The Evolution of Knowledge-Sharing Community Development: A Social Practice Perspective

從社交活動實踐的觀點了解知識共享發展的演變

Abstract

Common difficulties faced by Chinese tourism firms are the industry's high turnover rate and adaption to the strong organizational culture. To maintain their knowledge capital, firms are using knowledge-management systems to encourage knowledge-sharing behavior from employees. This is a conceptual paper which proposes a conceptual framework of knowledge sharing by identifying four key factors, organizational culture, leadership, material support from the organization, and individual competence, based on previous studies of knowledge creation (e.g., socialization, combination, internalization, and externalization). This knowledge-sharing framework will help tourism firms to develop a knowledge-sharing community through the establishment of a knowledge-management system. We provided a detailed discussion for the evolution of knowledge-sharing framework, and future directions are also suggested for tourism and hospitality research in knowledge sharing community development.

Key words: knowledge sharing, organizational culture, leadership, social practice, conceptual framework

Introduction

The tourism industry consists of many business sectors including accommodation, food and beverages, various transportation sectors, recreation, travel agents, etc. These business sectors have one common characteristic, which is providing hospitality services to their customers (Aratuo & Etienne, 2019). The tourism and hospitality industry is a labor-intensive and service-oriented sector in which the service quality of an individual employee can have a significant influence on customer experience and satisfaction (Fung & Hon, 2019; Hon, & Fung, 2019). Studies suggest that employee skills and behaviors can be inferred from job tasks, whereas knowledge is acquired and accumulated via education and work experience (Hon, 2012; Hon & Rensvold, 2006). However, it is difficult to share techniques for issues like handling tourist enquiries and special requests in formal training or in the classroom because expectations vary among individual tourists. In the workplace, employees can also develop their knowledge and skills through various social processes that involve interaction among coworkers or peers and other guests or tourists with various cultural backgrounds, insights, and experiences (Hu et al., 2009). For example, a senior tour guide's willingness to share his or her 15 to 20 years of work experience with a newcomer would make it easier for the newcomer to deal effectively with tourists' specific enquiries and would reduce complaints from tourists. Such implicit knowledge is rarely taught in a typical classroom or share in a training workshop; thus, the knowledge, skills, and experience of the workforce are an essential asset in the tourism industry (Hon, 2012; Okumus, 2013).

However, knowledge is intangible and easily lost, which makes it difficult for an employer in the tourism industry to maintain its knowledge assets due to the industry's high turnover rate. To deal with this problem, many tourism firms have attempted to develop a knowledge-management strategy and system to minimize the effects of the loss of knowledge caused by employees' turnover (Lee 2016; Yang & Wan, 2004).

With the strong cultural characteristics of high power distance and emphasizing on traditional values, Chinese employees are less likely to proactively share their experience and knowledge with colleagues (Hon & Leung, 2011; Hon & Lu, 2016; McAdam et al., 2012; Senbeto, Hon, & Law, 2021). Knowledge sharing intention of Chinese employees is seriously affected by the relationship between supervisors and subordinates and among the employees (Hon & Gamor, 2021; Hu, 2009). Knowledge-sharing behavior shown by employees becomes important for a firm's success in the competitive business environment because knowledge sharing can lead to

employee creativity and service innovation (Kim & Lee, 2013) and ultimately improve firm performance. Tourism scholars (e.g., Hussain et al., 2016; Hon, 2012; Hon, & Lu, 2016; Hon, Lu, & Chan, 2015; Hu et al., 2009; Senbeto et al., 2021; Yang, 2007) have begun to investigate how other organizational factors, such as culture and leadership behavior, competence-based rewards, can influence employees' willingness to share knowledge in an attempt to create strategies for tourism managers to build up their database knowledge-management system.

Social interaction is a key method to enhance employees' soft skills and knowledge (Hu et al., 2009). Peer-to-peer communication and interaction can allow employees to share their experiences and learn from each other. Although the organizations can instruct or even push employees to share their knowledge with their peers and coworkers, the effectiveness of the interaction relies on individual employees' willingness and intention to share (Yang, 2010). The establishment of knowledge-sharing practices in an organization becomes crucial for maintaining and sustaining knowledge management in the long run by setting up a positive knowledge-sharing work environment, via such means as team culture and leadership style (e.g., Hussain et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2009; Shamim et al., 2017; Yang, 2007), and by adopting an information technology system to facilitate knowledge-sharing behavior (e.g., Aboelmaged, 2018; Lee, 2016; Okumus, 2013). However, the literature has mainly concentrated on piecemeal organizational factors without creating a comprehensive model to understand the social process of establishing knowledge sharing. This conceptual paper aims to develop a conceptual framework for a knowledge-sharing social development process. More specifically, a conceptual framework is proposed to inform tourism managers about the formation and evolution of the social process of knowledge sharing.

This study contributes to the tourism, hospitality and knowledge management literatures in several ways. First, it is the first attempt to create a knowledge-sharing framework to understand the social process of knowledge-sharing development. With a strong sense of collectivism and traditional values in Chinese culture, it may be easier for the tourism and hospitality sectors in China to promote the knowledge sharing practices by understanding our proposed framework and creating knowledge sharing community. It suggests that several key components (e.g., organizational culture, leadership, material support, and employee competence) are necessary for the development of knowledge sharing. By adopting this framework, tourism and service organizations can establish knowledge-sharing management practices and develop their

knowledge-sharing social process in a systematic manner. Second, by integrating social practice theory, this study suggests that several knowledge-sharing components are necessary to help tourism scholars and the hotel managers understand how to promote knowledge-sharing behavior in the workplace and to maintain knowledge assets even when facing the challenge of the industry's high turnover rate. Lastly, it contributes to the knowledge management literature by developing a comprehensive knowledge-sharing framework with a combination of internal factors and external environments. It demonstrates the interactions among individual, group, and organizational factors on knowledge-sharing formation and provides a comprehensive explanation of the social processes involved in knowledge-sharing development. We hop e this conceptual work can provide detailed guidance for tourism scholars and managers interested in knowledge sharing and knowledge assets maintenance in organizations.

