demands made by Lee and Jang (2017) and Naranjo-Valencia et al. (2019) about the need to analyze the backgrounds of the PO in the tourism industry. In addition, we respond to the call for a better understanding of the interrelationships between internal and external factors to explain PO, especially relevant and not addressed in tourism destinations, as indicated by García-Villaverde et al. (2020). The

¹ In this sense, the literature highlights that technological dynamism affects two basic issues, the timing of commercialisation of the new technology and how to minimise the threat of entry of alternative technologies (Gort & Klepper, 1982; Aaker & Day, 1986; Shepherd & Shanley, 1998). In these circumstances, the development of a PO could condition the possibilities of recognising and responding to new environmental conditions (García-Villaverde et al., 2020). In relation to rivalry or competitive intensity, understood as intense competition for resources or market opportunities (Zahra & Bogner, 2000), the literature suggests that it can influence the benefits obtained from a PO, so that the traditional approach provided by the Industrial Organisation indicates that the advantages obtained from this orientation will be conditioned by the competitive intensity of the environment (Elche et al., 2018). Therefore, the relevance of both variables in the traditional literature on PO justifies their inclusion as moderating variables in this study.

divergent results for these environmental characteristics allow a better understanding about the effect of IC on PO in the context under study. Secondly, we contribute to linking the literature on dynamic capabilities and entry timing in the context of tourism, overcoming the gap in the study of the implications of IC, relevant and scarcely analysed, in the PO of HTFs. Specifically, we focus on the influence of IC, linked to the development of novel products and services acquiring and combining new knowledge, in PO, linked to the early launch of new products and services to the market ahead of their competitors. According to [Anning-Dorson and Nyamekye \(2020\)](#), this contribution is particularly relevant in the study of tourism destinations, because HTFs that generate cooperative and competitive relationships with other agents in CHTDs could take advantage of them to develop and renew their products and services and introduce them early in the market. Thus, the results show that the development of high IC leads HTFs to be ahead of the market launch of new products and services, which guarantees them a leading position with important effects on their reputation. Thirdly, we analyze the interesting context of CHTDs in developing countries at the firm level. We respond to the demand in the literature on tourism for an analysis of the background to strategic orientations, and especially about the PO in CHTD ([García-Villaverde et al., 2020](#); [Richards, 2018](#)), which are contexts of high concentration of HTFs, where the advantages and disadvantages of firm capacities for the PO are accentuated. Thus, we approach this proposal from a double perspective: developing a study at firm level to identify what the PO depends on the HTFs and developing the study in contexts that have been scarcely analysed, such as World Heritage Cities in developing economies ([Lee & Jang, 2017](#)), specifically in Peru.

This work is structured in five sections. The first section presents the justification and aim of the research. The second section describes the structure of PO, IC, competitive intensity and technological dynamism, and defines our hypotheses. In the third section, we set out the methodology used to test the hypotheses, and in the fourth, we describe and analyze our findings. Finally, the fifth section presents conclusions, recommendations, limitations and future lines of research.

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1. Pioneering orientation in cultural heritage tourism destinations

Following the extensive literature on the results of PO ([Gómez et al., 2016](#)), recent decades have seen various authors addressing the determinants of such orientation ([Schoenecker & Cooper, 1998](#)). Most of the works in this regard have focused on the manufacturing industry, with a limited number of studies being conducted in the tourism industry ([Lee & Jang, 2017](#)), while even more scant are those focused on the antecedents in this industry ([García-Villaverde et al., 2020](#)).

The concept of PO comes from the first mover advantage literature ([Lieberman & Montgomery, 1988](#)) and like other denominations such as pioneering strategy ([Zachary et al., 2015](#)) or pioneering innovations ([Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2019](#)) takes up the idea of entry as a process and not as an event. Following [Mueller et al. \(2012\)](#), we define PO as a continuum ranging from firms with a strong orientation towards being first movers with unique products and services to those that tend to be late entrants with products and services presenting less significant improvements. Under this approach, a number of authors have suggested that the decision to adapt differing degrees of PO depends on a firm's expectations of gaining first-mover advantages or disadvantages, specifically the net benefits of being the first firm to introduce innovative products and services in the market ([Song et al., 2013](#)).

The literature has reported the advantages of low costs and differentiation derived from high levels of PO ([Gómez et al., 2016](#)), based on: 1) an advantageous position over market followers, enabling such firms to capture scarce resources and develop valuable capabilities; 2) obtaining a temporary monopolistic position to differentiate the firm and access a broad consumer base; 3) access to advantageous and

exclusive distribution channels; 4) promotion of appropriate investments to maintain their market position; 5) influencing and capturing the preferences of the dominant consumers; and 6) creating barriers to market entry.

These advantages of PO are countered in the literature by a series of drawbacks ([Zachary et al., 2015](#)): 1) late reaction to changes in customer needs due to the inertia generated by initial success; 2) competitors' leveraging "free rider" and "vintage" effects; and 3) the risks stemming from market uncertainty and technological changes. This approach suggests that firms define their PO by evaluating the net effect of advantages compared to disadvantages ([Song et al., 2013](#)).