Literature Review

Knowledge-Sharing Practices in Chinese Community

Given the strong influence of conservatism and traditionality in Chinese culture, Chinese employees are likely to obey and follow the rules and decisions of their supervisors and organizational authorities (Hu et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2012). With a strong sense of power distance and conservatism, employees are aware of their role and seniority in their organization. Junior Chinese employees are always expected to strictly obey the instructions of their superiors. They tend to agree that they are obligated to respect and obey the decisions made by their supervisors and are less concerned about their right to express their opinions (Farh et al., 2007; Hon, Lu, & Chan, 2015; Senbeto, et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Many supervisors and organizational leaders expect their employees to obey their decisions and follow their instructions. Upward communication is not common in the Chinese organizations. This culture creates a barrier for junior employees to engage in knowledge-sharing practices (Hon & Lu, 2016; Hon, & Lui, 2016).

However, employees' engagement, especially that of junior employees, is very important for effective knowledge-sharing practices. In the tourism and hospitality sectors, many of the frontline staff who provide services and have direct interactions with customers are junior employees. They know customers well and their service experience and implicit knowledge become an essential contributor to the service quality of an organization. To keep this knowledge

asset, it is important to encourage all employees to engage in knowledge-sharing practices. Unfortunately, knowledge-sharing behavior cannot be controlled through formal instruction or firm policy. To overcome cultural barriers, trust in authority leaders and the encouragement of social interaction among Chinese employees are necessary (Hashim & Tan, 2015; Hon & Gamor, 2021; Kim & Shim, 2018; Li, Ye, & Sheu, 2014). This paper proposes that knowledge-sharing behaviours should be engaged through the development of a knowledge-sharing community in Chinese organizations.

Knowledge-Sharing Process

The social process of knowledge sharing is important in a work environment (Aljuwaiber, 2016). It is essential for employees to acquire job-related knowledge via observation and on-the-job training. Through daily activities and communication with coworkers and hotel guests, employees learn how to respond to customers' enquiries properly. Organizational knowledge-sharing practices involve tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge, such as education and work experience, is intangible and can be applied to practical job tasks (Hon, 2012). Explicit knowledge, such as the cleaning steps or procedures of a housekeeper, is tangible and can be written down and shared through formal guidelines and organizational policies (Okumus, 2013). Practical knowledge is easier to circulate and share within an organization via various channels such as documents, videos, reports, and stories. Tacit knowledge is associated with individual employees' experience and cannot be written down, which makes it difficult to share. Tacit knowledge is always embedded in social processes (Avdimiotis, 2019; Okumus, 2013). Interaction among employees, managers, and customers is the key to facilitating tacit knowledge's circulation in hospitality and tourism organizations. To manage explicit and tacit knowledge-sharing behavior within a hospitality and tourism organization, a well-designed knowledge-sharing practice or system is necessary.

Nonaka (1994) proposed four types of knowledge-sharing processes: socialization, externalization, internalization, and combination (Aljuwaiber, 2016). **Knowledge socialization** functions when employees share their experiences and practices; this is the process of tacit knowledge exchange among employees. The effectiveness of socialization practices depends on the formation of social groups, which frequently occurs within an organization. If employees fail

to join a social group, they cannot learn experiences and practices from others. Employees can collect information from various sources, which may create problems. If they do not critically examine the received information and select that which is useful and correct, they can make incorrect decisions despite the learning process. Moreover, the effectiveness of socialization practices also relies on knowledge-sharing intention. According to social exchange theory (Li, 2015), if employees share knowledge with others, they expect the knowledge receivers to share with them in the future as a social return. In Chinese culture, other than the rewards, *guanxi* also affects knowledge-sharing intention among Chinese employees (Liu, Chan, Zhao, & Liu, 2019). Knowledge sharing can help to improve the relationships between colleagues in the workplace and earn respect from thers. To facilitate the socialization functions of knowledge sharing, Chinese tourism and hospitality managers need to manage the relationships among employees carefully. They must educate their workforce about the benefits of knowledge sharing, that it does not serve only the purpose of gaining rewards and that the action of sharing can bring mutual benefits (Yang & Wan, 2004).

Another process is knowledge combination. **Knowledge combination** refers to the formation of new knowledge via a reorganization of existing explicit knowledge, consolidation, and synthesis (Nonaka, 1994; Srisamran & Ractham, 2014). It is the process of explicit knowledge sharing and modification. Knowledge combination occurs via formal communication such as teleconferencing, meetings, or email. To enhance the effectiveness of knowledge combination, an organization must take initiatives to manage its knowledge, including sorting, categorizing, integrating, and contextualizing existing guidelines and procedures (Bolloju et al., 2002). The business environment of tourism and hospitality industry is dynamic because the expectations of tourists or hotel guests constantly change. Businesses also threatened by uncertainties such as COVID-19. Managers must update their existing knowledge to meet tourists' changing requirements and the challenges from the dynamic business environment. Among the four knowledge sharing process, knowledge combination may be challenging for Chinese tourism and hospitality organizations because the organizations have to maintain close communications (both formal and informal communications) with their frontline staff and their business partners so that the modification of knowledge can meet their job content demands and the needs of guests, and ultimately overcome the challenges of the dynamic business environment. However, the effectiveness of open communications in Chinese workplace heavily depends on the supervisor-

frontline staff relationship (Qiu, Alizadeh, Dooley & Zhang, R., 2019). The protocols of "face" discourage the managers and supervisors to communicate with their subordinates (Qiu et al., 2019). Thus, knowledge sharing community development with proper leadership is the key to support knowledge combination process in Chinese tourism and hospitality organizations.