Institutions, HTFs and other internal and external agents jointly shape the image of a destination, and this image is key in the tourism industry ([Brandão et al., 2019](#)). Destinations compete with one another to attract certain types of tourists. Additionally, a destination defines the context in which HTFs compete and cooperate, thus driving the development of new products and services that enhance their competitiveness. Historical heritage tourism has expanded greatly in recent decades, triggering a global tourist flow attracted by CHTDs, such as the UNESCO World Heritage Cities and Sites ([Richards, 2018](#); [Weng et al., 2020](#)). These CHTDs are especially significant for the social and economic progress of developing countries. A prime example of this phenomenon is Peru, whose outstanding historic cities, such as Lima, Cusco and Arequipa, combine the attraction of their historical monuments, culture and gastronomy with a framework of local institutions and firms capable of offering high value added new products and services ([Herrera, 2013](#)). However, HTFs located in such destinations act differently, adopting varying levels of PO to compete in the market ([Lee & Jang, 2017](#)). CHTDs, then, are home to different types of firms, which may develop a concrete PO depending on their capabilities and their perception of the environmental conditions ([García-Villaverde et al., 2020](#)). Following [Zachary et al. \(2015\)](#), we study how firms' dynamic capabilities, specifically ICs, interrelate with two key factors present in the environment, namely, competitive intensity and technological dynamism, to explain the PO of HTFs in CHTDs.

2.2. Innovation capability and pioneering orientation

[Teece et al. \(1997: 516\)](#) define dynamic capabilities as "the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments". From this perspective, dynamic capabilities represent the unique combination of each firm's processes and resources. Thus, dynamic capabilities determine a firm's strategic orientation, since they generate expectations of value generation ([Helfat & Martin, 2015](#)).

The literature on entry timing has found that a firm's dynamic capabilities determine its PO ([Zachary et al., 2015](#)). A number of authors have suggested that dynamic capabilities alone do not lead firms to gain competitive advantages, as such capabilities must be consistent with their strategic orientation ([Schilke, 2014](#)). [Jantunen et al. \(2012\)](#) divide dynamic capabilities into three types, namely adaptation capability, absorption capability and IC. Several authors have underlined the significance of IC as a core component of dynamic capabilities and indeed highlight it as one of the most challenging capabilities in strategic management ([Breznik & Hisrich, 2014](#)). [Lawson and Samson \(2001: 384\)](#) define IC as the "ability to continuously transform knowledge and ideas into new products, processes and systems for the benefit of the firm and its stakeholders". Broadly speaking, the core of IC is a firm's capacity to develop new products, processes or services, acquiring and combining new knowledge ([Kogut & Zander, 1992](#)). To develop robust ICs, firms should align and integrate key resources, and improve aspects such as leadership, motivation and cooperation among their human resources, as well as the organization's ability to learn and innovate ([Ratten & Braga, 2019](#); [Ferreira et al., 2020](#)).

Entry timing theory argues that IC is a key antecedent to generate a high level of PO ([Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2019](#)). Thus, the ability to

devise and develop new products and services is essential for firms to enter markets ahead of their competitors. Firms with strong ICs are able to identify new market opportunities, create ideas and develop new products that create expectations of gaining first mover advantages. In addition, ICs allow firms to generate isolating mechanisms to maintain first mover advantages, so preempting scarce resources, technology leadership and switching costs arising from buyers' habit formation, consumer learning and reputation advantages (Gómez et al., 2016). ICs bolster the market position of firms with a high level of PO, allow them to seize the most attractive opportunities and help them broaden and protect their position against potential imitators (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2019). These arguments substantiate the notion that firms with stronger ICs develop a greater PO.

Despite the scant attention paid to the antecedents of PO in HTFs (Zachary et al., 2015), it is especially important to explore IC as a determinant of such orientation in the setting of destinations. On the one hand, HTFs are typically held to be low in IC, being seen as tending to adopt external technology generated in other industries. On the other hand, it has been claimed these firms may lack the motivation to introduce new products and services in the market, given the difficulty of protecting innovation from being imitated by competitors (Hjalager, 2010). Nonetheless, destinations generate intense competition that may lead some firms to adopt a PO, seeking to be the first to enter the market with new products and services (Elche et al., 2018). To this end, HTFs with stronger ICs may incorporate more complex, radical changes in their products and services, which are more difficult for competitors to imitate, thus buttressing their expectations of gaining sustainable first-mover advantages (Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020). IC is also especially important as an isolating mechanism of first mover advantages among HTFs, owing to certain distinctive characteristics, including changes in tourist preferences, advances in technological equipment and ICT, fragmentation of supply, segmentation of demand, the intangible nature of the production, co-creation and co-terminality of tourism (Beritelli et al., 2014). Thus, ICs provide HTFs with prior access to key resources for the development and early launch of new tourism products and services, allowing them to maintain a position of technological leadership and generating switching costs that arise from learning about and creating tourist habits and reputation effects (García-Villaverde et al., 2020).

In sum, only if HTFs located in CHTDs develop strong IC, devising and generating new products and services, they will tend to adopt a high level of PO, entering the market ahead of their competitors (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2019). Thus, firms in these destinations can only be robust in introducing new products and services if they rely on strong IC that generate expectations of maintaining first-mover advantages. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Innovation capability is positively related to pioneering orientation in hospitality and tourism firms located in cultural heritage tourism destinations.

2.3. The moderating role of competitive intensity

Competitive intensity, or hostility, is another environmental factor reported in the literature as a determinant of PO (Mac Cawley et al., 2019) and is one of the foremost characteristics of the hospitality and tourism industry (Singal, 2015). Following Jaworski and Kohli (1993), we define competitive intensity as the existence of an unfavorable business climate, with intense competition for resources and market opportunities.

Very few works in the literature associate competitive intensity with PO in HTFs (Abbas & Ul Hassan, 2017). In recent decades, however, destinations have witnessed a growth in competitive intensity (Singal, 2015) as a result of the processes of economic globalization and the international expansion of tourism (Buhalis, 2019), which has led to a demand for studies to analyze the impact of competitive intensity on the innovation behavior of HTFs. In this line, Abbas and Ul Hassan (2017)

analyze the effect of competitive intensity on innovation outcomes in the tourism industry, finding the variable to be a moderator of the relationship between innovation behavior and performance in HTFs.

In an environment marked by powerful competitive intensity, as is the case of CHTDs, firms typically develop proactive or entrepreneurial positions. Accordingly, when faced by high levels of competitive intensity, firms will generate profits by developing innovation behaviors, exploring new markets or seeking new ways to compete (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2019). In this sense, hostility in the environment spurs HTFs to redefine their activity through innovation practices.

As discussed, the presence of ICs in destination firms has a positive impact on their developing a PO (Beritelli et al., 2014). Given this, the perception of a high level of competition for resources and opportunities will drive HTFs to leverage their ICs to take better advantage of market opportunities than their competitors (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2019), thus improving their expectations of a PO leading to gaining financial benefits (Elche et al., 2018).

Additionally, the ICs of HTFs will bolster the development of isolating mechanisms to protect the potential advantages of adopting a PO. In this sense, as suggested by Singal (2015), high competitive intensity in destinations boosts the development of these isolating mechanisms, thus increasing barriers to entry as a result of establishing a PO. Thus, perceived high levels of competitive intensity impact the relationship between ICs and PO in firms located in CHTDs.

In environments of strong competitive intensity, like CHTDs, early movers can use their ICs to seize scarce resources ahead of their competitors, so increasing their isolating mechanisms and creating cost advantages from causal ambiguity (Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020). In environments of intense rivalry, then, HTFs with ICs can identify key aspects in which they are better innovators than other potential market entrants, which will create positive expectations of gaining first-mover advantages (Elche et al., 2018).

To summarize, we understand that when firms in CHTD are confronted by strong competitive intensity, the positive impact of IC on PO is bolstered. The arguments put forward in this section lead us to propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Competitive intensity enhances the positive relationship between innovation capability and pioneering orientation in hospitality and tourism firms located in cultural heritage tourism destinations.

2.4. The moderating role of technological dynamism

Dynamism is one of the main determinants of PO posited in the literature (García-Villaverde et al., 2020). Following Boyd et al. (1993), we define environmental dynamism as the speed and intensity of the changes in competitors' strategies, the demand-side behavior and the technological development of a determined industry. Although dynamism has been analysed holistically in some studies, various works have also underlined the need to separately examine the implications of technological dynamism and market dynamism (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993), as they may have differing effects on a firm's strategic orientation and, in particular, on their PO (Mac Cawley et al., 2019).

Drawing on Schubert et al. (2018), technological dynamism may lead to a misinterpretation of PO as a source of limited advantages. With respect to this decision, if an early entrant firm invests resources in a particular technological path before the dominant design emerges (Suarez et al., 2015), it runs a significant risk of being forced to choose between being stuck in a faltering category or attempting a risky repositioning of its products.

Few studies have addressed the consequences of environmental dynamism in the PO of HTFs, and most have focused on market dynamism (García-Villaverde et al., 2020). In this sense, the large-scale development of new technologies for use in destinations in recent years has prompted a demand for new studies to analyze the influence of technological dynamism on the innovation behavior of HTFs (Buhalis, 2019).

When there is a perception of rapid, unpredictable changes in technological development in the industry, firms with ICs will draw on these to tackle the situation. However, when HTFs are confronted by rapid, diverse, and unpredictable changes in the technology of their industry, and use their capacity to assess and utilize information from different sources, the perception of the risk inherent in developing a PO increases (Wang & Chen, 2010), leading to greater confusion and uncertainty about the opportunities generated and their future evolution. Under this approach, Schubert et al. (2017) report a negative impact of a firm's capabilities and technological dynamism on the perceived risk of innovation behaviors. The tourism industry has undergone significant changes in technology in recent years, primarily associated with new ICT, mobile applications, online platforms and new equipment (Buhalis, 2019), elements with special significance in developing economies. The perception of these rapid technological changes can affect the impact of ICs on the PO of HTFs located in destinations. As discussed, HTFs in destinations have ICs that typically lead to PO (Beritelli et al., 2014). When, however, such firms are obliged to confront continuous changes in technology, the attempts to understand which technology will gain dominance will increase the risk of error-making (Suarez et al., 2015), leading to increased uncertainty and confusion and, thus, a decline in the expectations of gaining first-mover advantages through ICs.

In this sense, although firms in CHTDs with ICs are able to identify opportunities for the development of a PO, the reduction in product life cycles and the high degree of uncertainty brought about by technological dynamism will quickly make the information such firms have obsolete, generating high search and coordination costs (Atuahene-Gima et al., 2006). This, in turn, will lead them to perceive greater advantages in developing a follower strategy.