Knowledge externalization is the process of converting tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (Bolloju at el., 2002; Nonaka, 1994). Because tacit knowledge such as work experience is invisible, it is subjective and difficult to formalize and write down (Okumus, 2013). The success of this process relies on knowledge elicitation techniques and the extent to which employees contribute their experience. For instance, tourism firms seeking to develop a handbook for tour guides to handle tourists' complaints is an example of knowledge externalization. However, no single formula or perfect guideline can address every complaint because every scenario is unique. In addition, employees' emotions, personalities, and communication skills vary, so the same procedures may not be useful for everyone or in every situation. It is not easy to apply knowledge elicitation techniques in the externalization process (Bolloju at el., 2002), so tourism organizations may conduct in-depth interviews with their senior and more experienced employees to collect and extract this information, summarize what is useful, and formulate a formal body of explicit knowledge.

Knowledge internalization is another process by which explicit knowledge is transformed into tacit knowledge (Bolloju at el., 2002; Nonaka, 1994). This process is difficult to manage because it relies heavily on the willingness and intent of individual employees to share knowledge. To provide quality service to customers, frontline employees are required to integrate the formal and explicit knowledge (e.g., service guidelines) provided by their organization and to combine this with their own experiences and knowledge to develop competence, that is, tacit knowledge. Thus, to create tacit knowledge, staff members must apply their professional knowledge and competency in the workplace and learn through trial-and-error implementation of explicit knowledge.

The effectiveness of the four knowledge-sharing processes depends heavily on the interactions among people. Employees' willingness and commitment are also key to its success. Knowledge sharing is effective only when a knowledge-sharing community is formed (Aljuwaiber, 2016). A knowledge-sharing community can be formed when employees at all levels are willing to take the initiative to share knowledge and participate in the knowledge-management process.

However, the current literature does not provide clear directions for tourism and hospitality organizations to set up a comprehensive system to manage the four knowledge-sharing processes effectively and systematically. Drawing on social practice theory, this paper emphasizes the importance of social practices in an organization and proposes a systematic way to set up a knowledge-sharing community.

Social Practice Theory

Knowledge-sharing practices within an organization are a kind of social behavior between members (Yang, 2010; Hon, Bloom, & Crant, 2014). To create a knowledge-sharing community framework, an organization can establish a social process for knowledge sharing by adopting social practice theory, a sociological theory commonly used to explain social behavior in a group (Dignum & Dignum, 2014); that is, it provides a theoretical framework to explain what people do and why they do it.

Although the application of social practice theory in tourism-related business sectors is still limited, the relevance of social practice in the tourism industry is highlighted in the tourism literature (Lamers, Van der Duim & Spaargaren, 2017). Souza Bispo (2016) introduced the term "tourism as practice," which emphasizes that tourism activities are created through human interactions (tourism workers and tourists) and physical interactions. Tourism knowledge is created through practices (e.g. traveling around the world and engaging in tourism activities at the destination) (Scarles, 2014). Tourism knowledge is also shared through social practices (Nezakati et al., 2015). With technological innovation, tourism knowledge exchange processes can occur via both virtual and physical channels (e.g. social media, online travel forums) (Edwards et al., 2017). The development of both technological and social knowledge-sharing practices means that knowledge and information are easily accessible to the public and stakeholders, which led to the development of the concept of the "smart tourism destination" (Jovicic, 2019). As the tourism industry is composed of many small-scale companies covering many different subsectors, Kim and Shim (2018) suggested that tourism organizations enhance their competency through the development of social capital and knowledge sharing by social networking. Indeed, social practices can be applied in tourism organizations. By applying this theory, tourism managers can understand how to create a knowledge-sharing community in a systematic way. According to social practice theory, social behaviors such as interaction or communication involve the

integration of individuals and their work environment (Dignum & Dignum, 2014). These behaviors are not solely related to individual decision-making; more broadly, they are strongly influenced by various social-environmental factors simultaneously.

Community of Practices

One possible way to manage the knowledge-sharing practices in an organization is to create a community of practice for knowledge creation (Edwards et al., 2017). A community of practice can be understood as a group of people who "engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor" (Wenger, 2011, p. 1). A community of practice provides a good platform for peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, team learning, and experience exchange (Cooper, 2015). Creating an effective community of practice allows the organization to proactively manage organization knowledge. It also helps the organization to break boundaries and create a link between learning activities and organizational performance (Wenger, 2011). Creating a knowledge-sharing community of practice is very challenging but important, especially for traditional hierarchical organizations (Wenger, 2011; Hon, & Lu, 2016).

Developing a community of practice

The effectiveness of knowledge sharing in a community of practice depends heavily on soft factors such as trust, the stress levels of community members, and perceived identity in an organization (Azan, Bootz, & Rolland, 2017). When employees perceive themselves to be an important member of their organization and they are trusted by their peers, they are willing to share their common interest and work knowledge, and a culture of helping each other, a common of practice, and collective problem-solving practices are gradually developed (Azan et al., 2017). Based on this, this paper emphasizes the importance of the concept of community of practice and social practice theory and proposes a conceptual framework for a knowledge-sharing community (Figure 1) and several key aspects of social practice to encourage knowledge-sharing behavior. In addition to the elements mentioned above (i.e., externalization, internalization, combination, and socialization), the framework includes four additional key aspects: organizational culture, leadership, material support, and employee competence (i.e., skills, knowledge, and behavior).