In short, we believe that when HTFs in CHTDs are confronted by rapid and unpredictable technological changes, the positive impact of IC on PO is weakened. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Technological dynamism weakens the positive relationship between innovation capability and pioneering orientation in hospitality and tourism firms located in cultural heritage tourism destinations.

Next, in Fig. 1 we show the proposed model.

3. Study design

3.1. Population and sample

The empirical study for the present work was conducted in HTFs located in Peru's World Heritage cities (Arequipa, Cusco and Lima-center). The importance of the tourism industry for the economy of Peru is considerable, accounting for 4% of GDP and generating some 1.1 million jobs. According to the National Chamber of Tourism, Peru welcomed more than 4.4 million tourists in 2019. This was an increase of almost 1% on the previous year but a notably smaller increase than in previous years. Data from the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism show that more than half of these tourists visited the cities analysed in this study.

To establish the study population, we selected firms operating in the following economic activities: 1) museum activities and conservation of sites and buildings; 2) restaurants and bars; 3) hotels, campsites and other accommodations; and 4) travel agents and tourist guides. As a result of this classification, once we had eliminated firms with fewer than three employees, duplicate entries and firms that had ceased operations, the population comprised 868 firms (243 in Arequipa, 339 in Cusco and 286 in Lima-Center (Peruvian National Customs Authority and Tax Administration).

The design process of the questionnaire was organized in a number of stages. In the preparation of the questionnaire, we held several meetings with academics and managers of the HTFs from Spain and Peru who had previous experience in the development of academic work in this industry.

We conducted a pre-test with several firms to ensure that all questions were fully understood by the respondents. Once we had the final

questionnaire, a group of lecturers from the research team made visits to the firms for the managers to answer the questionnaire, this allowed any doubts that arose in answering the questions to be resolved. The information was collected between March and May 2019.² Following the administration of the survey, we had a total of 238 valid questionnaires, representing a response rate of 27.42%. For a confidence level of 95% and the most unfavorable situation of $p = q = 0.5$, the sampling error was 5.41%. We conducted a difference in means test to determine whether the sample was representative of the study population. Furthermore, we verified there were no significant differences in terms of age and size of firm between the study population and the sample. Finally, we ran two tests to rule out the existence of common method bias (CMB). First, we conducted a Harman's test³ (Podsakoff et al., 2003) and, subsequently, we evaluated a random subsample of the overall sample of firms. We then sent a further copy of the questionnaire to the firms that had initially responded, for it to be completed by another manager, obtaining a second questionnaire from a subsample of 31 firms. Finally, an ANOVA was conducted to rule out the existence of significant differences between the constructs used in the study. No such differences were found for the dependent, independent and control variables between the firms in the second subsample and those in the overall sample. The above analyses confirmed the validity of the measures used in the study.

3.2. Measures

To measure the variables, we used scales validated in the literature and adapted to the study population based on the outcomes of the meetings held in the process to design the questionnaire. All the items were measured on 7-point Likert-type scales, rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). All the items are included in the Appendix.

Pioneering orientation. This variable was measured on a continuum ranging from market pioneer to late follower, using a three-item scale adapted from the study by Zahra (1996), and similar to that used in other studies, such as that by Mueller et al. (2012). This scale reflects a firm's propensity to develop pioneering behavior, viewed not exactly as creating a new product or entering a new market, but rather as a way of engaging in innovation-related actions and decision-making (Covin et al., 2000). A 7-point Likert-type scale was used, which, despite the bias arising from subjective valuation of entry-timing, eliminates the tendency of late-follower firms to self-exclude when asked to classify their own PO (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.882).

Innovation capability. Following the previous literature, dynamic capabilities can be divided into three levels: adaptation capability, absorption capability and IC (Jantunen et al., 2012; among others). IC refer to a firm's ability to mobilize and combine its knowledge to create new knowledge that results in a new product, process or service being developed. After analyzing various scales, we finally selected an adapted version of that proposed by Akman and Yilmaz (2008) (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.825).

Competitive intensity. Competitive intensity is considered one of the main environmental factors affecting organizations and is defined as the existence of an unfavorable business climate, with intense competition for resources and market opportunities (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). In this

² Once the study population had been identified (868 companies), we proceeded to contact the companies to inform them about the study and request their participation in it. Of the total number of companies in the population, 238 (27.42%) were willing to participate in the study.

³ Considering the limitations of this test, we also identified a marker variable –the identification number of firm–which theoretically is unrelated to other variables of the model (Lindell & Whitney, 2001). The linear regression confirmed that the marker variable was not statistically associated with the rest of variables.

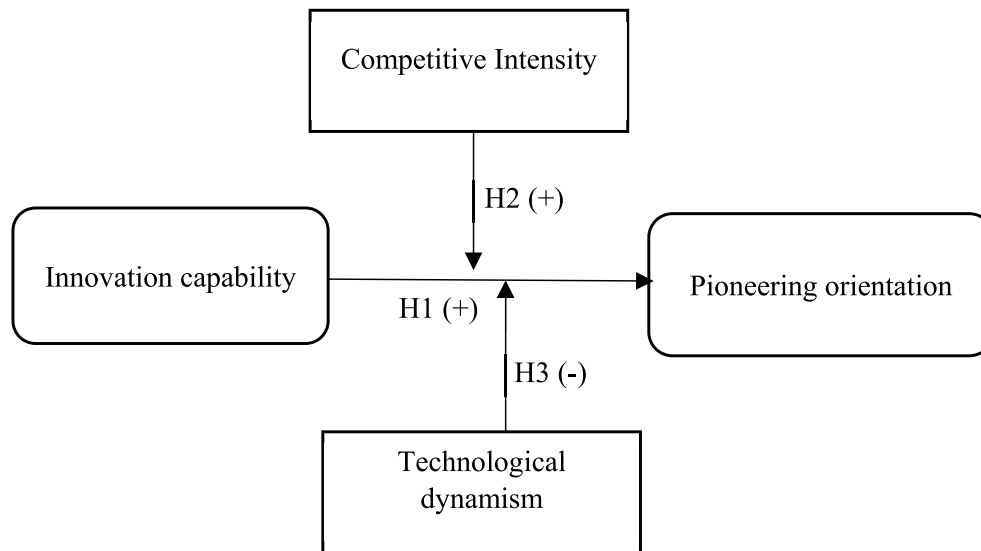


Fig. 1. Proposed model.

study, we adapted the scale originally proposed by Covin et al. (2000), which has been used in other works, such as that by Ruiz-Ortega and Garcia-Villaverde (2010) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.714).

Technological dynamism. The technological dynamism of the environment is evidenced by rapid technological advances in products or processes, changes in technological standards and the need for high-tech employees to gain competitive advantages (Covin et al., 2000). To measure this variable, we reviewed a number of previously used scales, and decided to use a version of the three-item scale originally proposed by Jaworski and Kohli (1993). This scale has been widely used in the previous literature (Atuahene-Gima et al., 2006) (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.674).

Control variables. This research considered four control variables: firm age, firm size, main activity and whether the business was independent or part of a corporation. Firm age was measured as the difference between the year of data collection and the year the firm was created. In this sense, the literature suggests older firms have greater experience in innovative practices, which, in turn, favors a PO (Hjalager, 2010). It can also be thought, however, that older firms might have a more rigid structure, entailing a negative impact on PO. As regards size, the studies we analysed presented contradictory findings. Henderson and Clark (1990) suggest that larger firms tend not to develop PO due to their structural inertia. In contrast, however, Robinson et al. (1992) showed that larger firms did indeed tend to engage in a PO. The literature reveals the importance of the impact of competitive market factors, such as the firm's activity, on the type of strategic orientation (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2003). We included a firm's main activity as control variable to control for the effect of activity type on its. We divided the firms into four possible activities: museums and conservation of sites and buildings; restaurants and bars; hotels, campsites and other accommodations; and travel agents and tourist guides. Finally, we also included as control variable whether the firm was an independent business or part of a corporation, an aspect that may have an influence on the ability to make decisions to lead processes to develop new products, innovation projects and senior management's commitment to implementing their strategies.

4. Results

Once the descriptive analyses⁴ of the study variables and the correlation analyses had been conducted, the hypotheses were tested by means of hierarchical regression analysis. Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations for the study variables. The results of the correlation analysis and the values for Tolerance and VIF shown in Table 2 determine the study is without problems of multicollinearity.

Table 2 also shows the results of the hierarchical regression analysis. An initial model (base model) included the variables of firm age, size, activity type⁵ and independent business vs corporation. The results of this analysis show a significant positive effect of firm size ($\beta: 0.151$, $p < 0.05$) and a significant negative effect of age ($\beta: -0.139$, $p < 0.05$) and independent business vs corporation ($\beta: -0.143$, $p < 0.05$).

To test Hypothesis 1, the next step (intermediate model) included the IC variable. The results showed a significant positive effect of IC on PO in HTFs located in destinations ($\beta = 0.416$; $p < 0.01$), thus confirming Hypothesis 1. This intermediate model has greater explanatory power than the previous model ($\Delta R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = 0.17$; $p < 0.01$).

To test Hypotheses 2 and 3, we introduced the influence of the moderating variables - competitive intensity and technological dynamism - and the interactive effect of these variables on IC. Including these variables in the analysis yielded an explanatory contribution over and above that of the intermediate model ($\Delta R^2_{\text{ajustada}} = 0.068$; $p < 0.01$). This suggests there exist interactive effects between IC and competitive intensity and between IC and technological dynamism, which affect the PO of HTFs in destinations. Specifically, the results show that competitive intensity has a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between IC and PO ($\beta = 0.145$, $p < 0.05$), which means we can accept Hypothesis 2. The results for the interactive effect between IC and technological dynamism showed a significant moderating effect of technological dynamism ($\beta = -0.253$, $p < 0.001$) on the relationship between IC and PO, thus corroborating Hypothesis 3.

To determine the nature of these interactions and to complement the

⁴ The mean value for PO is 5.13, the standard deviation is 1.22 and the values range from 1 (min) to 7 (max).

⁵ We have performed an ANOVA analysis which shows that there are no significant differences in the PO according to the activity type (museums and conservation of sites and buildings; restaurants and bars; hotels, campsites and other accommodations; and travel agents and tourist guides).

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and correlations.