First, an **organizational culture** can be understood as the shared assumptions, beliefs, values, and norms of policies, practices, and procedures relating to the organization's desired

objectives (Hon, Bloom, & Crant, 2014; Hon, & Leung, 2011; Schein, 2010). It provides values and direction for individuals on what should be done and why and how to perform their work duties. The design of an organizational culture is closely related to knowledge-sharing community formation. An organizational culture that emphasizes knowledge sharing and collaboration signals that communication, collaboration, harmony, and support for others are important values with which employees should comply (Hon, 2012; Hon, Lu, & Chan, 2015; Senbeto, et al., 2021), thus implying that knowledge sharing is important and encouraged in the organization. Formation of knowledge sharing organizational culture in Chinese organizations is difficult because of strong sense of hierarchy characteristics of Chinese culture (Jia, Yan, Liu, 2018). The leadership becomes a key to develop a knowledge sharing culture.

Organizational culture in Chinese context.

Several scholars have proposed that an organization's culture can strongly influence employees' performance by way of the values and norms of behavior that are comprised by the culture (Hon, Bloom, & Crant, 2014; Hon & Leung, 2011; Hon & Lu, 2016; Senbeto, Honl & Law, 2021). Cultures that emphasize such things as traditional, power distance, following authority are thought to conservatism and traditionality while those emphasizing such things as innovation and collaboration, equality of members, openness, and flexibility are thought to promote modernism and encourage organizational change in a competitive market environment (Hon, Bloom, & Crant, 2014; Hon & Lui, 2016; Senbeto, et al., 2021).

Chinese traditionality have been identified as one of important descriptions of organizational cultures and they appear to be especially useful for understanding how the social, legal, political, and economic transformations of Chinese nations have influenced social communities and work organizations (Hon & Leung, 2011; Hon Lu, & Chan, 2015; Hon, & Lu, 2016). In some tourism and hospitality organizations, Chinese cultures and attitudes have evolved significantly over the past several decades as a result of revolutionary changes in economic and social political in China. Chinese traditional culture represents a set of cultural values that can have a critical influence on the attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors of Chinese people (Hon, Bloom, & Crant, 2014; Hon & Lu, 2016; Hon, Lu, & Chan, 2015). Traditionality has ancient historic roots in China and was the dominant cultural expression for many centuries. In Chinese

traditional cultures, there is an emphasis on respect for tradition, and subordinating oneself to those higher in authority, rule following, and relationships governed by strict, prescribed codes of conduct in the workplace (Hon, Bloom, & Crant, 2014; Hon, Lu, & Chan, 2015; Senbeto, et al., 2021). Maintaining interpersonal harmony and acting with personal modesty are important values of traditional cultures and there are strong social sanctions to protect against social discord in the social and work environments, and hence, conservativism and protecting traditions are strong social and organizational cultural values in China.

Leadership is another influencing factor of knowledge community formation. Leadership can be understood as the potential or capacity to influence or control subordinates and others (Vroom & Jago, 2007; Hon & Lu, 2015; 2016). Hospitality management studies have indicated that trust and the quality of leadership experienced by employees has an important effect on their work attitudes, behavior, and performance (Hon et al., 2014; Hon & Gamor, 2021). However, China, many tourism and hospitality leaders are not willing to spend time and effort to develop the relationship with their subordinates. Instead, they tend to make use of their power to instruct their subordinates to follow their rules(Cheung, C., King, B., & Wong, A., 2018; Hon & Gamor, 2021; Hon, Lu, & Chan, 2015). This unwillingnessbehavior from leadersprohibits the subordinates to have open communications with their supervisors and senior managers. In supporting this argument, research have found that a supportive leaders can build trust-based and knowledge-sharing relationships with subordinates, communicate and collaborate with them, and show concern about them (Hon et al., 2014; Hon & Lu, 2016; Hon & Gamor, 2021). This type of supportive and empowering leadership can facilitate employees' willingness to share knowledge and enhance mutual communication and collaboration with their supervisors and coworkers. Thus, leaders' encouragement of knowledge-sharing behavior among employees should be an important indicator for the effective formation of a knowledge community development.

The third aspect is **employee competence**. Employee competence or capability refers to the practical knowledge, skills, and behaviors required for effective and efficient performance (Brown & Armstrong, 1997; Hon, 2012; Hon & Rensvold, 2006). Employee competence can be nurtured through education and by accumulating work experience and practical knowledge sharing with others in the workplace (Hon, 2012; Lee, 2016). Employee competence refers to an

employee's possession of the practical knowledge and skills necessary to perform a task successfully, and these skills and practical knowledge are indicated by consistent patterns of behavior. Therefore, employee competence represents goal achievement and high performance in the workplace, and can be seen as a behavioral outcome that good performers exhibit more consistently and effectively than average and poor performers (Hon, 2012; Hon & Rensvold, 2006). Generally, employees with high competence are expected to share their knowledge with others as they are more capable, and they are thus encouraged or required to share their knowledge and experience with less competent employees.

The final aspect is **material support**. Without the material support of the organizations, it is still difficult for the competent employees to share their knowledge in Chinese workplace comprised of strong power distance characteristics. Material support refers to the necessary resources and materials available in the firm that make knowledge-sharing practices possible (Nonaka, 1994). In other words, material support is the provision of assistance for employees to perform their expected behaviors (Neergaard et al., 2005). This support can take the form of tangible goods, financial support, material resources, and internal services or physical resources that are needed to promote knowledge-sharing practices. When individual employees have the necessary resources, materials, and support from the firm, they are more willing to share their knowledge with others encouraged by the organizational culture and supportive leaders, and when the necessary resources are available to enable them to exhibit individual competence, skills, and practical knowledge, so they are more willing to engage in knowledge-sharing practices.