	Size	Age	Main activity	Indep. Or subsidiary	Innovat. Cap.	Comp. Int.	Tech. Dynam.	ICxCI	ICxTD
Mean	2.22	12.69	—	—	5.88	4.92	5.31	29.08	31.69
SD	0.804	11.957	—	—	1.119	1.164	0.976	8.95	9.45
Size	1								
Age	0.250**	1							
Main activity	-0.387**	-0.275**	1						
Indep or subsidiary	-0.185**	-0.020	0.057	1					
Innovat. Cap.	0.062	-0.074	0.035	-0.098	1				
Comp. Int.	-0.088	-0.220**	0.137*	-0.030	0.080	1			
Tech. Dynam.	0.031	-0.014	0.133*	-0.104	0.351**	0.207**	1		
ICxCI	0.037	0.149*	-0.121	0.156	-0.292**	-0.083	-0.096	1	
ICxTD	0.035	-0.043	-0.106	0.108	-0.037	-0.064	-0.29**	0.139*	1

The values for mean and standard deviation were calculated before variables were standardized + $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2
Regression analysis.

	Base model		Intermediate Model		Contingent Model		Tolerance	VIF
	β	t-statistics	β	t-statistics	β	t-statistics		
Size	0.151	2.122**	0.115	1.778*	0.118	1.926*	0.793	1.261
Age	-0.139	-2.073**	-0.104	-1.710*	-0.142	-2.389**	0.845	1.184
Main activity	0.065	0.926	0.044	0.694	0.013	0.209	0.787	1.271
Indep or subsidiary	-0.143	-2.209**	-0.107	-1.813	-0.082	-1.457	0.939	1.065
Innov. Cap.			0.416	7.134***	0.422	6.859***	0.793	1.261
Comp. Int.					0.009	0.159	0.905	1.105
Tech. Dynamism					0.077	1.223	0.757	1.321
IC x Comp. Int.					0.145	2.478**	0.870	1.150
IC x Tech. Dynam.					-0.253	-4.324****	0.876	1.141
R ²		0.060		0.229		0.317		
Adjusted R ²		0.044		0.212		0.290		
Change in R ²				0.168***		0.068***		

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$; **** $p < 0.001$.

results of the hierarchical regression analysis, the figures below show the plots of each relationship on a y-axis of PO and an x-axis for the ICs for high and low levels of competitive intensity and for high and low levels of technological dynamism. The first plot (Fig. 2) shows that PO augments with ICs but the slope is steeper for higher levels of competitive intensity. These results add robustness to those obtained in the regression analysis and provide support for Hypothesis 2.

The second plot (Fig. 3) reveals that PO increases with IC, but the slope is less pronounced for higher levels of technological dynamism,

thus adding further support for Hypothesis 3.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The results of the present study served to accomplish our proposed aims. We have advanced the knowledge of the external contingent factors – competitive intensity and technological dynamism – that affect the relationship between IC and PO in HTFs in CHTDs. The findings suggest that a firm’s IC has a positive impact on its PO. In this sense, in both the

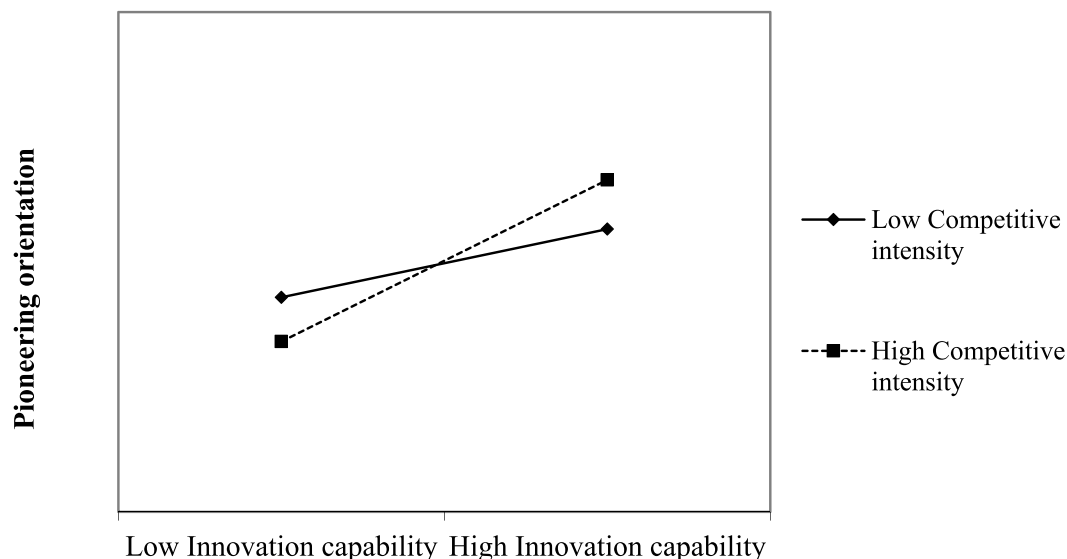


Fig. 2. Moderating effect of competitive intensity.

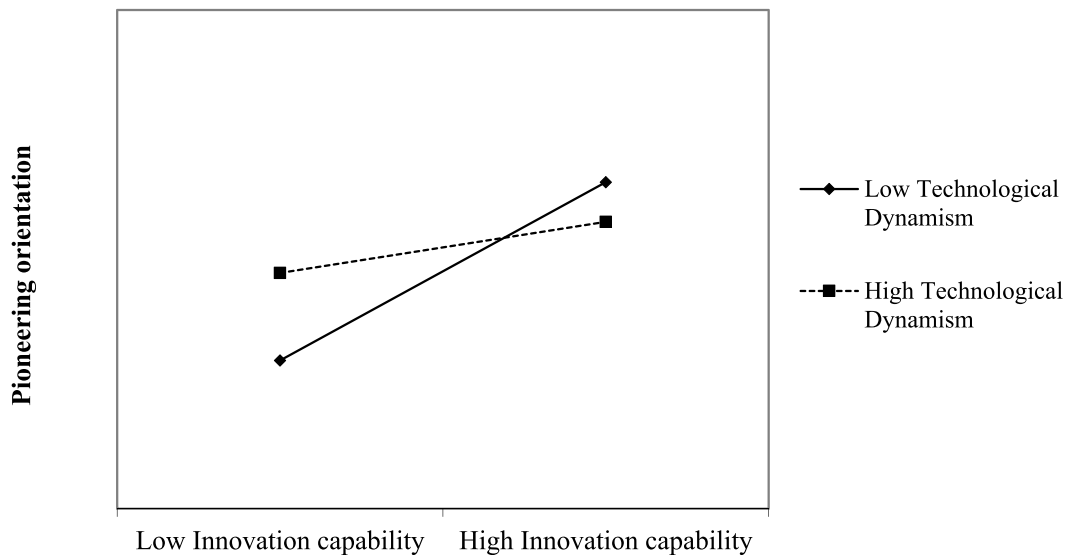


Fig. 3. Moderating effect of technological dynamism.

intermediate model and the final model, IC is the variable that best explains a firm's PO. These results are consistent with the theory put forward by Schilke (2014) about the need for a firm's dynamic capabilities to be coherent with their strategic orientation, and substantiate the positive effect of ICs on the PO of HTFs in destinations (Anning-Dorson & Nyamekye, 2020). Specifically, our work contributes to fill the gap in the tourism literature regarding the effect of IC on PO, in contrast to the increased attention paid to absorptive capability (Kale et al., 2019) and the study of the organisational antecedents of IC and its effects on firm's performance (Pascual-Fernández et al., 2021).

The findings show how two environmental factors, namely competitive intensity and technological dynamism, play contrasting roles in the influence of ICs on PO. First, our results reveal that the competitive intensity perceived⁶ in the environment has a moderating effect on the relationship between IC and PO in HTFs located in destinations. They also add strength to the arguments of Singal (2015) on the importance of competitive intensity in destinations and its influence in bolstering the isolating mechanisms generated by ICs for the development of PO. Second, technological dynamism diminishes the positive effect of IC on PO. It adds support to the propositions of Suarez et al. (2015) and Wang and Chen (2010) in the sense that when HTFs are faced by rapid, diverse and unpredictable changes in the technology of their industry, and use their capacity to evaluate and utilize knowledge from different sources, the perception of the risk inherent in developing a PO increases.

PO is a key factor for HTFs in CHTDs to enhance competitiveness, increase the attractiveness of these locations, and contribute to the economic and social development of their environment (García-Villaverde et al., 2020). Against the current backdrop of high competitiveness between firms, exacerbated especially by the drop in demand in the industry, PO has emerged as a fundamental aspect that may help firms

⁶ When we compare the average levels of competitive intensity between tourism destinations, we find that the perception of competitive intensity is significantly higher in Arequipa and Cusco than in Lima. The differences between Arequipa and Cusco are not significant. This could be explained by the size of the tourist destination, which is smaller in Arequipa and Cusco than in Lima, and the high number of tourism enterprises in these destinations. In both Arequipa and Cusco, but mainly in the latter because it is linked to Machu Pichu, it is very common to find a large number of travel agencies, hotels and restaurants promoting their products and offering their services at street level. It is therefore very common to find a wide range of tourist services in a relatively small space, which would lead companies to perceive higher levels of competitive intensity.

gain advantages over competitors and increase the success of CHTDs. Previous studies on PO have largely focused on its consequences and, to a much lesser degree, on its determinants (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2019). The literature has primarily concentrated on the manufacturing industry, with research neglecting the tourism industry (Lee & Jang, 2017). Our study complements these contributions by responding to the demand for the joint analysis of internal and external factors as determinants of PO.

The foremost contribution of the present study is to improve the understanding of the relationship between IC and PO, which is scarcely addressed in the entry timing literature, by delimiting both concepts and deepening their relationship. We also highlight the heterogeneity in the development of capabilities and strategic orientation of the firms operating in CHTDs, as only HTFs that develop strong IC tend to launch new tourism products and services ahead of their competitors. A further contribution is helping understand the key moderating and divergent role of environmental variables in this relationship. This study reveals how competitive intensity positively complements the effects of ICs, creating a favorable climate and boosting the development of isolating mechanisms that protect the potential advantages of a PO, while technological dynamism drives up uncertainty and confusion, thus reducing expectations of gaining first-mover advantages from ICs.

Regarding the theoretical implications of this study, it provides a contribution to the literature on PO (Mueller et al., 2012) by addressing the determinants of such an orientation, as demanded in previous works (Naranjo et al., 2019). Additionally, in contrast to previous studies focusing on internal or external determinants, this work adopts a more complex and realistic perspective that interrelates both aspects (Zachary et al., 2015), which has been residually applied to the field of tourism (García-Villaverde et al., 2020). It also contributes to dynamic capabilities theory (Teece et al., 1997), highlighting the role of IC as generators of expectations of gaining first-mover advantages (Helfat & Martin, 2015) and determining the divergent impact of certain environmental determinants in this relationship (Ambrosini et al., 2009). All these aspects are especially relevant to destinations. Moreover, this study responds to the call for an analysis of the strategic orientation of firms in hospitality and tourism, more specifically in the field of CHTDs in developing countries (Pikkemaat et al., 2019).