The above four aspects—organizational culture, leadership, material support from organizations, and employee competence—are included in the comprehensive knowledge-sharing framework shown in Figure 1. In the following section, we explain how the social processes of these four aspects may contribute to knowledge-sharing practices.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Organizational Culture and Knowledge-Sharing Practice

According to social practice theory, cultures that emphasize knowledge-sharing practices, communication, and collaboration demonstrate to employees that the organization welcomes knowledge-sharing behavior and that they should follow and share knowledge with their peers

within the firm. An organizational knowledge culture is essential for knowledge-sharing community formation and the success of knowledge management in service organizations regardless of the employees' national culture (De Long & Fahey, 2000; Issa & Haddad, 2008; Tseng, 2010; Walczak, 2005). An organizational culture and norm of sharing behavior among employees can motivate employees to utilize appropriate knowledge for decision-making and to share tacit knowledge to improve the decision-making of others in the workplace through socialization practices (Walczak, 2005). It also promotes the culture of "learning by doing." Through the formation of organizational collaboration and sharing culture with strong charactersitics of high collaboration and communication, low power distance, and low uncertainty avoidance, Chinese employees are motivated to convert the explicit knowledge shared by their organization and coworkers into their own tacit knowledge (Tseng, 2010; Hon & Leung, 2011; Wang & Yang, 2011). An open system organizational culture also emphasizes the importance of innovation, creativity, and transformational change. By adopting an adhocratic organizational culture (open system), employees are motivated to share knowledge with others to create new explicit knowledge. Thus, knowledge creation and conversion can be enhanced by an open system culture, and knowledge externalization and combination can be concretized through innovation manifestation by employees (Rai, 2011; Hon, Lu, & Chan, 2015). This shows that there is a strong association between organizational culture and knowledge-sharing processes.

The model of organizational culture described by Hofstede (2011) consists of six dimensions: 1) process-oriented versus results-oriented, 2) job-oriented versus employee-oriented, 3) professional versus parochial, 4) open versus closed systems, 5) tight versus loose control, and 6) pragmatic versus normative. The relationships among these six dimensions and knowledge-sharing practices are described below.

Process-oriented versus results-oriented cultures: Process-oriented cultures focus on technical and bureaucratic routines, whereas results-oriented cultures are mainly concerned with outcomes, not processes (Hofstede, 2011). Employees of results-oriented organizations are less concerned about the way to complete a task, and generally perceive that all their colleagues complete their work in more or less the same way (Hofstede, 2011). They are more willing to adopt innovative ideas and knowledge-sharing practices because their organizations encourage them to adopt innovation to improve individual and organizational performance (Ciganke et al., 2008). As a result, they are willing to engage in knowledge-sharing practices to gain new insights from each

other. In contrast, employees of process-oriented organizations perceived others' practices as different. Because the process of task completion is directly related to employees' performance, they tend to adopt existing ways or methods to complete their work. They also commonly perceive knowledge sharing as risky because their value in the organization depends largely on their knowledge and experience. Therefore, they are relatively conservative and less likely to try new methods because they are not willing to take the risk (Ciganke et al., 2008) associated with innovation.

Job-oriented versus employee-oriented cultures: Organizations that emphasize a job-oriented culture show greater concern about their employees' job performance than their welfare, whereas organizations that emphasize an employee-oriented culture care more about their employees' welfare and personal growth (Hofstede, 2011). Mueller (2014) proposed that employee-oriented cultures can motivate employees to engage in knowledge-sharing practices. Chang and Lin (2015) argued that a job-oriented culture should have a stronger positive effect on knowledge-sharing intention than an employee-oriented culture because employees are under greater pressure to enhance their work performance in a job-oriented culture; this makes them more willing to share their experience and knowledge with others in a bid to achieve such improvement (Ciganke et al., 2008). We believe that the influence of a job-oriented culture on the intention to share knowledge may be even stronger in the service industry because tourism and hospitality firms are team-based rather than individual-based. Firms' reward systems focus on team outcomes for which team performance is more important than individual performance. To enhance team performance, employees are more willing to share their practical knowledge and work experience with their teammates.

Professional versus parochial cultures: Employees in a professional-oriented culture have a high commitment to their occupation and profession but not to their organization. Their identity is based in their qualifications and loyalty to their profession, such as accountancy or law. This identity creates a barrier that prevents them from sharing their professional knowledge with others. In contrast, parochial-oriented employees obtain their identity from their organization (Hofstede, 2011) in positions such as higher-level or mid-level manager. These employees generally have a strong sense of identification with their organization and show greater commitment to it; therefore, parochial employees are more likely to share their practical knowledge and information with their colleagues (Janz & Prasarnphanich, 2003) because the goal is to benefit their organization. The

effect of a parochial culture on an employee's knowledge-sharing intention is particularly strong in the tourism industry because service quality is greatly emphasized in encounters between employee and customer (Hu et al., 2009). Service quality is related to teamwork and collaboration, so knowledge sharing among teammates can improve service performance (Lai, Lui, & Hon, 2014). Hence, employees of a company with a parochial-oriented culture will take the initiative to share useful information and service-related experiences with their teammates.

Open system versus closed system cultures: An organizational culture can be an open or closed system, which relates to the common style of internal and external communication (Hofstede, 2011). Organizations with an open system interact with both outsiders (e.g., industry partners and suppliers) and insiders (e.g., employees at various levels) in a proactive manner to gain up-to-date industry information and the latest practical knowledge for their business (Daghfous, 2014). An open system culture encourages employees to share their knowledge and experience via various channels of communication within an organization. They are not only encouraged to exchange their knowledge with colleagues but are urged to communicate with outsiders during external social events and activities. This culture can help employees (especially newcomers) to get along in the organization (Chang & Lin, 2015). Unlike the open system culture, a closed system culture discourages the free flow of ideas between peers. Employees in such a culture tend to be more conservative regarding knowledge sharing because they also fear a loss of power or control as a result of sharing practical knowledge with others.

Tight versus loose control cultures: The degree of formality and punctuality within an organization determines whether it has a tight or loose organizational culture (Hofstede, 2011). Organizations with a strong tight control culture emphasize their rules, policies, and structures (Tang & Zhang, 2016). Employees are expected to strictly follow the guidelines, rules, and policies, and are given little room to work flexibly. Because employees in a tight control culture are required to complete their work by following the rules and policies without any freedom, they do not need to show innovation and are less likely to share their knowledge with others. This culture discourages employees from engaging in knowledge-sharing practices. However, organizations with a loose control culture emphasize flexibility and creativity in the work environment. To encourage employees to be creative and work in an innovative fashion, these organizations provide few restrictions or guidelines for their employees and encourage them to complete their work in a flexible work environment that involves frequent collaboration and communication with others

(Kruis et al., 2016). This kind of work environment gives employees freedom and a flexible atmosphere to engage in knowledge-sharing practices.

Pragmatic versus normative cultures: A pragmatic organizational culture is customer-oriented, whereas a normative organizational culture is rule-oriented (Pothukuchi et al., 2002). The two organizational cultures are suitable for different industries. For instance, sectors such as banking and law that emphasize the accuracy of every single decision should adopt a normative organizational culture. Tourism and hospitality organizations, in contrast, are likely to adopt a pragmatic organizational culture that allows their employees more autonomy and flexibility to provide quality service to their guests (Hofstede, 2011). To motivate employees to share their practical knowledge and experiences, a pragmatic organizational culture is recommended (Jones et al., 2006). This kind of organizational culture promotes a customer-oriented philosophy, and employees are likely to fulfill customers' expectations not by simply following the guidelines and rules but also by sharing and applying their experiences and knowledge in the workplace. Because quality service is normally provided not by a single employee but by a team, employees are encouraged to share their knowledge and experiences with their teammates to ensure that customers receive the best service (Snyder & Lee-Partridge, 2013).

Leadership and Knowledge-Sharing Practice

Studies suggest that leader behavior is associated with employee behavior and plays an important role in knowledge-sharing intention.With the strong influence of power distance and traditional values in Chinese tourism and hospitality organizations, leadership style of supervisors in Chinese tourism and hospitality sectors has a significant impact on subordinate behavior and their leadership style is easily imitated and transmitted from top to bottom along the organization hierarchy (Hon & Lin, 2016). For example, empowering and supportive leaders promote trust-based sharing of power and knowledge with subordinates, demonstrate their trust in subordinates, and give them the freedom to make decisions (Hon et al., 2014; Hon & Lu, 2015; Xue, Bradley, & Liang, 2011). Empowering leaders lead by example, and showing concern for employees' personal well-being is likely to indicate that employees are encouraged to trust each other, share knowledge with each other, and engage in the kinds of service innovation that are likely to lead to a solution to a problem. Furthermore, transformational leaders enhance employees' knowledge-sharing intention and motivate their subordinates to move beyond their self-interest via idealized

influence (i.e., charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration (Bass, 1999; Bass & Riggio, 2006). The four knowledge-sharing practices require employees to contribute plenty of time and effort (Xiao, Zhang, & de Pablos, 2017); they also require employees' willingness to share. Transformational leadership can strengthen employees' sense of team identity and prioritize team and organizational interests over self-interest (Liu & Phillips, 2011). With this type of leadership, employees are more willing to engage in knowledge-sharing practices to improve team and organization performance (Han et al., 2016; Liu & Phillips, 2011). Therefore, transformational leadership can enhance employees' knowledge-sharing intention.

Employee Competence and Knowledge-Sharing Practice

Employee competence is defined as an employee's capabilities, attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors contributing to the effective and efficient performance of their work and duties (Kaur & Bains, 2013; Lee, 2016). Through active knowledge-sharing practices, especially knowledge socialization, employees can enrich their job-related knowledge and gain support from team members (De Vos et al., 2011; Lee, 2016), and consequently perform better in their work. In contrast, employee competence is a key factor that has a significant influence on an employee's knowledge-sharing intention (Cho et al., 2007). When employees perceive that their knowledge is not sufficiently valuable or useful to help other colleagues, they will hesitate to share it. Taking a service-oriented industry as an example, there is no one best method to deal with customers' different needs and enquiries, so employees, especially newcomers, may hesitate to share their "limited" knowledge and experience if they are not confident about them. This situation makes employees more likely to be knowledge receivers than knowledge sharers. To motivate employees to engage in knowledge-sharing practices, tourism firms can develop a "knowledge think tank" of highly competent employees or strong performers to participate in the four knowledge-sharing practices (Chen et al., 2012). A "knowledge think tank" is created through knowledge externalization and combination practices, and relies on the tactical knowledge contribution of strong performers in knowledge externalization and combination practices (Okumus, 2013). Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards should be provided to these employees who contribute to knowledge-sharing practices.

Material Support and Knowledge-Sharing Practice

Based on social practice theory, material support is essential for the development of a social process for knowledge sharing. In the tourism context, material support of social practice can be interpreted as technology, equipment, and the workplace environment (Strengers & Maller, 2012). It is believed that technological and facility support can help to promote knowledge-sharing practices. Thus, this study identifies two types of material support—technological support and workplace design—that contribute to the four knowledge-sharing practices.