Regarding the practical implications of this work, the results enable us to make a series of recommendations for managers of HTFs in CHTDs. First, managers should build ICs by drawing on the use of knowledge from different internal and external sources to efficiently generate new products, services and processes that create expectations to achieve

strong first-mover advantages by taking advantage of the opportunities in the cultural tourism market. Therefore, HTFs must make compatible the commitment with the customs, traditions and cultural heritage that identify the image of the destination, with a strong development of ICs to successfully introduce new products and services in the market ahead of competitors. Thus, we find HTFs that develop a strong IC by combining different factors, such as the innovative propensity of their employees, the deep knowledge about the opportunities arising in the CHTD and the ideas obtained from visits to other destinations, tourism fairs and contacts with external competitors, customers and suppliers. These HTFs take advantage of their ICs to be pioneers in the destination, for example, by providing personalized and adapted environments in historical buildings to their customers; integrating in their services guided tours to heritage monuments, cultural events and art galleries; and offering the participation of their customers in artisan workshops and tastings of traditional quality food products -e.g. empanadas, chicharrón, cheese, chili, choclo, chicha, adobos, etc.- Second, managers of HTFs should be able to evaluate the conditions in their environment to seek to leverage opportunities in response to conditions of strong competitive intensity and so mitigate the effects of rapid technological changes. On the one hand, the detection of growing internal and external competition in the CHTD will encourage hotels to take advantage of their ICs to accelerate the launch of new products and services in the market, ahead of their competitors. In this regard, we highlight the case of Inkaterra, a hotel chain recognized as one of the 25 most highly rated firms in the growingly competitive hospitality industry of Perú. This chain has used its ICs, built on its commitment to scientific research, heritage sustainability and diversity conservation, to develop a PO focused on novel proposals grounded in respect for nature, heritage conservation and sustainable architecture. For example, Inkaterra La Casona is the first boutique hotel in Cusco, restored during five years to emphasize the original architecture, combining suites with fireplaces and radiant floors, rooms decorated with colonial furniture, pre-Columbian textiles and original murals, with a varied offer of Yacu therapies and a cuisine based on local products with new culinary techniques and private visits to archaeological sites near the city such as Sacsayhuamán, Qenko or Puca Pucará. We also highlight the case of the chain of restaurants created by the Peruvian chef and entrepreneur Gastón Acurio, who has gained worldwide recognition as an example of PO. His continuous PO manifest in the combination of traditional culinary knowledge and local, quality products (sourced through internal relationships with agents at the tourism destinations) with novel ingredients, recipes, cooking methods, ways of receiving customers, restaurant decor, etc. In his opinion, in order to get out of the Covid-19 crisis and to cope with the increasing competition, the restaurant industry must innovate towards new ways of understanding gastronomy in a pragmatic and affordable way. In all these examples, the combination of high ICs with a perception of strong competitive intensity drives the HTFs to maintain a high PO.

On the other hand, HTFs that perceive a high technological dynamism can identify it more as a threat than as an opportunity, given the speed and unpredictability of technological changes expected in the tourism industry. In this context, the HTFs with strong ICs can be more cautious in the early launch of new products and services based on new technologies to the market given the risk that the technologies do not consolidate as the dominant design and first-mover disadvantages arise. We recommend that HTFs with greater IC should carefully evaluate the opportunities and risks generated by significant technological changes before incorporating them into the products and services launched into the market. This problem is accentuated among the HTFs of CHTDs, which must develop and launch new products and services that make compatible the demands of cultural tourists linked to traditions and the conservation of cultural heritage with high-quality amenities and services based on new technologies. An example of this balance can be found in the Casa Andina Hotels, which has premium hotels in Arequipa and Cusco located in historical buildings with great heritage value and

identifies its offer of products and services as a combination between tradition and modernity.

The public and private institutions of the CHTDs of developing countries, such as Peru -Municipalities, Chambers of Tourism, etc.- can contribute to the promotion of the PO of the HTFs, fostering the recognition and awards to the creative and innovative business projects incorporated to the market, promoting the development of ICs of the HTFs, through the organization of business meetings of local and external tourist firms, fairs, congresses, training plans and support for innovative projects, maintaining the legal security of the HTFs, promoting competition and collaborating in the development of technological infrastructures and the promotion of the implementation of new technologies.

Despite the precautions taken in conducting this study, it is not without its limitations. Although great effort was made in developing and validating the scales used to measure the variables, potential biases may not have been eliminated. Additionally, the context of the empirical study, namely the CHTDs of the World Heritage Cities in Peru, might be too specific and so limit the generalization of the findings. Finally, the study is cross-sectional; we consider this approach has allowed us to adequately fulfil our proposed aims and the detailed nature of the information examined would have excessively complicated a longitudinal analysis.

This study suggests several research lines. First, it would be interesting to examine the impact on PO of other dynamic capabilities, such as adaptation capability and absorption capability, to analyze the possible differing effects of each dimension. Future studies might also analyze the significance of internal and external relational factors in this strategic orientation, and could also examine other environmental variables, such as market dynamism.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

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