Technological support. Undoubtedly, information communication technology is an essential component of organizational knowledge management sharing and creation. Information communication technology provides an effective platform for organizations to establish an online knowledge-sharing process (Hashim & Tan, 2015). Many organizations have taken the initiative to adopt knowledge management software, such as big data systems, because technological support provides an effective means of knowledge storage, sharing, and retrieval among employees (Aulawi et al., 2017). By adopting technology, tourism firms can manage knowledge externalization and combination by creating a large database that stores information regarding tourists' behavior, backgrounds, buying patterns, and preferences (Ghaznavi et al., 2016). This can help the workforce to access detailed information about each tourist to provide tailor-made and personalized services through knowledge internalization practices.

An online platform offers an important tool for employees to engage in constructive discussion and knowledge sharing. However, the management of a knowledge-sharing online community is a big challenge for an organization, and its success relies on the quality and supply of knowledge (Chiu et al., 2006). To encourage employees to share valuable and useful knowledge through its online community, an organization must establish a culture of mutual trust in the online community. Trust in the community is about employees' acceptance of the community's shared values and norms. Therefore, an organization must be able to manage its knowledge-sharing online platform so that the knowledge-sharing online community can function effectively.

Workplace design. The design of a work schedule also influences knowledge-sharing practices (Appel-Muelenbroek & Haynes, 2011). To encourage employees to engage in the social practice of sharing their practical knowledge and experience (e.g., knowledge socialization), tourism firms should adopt a more open and flexible workplace design structure to encourage greater interaction among employees. An open workplace design structure allows employees to communicate and collaborate freely and openly (Haynes, 2011). However, organizations should

not simply adopt an open workplace design. Instead, they should carefully evaluate the duties of each position. Some duties, such as handling tourists' and staff members' personal information, require a private area. Organizations should design their workplace carefully to differentiate between areas that deal with general or private information. On the one hand, the workplace should allow employees to concentrate on their specific tasks, while on the other, it should allow employees to communicate without boundaries (Haynes, 2011).

In addition to an open and flexible work design, tourism firms should manage their employees' work schedule and design it carefully with the aim of building an effective social process for knowledge sharing. Knowledge-sharing practices become a burden for employees with busy work schedules and an inappropriate design structure, and the effects on experienced employees are even more serious (Paghaleh et al., 2011). Experienced employees who have worked in the industry or in the organization for a long period are knowledgeable about their work and are less likely than newcomers to gain basic knowledge via knowledge-sharing practices, thus, they are usually the knowledge sharers. As they have a busy work schedule and design, experienced employees are not motivated to participate in knowledge-sharing social practices (e.g., socialization). Therefore, work schedules and designs should provide opportunities for employees to interact and communicate with each other and should ensure that employees are not overloaded by their tasks.

The above has provided detailed explanations of the conceptual framework of how a social process for knowledge sharing develops, as shown in Figure 1. Knowledge-sharing is a complicated process that involves the exchange of tacit and explicit knowledge. To manage organizational knowledge and create a knowledge-sharing community, the organization should provide comprehensive and well-planned support to establish knowledge-sharing social practices and to motivate their employees to participate actively in the process. The conceptual framework in Figure 1 proposes four key aspects of the development of a social process for knowledge sharing: organizational culture, leadership, material support, and employee competence. If tourism managers can manage these fours aspects effectively, they can properly manage the four knowledge-sharing practices—internalization, externalization, socialization, and combination— and consequently, they can develop an effective, constructive, and sustainable knowledge-sharing development model. Ultimately, they will be able to solve the problem of lost knowledge due to the industry's high turnover rate.

Discussion and Implications

Tourism organizations have long encountered the critical challenge of lost knowledge due to a sector-wide high turnover rate. Conceptual framework development for knowledge management has become essential for managers to retain their assets and valuable knowledge to ensure service quality and maintain effective business operations. To help tourism managers solve this problem, this study proposes a framework for social knowledge-sharing development and practices. By introducing tacit and explicit knowledge and the four knowledge exchange practices, it provides a comprehensive picture of the social exchange of knowledge within an organization. More specifically, by integrating social practice theory, this study proposes a testable research framework of knowledge-sharing development for future studies. The study has identified several organizational (e.g., culture, material support) and individual (e.g., employee and leader) factors of knowledge-sharing practices and formulated a research model.

Theoretical Implications

This paper contributes to the Chinese tourism, hospitality, and knowledge management literatures by integrating social practice theory into tacit and explicit knowledge exchange processes as the foundation of the knowledge-sharing development. Both tacit and explicit knowledge are assets of an organization with which professional and stronger performers can attain a competitive advantage for their company. Tourism scholars have proposed many ways to manage the knowledge-sharing behavior of individual employees and customers, but the literature is quite fragmented and focuses mainly on how to increase knowledge-sharing intention (e.g., Aboelmaged, 2018; Lee, 2016; Okumus, 2013; Yang, 2010). Few studies have investigated knowledge-sharing practices among employees from a social practice perspective. With strong influence of collectivism and traditional value in Chinese culture, this paper represents a first attempt to propose a conceptual framework for the knowledge-sharing social development process that includes several key aspects (e.g., organizational culture, leadership, material support, and employee competence) that are important elements for the creation of a knowledge-sharing practice. It provides a new direction for tourism scholars to investigate knowledge-sharing behavior in the context of tourism.

Additionally, this paper is a first attempt to apply social practice theory to the formation of social processes for knowledge-sharing in Chinese tourism and hospitality field. With strong sense of collectivism and traditional values in Chinese culture, social practices play an important role on Chinese employees' knowledge sharing behavior. Social practice theory is commonly used to study the dynamics of routines of daily life (Bezjak, 2017). It is rarely used to examine the development of social processes for knowledge sharing in the tourism world. Knowledge-sharing behavior is a kind of social interaction and communication in an organization, not a formal or core job duty for employees. To gain a better understanding of knowledge-sharing behavior, this study examined knowledge-sharing practices in the context of tourism and knowledge management from a social practice perspective. It provides a new perspective for tourism scholars to investigate knowledge-sharing behavior in tourism firms.

Furthermore, based on social practice theory, this paper has identified four key factors of knowledge-sharing practices. It contributes to the literature by proposing a knowledge-sharing development framework that simultaneously covers the social processes of all four factors. It is worth noting that the four factors do not specifically influence one of the four knowledge-sharing practices but have a clustering effect on all four knowledge-sharing processes. Finally, this study used Hofstede's model of organizational culture (2011) and examined the influence of each cultural dimension on knowledge-sharing social practices. It provides a comprehensive picture of the influence of organizational cultures on knowledge-sharing practices. This paper also covers the influence of key factors on knowledge-sharing practices at the organizational and individual levels. It offers tourism scholars a better understanding of the contribution of individuals and organizations to knowledge-sharing practices.

Managerial Implications

The high turnover rate in Chinese tourism and hospitality industry has been a hot topic. As Chinese culture holds tourism and hospitality industry as a low regard, the Chinese workers are not committed to stay in the industry for their long term career development (Qiu et al., 2019). A willingness to share knowledge in the work environment is important for the industry to retain knowledge capital. This paper provides a clear picture for tourism managers to understand how and in what situations knowledge sharing can be developed to keep professional knowledge and experience in the firm. Knowledge-sharing behavior is the most effective and efficient way to learn

from others via on-the-job training or by observation. By sharing experiences, employees can learn from every single incident that occurs. Based on the proposed knowledge-sharing framework, tourism managers can get a clear idea of how to manage several key factors of knowledge-sharing social practices and establish an appropriate knowledge management strategy to create a knowledge-sharing community and manage organizational knowledge in a sustainable way.

This study contributes to the tourism and hospitality literature by highlighting the importance of the interplay among organizational culture, leadership, employee competence, and material support from organization. Some organizations have attempted to develop a knowledge management database with information technology, but most have been unsuccessful (Cohen & Olsen, 2013; Piccoli et al., 2017) because a comprehensive model of the social process of knowledge sharing has yet to be developed and understood. This study moves beyond the literature on knowledge management (Bolloju et al., 2002; Nonaka, 1994) and suggests that organizational culture, leadership, material support from the firm, and individual competence should be considered together in the knowledge-sharing social process. It helps Chinese tourism and hospitality organizations to better manage its knowledge assets by overcoming the boundary of traditional culture value through knowledge-sharing community development. Through the clustering effects of the four aspects in the process, a knowledge-sharing community can be formed. Also, organizations should provide a trusted platform for their employees and should motivate them to share practical knowledge by creating a collaboration and knowledge-sharing culture. This process concerns not only the support provided by an organization but also the knowledge to be shared.

Directions for Future Research

Although this study proposes a macroscopic view of knowledge-sharing social development, some research opportunities remain for further exploration by tourism scholars. First, Hofstede's (2011) six dimensions of organizational culture on knowledge-sharing practices have been recognized, but most studies examine the impact of each dimension separately on knowledge-sharing practices and none has considered them all together. The impact of each dimension on knowledge-sharing intention should be different. Therefore, it is recommended that future study examine the influence of the six dimensions on knowledge-sharing practice simultaneously. Understanding the extent and level of their impact can help tourism managers to allocate their

resources and plan for organizational culture development, especially in organizations with a limited budget or resources. It can also contribute to knowledge-sharing research regarding the effects of organizational culture on the formation of knowledge-sharing social practice.

Second, the four knowledge-transfer processes (i.e., internalization, externalization, socialization, and combination) in the knowledge-sharing process have been identified as the core factors key to understanding knowledge-sharing development (Bolloju et al., 2002; Nonaka, 1994). However, we found that previous studies failed to investigate the extent and effect of each factor on knowledge-sharing practices. It is believed that the influence of each factor should vary. For instance, some factors may have a strong influence on the internalization of knowledge sharing, whereas others may have a strong effect on externalization. Thus, this study provides a comprehensive knowledge-sharing framework by including both knowledge transfer processes and the four key knowledge-sharing practices for future scholars to investigate the effects of each influencing factor and for managers to effectively design knowledge-sharing systems in their organization.

Lastly, this study suggests that employee competence is critical in the development of a knowledge-sharing community. Future study can further investigate the relationship between employee competence and knowledge-sharing practices, perhaps in various tourism contexts, such as theme parks, cultural tourism, and medical/health tourism. In the knowledge-sharing development process, employees with high competence and strong performance are perceived as knowledge sharers, whereas employees with low competence and poor performance are perceived as knowledge receivers. Therefore, high performers are often encouraged to contribute and share their knowledge and experience. However, the contemporary business environment is dynamic and complex, and employees of different ability may contribute to knowledge-sharing practices in different ways. They can be knowledge sharers and knowledge receivers at the same time. In addition, competence will gradually decrease if experienced and knowledgeable employees do not take the initiative to gain new knowledge or learn from new generations The knowledge-sharing community development framework should be extended, and future scholars should investigate how employees with various levels of competence influence the development of knowledge-sharing practices and dynamic interactions among employees of different ability in the knowledge-sharing community. The findings will help tourism organizations to designate members' roles in the knowledge-sharing community.

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